COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PLANNING IN THE RURAL SOUTH: SEVERING THE TIES THAT BIND INCLUSION

by

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(Under the Direction of

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ABSTRACT

Social capital is a key resource for community development in resource-limited rural communities. To identify and develop such capital, an action research case study was conducted on the dynamics of a rural community leadership development program planning initiative in the southern community of Massix County (pseudonym), Georgia. The Massix Archway Leadership Development Work Group, as a part of the University of Georgia's Archway Partnership, was a diverse group of community volunteers charged with developing the program. The purpose of the case study was to investigate this process of planning a sustainable community leadership development program. Specific research questions were 1) What key strategies do volunteer community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program? 2) How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage

in program planning efforts? 3) How do volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?

The development process and the intervention of program planner recruitment were tracked over a two-year period of time by conducting participant observations, surveys, interviews, and a focus group at various times. In the process of planning the leadership development program, planners made a critical decision to sever ties to an existing leadership development program hosted by a major community development stakeholder in order to create a broader-based, inclusive program offering that better met the needs of the community at large. Based on the study of the process, it can be concluded that 1) A planning table of multiple community organizational stakeholders and diverse community constituents creates the conditions for the development of inclusive, sustainable community programs; 2) A flat organizational structure, skilled facilitators, and intentional group dynamic techniques can foster the collective empowerment of diverse community planners; 3) An outcome of community-based action research and interventions led to both personal and organizational learning and change; and 4) For rural communities, diversity and inclusion in program planning efforts are associated with program sustainability.

INDEX WORDS: Community Program Planning, Leadership Development, Diversity, Inclusion, Action Research, Rural Community, Learning Organization

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my mother, the late Councilwoman Brenda Oates Pickett. As the first African-American elected to the city council and as a community servant, she had numerous accolades bestowed upon her in her life. For one, a street was named in her honor. Posthumously, she was awarded the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition. Also, a bench in a downtown park was dedicated to her honor. But her true reward was the lives she touched during her time on earth as a servant of God. Her sacrificial servant leadership continues to be an inspiration as I attempt to honor her legacy and walk in her footsteps. Mom, well done!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Community development is defined as the "networks of actors engaged in activities through associations of place" (Robinson & Green, 2010, p. 2). It is believed that the key to community development lies in building social capital (Bachelder, 2000). Social capital is defined as "the network of social connections that exist between people, and their shared values and norms of behavior, which enable and encourage mutually advantageous social cooperation" (Social Capital). By improving upon the social connections communities are better positioned to initiate and sustain desired growth and development. Robert Putnam, a political scientist, asserted that "prosperity grows out of the trust, the relationships, and the norms of reciprocity that exist within a community." (Bachelder, 2000, p. 802).

Perhaps more than in other communities, there is a need for rural residents to take charge of community organizing to spur development (Kaplan, 2009). In order for rural communities to build social capital by fostering cohesion, organization and development, they must accomplish it themselves by using its own resources (Bachelder, 2000; Murray & Greer, 1998). Sharp (2001) related the organizational leadership of rural areas to the community's capacity for local development. Relatedly, Robinson and Green (2010) claimed, "A common issue and challenge for community development is leadership" (p. 7). So while capacity-building leadership education can impact community development, one challenge in rural areas, in particular, is having enough human and capital resources for leadership education. Since such efforts are

largely collaborative, they require the involvement of diverse community stakeholders. But in closed, geographically-dispersed, small communities, there is an additional challenge of bringing "together individuals who normally do not work together" (Robinson & Green, 2010, p. 7). While primary, these factors are among many that impact rural community leadership development program planning efforts.

This work presents an action research case study that investigated how volunteer planners in the rural southern community of Massix (pseudonym), Georgia developed a sustainable leadership development program. It began with an investigation of the current leadership offerings available in the local community. The preliminary study informed the research problem, established the purpose, and led to the development of the research questions that governed the study. These topics will be covered in this chapter.

Problem and Start-Up Process

A preliminary investigation of two leadership development offerings in Massix County was conducted in 2011. At the time, the local leadership programs were in varying stages of development. First, the Leadership Massix program, sponsored by the Community Business Development Giant (CBDG), was an immersion-based program that held its first class in 1991. It was on hiatus for redesign. Second, the leadership program of Massix Archway was in its formative stages of development. It was conceptualized as a result of a 2008 community listening session in which leadership development emerged as one of five community priorities.

In an effort to spur community development, major community stakeholders in Massix County partnered to utilize the outreach services of the University of Georgia's Archway Partnership (www.archwayparternship.uga.edu). Archway Partnership is an organization that engages with communities to address unique issues of economic and community development

and connects the community with University of Georgia and the University System of Georgia resources to address the community-identified issues. At the 2008 listening session conducted in Massix attended by 100 community stakeholders that even involved a diaspora of the community, the community called for a capacity-building program to train local leaders to lead community development efforts. At the time of this action research study, the Archway Partnership professional operated as an embedded resource in Massix and was preparing to populate and convene the Leadership Development Work Group (LDWG) formed to address the need.

The purpose of the preliminary investigation was to determine the program that best suited the needs of community leaders. First, I conducted interviews with the CBDG coordinator for Leadership Massix, the Archway Partnership professional of the Massix Archway program under development, and the training coordinator of a local church. Next, surveys were administered to engaged and non-engaged church leaders in the community and graduates of Leadership Massix. A community leadership development needs assessment was conducted and used to do a comparative analysis of each program's ability to build the capacity of local leadership to engage in and sustain community development efforts. Leadership Massix was evaluated in terms of its outcomes and the Massix Archway program was evaluated in terms of its conceptual strategy.

The investigation identified the leadership program of Massix Archway as the community leadership program best suited to build the capacity of local community leaders. Appealing features were that the program was the result of collaborative community efforts; and that the curriculum under consideration was developed by the University of Georgia's J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development and had been implemented in several

communities throughout Georgia with documented community development results. In contrast, the outcome of the Leadership Massix program was largely networking for economic development. Additionally, the $200 cost of attendance, monthly 8-hour workday sessions conducted over 9 months, and exclusive CBDG-member recommendation process were barriers to broad-based participation. Specific details of the preliminary investigation are discussed in Chapter 3. The conceptual framework of community inclusion is presented next.

Conceptual Framework of Inclusion

The investigation of the problem was informed by models of community inclusion for sustainable community development efforts. Rural communities are particular areas of interest in terms of community development for several reasons. First, many southern rural communities experience the flight of the creative class (Florida, 2005). In addition, many long-time residents and businesses do not welcome development that would redefine the location or alter the status quo (Young, 1993; Murray & Greer, 1998). Lastly, historic racial tensions and widened socio-economic lines have segmented populations of people within the small community. In order to facilitate community action, divisive issues must be addressed (Murray & Greer, 1998). If community development is the progressive community-building process that ensures the needs of community members are met, then such initiatives must be a prioritized effort among the stakeholders in rural southern communities as one way to effect change.

Since there is an evident flux of lifelong citizens from rural areas into more appealing locations and single community resources are limited, the use of multi-community concept is proposed to overcome inherent community issues (Bachelder, 2000, Murray & Greer, 1998). Informed by tenants of inclusion, diversity and representation, Figure 1 depicts a convening of sub-community representatives for the planning of a rural program in Massix. Grassroot

initiatives with those making up the collaborative structures at the helm of its development was recommended to ensure rural area's best utilization all of its limited resources (Sharp, 2001).

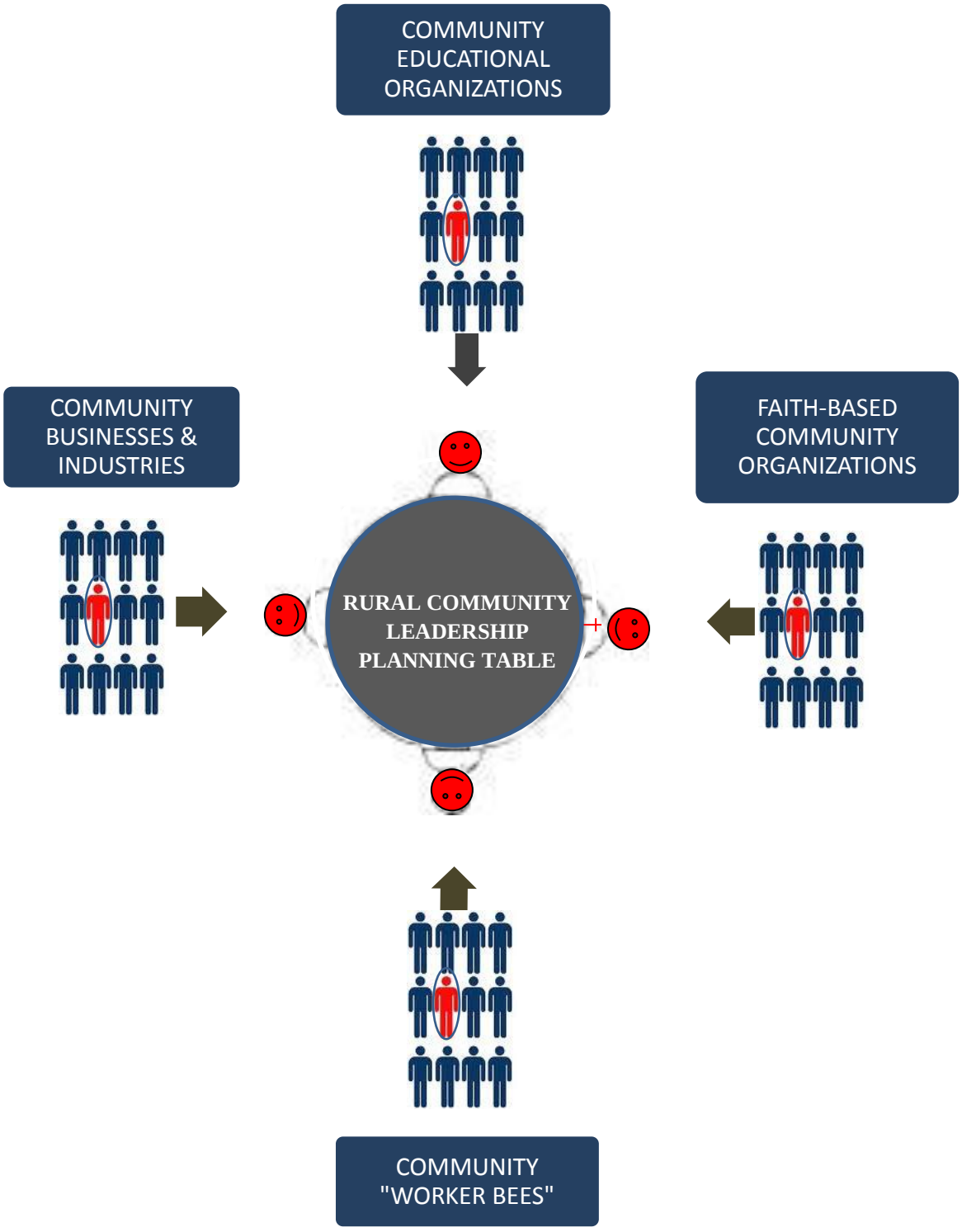

Figure 1. The Rural Community Leadership Development Planning Table

Multi-community is defined as two or more rural communities working together to accomplish a mutually beneficial vision (Murray & Greer, 1998). In the case of Massix, the application was to involve multiple independent community organizations, or sub-communities because community cohesion and organization requires a great deal of time to maintain and can be expedited by forming a community organization from pre-existing structures such as citizens of the community, churches, higher education institutions, and business (Bachelder, 2000; Littlefield, 2005; Murray & Greer, 1992; Young, 1993). Murray and Greer (1998) caution in putting together a community group unless the "membership of the group must be representative of all sections of the area that will be affected by its activities" (Supporting Multicommunity Activity section, para. 3).

Purpose and Research Questions

In order to study the leadership development program planning effort, an action research study was chosen to explore a system undergoing change processes due to collaborative inquiry and intentional action to solve problems. The purpose of the action research project was to study the dynamics of planning a sustainable capacity-building community leadership development program for the southern rural community of Massix. The sponsor of the project was the Massix Archway executive committee that was comprised of seven major community organization leaders in Massix. In an effort to understand the phenomenon, the following research questions were explored:

1) What key strategies do volunteer community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program?

2) How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts?

3) How do volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?

The project eventually included three action research cycles. These cycles included three interventions: (1) the recruitment and inclusion of diverse community stakeholders, (2) the establishment of community partnerships, and (3) the training of trainers to facilitate the leadership program. The design, implementation, and evaluation of the interventions were a collective effort of the Leadership Development Work Group, the facilitators, and myself as a participant-researcher.

Significance

While much attention has been given in academic literature to community-based program planning efforts and the impact of diversity and inclusion, this study added to knowledge bases: (1) a case study that explored the dynamics of collaborative partnerships in a southern rural United States community, (2) the impact of diversity and inclusion efforts in traditionally segregated communities that traditionally adhere to the status quo, (3) and the factors that are barriers to change efforts individually and collectively in such contexts. In addition to contributing to the theoretical understanding, this action research study is of practical importance to community development practitioners, leaders of community organizations and community interventionists as they strive to plan inclusive community-based programs. Also, local, state, and national governments, agencies, and foundations that engage in community development efforts in rural communities can gain strategies for future engagement. From this study, these

audiences can learn of mechanisms that worked to develop cohesion and engagement for community development in segmented, rural and southern communities.

The literature review in which this case research was situated and used to interpret the findings in relation to the research questions is presented next. First, an interpretivistic program planning process and its relationship with program sustainability is discussed. The method allowed for shared sense-making and emergent processes in which prior decisions can be revisited. In addition, perspectives on community collaborations in the form of partnerships and networks are presented. The engagement of various stakeholders increased the potential for program sustainability. One sector was the role of faith-based leaders in rural efforts based upon their positionality in the community organization. Then literature on the dynamics of diversity, inclusion, power and privilege is revealed. Last, adult and organizational learning concepts of single-loop learning, double-loop learning, and characteristics of learning organizations shed light on learning involved in change efforts and how organizations can exemplify learning organizations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provided a framework to design and investigate the phenomena of rural community leadership development program planning. The following table illustrates the theories that served as a foundation of the research study. Although theories are linked to individual research questions, inevitably the concepts were integrated to make meaning of the case study from a holistic perspective.

Table 1

Research Questions and Literature Review Concepts

Research questions	Concepts	Literature review concepts
What key strategies do volunteer rural community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program?	• Participatory adult program planning	• Interpretivism (Netting et al.)
How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts?	• Diversity and inclusion • Power and privilege • Collaborative community partnerships and networks	• Leveraging difference (Davidson) • Difference matters (Allen) • Power of diversity (Page) • Critical pragmatism (Forester) • Planning and power (Forester) • The planning table (Cervero and Wilson) • Community inclusion (Hanson and Salmoni) • Faith-based community transformations (multiple researchers)
How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?	• Adult learning (individual, organizational, systemic)	• Single and double loop learning (Argyris and Schön) • Learning organizations (Senge, Watkins and Marsick)

The major concepts in the study are participatory adult program planning, community collaboration, inclusion of diverse people, as well as the adult learning theories of individuals and organizations.

Interpretivistic Program Planning and Program Sustainability

Interpretivism is an appropriate philosophy of the program planning process based upon the participatory nature of the effort. In interpretive planning, Netting and colleagues posited that "engagement, sense-making, and discovery interact continually as a program design unfolds" (p. 118). In the LDWG planning effort, this aspect of program planning is evident in the group's actions and results. The thought process of the program planners is largely a nonrational process (Netting et al.). The objective of the group is to collaboratively work by consensus to plan the program that meets the "broadest goals and values" (p. 28) of the constituents for sustainability. In the interpretive approach to planning programs, the participants are asked to "participate more than plan" (p. 117). In addition, the interpretive process lends to allowing the program to unfold and emerge. With the input of multiple stakeholders, all perspectives are included with no one single truth being advocated. Therefore, the perspectives are broad with the inclusion of all planners and the meaning-making is shared (p. 140). According to Netting and colleagues (2008), "being open to options and alternatives is central to community organizing and to policy analysis" (p. 150).

The group typifies a learning organization in which cycles of learning occur based upon reflection and shared knowledge (Netting et al., 2008; Senge et al., 1994; Marsick & Watkins, 1994). Netting and colleagues (2008) recognized that interpretive planning followed along with the practice of learning organizations in that programs unfold when dialogue occurs. A further discussion of learning organizations follows later in the chapter.

Consistent with the participatory interpretivistic framework, the program planning for this initiative follows a transactive approach. Transactive planning is "interpretive in nature, since the focus is as much on inclusion as it is on results" (Netting et al., 2008, p. 19). It is characterized by multiple stakeholders engaging in mutual learning face-to-face (p. 18). Netting and colleagues uphold that the transactive approach is best when multiple stakeholders are involved in "capacity building and sustainable community development" (p. 18) initiatives. The process of program planning does have a linear progression. Netting and colleagues (2008) described the emergent planning process as a "Slinky," since each progressive step has loops that interface with other steps such that any part of the process can be revisited at any time and is unpredictable in nature.

Collaborative Community Program Planning

From a stakeholder's perspective, sustainability of community programs involves "the influence of community context, existing capacity, and the required human and monetary resources that positively impact a programme's ability to continue over the long term" (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010, p. 526). In terms of context, Altman (1995) holds that "any one community intervention…must pay particular attention to the social and political milieu in which it is delivered…" (p. 529). Alfonso and colleagues (2008) defined community capacity as the ability to create change, which includes community involvement, problem-solving skills, human resources, and the power to be effective. Human and monetary resources involve having the man power and finances to support the program's continuous implementation. This was directly in line with the program planners' characterization of program sustainability.

The research establishes several factors that contribute to sustainability. A study determined that actions based upon research significantly contributed to the program's

sustainability (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). In addition, the stakeholders of a community initiative took the following steps to foster program endurance. These included: creating community partnerships, creating network linkages throughout the community, and increasing the capacity of individuals and the community (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). Similarly, Hanson and Salmoni (2010) found that stakeholders perceive a lack of human resources, financial resources, leadership and co-ordination, and buy-in as barriers to sustainability.

One recommendation to build sustainability is to promote community involvement (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). They posited, "Communities should attempt to involve a wide range of individuals and organizations…[because a] diversity of individuals and organizations will provide inclusion of a variety of backgrounds and skill sets upon which the project can draw" (p. 530). "At a minimum, involving various community constituencies as partners early in the research process is a precondition to successful sustainability" (Altman, 1995, p. 528).

Cervero and Wilson (2006) asserted that the instructional design of most adult education program designs emphasize the inclusion of the adult learner in program planning process. Rehm and Cebular (as cited in Netting and colleagues, 2008) stated that "the idea is to get the right people in the room—those whose presence is critical for doing the job" (p. 23). Therefore, a community leadership development program must include a representative body of the community. Cervero and Wilson (2006) conceptualized the planning table as a metaphor used to describe the social construct of program planning. The construct was based upon the social aspects of planning programs—whether at a physical table or informal conversations—that are influenced by "the technical, political, and ethical domains of planning" (p. 20).

Diversity, Inclusion, Power, and Privilege

The dynamics of a community planning table includes power relations, interests, ethical commitments, and negotiation (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). Allen (2010) stated, "The relationships among power, hegemony, and ideology reveal that organizations are 'sites of struggle [in which] different groups compete to shape the social reality of organizations in ways that serve their own interests'" (p. 37). Therefore, solutions are highly "sensitive to power, politics, and contextualized particulars" (Netting et al., 2008, p. 25). In addition, privilege is another dynamic that impacts program planning efforts. "Persons in positions of privilege tend to reap benefits from their hierarchies, while people placed in lower levels are more likely to be disadvantaged" (Allen, 2010, p. 184).

Because of this, Forester (1989) explained that planners should expect power dynamics to affect program planning. He states, "Any account of planning must face these political realities" (p. 3). The goal of planners is to "think and act politically…to anticipate and reshape relations of power and powerlessness" (p. 7). Forester (1989) also proposes that program planners "work to include or seek ties to those traditionally excluded, encouraging attention to alternative that dominant interests might otherwise suppress" (p. 46).

Allen (2010) noted that, "Although power processes can exclude and marginalize people, they can also enable and empower them" (p. 37) and encouraged the expression of empowerment through communication so that "advocates for change…challenge the status quo" (p. 185). In addition, "Members of dominant groups can become proactive about their privilege and use it for social change" (p. 189). In contrast, inclusion as evidenced by "valuing difference has potential rewards that include increased creativity, productivity, and profitability; enhanced public relations…they can optimize accomplishing goals…" (p. 5). Further, diverse teams "perform

better than homogenous ones" (Page, 2007, p. 299). Davidson (2011) deems that, "Organizations that truly leverage difference cultivate the capability to engage with and learn from diverse stakeholders…" (p. 9).

However, diversity and inclusion are not without potential setbacks. For one, a barrier to inclusion and the effectiveness of diversity are social norms (Allen, 2010). "Norms about political correctness may block members of all groups from expressing themselves" (Allen, 2010, p. 7). In addition, "Diversity can create communication problems…and problems with group dynamics" (Page, 2007, p. 320). Only when diversity leads to solutions is it beneficial to program planning efforts (Page, 2007).

Therefore, the inclusion of diverse community stakeholders is essential to the planning of an inclusive, sustainable community leadership development program. Leveraging difference by the inclusion of diverse community stakeholders has the potential to produce creative solutions to problems that are outside of the status quo in rural communities (Allen, 2010; Davidson, 2011). However, the same dynamic could be detrimental to group dynamics and performance (Allen, 2010). The interplay of power, privilege, diversity, and inclusion will require skillful mediation and negotiation on the part of the facilitators and program planners (Forester, 1989). In addition, the literature notes that "diverse groups should perform relatively better over time" (Page, 2007, p. 327) when they are working towards a common goal. One predominant community organization that literature supports the inclusion of is faith-based leaders.

Faith-Based Institutions and Social Capital

The social structure of rural areas and their potential for community action has been studied for almost a century (Sharp, 2001). They are of particular interest because of the large disparity in community cohesiveness. There are divisions among races, economic classes, and

the like. Kaplan (2009) asserts that "religious groups are often the main catalyst for the formation of robust social networks, which are the main storehouse of capital in countries where society is heavily fragmented…" (p. 24). The use of religion is considered one of the premier methods of constructing positive behavior and cooperation in segmented populations (Kaplan, Calman, Golub, Ruddock, & Billings, 2006). Littlefield (2005) asserts that the significance of churches and their impact on social capital cannot be deemed unimportant. One study showed that churches, particularly in rural communities, are the only avenue for rebuilding and replenishing social capital and maintaining community networks that benefit the community at large (Bachelder, 2000).

The work of Littlefield (2005) identified key factors in the dynamics of a community field—a network of organizations that are formed for the sake of community organization. Sharp (2001) states, "The structural interest in the community field is expressed through linking, coordinating action, actions that identify and reinforce the commonality that permeates the differentiated special interests in the community field" (p. 404). Community development is primed to occur when linkage among community social infrastructures are well-defined and established. The most effective structures are pyramidal or coalitional-type (Sharp, 2001). One structure that has the recommended pyramidal infrastructure is faith-based organizations.

Of 635 churches in the northeastern and northcentral area of the nation, 100% of the pastors across denominations believed that the mission of the church was to accompany spiritual education with practical assistance (Littlefield, 2005). In addition, Littlefield (2005) found the following comparative characteristics of engaged churches versus non-engaged churches: Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, older, and larger. In addition, engaged churches owned their buildings and had congregants of a higher socio-economic status (Littlefield, 2005). A

compilation of empirical data on the community engagement of churches is provided in the Appendix A.

Kaplan (2009) believed that the use of faith has been underutilized as a transformative agent in the area of community development and upholds that "faith encouraged development" (p. 23), citing examples of such instances worldwide. Kaplan (2009) suggested that the impact of religion and churches on community development must be considered and, without it, the understanding of the dynamics of development is deficient. Kaplan (2009) noted that the Protestant teachings of "planning, frugality, diligence, discipline, capital accumulation, risk taking, a commitment to one's secular vocation, and the pursuit of new ideas" (p. 23) inspired the development of capitalism in countries including the United States. In modern times, churches in Brazil and Africa have encouraged its congregants in wealth-building and civic engagement (Kaplan, 2009). In addition, these churches also "teach leadership and management skills" (Kaplan, 2009, p. 23). Bachelder (2000) affirmed:

> In a city where poor newcomers are always arriving and successful residents are leaving, the church must always be rebuilding the community from the inside out, constantly replenishing the store of social capital, and creating human relationships and networks that work for the good of all (p. 804).

Therefore, faith-based rural organizations are one of the keys to the development and maintenance of social capital, a community asset required for rural community development.

Engagement of Multiple Stakeholders for Rural Planning

An integration of the literature suggests that a sustainable community leadership development program planning effort would be a collaborative community effort with diverse, included stakeholders, including faith-based leaders, who follow an interpretivistic method of

program planning with an established norm of dialogue based upon individuals' perspectives and representing the multiple interests of the community organizations to which they belong. Such a group would ensure the planning of a program that is relevant in which the planners continually engage in learning opportunities based upon the degree of diversity, inclusion, and community collaboration. However, literature encourages the establishment of a common goal as well as time for the diverse group to develop as trust is established and learning is shared.

Young (1993) noted that "a problem of particular importance in…any rural community, is that of identifying and recruiting the leadership in the community to participate in the planning process" (p. 19). Although the recruitment and engagement of diverse stakeholders in a community is not without challenges, their inclusion is imperative (Forester, 1999). In addition, organizations that benefit from maintaining the current state of affairs must be at the planning table. Young (1993) observed that "it is critical to include these organizations in the embryonic stages of the project to build as much ownership as possible if ultimate success is to be achieved" (p. 20).

Research supports the engagement of church leaders to facilitate community education and initiatives (Kaplan, Calman, Golub, Ruddock, & Billings, 2006). Using their ability to bring people together and pre-existing relationships of trust, faith-based initiatives have the ability to transact transformation (Young, 1993). These institutions have internal organizational structures and means of communication that are also useful assets in community initiatives. Such has been the case for many community health projects (Kaplan et al., 2006; Hale, Bennett, Oslos, Cochran, & Burton, 1997).

For community-based efforts to be sustained, collaborations are also essential. Particularly in rural communities, which can be void of creative talents, partnering with

established, sustained community institutions and organizations that can be a resource to support the effort is key. Although the intervention is only within the context of stakeholder recruitment, research shows that this one component of program planning is significantly impacted by it. To overcome barriers to program planning participation, church leaders and other key community organizations may become engaged in the effort as a part of the community network or as a partnership. Research suggests that every constituent does not have to engage as a program planner. Hanson and Salmoni (2010) posited:

> Networking and partnerships are highly functional actions for achieving sustainability, and have received attention in previous research as being important strategies for aiding sustainability. Networks have been reported to increase the advocates for a programme and allow the programme messages to diffuse more rapidly, while partnerships can encourage sustainability through collaborations between individuals and organizations with similar missions, along with the sharing of resources, expertise and responsibility. (p. 529)

By engaging community organizations not represented as planners in this way, the rural leadership development program can still be sustained since networks and partnerships build grassroots and community support.

Recommended planning table constituents: target audience (consumers), church leaders, business leaders, community-based organizations, institutions of adult education, public entities (government, agencies, etc.), civic organizations, and "worker bees," who are active grassroots workers (Alfonso et al., 2008; Cervero and Wilson, 2006; Hanson and Salmoni, 2010; McCann et al., 1995). Hanson and Salmoni (2010) held that, "While having appropriate individuals around the table is highly beneficial to programmes [sic], it is important to have balance and

diversity to guard against a loss of momentum or expertise if such individuals leave the project" (p. 532). McCann et al. (1995) believed that it is imperative that community interventions build on established "community assets and infrastructures" (p. 65). "Multidisciplinary stakeholder involvement" (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010, p. 530) should be a priority. The planning group should "continually work at expanding the network of individuals involved in the programme to avoid a high degree of dependency on key individuals" (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010, p. 530). Sharp (2001) noted:

> The research reported here suggests more appropriate proxies for measuring the community field, including a diverse and inclusive community organization or coalition, which generates communitywide awareness and facilitates the flow of local information or resources; generalized leaders, who seek to build bridges between diverse social fields; capacity for leadership development; organizations or institutions with stockpiled resources available for community development; multi-interest planning processes; and proactive action organized in response to collectively recognized community needs… (p. 422).

The right stakeholders at the planning table, with the inclusion of diverse constituents with a common goal, were important to individual and collective adult learning and the development of the LDWG as a learning organization.

Adult Learning and Learning Organizations

Theories of adult learning, organizational learning, and learning organizations describe the personal development of individuals and its impact on group development. The theories of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön inform several aspects of adult and organizational learning.

Peter Senge and colleagues characterized learning organizations. The relationship of these theories to this study is presented.

Adult and Organizational Learning

Argyris and Schön are the foundation of many concepts of adult and group learning. These include Model I and Model II espoused theories, theory-in-use behaviors, and single and double-loop learning. The research conducted revealed cognitive behaviors that promote and hinder learning. In addition, solutions for overcoming barriers to learning were realized. Each of the concepts is discussed.

A primary outcome of studies was the realization of espoused theories and theories-in-use propositions. Espoused theories represented what an individual espoused as true. However, theories-in-use propositions revealed the cognitive behavior of individuals. At times, the two theories about knowing were contrary. Model I theories emerged in which an espoused theory was idealized and purposed by the individual, but the action revealed contrary "theory-in-use" propositions (Argyris, 1980; Argyris, 2002). Interestingly, Model I theories of use are consistent across various contexts of "gender, race, culture, education, wealth, and type of organization" (Argyris, 2002, p. 212). It is described as four basic components.

> Briefly, Model I theory-in-use is comprised of four governing variables: (a) be in unilateral control; (b) strive to win and not lose; (c) suppress negative feelings; and (d) action rationally…The consequences of these Model I strategies are likely to be defensiveness, misunderstanding, and self-fulfilling and self-sealing processes (Argyris, 2002, p. 212).

Research suggested that these behaviors are learned early on in life and are a blind spot to individuals that operate in them. Model I behavior is actualized "through acculturation and

socialization, a set of values, action strategies, and skills that lead them to respond automatically to threatening issues by 'easing in,' 'appropriate covering,' or by 'being civilized'" (Argyris, 1980, p. 205). These individual behaviors translated to organizational behaviors that are counterproductive and hinder learning. The same defense patterns emerged in response to organizational change. Argyris (2002) suggested that these behaviors "inhibit genuine learning and overprotect the individuals and the organization" (p. 213). Model I behaviors could only lead to single-loop learning in organizations. Single-loop learning involved learning that produced change. However, the change was in line with pre-existing understandings and goals. For example, it represented a change in procedure. By not questioning underlying beliefs and norms, organizations operated in a way that perpetuates the status quo. It upheld and maintained the normal modi operandi. On the contrary, double-loop learning involved a change in underlying beliefs that lead to different actions. Such moments were deemed rare but necessary for "long-run effectiveness and survival of the organization" (Argyris, 1980, p. 207). It was possible to promote individual Model II theories-of-use behaviors that promote a higher level of individual and organizational change. Therefore, long-term change came from changing individuals (Crossan, 2003).

There were three major elements of Model II behaviors. First, there was advocacy for a position based upon "inquiry and public testing" (Crossan, 2003, p. 214). This allowed for the individual to operate as a learner instead of an expert by inquiring and considering all knowledge bases. In addition, there was continual evaluation and attribution that is open and explicit (Argyris, 2002). Argyris (2002) posited: "To the extent that individuals use Model II instead of merely espousing it, they will begin to interrupt organizational defensive routines and create organizational learning processes and systems that encourage double-loop learning in ways that

persist" (p. 214). It followed, then, that the ability of a group to engage in explicit dialogue on issues that may stir defensiveness is essential to the development of the individual and the collective (Argyris, 1980). This could be accomplished by changing individuals' theories of action.

Argyris asserted that Model I behavior discouraged learning since it focused on win-lose dynamics, withheld vital information in the effort to "be a good leader" (Crossan, 2003, p. 44), and used defensive patterns as opposed to productive reasoning. He stated, "People withhold information…because they see that as a sign of effective leadership" (p. 44). Such behaviors by an individual could translate into organizational behaviors. Some practices to encourage organizational learning included a process of unfreezing-refreezing as well as developing reflective practitioners.

Argyris held that "producing organizational learning is done by individuals taking action" (Crossan, 2003, p. 40). Argyris developed a process of unfreezing to allow for new learning and refreezing in which new learning is translated into action. He stated:

> Our ultimate goal is to help individuals unfreeze and alter their theories of action so that they, acting as agents of the organization, will be able to unfreeze the organizational learning systems that also inhibit double-loop learning…Not only do we have the temerity to question underlying human theories of action and organizational learning systems, but we are calling into question some of the most basic societal norms and values. Moreover, we even strive to present new models of action for individuals, organizations, and societies (Crossan, 2003, p. 42-43).

Another practice that inspired learning is the development of reflective practitioners. Actors in systems would reflect upon their actions. Reflection enabled individuals to be skilled at a "meta"

analysis that caused critical thinking around the notions of values, value claims, and error (Crossan, 2003). The ability to skillfully navigate through Model I behaviors to Model II theories-in-use would set the stage for learning and for the development of a learning organization. The goal was to create organizations in which learning is a shared organic experience (Crossan, 2003).

Learning Organizations

Building on the work of Argyris and Schön, Senge and colleagues conceptualized a learning organization. Based upon his theory, a learning organization consisted of a group of individuals that continually build their capacity to learn and create meaningful, sustained change (Crainer, 2008). From a business perspective, he described learning as being "'…about changing individuals so that they produce results they care about, accomplish things that are important to them,' and it is the best way for a company to come to terms with a rapidly changing world" (Crainer, 2008, p. 71). Therefore, in order to remain relevant and competitive, organizations must learn to learn. The five characteristics identified by Senge and colleagues are personal mastery, mental models, team learning, shared vision and systems thinking (Senge, 1994).

Personal mastery. Personal mastery referred to individuals "committed to their own lifelong learning" (Senge, 2006). The organization's learning was directly impacted by the personal mastery of each of its members. If individuals failed to learn, then organizational learning and development was stifled.

Mental models. Mental models referred to the awareness of how individuals make meaning of the world around them. These mental models influenced understanding and, therefore, actions (Senge, 2006). They were "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even picture or images" (p. 8) that impact learning.

Team learning. Team learning incorporated dialogue based upon Argyris and Schön's Model II theory-in-use that encouraged the open exchange of ideas. A part of team learning was dealing with defensiveness and other Model I routines that acted as barriers to organizational learning (Senge, 2006).

Shared vision. Shared vision "involves the skills of unearthing shared 'pictures of the future' that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance" (Senge, 2006, p. 9). The vision was informed by the individual visions of the members rather than a top-down translation of organizational vision (Senge, 2006). It extended beyond the stereotypical vision statement, but a vision that organizational members took ownership of (Senge, 2006).

Systems thinking. Systems thinking involved the integration of personal mastery, mental models, shared visions and team learning (Senge, 2006). It was the ability of an organization to realize the inner workings of the larger system and how the organization impacts it and is impacted by it. Such systemic perspectives allowed for more purposeful action since it takes into account causality and feedback (Senge, 2006).

In all, learning organizations consisted of individuals who were personally committed to learning, engaged in dialogue to facilitate team learning, invested in the organization's collectively-developed shared vision, willing to be aware of their mental models while remaining cognizant of the organization as an integral part of a larger system. Marsick and Watkins (1994) characterized a learning organization as a self-transforming entity that "empowers its people, encourages collaboration and team learning, promotes open dialogue, and acknowledges the interdependence of individuals, the organization, and the communities in which they reside" (p. 354). In reflecting on the foundational work of Argyris and Schön on learning organizations, Senge (2003) commented,

> …This is a long journey—that becoming a 'learning organization' is deep, inherently difficult, time consuming and personally challenging. I believe this growing recognition comes in large measure from appreciating that the behaviors and assumptions of managers are a part of the problem, that we do have embedded defenses against seeing gaps in our own actions, and that confronting these problems requires deep personal commitment (p. 49).

Further, learning organizations were characterized as one that values diversity and "take advantage of the full range or perspectives and values which those outside the mainstream offer" (Marsick & Watkins, 1994, p. 359). The development and sustenance of a learning organization was complex and multi-faceted.

Resistance to Change

The nature of Model I and Model II behaviors suggested that there can be considerable resistance to collaborative community-based change efforts in which multiple stakeholders with varying interests negotiate in an attempt to create a shared vision. Counter-culture dialogue was the vehicle by which the status quo is challenged in order to create the opportunity for a new outcome beyond Model I single loop change. Therefore, the use of an interventionist was suggested in order to help facilitate learning (Diamond, 1986). Attention to the subconscious resistive behaviors could increase the effectiveness of interventions (Diamond, 1986). Research suggested several capacity-building learning tools to minimize resistance and maximize learning. In addition, the impact of organizational structure as a mechanism of resistance was presented.

Both individuals and organizations could manifest behaviors that were resistant to change. Since organizational learning depended upon adult learning, it was worth noting the psychological responses experienced by individuals undergoing change efforts. "These

defensive and adaptive tendencies usually protect the status quo and, therefore, block learning" (Diamond, 1986, p. 544). From a psychoanalytical perspective, one tool that could be effective in creating double-loop learning and building the adaptive capacity of the skill was reflexive inquiry.

> Interventionists must facilitate a learning environment where clients can openly explore psychological defences [sic] and resistances to change, which result from the stressful and anxiety-provoking event. This suggests that clients must be educated to interpersonal and group defensive operations. Model 2, 0-2 learning systems are 'sophisticated work groups' (Bion, 1959), which facilitate 'reflexive inquiry' (Argyris and Schön, 1978) through double loop learning and awareness of basic assumptions and unconscious processes (Diamond, 1986, p. 546).

Although the emergence of double-loop learning could be elicited, Argyris (1980) held that the unfreeze-learn-freeze process that led to Model II theories-in-use would not completely eradicate Model I behaviors. On the contrary, both behaviors would co-exist while individuals chose between the two modes in any given circumstance. He stated:

> The fundamental thrust of the recommendations is to control error by making the logic in peoples' heads more public and hopefully more influenceable [sic]. This thrust will work, especially if it is backed up by sanctions from the superior. But what will also occur is that people will not forget their personal games, competitiveness, and so on. They will develop new ways to use them and to camouflage the fact that they are doing so (Argyris, 1980, p. 211).

It was essential, then, that there was an awareness of the tendency and an opportunity to often engage in double-loop learning opportunities in order to create a learning organization in which dialogue continually challenged the status quo and its members were consistently reflective.

Diamond (1986) noted, "In these studies, Argyris discovers a behavioural connection between social structure (pyramidal and hierarchical), organization culture (ruling norms for behaviour), and ineffective human performance" (p. 550). Therefore, the organizational structure of the collaborative effort was a major determinant of how an intervention will unfold. Stringer (2007) held that "'flat' organizational structures that put decision-making power in the stakeholders' hands" (p. 25) are required. Further, Diamond (1986) held that resistance to change is "…symbolized by pyramidal organization and culture that represent an externalized social system of ego defenses against the anxiety of losing control and the risks of growth" (p. 552). In that stead, Argyris suggested that the purpose of the change agent is to "encourage the sharing of ideas, feelings, and values, while supporting the expression of individuality, mutual concern, and trust" (p. 553). Argyris posited that:

> In work groups, a high frequency of psychological success is the criterion for competence and effectiveness, where members define their own objectives and share leadership functions between themselves so that no one person possesses an inordinate degree of power and authority (Argyris, 1980).

Therefore, "Bureaucratic organizations foster security operations and defensive actions in their participants (Diamond, 1984) and, by doing so, complicate possibilities for human and organizational learning and change" (Diamond, 1986, p. 548). A structured organizational design would inherently hinder learning on all levels.

> Intervention aimed at change in the status quo and learning to double-loop learn challenges organizationally-embedded defensive structures, which are particularly rigidified in bureaucratic settings. Therefore, such interventions meet with extraordinary resistance to change and learning resulting from the client's perception of a dangerous situation and the concomitant anxiety. Inevitably, defensive reactions such as projection of aggression, projective identification, and splitting of one's self and other(s) surface during the intervention. By challenging the status quo, interventionists (or change agents) encourage organization participants to evaluate critically the dysfunctional consequence of personal and organizational defenses. (Diamond, 1986, p. 549).

The theorists also described the interconnected relationship between learning and action. There were three "loops" of learning correlated with behavior. Single-loop learning involved a behavior correction that adhered to the dominant culture. "Single-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected without altering the underlying governing values" (Argyris, 2002, p. 206). However, double-loop learning was characterized by instances in which norms were challenged. "Double-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected by changing the governing values and then the actions" (Argyris, 2002, p. 206). In the end, a different outcome emerged. In the final stage, triple loop learning was described as learning about learning. It was the ultimate level of development. The "operational criteria" (Crossan, 2003, p. 41) allowed for a way of knowing what was truly learned. In effect, if there is no corresponding action, learning had not taken place. Conversely, if learning had taken place, the result would be a significant change in the outcome.

Core to a higher dimension of learning was the engagement of a group in dialogue that challenged norms (Argyris, 1980; Marsick & Watkins, 1994). "Learning organizations

capitalize on differences because solutions can often be found outside the norm" (Marsick & Watkins, 1994, p. 359). Of Argyris and Schön's work, Senge (2003) noted, "…They imply a fundamental set of new personal and interpersonal competencies that sit solidly in opposition to widely shared cultural norms" (p. 47). Engaging in conversations as a means to learning instead of advocating personal interests in a win-lose manner was countercultural.

The development of a learning organization began with the adult learner. The willingness to engage in counter-cultural conversations to share learning was essential. Senge (2003) posited, "It requires both personal willingness to detect and correct errors in my own behaviors, as well as continual improvement in the processes, practices, metrics, and governance structures of larger organizations. It is both, not one or the other" (p. 48).

Assessment of Current Studies

A review of literature related to community program planning, diversity, inclusion, power and privilege, as well as adult learning found strength in the multiple sense-making of interpretivism, the dynamics of diversity and inclusion in the midst of power and privilege, and individual and organizational learning. However, the literature largely referenced dated studies. And while fundamental principles are the same, their applicability varies across contextual landscapes. In addition, the literature did not address the interplay of all of these concepts in a rural South setting. The lack of scholarly studies situated in rural south community development is due to the lack of researchers studying the topic (Young, 1993). Since community development rests in community cohesion, perhaps the stigma of past social tensions in rural southern areas has made such efforts daunting. The predisposition of such communities to resistant change in order to maintain the status quo also lends value to the study of this change effort. Therefore, an exploration of the dynamics of change in a contemporary rural setting using

an action research case study methodology would provide relevant, timely insights into the interworking of these concepts. In addition, further investigation of the mechanisms at work in rural communities via faith-based and other community organizations as well as community development through cohesion and engagement is worthy. The implications of such studies can lead to a genesis of like-transformations throughout rural South communities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of an action research case study of the dynamics of rural community leadership development program planning that spanned a two year period of time. The action research team was comprised of LDWG planners that consented to take part in the study. Various methods of data collection were used to inform the research questions of the study. Data were analyzed considering issues of trustworthiness and validity. The limitations of the study were considered. As a participant observer, my positionality and subjectivity are addressed. Each aspect of the methodology is presented in this chapter.

Action Research Case Study

To study the dynamics of the rural community program planning effort, an action research case study methodology was selected. The benefit of the case study research design is when "a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2008, p. 13)." The strength of the case study design is its attention to using multiple sources of data to understand a phenomenon (Yin, 2008). This study employed participant observations, surveys, interviews, and a focus group.

Action research is appropriate because of its attention to "specific problems within a specific setting" (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). The community initiative is a change effort. Unlike other research conducted in systems, the purpose of action research is to create and manage change. Stringer (2007) noted, "Change is an intended outcome of action research…subtle transformations brought about by the development of new programs or modifications to existing

procedures" (p. 208). The study is situated in three cycles of the action research routine of look, think, and act (Stringer, 2007). Stringer (2007) characterized the "look" phase to include action inquiry—"gathering relevant information" (p. 8) and "describing the situation" (p. 8). The "think" phase involved making sense of the data (Stringer, 2007). The "act" phase involved the implementation and evaluation of a plan of action (Stringer, 2007).

The action research case study sought to answer the following research questions: 1) What key strategies do volunteer rural community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program? 2) How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts? 3) How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively? Based upon the research questions, the research design was planned.

Research Design Plan

The research study was approved by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and involved several phases. Some phases occurred concurrently and other occurred intermittently. As a general overview of the research process, entry was made into the system as a participant in the Leadership Development Work Group at its initial meeting in May 2011 in accordance with Merriam's (2009) assertion. In March of 2012, I officially engaged with the organization as a participant researcher. The research study was presented to the LDWG and confidentiality agreements were signed. Participant observations began and continued throughout the duration of the study for every general and committee meeting of the group. Research study recruitment was ongoing as new program planners attended meetings.

The intake surveys were administered and phone interviews undertaken beginning in April 2012. The survey and interviews were administered once to each participating planner. Critical incident interviews were conducted beginning in September of 2012. In January 2013, a focus group with the planners was conducted and facilitated by Dr. Lorilee Sandmann. In late February and early March of 2013, planners, recruited program facilitators, and I were trained to facilitate the community leadership development program adopted by the LDWG. In March of 2013, my engagement as a participant researcher ended and I continued in my former role of participant in the planning group. This overview of the research plan, data collection, data analysis strategies is presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2

Implemented Research Plan

Phase	Action step	Timeline
0	• Entered organization as a participant in the LDWG	May 2011 – March 2012
1	• Entered organization as a participant researcher of the LDWG • Recruited study participants among LDWG planners	March 2012 – March 2013
	• Conducted observations • Reviewed documents	March 2012 – March 2013 (Ongoing)
2	• Administered intake survey to study participants • Conducted telephone interviews	Began April 2012 until complete
3	• Recruited more program planners	Retrospectively since January 2012 and onward
4	• Conducted critical incident interviews	Began September 2012 until complete
5	• Conducted focus group	January 2013
6	• Conducted training of planners and recruited facilitators by the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute	Late February – Early March in 2013
7	• Exited organization as a researcher	April 2013
8	• Continuing engagement as a program planner and facilitator	April 2013 and onward

Table 3

Research Data Collection and Analysis

Research question	Data collection	Analysis
What key strategies do volunteer community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program?	• Documents • Participant observation • Intake survey • Phone interview • Critical incident interviews • Focus group	• Quantitative statistical data generated from the survey. • Qualitative data was transcribed and coded • Data was triangulated to inform the research questions. • Other trustworthiness and validity measures: subjectivity and reflexivity awareness, long-term intensive observations, and evidence of change.
How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts?	• Documents • Participant observations • Critical incident interviews • Focus group	
How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?	• Documents • Participant observations • Critical incident interviews • Focus group	

Action Research Team

The planners in the Leadership Development Work Group were initially recruited by the Massix Archway professional. Potential recruits were identified based upon their prior involvement in other community-based initiatives. In addition, the facilitator used a continuous snowball technique of purposeful sampling with the LDWG to identify and invite other stakeholders. The recruitment process continued over time as the Massix Archway professional sought to garner support and participation from various sectors of the community. Planners, then, took ownership of the recruitment of other planners as an action research intervention. Work group participants committed to seek others pertinent to the effort and encourage their inclusion in the planning effort. The Massix Archway professional encouraged the work group

members to seek other participants based upon various aspects of diversity, including those with particular skill sets necessary for program planning, such as grant writing and financial management. The entire population of fifteen LDWG planners since the inception of the study was invited to take part in the study. Of the fifteen, eleven participants consented. Several data collection methods were used to inform the study.

Data Collection

A variety of data collections methods were used for the action research case study on rural leadership program planning. These included surveys, participant observations, interviews, documents, and a focus group. Each method is presented along with the rationale for its inclusion in the research study.

Intake Surveys

Seven intake surveys were completed by participants in the research study. The purpose of the survey was to fully characterize the planning team. The survey consisted of data such as gender, age, race, city of residence, profession, employer, leadership experience, community organization associations and leadership roles, as well as faith-based affiliation and leadership roles. The data revealed the demographics of the planners and their linkages with community employers and organizations (including churches), and their career and/or community leadership experience. Data from the initial planners served as a baseline for an assessment of its representation of the community and, consequently, for recruitment of new members in areas where the initial planning community was not representative. The intake surveys were conducted online. It is provided in Appendix B.

Participant Observations

Participant observations were conducted during regular Leadership Development Work Group meetings and committee meetings. An inductive framework was originally used to categorize data on the work group participants' engagement and influence, decision-making that impacted program outcomes, and overall impact on the planning process. However, other observations outside of the initial framework were also noted. Since the composition of the volunteer LDWG was fluid, observations were not videotaped or audio recorded since planners attending their first meeting were not aware of the research study. Merriam (2009) upheld Bogdan and Bilken who "advise against anyone talking about the observation before notes have been recorded" (p. 130).

Merriam (2009) asserted, "Observations take place in the setting where the phenomena of interest naturally occurs" (p. 117) and it provided a "firsthand encounter with the phenomena of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview" (p. 117). Because community planning tables were impacted by the political context, giving attention to the overall setting through observations could reveal subtle undertones of the group's dynamics (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). As Merriam (2009) encouraged, I initially entered the work group as a participant only. Field notes were generated after observations were conducted.

Intervention Interviews

Five telephone interviews with program planners and one face-to-face interview with the internal Archway Partnership professional were conducted regarding the action research intervention of program planner recruitment to gain further understanding of the decision-making processes of the planners during the recruitment effort. Initial telephone interviews consisted of a structured set of questions. The purpose was to ascertain the current planners'

perspectives on the recruitment effort, such as what stakeholders were relevant to the planning effort and why, as well as their perspectives on why those stakeholders were not currently engaged in the planning process. Planners were also asked to identify hindrances to the inclusion of the missing constituents and how the hindrances could be overcome. The instrument was also used to gauge the multiple interests of the planner and further explore the skills and expertise of the participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The guide is in Appendix C.

Critical Incident Interviews

Seven critical incident interviews were conducted face-to-face with a semi-structured format to illicit reflections on the planning process. Probing questions regarding the ongoing planning process were used to qualify responses, deepen meaning, as well as to get clarification about my observations. The interview captured the overall experience of the program planner at that particular junction in the study. The hour-long interviews had multiple purposes. The participants were asked to reflect on times in the planning process in which they felt included, excluded, comfortable, and uncomfortable. Next, the participants were asked to describe the context (events, actors, and outcomes) of critical incidents that occurred during the planning process. The interview also ascertained the participants' meaning, qualities, or characteristics of a sustainable community program. They were then asked to describe critical incidents that positively impacted sustainability and negatively impacted sustainability. Planners were also asked about their individual learning experiences to date, their perspectives on the impact of power and privilege in the planning effort, as well as the impact of diversity and inclusion on the planning process. Last, interviewees were asked to describe and evaluate their individual recruitment efforts. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Because of the "highly subjective…human nature" (Merriam, 2009, p. 118), "interviews allow the individual to make meaning of observed data by asking about specific events and actions" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94). Interviewing would also allow the opportunity to inquire about what was observed with more depth by using probes. To some extent interviews may reveal if people are operating according to their intents/convictions or not (espoused theories versus theories-in-use) and, perhaps, how the political context impacts these (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94). In addition, interviews allowed for the meaning-making of the leadership development planners to be revealed with the privilege of hindsight and immediate outcomes. The confidential nature of face-to-face interviews had the potential of garnering data that participants may have failed to reveal at politically-impacted community planning tables.

Critical incident interviews were a useful technique. They focused on three aspects of the incidents: the events, the actors, and the outcomes (Davis, 2006; Victoroff and Hogan, 2006). "The aim is to capture a detailed description of the behaviors of the participants in a specific situation, rather than generalizations or opinions...the data is grounded in the actual behaviors of the participants and can inform future behaviors in similar situations" (Victoroff & Hogan, 2006, p. 125). Flanagan believed that critical incident techniques are helpful in "determining characteristics that are critical to important aspects of an activity or event (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 476)." Meadows and colleagues held that the investigation of critical incidents gives researchers "the ability to take into account information about people's perspectives and experiences, focus on depth and richness of data, interest in process and context (Victoroff & Hogan, 2006, p. 125)." Flanagan (1954) asserted that "the critical incident technique does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing such data collection (p. 335)." Therefore, the

instrument had a wide range of applications and has been used in educational and community-based studies (Bass, 2011; Corbally, 1956). The guide is in Appendix D.

Documents

The Massix Archway transcripts of the community listening session, meeting agendas, and annotated session notes served as rich sources of data in the research study. Not only were these documents used to validate observations, but to also inform the action research intervention as well as the preliminary investigation that led to the research study problem statement. Other documents were used to inform the study. A partial list is provided in Appendix E.

Focus Group

A focus group with five planners was conducted in January 2013. A guide to the focus group is provided in Appendix F. The purpose was to illicit a collective response from the group concerning their learning—personally and collectively, the impact of diversity and inclusion in the midst of power and privilege, and to reveal takeaways having been a participant in the effort.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the intake survey and interviews were analyzed using statistical methods. Calculations included frequency, ratios, and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed as it was collected (Merriam, 2009). Compiled data were coded and analyzed utilizing ATLAS.ti Qualitative Data Analysis Version 7.0.85. Transcription files were imported separately into the project. Each file was descriptively labeled with a code identifying the participant and the data source. Data was coded inductively using an emic method in which "categories [were] taken from participants' own words and concepts" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 97) and associated with families (Diversity-Inclusion-Power-Privilege, Sustainability, and Learning). Subsequent substantive categories were created to identify broader key themes (Maxwell, 2005).

A graphical representation of coding is presented in Figure 2. Codes and an example of a family are provided in Appendix G.

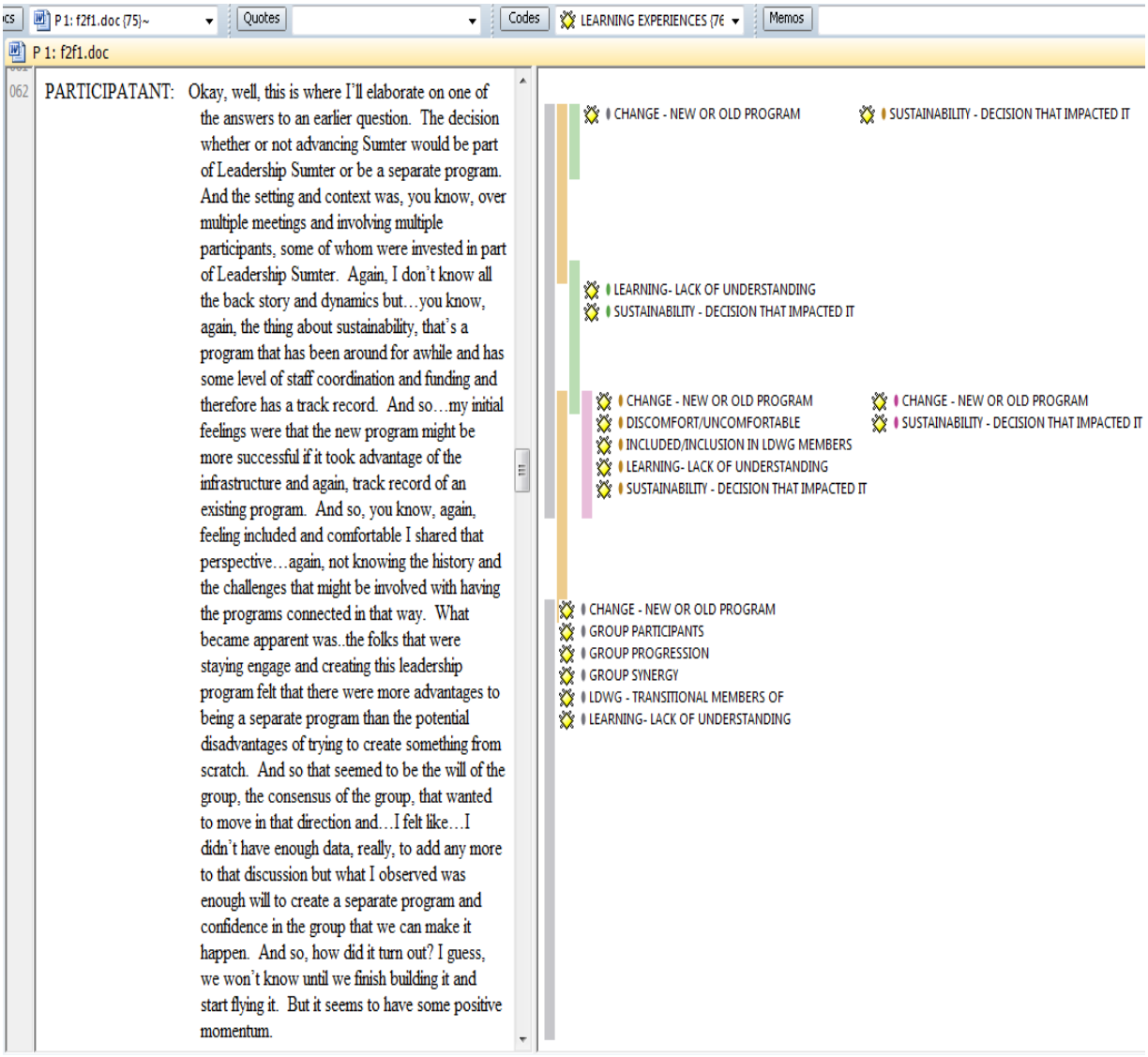

Figure 2. Data Coding Scheme

In accordance with confidentiality agreements, pseudonyms are used to identify individuals for the purpose of exploring diversity. No direct attribution is provided for other data reported in this study (Yin, 2008).

Trustworthiness and Validity

Several measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the research study and its findings. Merriam (2009) provides the following attributes of trustworthiness: careful design, adherence to ethical standards, and triangulation of data. The research questions were formulated and data collection instruments were designed to fully inform them using multiple sources of data over the duration of the study. In addition, ethical standards were upheld. As previously stated, the study was approved by the International Review Board (IRB) of the University of Georgia. Rich data and triangulation are measures taken to ensure a rigorous qualitative study is conducted (Maxwell, 2005). Yin (2008) holds that the uniqueness of case study methodology requires triangulation because of the "richness of the phenomenon and the extensiveness of the real-life context (p. 2)." Merriam (2009) referenced Patton, who advocated "using rigorous methods to validate observations" (p. 118). The research design involved a substantial amount of data collection of which several data sources, participant observations, interviews, surveys, and a focus group, were triangulated to ensure both trustworthiness and validity.

Measures were employed to ensure validity. These measures attended to the "quality and quantity of evidence" (Merriam, 2009, p. 254) and promoted "disciplined subjectivity" (Merriam, 2009, p. 215). I was continually reflexive by participant observation notes and explored the impact of reactivity in the research study (Maxwell, 2005). Other methods included: conducting an intensive study over a period of time, collecting "rich" data, an intervention that produced change, and triangulation (Maxwell, 2005). Argyris (2002) advocated the stance of Campbell and Stanley who "advise that a time series of observations will enhance the credibility of findings…[a time-series design] is a relatively straightforward procedure to

strengthen the claims significantly by reducing these threats to internal validity…" (p. 215). Maxwell (2005) also promoted the long-term engagement of participant observers: "Repeated observations and interviews, as well as sustained presence of the research in the setting studied, can help rule out spurious associations and premature theories" (p. 110). I was engaged with the Massix Archway LDWG as a participant for twenty-three months and as a participant researcher for thirteen months. Maxwell (2005) held, "Both long-term involvement and intensive interviews enable you to collect 'rich' data, data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on (p. 110)." In addition, the resulting outcome of the research study revealed a change.

Limitations

Time was not a limiting factor in the research study. The entirety of the planning process was studied from the inception of the Leadership Development Work Group as program planners through its transformation to a team of program administrators and facilitators. However, a limitation of the research study is the insider positionality of an action researcher. Typical criticism of action research studies is that the researcher is also a stakeholder with a vested interest in outcomes, which implies a bias. However, measures to ensure trustworthiness and validity were discussed previously. My positionality and subjectivity as a researcher and stakeholder are fully articulated and discussed.

Positionality and Subjectivity as a Researcher and Change Advocate

The leadership development program planning effort of Massix County, Georgia was a wonderful undertaking due to its collaborative inquiry and subsequent action. My primary roles were as a participant researcher and an advocate for change in the planning effort. These roles were also influenced by my positionality as an educator at The Technical College and a

government official. Needless to say, engagement with the LDWG was replete with moments of joyful hope as well as distress and discomfort. Based upon my experience as a participant researcher, I uphold the retroactive sense-making approach of Weick described by Netting and colleagues (2008). They stated the following:

> What actually occurs in the planning process is most likely describable only after the process has produced a product, because in the doing of the planning, unexpected learning happens along the way that influences all the next steps in the process. (Netting et al., 2008, p. 133)

Diversity efforts minimized or lessened the impact of power and privilege among the LDWG and, hence, the program's potential candidates. The program's purpose was not just for leadership education, but was to provide leadership opportunities (See logic model, Appendix H). The list of graduates may be tapped to perform and/or fulfill certain roles in the community, including succession planning in government, staffing local boards, training for leaders of community organizations, facilitating future Advancing Massix sessions, and joining the steering committees. Therefore, the effort was not only transformational for the individual planners. Embedded in it was the potential for systemic transformation: from the individual, to group, to organizational or institutional, and finally an entire system.

As a researcher, my positionality impacted the research study in various ways. First, I was born and raised in Massix County, Georgia. It is also my current homestead. Therefore, it was an ethnographic study in which I have a vested interest since it took place in my community. However, having been born and reared in the area, I hold cultural norms of which I am not aware. Without great focus, it was possible to maintain the same status quo mindsets about the community typical of rural areas versus seeing the community as a transforming organism

capable of change. I attempted to ensure that reflection and triangulation prevented me from making assumptions based upon my own lived experiences.

As an African-American female in the rural south, I am aware of power delineation and struggles in the community based upon race and sex. Therefore, the framing of my world in Massix County, Georgia was based upon race, sex, and positions of power. Journaling and field notes in which I record my positionality during data collection revealed such thinking so that data was analyzed within the actual context of the setting.

Embracing reflexivity throughout the research process was vital. Being reflective about my reflections revealed deep-seated ideals that governed my processing of events as they occurred. For that reason, I am grateful for my self-awareness in this process. Instead of studying "them," I remembered that I am studying "us" since my positionality impacts my research.

In addition, I served in a community leadership role. My unique thoughts on leadership development are impacted by my experience as a neophyte in the public service arena. I attended a required newly elected official course through the Carl Vinson Institute. The class was excellent in preparing me overall to serve in an elected office. However, the course was designed to provide an overview of public service and did not prepare me for the contextual issues that arose. The particular nuances and cultural components were not addressed. Therefore, my interest in the leadership development initiative was fueled by my early struggles and "trial and error" experiential learning. It was important that I did not use my learning as a researcher to manipulate the issue work group, but to actively plan a sustainable program with the LDWG sharing learning and meaning-making with my planning constituents. As I operated

in the multiple roles, I became skilled at managing the researcher hat, participant hat, and observer hat.

As a Christian minister, I believed that everyone is responsible for the welfare of our community. For me, community service was a must. And interestingly enough, volunteerism was a core strength of our rural southern culture. I must admit that I believed the participation of Christian pastors and other faith-based leaders was essential to planning a sustained leadership development initiative in the rural south. Based upon my review of literature, review of Massix Archway documents, and discussions with the Massix Archway professional, others also recognized their favorable attributes in community efforts. For one, church ministers operated in an educative capacity. Second, such individuals were strategically positioned in the community. They had direct access to a large segment of the county's population that have gathered together to practice their faith. Their hierarchical position in the structure of the faith-based organization provided an avenue for marketing the leadership development program. However, the demands of the senior leadership role were cited as reasons for non-engagement.

In interpretive program planning, power and politics were the springboards of actions. It was critical to maintain a reflective stance in my roles as a participant in the planning process, as a researcher, and as an advocate for change (Netting et al., 2008). The "continual assessment of self and others in order to know when to resist and when to foment change" were key to my success (Netting et al., 2008, p. 141).

As a participant planner of the community program, I recognized that I was aware of the processes of planning adult education programs. However, in humility, I recognized that I was not an expert. When I was at the planning table, I gave attention and space to others to share their perspectives about the community, its leadership needs, and the program design. As an

introvert, critically listening and analyzing was natural for me. There were, at times, the paradox of being educated in adult learning theories, community development and program planning and regarding myself as only one voice in the midst of philosophies that contrasted best practices. In addition, it was difficult for me to share all of my thinking when I perceived that my voice may have stifled the dialogue and, therefore, the potential creativity of the work group.

As an advocate for change, the power and political dynamics of the rural community that sought to maintain the status quo was in direct contradiction with my personal beliefs. I realized that the planning process included the risk of engaging in potentially controversial discussions with power-and-privilege constituents. However, my conviction as a Christian community leader encouraged my advocacy for the betterment of the community. Although there were several challenges managing the multiple roles of a participant, researcher and advocate for change in a program planning process impacted with power and political dynamics, in reflection, I was confident that such an approach was essential for the relevance, feasibility, and sustainability of a leadership development program in the community I love. Further, it was great sharing the experiences of the planning effort with the facilitators and the Leadership Development Work Group, who mirrored the same passion, commitment, and risk-taking for the prosperity of our Massix and our community constituents.

CHAPTER 4

STORY AND OUTCOMES

This chapter presents the action research case study of rural community leadership development program planning. It begins with a snapshot of the Massix community in which the study was situated. The population, demographics, and other parameters are presented. An exploration of the community field included faith-based institutions, Massix Archway, and a mention of other community organizations.

Three cycles of action research were accomplished during the span of the study. The first cycle investigated community leadership development program offerings in Massix, County. The second cycle of action research involved the recruitment of volunteer community program planners. The third cycle explored the establishing of collaborative community partnerships and networks for the new leadership program. A meta-analysis of the action research cycles and its outcomes is discussed last.

Context—Massix County, Georgia

Massix County is a rural community consisting of five cities located in the southwestern region of the state of Georgia in the United States. The population, demographics, social climate, and economic status of Massix described the make-up of the community. Faith-based organizations (whose significance was supported by literature and the 2008 community listening session) and Massix Archway are given attention.

Massix County Population

The population of the Massix County is 32,819 (2010 Census Data, 2010). Comparatively, Massix County demographically mirrors the nation in many areas. The percentage of males and females differs by 2.1% (2010 Census Data, 2010). The percentage of individuals 18 years and older, as well as 65 years and older, is 2.2% fewer and exactly equal, respectively. However, disparities are evident in several areas. Compared to the U.S. census, Massix County has 28.1% fewer Whites, 37% more African-Americans, 30.2% fewer individuals of other races, 11.6% more families below the poverty level, 11.6% more individuals below the poverty level, and a median income $19,180 lower than the national median income. Last, 2% more individuals earned bachelor degrees in Massix County than the nation (2010 Census Data, 2010). Table 4 provides social and demographic data for Massix County and the United States from 2010 Census Data (2010).

Table 4

Comparative Statistics of Massix County, Georgia and the Nation

Statistical parameter	Georgia	United States
Estimated 2005-2009 population	32,084	307,006,550
Percentage of males	47.2	49.3
Percentage of females	52.8	50.7
Number 25 years and older	19,909	197,440,772
Percentage 18 years and older	73.2	75.4
Percentage 65 years and older	12.6	12.6
Median years of age	33.4	36.5
Percentage of Whites	47.3	74.5
Percentage of African-Americans	49.4	12.4
Percentage of other races	3.3	33.5
Percentage of families below poverty level	21.5	9.9
Percentage of individuals below poverty level	25.1	13.5
Yearly median income	32,245	51,425

Note: Compiled from 2010 Census Data (2010).

Faith-Based Community & Other Community Organizations

Churches and other faith-based institutions were prevalent community organizations in the rural area. In 2002, there were 49 places of worship (City Data, 2010). During that time, 41.2% of the population were affiliated with a congregation—a total of 13,672 individuals (City Data, 2010). Eighty percent of the congregants attended Southern Baptist (55%) and United Methodists (25%) churches (City Data, 2010). The remaining 20% of the population were congregants of one of sixteen other denominations or faiths. Over 70% of the religious institutions in the community practiced the Christian faith (City Data, 2010). Table 5 details the number of congregations and adherents in 2002 (City Data, 2010).

In addition to places of worship, there were 175 registered nonprofit organizations that serve the community, which included public charities and private foundations (Registered Non-Profit Organizations, 2011). The community also had seven governing bodies of elected officials—a mayor and councilors of each of the five cities, a board of county commissioners, and a board of education. In all, there were over one hundred fifty elected and volunteer leadership positions in Massix County. Of them, only the elected officials of city and county government, as well as the Board of Education, were required to undergo leadership education.

Table 5

2002 Congregations and Adherents in Massix County, Georgia

Denomination	Number of congregations	Number of adherents
Southern Baptist	20	7,459
United Methodist	10	3,458
Catholic	1	485
Presbyterian	1	369
Seventh-Day Adventist	2	346
Churches of Christ	3	277
Episcopal	1	258
Mormon	1	218

Wesleyan	1	130
Assemblies of God	1	125
Church of God	1	124
Church of God of Prophecy	2	106
Evangelical Lutheran	1	92
Baha'i	-	79
Presbyterian of America	1	74
Mennonite	1	40
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	1	32
Southwide Baptist	1	-

Note: Compiled from City Data (2010).

Massix Archway

In October of 2008, Massix Archway was established in partnership with the University of Georgia (UGA) Archway Partnership (www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu). The partnership included an executive committee comprised of major stakeholders in the community: Massix County Board of Commissioners, Ellis City (pseudonym), Massix County Board of Education, Massix Medical Center, Ellis-Massix County Payroll Development Authority, The State University, and The Technical College. The goal of the partnership was to link the resources of the University of Georgia with community efforts to foster community development. This included linkage to the Fanning Institute of the University of Georgia, of special importance to this case.

The Fanning Institute was contracted by Massix Archway to facilitate a public listening session of over 100 county community members to identify areas for community development. The participants were asked to identify trends that would affect the community, actionable steps to adjust to the trends, as well as identifying community resources that would help the community be responsive to the trends. The data from the listening session was transcribed and analyzed. The following themes emerged: education, becoming a "college town" community,

fairgrounds development, leadership development, and public health. In 2009, an external Archway Partnership professional was employed to live in Massix as an internal resource.

The organizational structure of Massix Archway included an executive committee, a steering committee, and issue work groups (IWG). The seven-member executive committee was comprised of the leaders of the major community stakeholders that contracted with Archway Partnership. The steering committee consists of thirty-eight community members. Issue work groups were formed for each of the five identified priorities (leadership development, education, college town, public health, and fairgrounds). The leadership development issue work group consisted of steering committee members that expressed specific interest in the initiative and others that were invited by the participants and the Massix Archway professional.

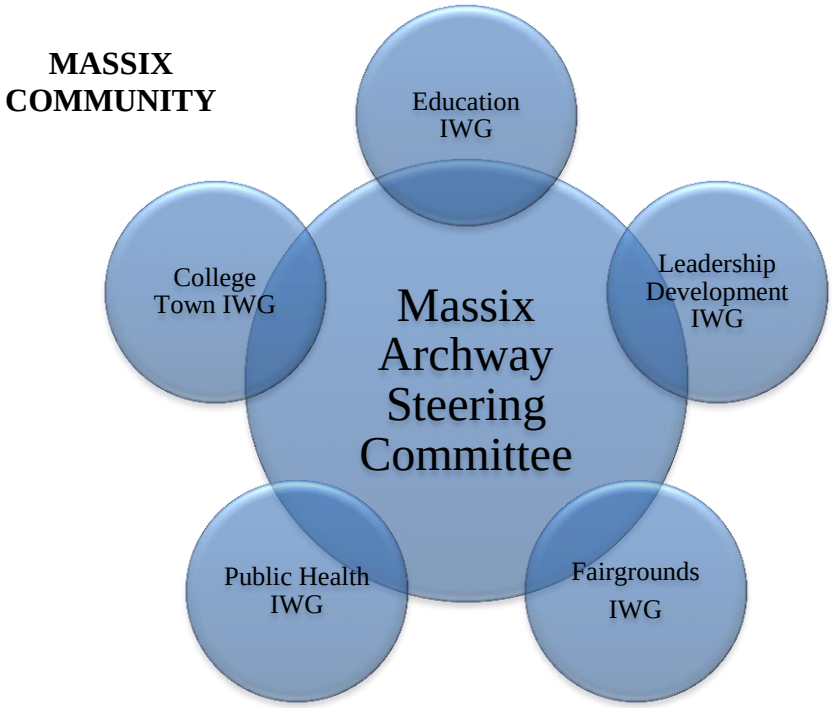

Figure 3. Massix Archway Issue Work Group (IWG)

The five priorities were attended to by the Archway Partnership professional, who was the full-time internal facilitator of Massix Archway. In addition, the Archway Partnership

Coordinator of Operations based in Athens served as an external facilitator on occasion. Since the initial listening session in 2008, four of the five issue work groups had formed, planned and effected changes in the community by May of 2011. The leadership development steering committee met on February 24, 2009. The eight-member group identified five priorities for leadership development. To accomplish these priorities, leaders indicated that the skill development of emerging and existing leaders, attention to racial tensions, and better community representation were important. The group also expressly included "religion based" institutions as entities important to the leadership development effort.

Concurrent Action Research Cycles and Planning Phases

Action research involves studying a system as it undergoes change. The action research cycles involved an iterative process of looking at the system, thinking to plan action, and acting upon it. The outcomes were then taken into account for the next cycle of looking, acting, and evaluating. Interventions were designed to spur change processes in systems.

Three action research cycles were observed during the program planning process. They could be characterized as "conceptualization of the program," "actualization of planners," and "formalization of partnerships," or "program," "planner," and "partners." Each of the three cycles involved a sequence of looking, thinking, and acting based upon the action research methodology of Ernest Stringer (2007). For the community-based action, "Look" entailed surveying the landscape of the community; "Think" involved deliberating among viable options; and "Act" was taking a course of action. The planning effort followed an emergent process in which timelines were not imposed since the initiative was grassroots-driven. The actions and results of each planning phase are presented and discussed.

However, it was noted that the three action research cycles corresponded with the LDWG planning phases. Therefore, action research actions and planning process actions occurred concurrently. A model of the planning process that incorporated both the action research cycles and the program planning phases is presented in Figure 4. Tables and figures are used throughout the next section to promote clarity. Research notes are included in the tables to highlight defining moments of the planning process.

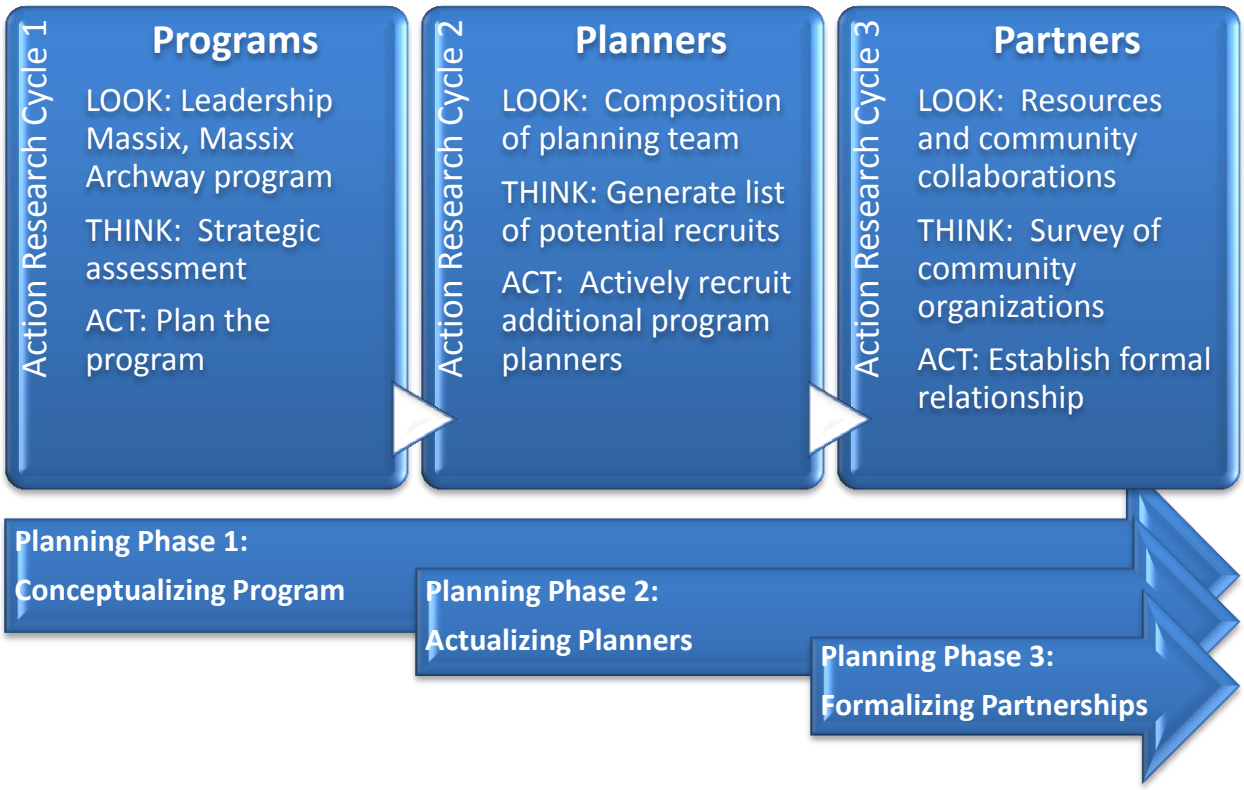

Figure 4. Action Research-Planning Phases Model of Community Program Planning

Action Research Cycle One: Community Leadership Programs

The first action research cycle was performed to conduct a preliminary assessment of the current leadership development offerings in Massix County. Two programs were assessed: the Leadership Massix program hosted by the Community Business Development Giant (CBDG)

and the program under development by Massix Archway. To evaluate the two programs, a variety of data collection activities were conducted. The programs were assessed based upon the community listening session and the needs assessments of local leaders. Based upon the preliminary findings, I engaged with the client system as a participant and eventually as a participant researcher in their leadership development efforts.

LOOK: Investigation of Leadership Offerings

As a part of the action research project, I conducted an initial evaluation to investigate and assess the leadership development programs in Massix County, Georgia. The goal was to determine if existing programs built the capacity of local leaders to engage in community development efforts. At the time of the investigation, there were two local leadership development programs identified in the area—Leadership Massix, which was sponsored by the CBDG and the program under development by Massix Archway. The former program was in hiatus for redesign and the latter program was in a conceptualization stage. The programs were evaluated based upon program outcomes, in the case of Leadership Massix, and conceptual strategy, in the case of Massix Archway. The purpose, key questions, and data collection of the preliminary investigation are provided.

Purpose of the preliminary investigation. The purpose of the preliminary investigation was to explore the development of community leaders for successful engagement in community development initiatives. As a prevalent subpopulation of leaders in rural communities, faith-based leaders were chosen as the consumer under consideration. Primary stakeholders of the evaluation included executive pastors, associate ministers, church officers, community leaders, and community development institutions. However, the attention to church leaders was for

initial assessment purposes only. The findings were extrapolated to other members of the Massix community.

Key questions of the preliminary investigation. The following essential questions were developed to determine the degree of community development awareness, degree of community engagement, the leadership skills needed for community development, and the outcomes of the Leadership Massix program. They are: (1) Describe current community development initiatives underway in the area. Describe your involvement. What role(s) do you play? How long have you been engaged in the effort(s)? (2) What knowledge, skills, aptitudes, abilities, tools and resources (herein referred to by the acronym KSAATRs) are essential to your effectiveness? (3) To what extent do community leadership development programs build the capacity of its participants for community development action? Based upon the questions, the following table illustrates the data collection and analysis strategy to inform the evaluation based upon the key questions.

Preliminary data collection and results. The evaluation began with a survey of leadership development needs assessment of five rural church leaders. Documents of Leadership Massix and the Massix Archway leadership program were reviewed. Phone surveys were conducted with Leadership Massix graduates to determine program outcomes. Last, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the director of Leadership Massix, the Massix Archway professional, and a training coordinator of a local church whose mission included community engagement. The data were analyzed to identify the strategies of both programs. Each program was assessed based upon their ability to build the capacities identified in the leadership needs assessment and their overall process for building the capacities of local leaders.

Needs assessment results. The results of the survey of four engaged and one non-engaged church leaders revealed that there were varying levels of leadership experience and leadership development. At one congregation, seven respondents were non-engaged. Each revealed that they were not aware of any community issues and, therefore, were not actively engaged in community development efforts. The church training coordinator of the same congregation, however, identified the lack of overall leadership development skills as the reason for the lack of participant in community development efforts, although the church's mission statement called for community engagement. In addition to the seven non-engaged church leaders, four engaged church leaders and one non-engaged church leader from other congregations, identified key knowledge, skills, aptitudes, abilities, tools, and resources (herein referred to using the acronym KSAATRs) necessary for effective engagement in community development initiatives. Overall, survey responses included leadership development, awareness of community issues, a desire for engagement, communication skills, love for the community, sincere motivations, collaborative church efforts, a system of support, humility, respect, patience, and demonstrations of credibility. Data was analyzed. The following themes emerged as KSAATRs necessary for effective community development engagement: 1) leadership development skills, 2) awareness of community issues, 3) motivation, 4) personal development, and 5) a network of support.

Interviews and document results. Face-to-face interviews with the director of the Leadership Massix program and the Massix Archway leadership program provided further information on the strategy of both leadership development offerings. Factors included the leadership curriculum, the cost of attendance, logistics, and other pertinent program characteristics. Also, phone interviews were conducted with Leadership Massix graduates. An

abridged discussion of these results is presented in the next section since it directly informs the deliberation between the two program offerings.

THINK: Assessment of Leadership Programs

Both leadership offerings were assessed based upon their proposed strategies for leadership education. A discussion of Leadership Massix is presented first. It includes a discussion of the program outcomes identified by five of its graduates. Massix Archway's conceptualized leadership program follows.

The strategy of Leadership Massix. Leadership Massix was established in 1991 by the Community Business Development Giant (CBDG). Its purpose was to build the capacity of business leaders by creating awareness of the issues that faced the community, exploring the inner workings of Massix business and industry sectors, and providing opportunities and tools for the business leaders to address issues. The program's objectives were largely accomplished via community immersion by touring local businesses, industries, and governments. Program content included the history of Ellis City and Massix County was well as lessons on state government, community tourism, education, healthcare systems, economic development, and city/county government. The program did not feature a formal leadership curriculum. The last day of the program was reserved to address topics such as personality types, management skills, and work ethics.

Participation was exclusive to CBDG member organizations. Cost to participants was $175 to $200, which was typically sponsored by the employer. Logistically, eight-hour sessions were conducted on weekdays once per month from September to June. At the time of the assessment, the program was on hiatus for redesign. The program director commented that it had saturated the community. When asked if the graduates had engaged in community

development efforts as a result of completing the program, the director could not recall specific examples but stated that graduates went on to serve on boards of organizations. Although program sessions were evaluated by the participants, outcomes beyond the conclusion of the program were not evaluated.

Five graduates of the Leadership Massix program were contacted separately to know the outcomes of the program. Respondents unanimously asserted that the program was geared more towards community economic development than community leadership development. Four of the five graduates had not engaged in any community development initiatives as a direct result of having completed the Leadership Massix program. One respondent did not participate in community efforts outside of those required by the employer in fulfillment of professional responsibilities.

The strategy of Massix Archway. As previously stated, leadership development emerged as a desired outcome of a 2008 community listening session. The next year, the leadership development steering committee met on February 24, 2009. The minutes of the eight-member steering committee identified five specific areas of focus. These included: skill development of emerging and existing leaders, attention to racial tensions, better participant recruitment, advanced and adapted curriculum, and attention to public education. In justification for desiring a new leadership program, steering committee participants believed that the Leadership Massix program had saturated the community and new Leadership Massix enrollees were not community leaders. (The group also listed "religion based" institutions as desired participating entities of a community leadership development program.)

Since the leadership program of Massix Archway was in its conceptualization stage, outcomes could not be evaluated. However, the Archway Partnership professional shared the

evaluation of a potential program curriculum—the Community Leadership Development program of Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia. Twenty-one program outcomes attended to all five KSAATRs identified by church leaders as necessary for effective community engagement. The following table illustrates the linkage of KSAATRs and outcomes. The data is based upon the 2002-2005 Evaluation Report coordinated by Louise Hill of the Fanning Institute.

Table 6

Association of Leadership Capacities and Fanning Curriculum Evaluation

KSAATR capacities	Curriculum evaluation outcomes
Leadership skills	• Increased leadership skills • Communicating effectively • Running an effective meeting • Problem-solving in group settings • Managing conflict • Negotiating for consensus • 83.4% felt more competent as a leader • 77.5% were more comfortable speaking in a crowd
Community awareness	• Understanding community leadership • Knowing the community • Leader's role in economic development • Local governments • Over 50% indicated more awareness of community issues
Network of support	• Building partnerships and collaborations • Ability to use connections for community betterment • Builds community support for the leadership program • Networking with government leaders • Over 90% provided more useful networks
Personal motivation	• 91.2% were motivated to serve the public interest
Personal development	• Respect differing opinions 13.8% developed more personally

The curriculum evaluation also noted that 75% of engaged leaders become more engaged and 46% of participants took on leadership roles.

In order to plan the program, the Archway Partnership professional would convene a group of volunteer community program planners. Therefore, specifics regarding the program's selection process, logistics, cost, and ultimate choice of curriculum were not available. It is worth noting, though, that Archway Partnership initiatives would not duplicate existing services in a community.

Preliminary investigation findings. An overview of the investigation is presented in Table 7. The essential questions that guided the evaluation, the subsequent findings, and the impact of the findings on deliberation are discussed. The findings were informed by surveys, document, phone interviews, and face-to-face interviews.

Table 7

Preliminary Investigation Findings

Question	**Findings**	**Deliberation**
What is the mission of your church?	Some church leaders were not aware of the mission of the church organization. Others failed to identify community engagement as a part of the mission statement.	Non-engaged church leaders with community engagement as a mission have not connected to the overarching church mission.
Describe current community development initiatives underway in Massix County, Georgia. Describe your current community development involvement. What role do you play in the initiative? How long have you been engaged in the effort?	Non-engaged church leaders were unanimously unaware of community development initiatives in the area. This includes leaders that also graduated from the Leadership Massix program. Engaged church leaders were able to readily identify key community issues.	Contrasting non-engaged and engaged church leaders revealed that the latter were more deeply aware of community issues and avenues for engagement.
What knowledge, skills,	Engaged and non-engaged	Community leadership

aptitudes, abilities, tools and resources are essential to the effectiveness of church leaders as community development agents?	church leaders identified the following KSAATRs: • Leadership Skills • Awareness • Personal Motivation • Personal Development • Network of Support	development programs for rural leaders would need to attend to the identified KSAATRs to some extent.
To what extent do community leadership development programs build the capacity of participants for sustained community action?	Leadership Massix does not attend to the KSAATRs. Its outcome is community economic development. Massix Archway's program is based upon capacity-building. The Fanning curriculum, if adopted by the group, attends to the KSAATRs needed by church leaders.	Leadership Massix does not prepare leaders for community engagement. The anticipated leadership program of Massix Archway shows promise for developing leaders for sustained community development.

Therefore, it was anticipated that the program under development by Massix Archway would build the necessary capacities of leaders for community development initiatives. (A comparative table of the two programs is in Appendix I.) A decision was made to pursue the Massix Archway LDWG and approval was sought to conduct a formal action research case study investigation on this effort.

ACT: Plan the Massix Archway Program

To act on the decision to plan a new leadership program, the Archway Partnership professional recruited a diverse group of volunteer community program planners for a Leadership Development Work Group (LDWG). This group was populated by direct invitations to the steering committee members that expressed interest in leadership development. Other invitations were extended to those identified for their involvement in other community-based initiatives. While my initial meeting with the Massix Archway professional was an introductory

conversation regarding the current state of leadership development programs in Massix County, the facilitator not only asked for my participation at the planning table, but also asked for assistance with bringing other church leaders to participate in the planning effort. Prior efforts to include this segment of the community were to no avail. I inquired about the possibility of using the Massix Archway leadership development initiative as my research site. The professional facilitator responded that many have sited the work done by the community partnership and the information is public. However, participation as a researcher would have to be approved by the superiors.

Entry into the system involved briefing and getting permission from the Massix Archway professional, the Archway Partnership coordinator, and the Massix Archway executive committee. The study was subsequently approved by the executive committee and I received a formal letter granting permission by the chairman of the executive committee to situate my study in the Massix Archway program planning effort. Initially I engaged as a program planner—a participant in the program planning effort—until I received clearance to conduct a study at the site by the University of Georgia.

Planning Phase One: Conceptualizing the Framework (May 2011—Jan. 2012)

The initial planning phase consisted of capacity-building activities during which the volunteer planners learned to plan community leadership programs. For the first nine months, the planners worked together to develop a conceptual framework for the program. During that time, several learning opportunities were afforded the group. At the first meeting, attendees received data pertaining to leadership and leadership development from the 2008 listening session conducted by the Fanning Institute at the request of Massix County. Other opportunities during that period included conversations with the CBDG to learn about Leadership Massix,

several representatives from other Archway Partnership communities to discuss best practices, as well as presentations from Fanning concerning their community leadership development curriculum. In addition, the coordinator from Archway Partnership facilitated several Massix 3000 visioning sessions with the LDWG. After considering developing the program for specific populations, such as the youth, emerging leaders, and others sectors of the community, the group could not justify excluding any community member from the opportunity to hone leadership skills. Therefore, by the end of 2012, the LDWG adopted inclusion as a fundamental principle of the leadership program. During this phase a critical incident occurred that will be addressed next.

Table 8

Planning Phase One

Date	Purpose and outcomes	Research note
Entry as a participant		
May 2011	Initial meeting of the Massix Archway Leadership Development Issue Work Group Name of group: "Leadership Work Group" Leadership priority data from the 2008 listening session were distributed to the assembled participants Discussed CBDG-sponsored leadership program Participants agreed that a leadership development program is necessary for the community (services not duplicated by existing leadership offerings) Identified other relevant stakeholders—individuals and community organizations Curriculum offerings were considered, including Fanning community leadership development curriculum	Convening of community planning group Leadership development intervention chosen by community Participants analyzed community field for additional supportive constituents

	Participants encouraged to reveal the particular leadership needs of Massix County	
June 2011	Fanning representative gave an overview of curriculum offerings: Train the Trainer and its community leadership development modules (See Appendix J and Appendix K) The group considered alternatives: Leadership development only, training trainers only, or both training trainers and offering the leadership development curriculum Informal talk on Pulaski Tomorrow leadership development effort Harley Lawson	Review of adult learning curriculum
July - November 2011	*No meetings were conducted. Due to the considerable cost of the curriculum offerings, the Massix Archway professional, along with the support of the CBDG, applied for a grant to fund the effort. (The grant was not received.)*	
December 2011	Developed inclusive definition of community leadership development (Inclusive Meaning-making): • Fanning statement • Communication lines with community • Motivation with sense of urgency to give back to community • Welcoming of planners from other communities • Networking between existing leadership and young emerging leaders • Adaptive to generational differences • Inclusive What should Massix 3000 look like (Community Visioning) Determined the positive things that can support the community vision of Massix 3000. Determined the barriers to the fulfillment of the Community Vision of Massix 3000	SWOT analysis Visioning
January 2012	The community planners made the decision to create a separate leadership development offering than the Leadership Massix program sponsored by the local CBDG.	*Critical incident-severed ties to CBDG hosting program*

During this phase, the CBDG had expressed an interest in the new program under development being adopted as the revamped Leadership Massix. While the integration of the new curriculum would solve the problem of having a curriculum-based, capacity-building component, the factors that were perceived as exclusive remained a fixture in the revamped Leadership Massix. As the preliminary investigation noted, the cost, logistics (8-hour workday sessions), and selection process (perceived as being limited to CBDG member organizations) limited the program's accessibility to the community. In January of 2012, the inclusion principle was the main determinant in the severing of ties with the CBDG as a potential host of the new leadership program.

Action Research Cycle Two: Community Program Planners

The second cycle of action research focused on the planners. During this cycle, I entered the LDWG as a participant researcher. As a part of the action research process, the LDWG's group dynamics, team developmental processes, and its composition were studied. The resulting understandings were used to inform proposed interventions to undergird the planning process. Each is presented and discussed.

Group Dynamics

Early on, the Leadership Development Work Group functioned as a unit. This was evidenced by observations of everyone contributing to the orientating tasks of determining the purpose and vision of the leadership program. However, as Lewin (1944) noted, it is "…the study of experimentally created changes [that] gives a deeper insight into the dynamics of group life" (p. 195). While the new leadership program was an external change effort, the decision to sever ties with the CBDG as a program host was a critical incident that initiated an internal change process within the LDWG. Therefore, the landscape of the LDWG was surveyed in

order to determine interventions to strengthen the planning team. The dynamics of the group were explored by conducting a force field analysis, reviewing the impact of discussions and decision-making, and examining the group's execution of decisions. Next, the LDWG developmental stages were assessed. Last, the composition of the planning group was addressed.

Force field analysis. Because the LDWG was formed in response to a change effort facilitated by Massix Archway, I met with the Massix Archway professional to discuss a force field analysis. Although there were several potential driving and restraining forces, there was only one dynamic that emerged as significant. The one potential resistance to change would be from the Community Business Development Giant (CBDG). The CBDG hosted an immersion-based leadership program since 1991 that was on hiatus at the time. Despite hopes that the CBDG would adopt the new Massix Archway program, the LDWG chose to create a separate program offering in the interest of promoting an inclusive program. The main driving force was Archway Partnership and its principle of grassroots-driven processes.

Discussions and decisions. In his work, Kurt Lewin described the relationship between discussion and decision. Discussions, although useful, could fail to create motivation that leads to action (Lewin, 1944). He revealed that "discussion without decision did not lead to a parallel increase in production" (Lewin, 1944, p. 197). Without "definite production goals" (Lewin, 1944, p. 197), the production benefits of team decision-making were not accomplished. Early on, there were notably more discussions than decisions. However, as the group entered its Performing stage, the LDWG committees not only took ownership of its responsibilities, but also initiated ownership of two program planning elements that had been tabled for some time. These included determining a name for the leadership program and creating a final draft of the white paper.

As Lewin noted, "Group decision provides a background of motivation where the individual is ready to cooperate as a member of the group more or less independent of his personal inclinations" (Lewin, 1944, p.198). An example of this dynamic was evident in the selecting of a name for the program, which was regarded as a critical incident. The decision to choose a name had been discussed and tabled for several months due to a lack of consensus. The combined Recruitment & Selection and Marketing & Promotions deemed a name necessary in order to perform. Therefore, the committees asked the LDWG to take ownership of the initiative.

With the consent of the group, I created an online multi-voting survey of the ten proposed names of the program. The link was sent to all LDWG members as well as other Massix Archway stakeholders. Thirteen of twenty-one responded—a response rate of 61.9%. The data was analyzed using quantitative statistical methods and presented to the group in August 2012. However, discussions still emerged regarding the name. Finally, one participant declared that they just wanted a name—whether it was their personal choice or not. Another took up the same sentiment, expressing that no one would fail to support the effort if they didn't like the name chosen. In the end, the name of the program was selected. (Interestingly, it was not one of the ten that had been previously proposed.) Not everyone agreed on the name, but everyone did agree to get past the hurdle in order to further the community leadership program planning effort. A similar sentiment guided the committees' ownership of drafting a final version of the white paper that would be used for recruitment and marketing.

Execution of decisions. The process of group decision-making was observed by the online scheduling tool recommended by a participant at a LDWG meeting. I initiated the first LDWG Recruitment and Selection committee meeting using the online scheduling tool Doodle

that was recommended by another planner. I sent a link with proposed dates and times to all committee members. The participants selected times of availability. Based upon the responses, a meeting date and time that fit everyone's schedule was finalized. Although each selection was an individual decision, it was made in an online group setting since everyone could view the availabilities of all respondents. According to Lewin (1944), "…the anchorage of the motivation of the individual in a group decision goes far in achieving the execution of the decision…" (p. 199). All respondents attended the committee meeting, including one volunteer that had missed several regular LDWG meetings.

Group Development

According to Tuckman (1965), small teams followed the development stages of those in a natural group setting that "is distinguished on the basis that the group exists to perform some social or professional function over which the research has no control…they come together to do a job" (p. 385). The following table presents the characterization of the LDWG's development.

Table 9

LDWG Small-Group Developmental Sequence

Stage	Structure and task descriptor	Evidence
1 Forming	Interdisciplinary group	The LDWG represented a diverse group of voluntary constituents from various backgrounds.
	Task orientation	Task efforts were to determine a common vision and approach to address leadership development programming in Massix County, Georgia.
2 Storming	Intragroup hostility	The Massix 3000 visioning exercised allowed conflicting perspectives to emerge. While some in the group wanted to embody a vision of inclusion and sever ties with the CBDG, others preferred for the CBDG to adopt the new program.

	Emotional response to tasks	The existence and objective of the LDWG was challenged. The CBDG eventually disengaged.
3 Norming	Cohesion	The remaining volunteers embraced the term "inclusion" as a part of their dialect.
	Expression of opinion	The group sought consensus and demonstrated mutual respect for the contributions of others. Although all did not agree on some items, everyone expressed their thoughts. Some planning agenda items were tabled and revisited.
4 Norming performing	Positive interdependence	As committees were formed, the personal strengths and diversity of the group promoted a dependence on their expertise. The structure was not a primary issue as leadership was shared.
	Emergence of solutions	The group was able to create solutions further the program planning effort. Committees continued to demonstrate ownership.

The LDWG planners did not adjourn, but transformed from planners to program administrators.

Interventions Considered

The Archway Partnership professional and I met to discuss the current state of the program planning team and the proposed interventions in January and March of 2012. Fundamentally, the interventions included those of group task, group maintenance, and organizational learning within the specific context of Massix County. The Appendix L details the interventions proposed, its scholarly basis, the Archway Partnership professional's selection and justification for the decision. In the end, the recruitment intervention attending to the inclusion of diverse community stakeholders was selected.

LOOK: Composition of Planners

The Leadership Development Work Group (LDWG) consisted of a group of volunteers charged with designing a new leadership program offering for Massix, County. The original

planners were identified and solicited by various means. Some were encouraged to participate by their employers or were members of the leadership development steering committee. Others were invited by the Massix Archway professional. However, the organic inclusion of others to participate in the planning process had been welcomed since the group's inception. Too, volunteer meeting attendance was not mandated. Therefore, the make-up of the LDWG was fluid. This section explores the pre-recruitment composition of the LDWG.

Pre-recruitment composition of the LDWG. In May of 2011, the first meeting of the LDWG was held. The original participants numbered thirteen. Over time, three of the original participants disengaged from the group. By the time I entered the LDWG as a researcher in March of 2012, ten of the original volunteers remained. This represented 77% of the original participants. The following table gives an overview of the transitional make-up of the group before recruitment. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the work group members.

Table 10

Pre-recruitment LDWG

Participant	Orientation to LDWG	Status as of March 2012
Allen	Original	Remained engaged
Irene	Original	Remained engaged
Naomi	Original	Remained engaged
Renee	Original	Remained engaged
Randy	Original	Remained engaged
Rhonda	Original	Remained engaged
Darlene	Original	Remained engaged
Ira	Original	Remained engaged
Gloria	Original	Remained engaged
Harry	Original	Re-engaged
Victor	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012
Timothy	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012
Erin	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012

An online survey and telephone interview were conducted to determine the diversity of the remaining original participants. The result was a profile of the LDWG according to the demographics, employment, community organization memberships, and leadership education and experience of its members. The group was also polled to determine if they were church leaders. This served as baseline data for recruitment. In general, the profile of the consenting LDWG members that completed intake surveys included: 3 of 7 Whites, 4 of 7 Blacks, 2 of 7 males, 5 of 7 females, 30-54 years of age, 5 of 7 career leaders, 2 of 7 career labors, 5 of 7 ministerial and lay church leaders, 6 of 7 church affiliated, and 27 different community organization linkages. A detailed profile is provided in Appendix M.

THINK: Desired Constituents

More planners were desired for the leadership development program planning effort. With a small number of planners, there was a high dependency on each individual volunteer, which would have negatively impacted program sustainability. By increasing the number of volunteers, the human resource asset would benefit the planning team. Surveys, phone interviews, and observations of LDWG meetings were used to identify the constituents the LDWG believed were absent but essential to the planning process.

In general, LDWG planners wanted to include the following sectors (listed in order of frequency): secondary and postsecondary education, church organizations, civic and social organizations, local governments, businesses and industries, diversity, President Carter, scouting organizations, parents and students, the target audience, and skilled individuals. An extensive list is provided in Appendix N. The rationale for their selections included the sector's size, leadership mission, learning organizations, community service orientation, stakeholders, for

human resources, and for diversity. A table of perspectives follows. In addition, the group hoped to recruit those that were agile and intrinsically motivated to participate.

Table 11

Basis for Purposeful Sampling

Category	Select substantiating interview responses
Institution size	• Large employers who have a vested interest and a lot of employees and a lot of leadership positions (some are engaged and others aren't) • There are so many churches in the community.
Leadership experience, mission, or objective	• Had the highest leadership position in our country • They talk about leaders in America that were Eagle Scouts (character and leadership embedded in scouting).
Learning organizations—education and training experience, mission, or objective	• They are in the business of training people and increasing people's skills • There is added value if both of our higher education institutions are involved
Community service orientation	• Leaders of church groups and pastor's association because there are a lot of activities that go on that are initiated by a lot of churches
Community stakeholders	• See more clergymen to get their input…even if they can't be a part of it • some from local businesses that hire emerging leaders
Human resources	• And the folks that are already coming….it's too big, can't take the load all by ourselves
Diversity	• I think they will be beneficial because they have different perspectives and give us ideas on how to resolve issues and accomplish different goals.

In addition, the LDWG shared perspectives on the lack of involvement in the planning effort, the desired characteristics of those recruits that would join the effort, as well as behaviors that could support the successful inclusion of recruits. The data is presented in the following tables.

Table 12

Perceptions on the Lack of Involvement

Category	Select substantiating interview responses
Lack of awareness	• In some cases---haven't been invited. • Mainly because we hadn't identified a person that we really know and that we believe would be really interested in giving their talent and time.
Time	• Not sure if it's a timing problem
Busyness	• Been invited but other commitments and busy schedules
No interest	• Apathy might be the reason- it's hard to get people to give back to the community…

Table 13

Important Characteristics of Recruits

Category	Select substantiating interview responses
Agility	• We need people that are agile, able to jump into something and pick up on where the process is and where they can add value and help move it along to completion.
Intrinsic motivation	• However, if they are dragged or told to be there, that challenge will be there for that person. A lot from my perspective is intrinsic—want to be there, want to be a part. If they don't have it, won't be there or won't contribute. • I think it's important that everyone that's there wants to be there and is fully participating and that they have an interest larger than their own. Otherwise, I don't think we'll get to where we need to go.

Table 14

LDWG Behaviors to Circumvent Challenges

Category	Select substantiating interview responses
Facilitation • Skill • Expertise (critical mass) • Multiple modes of engagement	• There is a critical mass to be productive—not too few, but not too many. When a facilitator suggests that it be limited, the question I have is, "What do you mean?" It sounds exclusionary. I think it needs to be inclusive. The challenge is to grow to be inclusive but not so large that it's dysfunctional and we self-destruct.

Recruitment Efforts (Promote in community organization, use social media, use technology, sincerity, highlight benefit to future generations, ongoing open invitation, stay resilient and identify underutilized or emerging leaders	• If you go to a church or council meeting—everywhere you go you need to say, "This is what's going on in Ellis City (pseudonym)." • I would approach it just from the psychology [standpoint] to get them from self-interests…We don't have any money to give them…[there] may not be a personal tangible benefit except that of giving back and having the next generation benefit from the time and energy. • Go for it, don't give up…keep saying, please come. • I see the same people at the table…I want to see somebody else there—instead of the 10 or 15 I see at every meeting…

ACT: Planner Recruitment Intervention

The LDWG planners collectively created a list of desired participants, whether organizations or individuals. In addition, the group was encouraged to engage in conversations in the community and invite guests to attend. There were numerous recruitment attempts. Some had informal conversations to invite participants. Then planners volunteered to reach out to specific individuals and community groups. A presentation was made to the Massix Ministerial Association in order to garner planning support. The post-recruitment composition of the LDWG is presented next.

Post-recruitment composition of LDWG. Table 15 shows the engagement status of new recruits as a result of the recruitment intervention. Only one recruit remained engaged.

Table 15

Recruited LDWG Members

Pseudonym	Status
Helene	Engaged
Lewis	Disengaged
Alicia	Disengaged
Carlos	Disengaged
Harvey	Disengaged

However, during times of engagement, most of the five recruits contributed meaningfully to the discussion at hand. A detailed reporting of recruitment efforts is provided in Appendix N. It includes the LDWG evaluations of efforts. The LDWG profile was updated based upon the data of the new recruit. In addition, other original members disengaged from the planner effort. The later composition of the LDWG is shown in Table 16. The profile of the LDWG was updated and items that changed as a result of the new recruits are differentiated with italicized text. In general, the final profile characteristics of the LDWG who completed an intake survey are: 3 of 8 Whites, 5 of 8 Blacks, 2 of 8 males, 6 of 8 females, ages 30-54 years, 6 of 8 career leaders, 2 of 8 career laborers, 7 of 8 church affiliated, 6 of 8 ministerial and lay church leaders, and linkages to thirty-one different community organizations. The table is provided in Appendix O.

Table 16

Post-recruitment Composition of the LDWG

Participant	Orientation to LDWG	Status as of March 2012
Allen	Original	Remained engaged
Irene	Original	Remained engaged
Naomi	Original	Remained engaged
Renee	Original	Remained engaged
Randy	Original	Remained engaged
Rhonda	Original	Remained engaged
Darlene	Original	Remained engaged
Ira	Original	Remained engaged
Gloria	Original	Disengaged after March 2012
Harry	Original	Re-engaged
Victor	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012
Timothy	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012
Erin	Original	Disengaged prior to March 2012
Helene	Recruit	Remained engaged
Lewis	Recruit	Disengaged
Alicia	Recruit	Disengaged
Carlos	Recruit	Disengaged
Harvey	Recruit	Disengaged

Of the five, only one remained engaged in planning efforts—20% remained engaged. The planning effort went forward with ten committed LDWG planners.

Intervention outcome. The composition of the committed LDWG planners were representative of the Massix community representing diversity in several domains: males and females; Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics; ages 30-54; three cities of Massix County; education, government, business, and industry; professional leaders and working class laborers; one church leader and several lay leaders; and thirty-one different community organizations. Regarding a diversity of skills, the Archway Partnership professional held that many of the current participants have the skills necessary to plan the leadership development program. The recruits that attended one meeting contributed to discussions such as planning for a diverse target audience and appealing to business and industry sectors. The recruit that remained engaged made invaluable contributions to the planning process. And just as the make-up of the planning group was dynamic, so were the team processes that evolved as the group developed.

Planning Phase Two: Actualizing (Feb. 2012—May 2012)

Phase Two was characterized by self- and organizational-actualization. In January of 2012, the LDWG severed ties with the CBDG as a potential host of the new leadership program. The planning process began to develop momentum as the planners took initiative to schedule and facilitate committee meetings outside of the general monthly LDWG meeting. Participants were asked to perform independent research of other leadership programs offered in Georgia as well as consider the Fanning curriculum of UGA. The findings were presented to the LDWG during monthly meetings. The shared learning experiences were impactful as participants began to learn through inquiry and action.

Table 17

Planning Phase Two

Dates	Purpose and outcomes	Research note
February 2012	Participants were assigned different leadership programs in the state of Georgia to present an overview to the group. The facilitator asked the planners to consider if the right people were at the table and to determine who else might be needed. General request to invite a guest to the next meeting.	Adult learning, Organizational learning Intervention stage-setting
Entry as a participant-researcher		
March 2012	Planners presented research on leadership programs in Georgia. Members were asked to bring a guest. LDWG planner voluntarily engaged as a liaison between the planners and the Massix Archway executive committee. The CBDG expressed an interest in the Leadership Massix program being revamped via the planning effort. The group discussion led to the reiteration of the program planning effort being separate from the CBDG. *1 recruit attended the meeting for the first time.*	Adult learning, organizational learning Intervention: recruitment effort to invite guests (non-specific)
April 2012	Planners revisited target audience. After discussions, it was agreed to be inclusive of all sectors and members of the community. Formal discuss on recruitment for diversity in regards to gender, race, skill set, community orientation, career experience, etc. The group compiled a list of specific individuals to recruit. Planners volunteered to extend the invitation. Planners considered options for institutionalizing the program as a base of operation. A planner prompted the formation of committees.	Intervention: recruitment of specific individuals (names generated collectively)

	The planners considered program names. *No new recruits attended for the first time. The group decided to poll to meet in the evening to accommodate typical work schedules.*	
May 2012	The planners continued to discuss program names. Planners chose to serve on committees: recruitment/selection, marketing/promotions, budget/finance, curriculum selection/enhancement, program structure/administration, and facilitator team *CBDG disengaged from the LDWG meetings.* *Intervention: 2 recruits attended the meeting for the first time (selectively recruited)*	Organizational development Intervention: attempted to recruit specific faith-based leader through a snowballing process

Notable developments during Phase Two included: the implementation of a recruitment intervention, initialization of LDWG communications with the Massix Archway executive committee, reassertion of inclusion principle, and the formation of committees. In all, three recruits attended their first meeting. Although Phase Two program planning experienced challenges, the leadership program began to take shape.

Action Research Cycle Three: Community Collaborations

The third and final action research cycle explored potential community collaborations for the leadership development program. Investigations into opportunities for full institutionalization of the program and its processes were considered. In addition, instead of fully integrating the program into one community organization, a multi-stakeholder partnership was considered in which various sectors supported the program by providing services such as marketing and accounting. The action research sequence of this cycle is presented.

LOOK: Survey of Potential Partners

In early 2012, the LDWG had been presented with two options that impacted community collaboration. One option was to house the new leadership program with an existing community organization. (As previously noted, the CBDG originally hoped that the new curriculum-based leadership program would be adopted by them and become the revamped Leadership Massix. However, the LDWG opted not to do so since the organization's exclusive practices remained intact.) The other option was for the LDWG to organize and create a new nonprofit organization.

As the planning process continued, the group identified several entities as potential organizations to either a) host the program, where it would be institutionalized, or b) perform specialized services for the program, such as serve as a fiduciary agent through which to channel funds. Organizations originally considered included Family Connections, Ellis City, The Technical College, and The State University. Planners conducted inquiries into each option.

A member of senior leadership at each organization addressed the potential of housing the program. In addition, the organization was asked about the potential of partnering for specialized services, such as operating as a fiduciary agent, facilities for meetings and office space, logistical parameters, etc. The findings presented to the group are reflected in Table 18.

Table 18

Initial Collaborative Partnership Inquiry

Community organization	Collaborative partnership factors
Family Connections	• The organization would not be able to host the program.
Ellis City	• The city could not be a fiduciary agent due to regulations.
The State University	• The housing of the program at the institution was probable, but would be based upon the approval of the Board. • As a fiduciary agent to channel funds, there was a two or more week turnaround. • The institution donated space to hold sessions.

The Technical College	• The President of the postsecondary institution supported the basing of the community leadership program there. However, it would be based upon Board approval. • As a fiduciary agent, a formal process for the distribution of funds from the account would be established. Funds would be available the same week. • The institution donated space to conduct meetings as an in-kind donation. However, the on-site vendor would have to be used for food and beverage services. • The institution expressed willingness to house the program materials, provide an email address, fax number, and phone number for communication purposes.

THINK: To Partner or Not to Partner

After considering the findings from the initial inquiry into collaborative partnerships, the LDWG decided to house the Massix Archway leadership program at The Technical College. Communications continued with The Technical College as the LDWG awaited the next board meeting for formal approval. However, an unanticipated finding halted the approval process and sent the LDWG into a second inquiry into community collaboration. It was determined that the regulations that governed The Technical College, and, in turn, The State University, prevented the channeling of funds through them. While the group continued to plan the leadership program and consider other partnership opportunities, a new development with the CBDG changed the landscape of LDWG community collaborative efforts.

In January of 2013, the LDWG learned of a new development with the Community Business Development Giant (CBDG). The CBDG had been merged with the Ellis-Massix County Payroll Development Authority. The Massix Archway professional had been hired as the executive director of the newly formed unit. The change in leadership resulted in the re-engagement of the CBDG in the planning effort as the professional continued to facilitate meetings. As a result, other CBDG staff joined the planning effort. The development also

brought with it the option of collaborating with the merged organization since the new executive director was amenable to an inclusive leadership program that met the needs of the community at large.

ACT: Re-engaged and Renegotiated Partnerships

At the time of exiting the LDWG as a researcher, several notable actions had occurred. Nineteen members of the Massix community completed training to facilitate the community leadership development program. The pool of facilitators ensured that the program would not falter due to a lack of human resources. Almost half of the trained facilitators were an outcome of a partnership with The Technical College. Although the program could not be housed at the institution, the partnership was renegotiated to keep the school involved at their request.

In addition, with the CBDG re-engaged, several collaborative actions took place. First, staff of the CBDG joined the planning effort. Second, the CBDG and its staff hosted the Train-the-Trainer facilitation development program. Third, the CBDG offered to serve as the fiduciary agent of Advancing Massix.

Planning Phase Three: Formalizing (Jun. 2012—Mar. 2012)

The formalization phase involved the process of developing a clear plan of action for formal and ongoing operations or institutionalization. This included finalizing decisions concerning the budget, securing funding for the program, marketing to the target audience, and training local community volunteers to facilitate the leadership development sessions. Committees met and reported findings and proposed actions to the LDWG during general meetings. A critical incident was the adoption of a name: "Advancing Massix." In addition, two new recruits attended a LDWG meeting. The Massix Archway executive committee elected to fund $10,000 to the planning effort to purchase the curriculum and the cost of training. The

group also approved a logo design. A detailed account of Phase Three is provided in the table below.

Table 19

Planning Phase Three

Dates	Purpose and outcomes	Research note
June 2012	Committee meetings were initiated for recruitment/selection and budget/finance. Preliminary brainstorming resulted in recommendations for the LDWG meeting. Committee reports spurred conversations, decisions, and actions. Called for the completion of a white paper and continued recruitment. Promotion of diversity among classes was advocated. Working budgets were presented. Recruitment/selection committee merged with marketing/promotions due to few participants A name for the program was still under consideration.	Intervention: recruitment of specific community organization (presented to Massix Ministerial Association)
July 2012	A draft of the proposed budget was developed. An online survey using previously proposed program names was emailed to the executive and leadership development steering committees as well as the LDWG. The Fanning Train-the-Training curriculum was selected. Plans were made for planners to solicit funds from various organizations. Planners asked to take ownership of the name selection process and the revamping of the white paper. The group was given access to a compilation of businesses and community organizations in the area.	Adult and organizational learning

	Formerly disengaged planner re-engaged with the LDWG. *Intervention: 2 recruit attended the meeting for the first time*	
August 2012	Online multi-voting survey used to collect responses to the poll. Results were shared. A name was chosen for the program. A finalized budget for first and subsequent years of operation was finalized. A list of potential supplements was generated to bring a real-world perspective to facilitation lessons. Several were faith-based leaders. The group chose a logo for the program with modifications.	*Critical incident: adopted "Advancing Massix"*
September 2012	The planners continued to investigate partnering with a fiduciary agent. The group agreed to seek partnership with a local education organization.	
October 2012	The group selected the final logo design. The modified white paper was presented to the group.	
November 2012	*No meeting was conducted. There was online facilitation of actionable objectives.*	
December 2012	Funding for the $10,000 Train-the-Trainer curriculum and resulting training was approved by the Massix Archway executive committee	
January 2013	A change in leadership was effected in the CBDG. The Massix Archway professional announced her new executive leadership role in the CBDG. A proposed date for the Train-the-Trainer training was established. A total of 21 individuals had been selected to participate. The education organization elected to provide the majority of the trainers.	Community organization buy-in and allocation of facilitation resource
February 2013	19 volunteers were trained to facilitate the leadership program over a weekend. New facilitators were invited to join the planning team.	Adult and organizational learning

	2 new planners joined in the effort.	
March 2013	A meeting poll was utilized to determine the best time: a morning, afternoon, and evening option was presented. The afternoon meeting was selected. The group decided to inquire about connecting with the CBDG to funnel monies New planners were added to the planning team as a result of the Train the Trainer. (More expressed interest but the meeting was at an inconvenient time.) *5 new planners joined the effort. However, there were 7 respondents interested but their schedules did not permit attending.*	
April 2013: Exit as a researcher – Continue participant		

Meta-Analysis of Program Planning Phases and Action Research Cycles

The action research methodology was chosen because it was conducive for studying a system undergoing change. Action research cycles occurred concurrently with the planning process. First, the outcomes of the action research cycles are discussed. Second, the residual effect of the partnership intervention on the recruitment intervention is explored. Last, program planning outcomes are considered.

Action Research Outcomes

The first action research cycles involved an investigation of leadership offerings in Massix. A survey of the needs of leaders to engage in community development efforts determined that the program under development by Massix Archway was the most promising. The determination was largely made by the comparison of the curriculum evaluation and the needs assessment of local church leaders. In addition, particulars of the program were unavailable because it hadn't been planned. Therefore, there were no outcomes to evaluate.

The second action research cycle was a process of program planner recruitment. The net result was five planners joining the effort with one remaining engaged although the LDWG recruited extensively. The connections made, however, increased the awareness of the upcoming leadership offering and laid the groundwork for individuals and organizations to serve in supportive roles as the program continues.

The third action research cycle involved a survey of community organizations. The purpose was to establish collaborative partnership and networks. Although the program was not institutionalized, the supportive partnerships with key organizations allowed for the sharing of resources and the benefit of expertise. For example, as a result of partnering with The Technical College, nine of its employees were recruited as facilitators.

Cycling back. An interesting facet of the outcomes was that mid-terms outcomes of the last research cycle fed back to the mid-term outcome of the second research cycle. Likewise, the mid-term outcome of the second cycle fed back into the first cycle's outcome: the creation of a leadership program that would build the capacities of local leaders to lead sustainable community development initiatives. Retrospectively, the re-engagement of the CBDG and The Technical College resulted in the addition of seven new program planners. The new program planners contributed to the plans for the new leadership development program. The residual effects of partnership, then, benefitted the entire action research and planning processes. Figure 5 shows a diagram of the action research outcomes and feedback loops. Based upon the final state of the program planning process, the overall number of LDWG recruited planners as a result of action research (AR) cycles was twelve. Of the twelve, all but four remained engaged. Therefore, there was a net increase of 8 out of 12—about 67%.

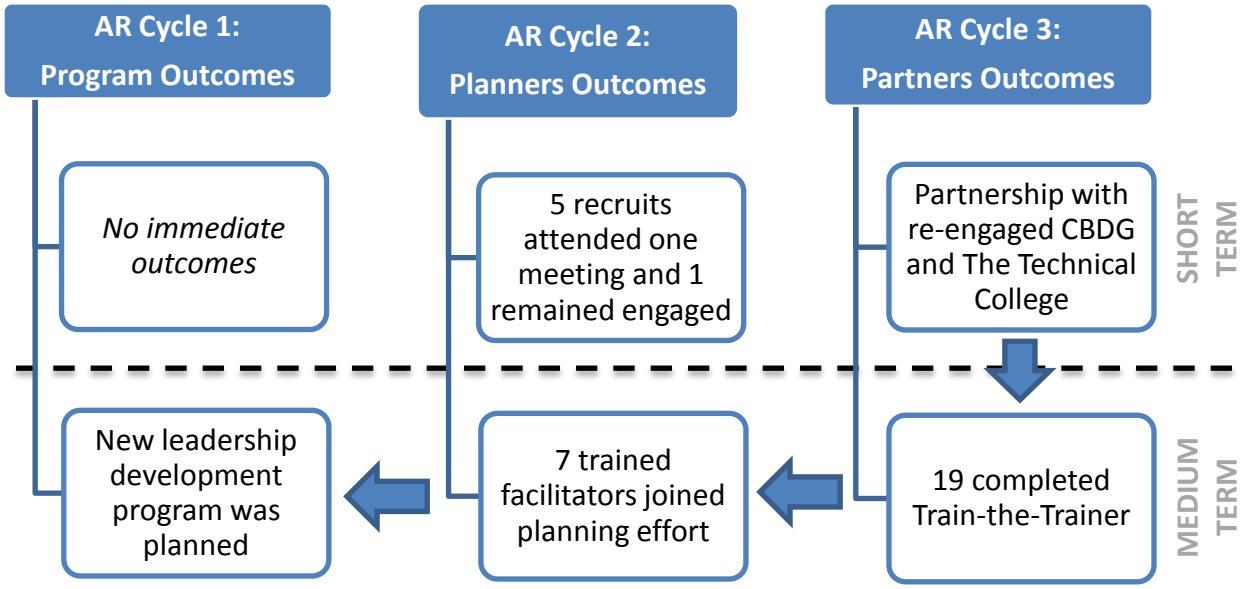

Figure 5. Partial Planning Outcomes Logic Model.

Train-the-trainer. A total of nineteen community constituents of Massix completed the facilitator training curriculum of UGA's Fanning Institute. (The trained facilitators included five of the original LDWG planners and one recruit.) The training was conducted over a three-day period in which recruited facilitators were oriented to the leadership program planning effort of Advancing Massix, the need for community facilitators, and development activities to increase the capacity based upon modeling and immersion, among other learning methodologies. As noted, the engagement of recruited facilitators resulted in the addition of seven individuals to engage in program planning efforts. In addition, the participants completed surveys to determine their level of growth. The pre- and post-survey results are provided in the Appendix P and Appendix Q. Generally, facilitators reported an increase in comfort to use icebreakers, various teaching methods, awareness of logistical factors, handling problem behaviors, refraining from presenting, comfort using visual aids, and overall strategies for effective facilitation. However,

there was an interesting decrease in understanding the value of self-assessment. An evaluation of the Train-the-Trainer program and its facilitators is provided in Appendix R.

Program Planning Outcomes

The outcome of the two-year planning process yielded the following formalized aspects of the program developed by the Massix Archway Leadership Development Work Group:

- an inclusive community leadership development program,
- program participation cost of $50,
- evening leadership sessions,
- the Fanning community leadership development curriculum,
- 19 program facilitators completed training,
- 9 of 19 (almost 47%) resulted from a partnership with The Technical College, and
- a total of 12 planners were recruited.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to study the dynamics of planning a sustainable capacity-building community leadership development program for the southern rural community. The research questions that guided the study were: 1) What key strategies do volunteer rural community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program? 2) How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts? 3) How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively? This chapter presents findings from participant observations, surveys, phone interviews, critical incident face-to-face interviews, documents, and a focus group and subjects who participated in the action research project as a part of the Massix Archway Leadership Development Work Group. The findings are organized by research questions with categories and sub-categories that emerged during the data analysis. Table 20 provides an overview of each research question, categories and subcategories.

Table 20

Overview of Findings

Research question	Category	Subcategory
What key strategies do volunteer rural community program	Using neutral skilled facilitation	• External resources • Encourage dialogue • Utilize technology

planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program?	Continually recruiting planners	• Commonality • Diversity
	Building capacities	• Shared learning • Learning by acting
	Engaging in intentional strategic planning processes and decision-making	• Perform SWOT analysis • Determine the target audience • Institutionalize program processes • Determine fiduciary partnership
	Having the necessary time for development	• Individual development • Group development • Program development
How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts?	Initial barrier to dialogue	• Southern hospitality • Superficial Tokenism • Outsider mentality • Socio-political factors
	Impetus for change	• Weakened status quo • Guided decision-making • Promoted planner inclusion • Spurred group performance
In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts?	Non-engaged senior-level leaders	• Potential program supplements • Potential program marketing or recruitment function
	Engaged mid-level and lay leaders	• Fully engaged in the planning process
How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?	Learning through single-loop learning	• Rural south social norms • Power and privilege
	Learning through double-loop learning	• Abandonment of rural social norms • Inclusion-inspired change • Unlearning • Personal responsibility and transformation
	Learning organizations	• Shared vision of inclusion • Dialogue and shared learning • Personal commitment to development • Sense-making of inclusion • An inclusive Massix

Key Strategies Community Program Planners Employ to Plan a Leadership Program

The first research question investigated the key strategies of rural community planners to plan a sustainable leadership program. These included employing neutral skilled facilitation, recruiting additional representative program planners, building the capacities of the rural planners, using strategic planning processes and decision-making, and allowing time for development. Each of the five key strategies is discussed.

Table 21

Key Strategies for Developing a Sustainable Program

Research question	Category	Subcategory
What key strategies do volunteer rural community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program?	Using neutral skilled facilitation	• External resources • Encourage dialogue • Utilize technology
	Continually recruiting planners	• Commonality • Diversity
	Building capacities	• Shared learning • Learning by acting
	Engaging in intentional strategic planning processes and decision-making	• Perform SWOT analysis • Determine the target audience • Institutionalize program processes • Determine fiduciary partnership
	Having the necessary time for development	• Individual development • Group development • Program development

Using Neutral Skilled Facilitation

The first noted strategy was to partner with UGA's Archway Partnership program and the skill of its facilitators. The perceived neutrality of the facilitators set the stage for meaningful dialogue during the planning effort. Due to the encouragement of the facilitators, participants

felt open to discuss "sensitive" and controversial topics that were customarily avoided. In rural communities, those with power and privilege as community leaders were traditionally the decision-makers. One participant explained:

> There was a lot of discussion around the people who were always at the table…I think that was one of the most controversial moments for me when [the external facilitator]…asked who the target group was...my ideas was that the people who are always at the table are older, male, Caucasian, and have some type of wealth…it was who I hoped our committee would not turn into because I thought that if it did turn into that, we would be overpowered opinion-wise.

As was noted in the literature, rural southern communities seek to maintain the status quo (Young, 1993; Murray & Greer, 1998). In order to create organizational change, a protective environment that welcomed diverse, divergent thoughts allowed for a new program to be envisioned that was notably different from the existing community leadership program offered. "…The voices of the most powerless groups tend to go unheard, their agendas ignored, and their needs unmet" (Stringer, 2007, p. 35). In addition, several participants noted one facilitator's skill of establishing a norm that challenged the rural social norm of politeness.

Critical incident interviews yielded findings related to politeness in rural community communications. One participant stated:

> I remember him [the facilitator] saying, 'Who is going to be the controversial person? Or don't be afraid to make controversial statements. If it is your opinion of what is going on, feel free to say whatever it is' and I felt comfortable because I was then not afraid to say what I thought might be uncomfortable for other people…Those things are normally very sensitive topics and to discuss them around a table full of people with their own opinions

> about those subjects, it was uncomfortable at first but…when [the facilitator] just put it on the table, 'We know that everyone is not going to have the same opinions but we still want to hear it,' I think that was the most comforting moment.

Another revealed that they were initially "worried about offending other people when we were going through the process [of deciding upon change]…" A participant shared:

> …I thought it was a well-rounded group of people that were able to sit down and have discussions about events and things that are going on in our community without having to feel that our discussion would be something that would be disregarded in any way.

In the end, an atmosphere of inclusion among the planners was accomplished.

The facilitators also translated external resources to the rural area by inviting planners of other Archway Partnership communities that developed leadership programs to the meetings to share best practices. Last, facilitators communicated meeting outcomes via email. The practice helped those that could not attend feel included in the process despite absence.

Continually Recruiting Planners

A particular issue with any planning effort is having the human resources necessary to complete the task. In addition, in rural areas, "a problem of particular importance in…any rural community, is that of identifying and recruiting the leadership in the community to participate in the planning process" (Young, 1993, p. 19). Out of the original group of thirteen planners, three disengaged. Recruitment introduced five new planners, but only one remained. Of the sustained planners, it is worth noting their commonality as well as their diversity.

One common factor among the planners that remained engaged was a specific personal mission or goal. For one, it was in the interest of giving back. For others, the effort was directly relevant to their careers. Still others had an interest in succession planning. Despite the various

purposes, the planners that remained were committed to their individual purposes. The recruit that remained engaged, an entrepreneur, expressed early how the program could benefit the business. In addition, the profile of the planners revealed a commitment to personal growth and development. All had an affinity for leadership, whether leadership education or leadership experience.

Last, the recruitment of planners was intentionally strategically diverse. The end result was a committee whose demographics reflected that of the community in terms of their background, educational attainment, and social and civic organizations affiliations, as well as community engagement. On participant commented:

> The people who are in our planning committee right now are not the normal people who are always in decision-making positions…our group, I think, has a very diverse dynamic in that we have someone African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic…we have someone that is wealthy…someone…who had to survive on government assistance, someone who was not rich but not poor and middle class…I think our group has someone who has experience in every facet of life and I think it has kept our group from becoming a money-power-privilege type of dynamic.

Another planner shared, "That's one of the things that I enjoy about being a part of the committee because of the diverse comments, diverse backgrounds, and experiences that were shared…" Still another commented, "It was a welcoming sight to see the diverse group. I mean, a truly diverse group—from educational background to ethnicity to cultural experiences. It seemed like it was a balanced group." Planners represented the interests of various sectors of the community: local government, business and industry, educational system, etc. Their social network in the rural community was extensive. (The composition of LDWG is in Appendix L.)

Building Capacities

The program planners had various skill sets and leadership experience. However, the LDWG were not skilled in planning rural community leadership programs. The interpretivistic perspective of adult program planning encourages planners to "participate more than plan" (Netting et al., 2008, p. 117). Therefore, the initial motivation of the LDWG was to participate in the planning process more than actually plan. One item of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan of Archway Partnership was to "build human and community capacity." In order the facilitate participation and build planning capacity, one strategy was to embed learning throughout the process.

In the early stages, the primary learning mechanism was shared learning. Many meetings focused on learning about community leadership curriculum. Participants were asked to independently inquire about other leadership programs in Georgia and report back to the group. For one planner, this was particularly impactful. In addition, as each individual developed, the group benefited as shared learning was promoted.

The latter stages of the planning process represented a shift from primarily shared learning to action learning with instances of shared learning. One participant noted how the concept of inclusivity was not fully realized until the intervention required current planners to recruit others. This stage seemed to coincide with the performance stage of group development. It resulted in the development of committees that self-actualized and requested ownership of two initiatives that hadn't materialized: the naming of the program and the writing of a white paper.

Engaging in Intentional Strategic Planning Processes and Decision-Making

As the LDWG convened to plan the new leadership program, key planning processes were conducted. These included the Massix 3000 visioning exercise and a modified SWOT

(Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats) analysis led by the facilitators. The exercises guided decision-making by allowing the group to connect the vision for the leadership program to the community's assets. As such, the LDWG was able to plan a sustainable program. The Massix 3000 helped the group to envision a leadership program that was available to all. The group eventually adopted the language of inclusion to represent the target audience. The principle of inclusion was threaded throughout every discussion and decision-making opportunity. It was considered as the planners rejected housing the program at the CBDG, selected a program name that would not be intimidating and did not have "leadership" in the title, as well as considering fiduciary partnerships as a channel to stream funds.

Having the Necessary Time for Development

Unlike traditional top-down program planning efforts, the non-rational interpretive approach along with Archway Partnership's commitment to a community-driven planning process, allowed for the program to fully develop without the restriction of time (Batten & Holdaway, 2010). This allowed time for the LDWG to develop individually and collectively. One planner stated:

> …So until we got to the point where we know what we're doing, getting it down was smoother in that organization than many organizations that I've been a part of…Everyone one is like, 'Okay, we know what we're doing now, let's go.'

The progress of the program planning effort mirrored the developmental stages of the group, which was also impacted by group dynamics. In the two-year time period, the program planning process accelerated during the performing stage of group development after the storming stage, which was aligned with the disengagement of program planners. At the end of the storming development state, one participant shared, "All of a sudden, when the group got smaller, the

decisions were easier to make (laughs)…it did speed up the process and we seemed to get more done." A planner believed, "We [have] got to make sure we get it down…as opposed to having to spend time talking and talking and talking things through, which was necessary, but now we're very driven and goal oriented." The LDWG did not enter the performance stage until late into the planning effort. However, the time it took to norm and storm was essential. Had there been a program planning timeline that limited the growth of the group, a new leadership offering may not have been the outcome. It took time for the group to build enough trust to engage in dialogue and fierce conversations.

In all, the key strategies employed by the rural planners all worked together to plan a program that is inclusive to the community. The supportive structure of Archway Partnership and its facilitators increased the learning of the group. Their skilled facilitation helped the group to develop actionable knowledge. The flat structure allowed for the free exchange of ideas. The diversity of the planners led to rich conversations. And the commonality of a specific personal interest or motivation helped them to remain engaged. Over the two years, the LDWG grew individually and collectively, which enabled them to plan a sustainable community leadership development program.

Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on Power and Privilege in Community Program Planning Situated in the Rural South

The second research questions sought to understand the impact of diversity and inclusion in the midst of power and privilege in the rural South. Based on observations, interviews, and the focus group, two notable categories emerged. Initially, diversity and inclusion was stifled by power and privilege. As one planner noted:

> "[The planner's] presence seemed to be overpowering…not as many people were as vocal as during the times [the planner] was not there. And when [the planner] was there, when someone did speak, her opinion, whether it was in support or opposition to that person's opinion, her comments about that would always outweigh what the person had just said…"

Wijnberg and Colca (1981) upheld Jankovic and Anderson in that "The tight-knit relationships in rural areas lead influential people to share attitudes among themselves and to make decisions privately" (p. 92). Another planner shared, "I'm talking about the little friction…It was like, 'I want to be the lead person…' and '[You all] fall under us'…I did feel a little power struggle there." Therefore, inclusion and dialogue were initially hindered. Later, as the group developed, diversity and inclusion became the impetus for change. When asked if the planning effort was impacted by power, one participant asserted,

> I think initially it did…but I would think, too, at the end, some of those people that were there at the beginning were not there at the end. So I think I saw some power plays, but I didn't see too much of that towards the end.

A planner stated, "Diversity allows this program to be different from every other program. One [reason is] because the people who are in our planning committee right now are not the normal people who are always in decision-making positions." The result was a weakened status quo, broad inclusion of the program's target audience, and a decision to host the planned program outside of the CBDG. A planner noted, "…But the last meeting, it was so relaxed, I felt really comfortable. I think everybody there felt comfortable." Table 22 provides an overview. Then each impact is discussed. First, a note about the context as it related to the impact of diversity and inclusion is provided for consideration.

Table 22

Impact of Diversity and Inclusion

Research question	Category	Subcategory
How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in community leadership development program planning situated in the rural South?	Initial barrier to dialogue	• Southern hospitality • Superficial Tokenism • Outsider mentality • Socio-political factors
	Impetus for change	• Weakened status quo • Guided decision-making • Promoted planner inclusion • Spurred group performance

Contextual Considerations

The diversity of the LDWG was comprehensive. As delineated in Chapter 3, participants spanned numerous community organizations, personal and professional experiences, educational attainment, socio-economic status, as well as race, gender, and culture. Many planners felt the degree of diversity was adequate. One individual expressed, "[At] the first meeting I went to, there seemed to be a really good cross section of the community from the different sectors…" Another proclaimed, "Well, I think it's one of the most diverse groups…" Despite a less than desired response to recruitment, the participants perceived that the assembled LDWG members were not those normally called upon in community planning efforts.

However, several power-privilege dynamics were evident. For instance, Participant A was a direct supervisor of Participant B. In addition, Participant A was a relative of another's employer—another prominent leader in the community. As has been noted, the CBDG was recognized as a powerful institution. The organization had strong connections with each participant's employer. This exemplified the breadth of social interconnectedness that pervades

rural southern culture (Bachelder, 2000). Despite the attainment of a diverse population, the study explored if the diverse individuals felt included in the program planning effort.

Initial Barrier to Dialogue

In the perception of the LDWG, inclusion was eventually accomplished. While almost every participant felt included from the outset, there were some mindsets that had to be overcome before meaningful engagement occurred. In addition, the external socio-political forces of power and privilege and their impact on inclusion are discussed. The internal barriers to inclusion are discussed first. Subsequently, the exterior resistant forces are addressed. The data revealed some internal barriers to the inclusion of various community planners. The cultural norm of southern hospitality, the suspicion of tokenism, and an outsider mentality affected the comfort level of LDWG members. The impact of internal dialogue concerning the rural context, race, and belongingness are explored.

Southern hospitality. One LDWG planner reported experiencing a struggle with the southern hospitality notion of being polite, respectful, and non-confrontational. However, such behaviors would limit the engagement of divergent ideas, fierce conversations, as well as an aversion to addressing prevalent rural issues of overt racism. The individual recalls experiencing discomfort while planning the recruitment of other program planners. The concern was over the inclusion of too many privileged White males and how it could hinder the voice of other diverse planners. Literature supports the stakeholder's perception. In diversity and inclusion community efforts, it has been noted that the presence of the privileged can reach a critical mass after which others are silenced (Datta, 2005). However, with the encouragement of the facilitator and the invitation to engage in controversial conversations, the planner voiced the concern. The participant reflected:

> I felt comfortable because I was then not afraid to say what I thought might be uncomfortable for other people when we were discussing who our target group would be [and] what were some of the issues in Massix County. Those things are normally very sensitive topics and to discuss them around a table full of people with their own opinions about those subjects…it was uncomfortable at first but…when [the facilitator] just put it on the table, 'We know that everyone is not going to have the same opinions but we still want to hear it,' I think that was the most comforting moment.

However, others were challenged with the norm of southern hospitality. Another participant recalls wanting to be "as respectful as you can." In addition, another LDWG member stated that "…offending members of the CBDG or other [planners] who had gone through [their leadership program]…and making a decision not to attach ourselves…and do something completely different obviously could be offensive…if it wasn't handled the right way…" Failing to do so was deemed as a negative consequence that could be detrimental to the sustainability of the program. At the conclusion of the planning process, a participant reflected, "I mean, there are a lot of different dynamics that came into play, and in the South, we're known for southern hospitality and the last thing you want to do is step on your neighbor's toes." Argyris (1980) revealed that much of learning is hindered by long-held ideas about what is acceptable social behavior. This is a universal phenomenon. He stated:

> My recent research suggests, however, that the organizations may not be the basic cause of the problem. It appears that most individuals in our society (and in many societies throughout the world) are taught….through acculturation and socialization, a set of values, action strategies, and skills that lead them to respond automatically to threatening issues by 'easing in,' 'appropriately covering,' or by 'being civilized'…making

> threatening issues undiscussable and then to making their undiscussability undiscussable. The organization may not be the culprit; it may be the victim of the individuals who work within it. However, once the victim, the organization may collude to maintain and reinforce the problem (p. 205).

Superficial tokenism. Still, another planner had battled thoughts that their inclusion in a prior community listening session that preceded the program planning effort may have been superficial. Having taken part in various other community efforts, the volunteer recalled, "I was there, but wait a minute, maybe I'm here just because of color and I said [to myself], 'No, I've got to bring something to the table' and so, you know, that was only one time [I didn't feel included]." The individual was able to overcome the notion in order to make a meaningful contribution to the discussions at hand. After making the internal shift, the participant reported feeling included and comfortable at all times as a part of the leadership program planning team. The individual stated, "I did feel included. I felt like my opinion mattered…everybody listened. I even had one time when [the facilitator] said, 'That's something I'd never [thought] of. Thank you.' That was really important to me."

Outsider mentality. One member shared a previously held notion of exclusion from community-based efforts since there were no familiar ties to the community although the rural area served as the homestead and workplace. The perception was:

> I always felt like if you weren't born and raised here…if your great granddaddy is not from here, then you're not going to know people and it took me a long time to…change that perception that I could be involved in the community…and could be a part of anything of our small town. I don't feel that way anymore…

Without a sense of belonging, meaningful engagement could be hindered (Young, 1993).

Overall, the data research participants responded that they felt included from the beginning. However, it is also evident that some dialogue was left unsaid. In addition to having overcome personal mindsets that could have hindered inclusion, there were also external aspects of rural community planning that affected the inclusion of the LDWG in the midst of power and privilege.

Socio-political factors. At times, it seemed that the participants were on egg shells during the planning process. In the final focus group, when directly asked if politics impacted planning, there was a long silence before a participant responded "in another way." Even at the conclusion of the study, there were some things that were still undiscussable. Observations revealed instances of silence during meetings in the beginning. For instance, one planner noted,

> There was one person that held a known high ranking position with a major employer…and [the individual's] presence or absence was always felt. And the tone of discussion, to me, changed when [the individual] was present. And I sometimes think that it changed because of her privilege. [The individual's] presence seemed to…be overpowering in the sense that not as many people were as vocal as during the times [the planner] was not there. And when [the planner] was there, when someone did speak, [the individual's] opinion, whether it was in support or opposition to that person's opinion—[the individual's]…comments…would always outweigh what the person had just said, even if it was in support.

Although there were no formal leaders in the LDWG, the inclusion of leaders by professional created an atmosphere of dominance in the planning effort. As another planner noted, separating professional roles and responsibilities from the unilateral structure of the LDWG took effort.

However, it was not simply a matter of an individual. The data shows that the socio-political climate of the rural setting as also at work. Another planner commented:

> …I know even for me, I was very choicey [sic] about what I say because this is a small community, it is very political…I just wanted to bring attention to the fact that there are a lot of things that [are] unsaid…but there are reasons why…I had to be aware of, 'Who you are talking to,' and 'How you're talking,' and 'What you're saying,' so it's just a difference.

Besides impeding uninhibited dialogue, power and privilege were identified as factors that impeded the planning process.

Impact on group progress. The planning effort spanned almost two years. Early on, many of the meetings were opportunities for an introduction to the planning process and education in nature. However, as features of the desired leadership program emerged, divergent ideas became evident and were sources of tension. A planner admitted, "I'll be honest with you…I didn't feel comfortable coming to some of the first meetings." The differences became a point of stagnation since planners did not make a decision. The main point of contention was the ideal of developing a new leadership program. Subsequently, whether to host the program with the CBDG or not was on the table. The following narrative describes one planner's experience.

> …Not much was accomplished very early on in the discussion…I felt like negativity, spinning wheels, [and] frustration [were] in those initial meetings. And I was worried at that point…[I thought], 'This isn't going to get anywhere; there's too much political feelings involved in it. We're trying to redo something that's already been done…If [the CBDG program] has got less people participating than it used to be…what makes us think that we can come up with something…

However, the participant eventually had a change of heart.

Impetus for Change

Over time, the diversity and inclusion of the community planners overcame the initial barriers to dialogue. As the LDWG began to exchange ideas, a collective vision for the leadership program was adopted. The outcome of the Massix 3000 visioning exercise was the agreement to plan an inclusive, curriculum-based community leadership program that was accessible and relevant to all community members. Subsequently, change was initiated. Diversity and inclusion eventually weakened the status quo, guided decision-making, promoted planner inclusion, and spurred group performance.

Weakened status quo. Rural communities tend to resist change in order to maintain the status quo. While the CBDG was interested in adopting a curriculum-based program, the inclusion factor became an impasse. The leadership program sponsored by the CBDG understandably catered to its business members. Leadership sessions were conducted during typical work hours and participants had to be recommended by member businesses. In addition, the high cost of attendance limited the potential pool of applicants outside of business sponsorship. In contrast, the LDWG members had collectively made a strong commitment to inclusion. Their shared vision revealed that the program would be beneficial to the community as a whole across varying sectors—from the young to the elderly, adult students to retirees, the poor to the wealthy, and from emerging leaders to experienced leaders. In that stead, community planners agreed that the program would be open to all, affordable, and accessible. Senge (2003) noted that such issues are not uncommon. He holds, "…This is what makes the simple aim of detecting and correcting error still radical today, despite much recognition of the need for

organizations to learn" (Senge, 2003, p. 48). The status quo in the rural area was weakened in the pursuit of an inclusive program envisioned by the diverse group of planners.

Guided decision-making (Severing ties). After months of deliberation, a defining moment in the program planning process was the realization of the need to create a separate program offering from the leadership program hosted by the CBDG. The decision was controversial because the CBDG was a major stakeholder. However, there was also a strong interest in maintaining their niche of business development that excluded other sectors of the community. Without the support of the CBDG, the planners were concerned that the program's sustainability would be critically impeded. Eventually, the deciding factor was the collective vision of an inclusive community leadership program established early on. It proved to be the defining characteristic that eventually led to the volunteer program planners electing to sever ties with the CBDG, with its potentially negative impact on sustainability, in order for the program to be accessible by the masses and have a potentially larger impact than otherwise.

Some participants believed that the decision was a factor in the initial disengagement of the CBDG from the planning process. Argyris (2010) held that, "Reputational and career fears can inhibit change." However, the separation was not without dissention. One participant reflected:

> For a couple of meetings, [I thought], 'Why are we doing this? We've got a program? Let's make it the program that we want. Why do we have to mess with the political things of saying [we want] something different.' And now, I can look back and see…I really think that was the best thing and the right decision to do.

Not all believed that the decision was ideal. In retrospect, one planner was dubious. The measure was perceived as having a potentially negative and potentially positive impact. The participant shared:

> My initial feelings were that the new program might be more successful if it took advantage of the infrastructure and again, track record, of an existing program… not knowing the history and the challenges that might be involved with having the programs connected in that way.

Argyris (1976) noted:

> The high degree of consonance between learning acculturation and the kind of limitations placed on learning within groups and organizations results in processes that limit exploration and information and so help provide stability but also inhibit learning in fundamental organizational issues (p. 367).

Eventually for this participant, the principle of inclusion overcame the hesitation to sever ties. The planner continued:

> Is it easier to add something to an existing organization or is it easier to create a new organization?...It depends on what you're trying [to do]…From my perspective it seems like a higher risk but on the other hand, I think the reason that decision was made is, 'Well, the other path might be less risky but it might be less successful because…we wouldn't really accomplish our goals.'

In addition, some planners felt that community members may shun a leadership program with the term "leadership" in the name. In the interest of inclusion, a name was desired that would be attractive to all sectors of the area.

Promoted planner inclusion. Diversity and inclusion also spurred the recruitment intervention. The group sought diverse members to bring their expertise and experience to the planning, and also to serve as resources for the recruitment of participants and potential facilitators of the community leadership sessions. One member revealed that inclusion carried a deeper meaning than they originally believed. Thereby, inclusive programs were perceived as viable since the entire pool of community members would be potential leadership program candidates. In addition, the diversity of planners and recruits would lend towards the program remaining relevant to stakeholders. Therefore, diversity and inclusion led to the inclusion of other diverse planners in the planning effort. The measure would ensure attention was given to the needs of community members and organizations, as well as businesses.

Spurred group performance. After the two key decisions—one, to offer a new leadership program and, two, to separate from the existing leadership program sponsor—the program planning process accelerated and a new program offering was being developed. The community planners that continued to attend meetings went forward with plans of creating a new leadership program offering. In the process of time, a participant noted a change in composition of the LDWG that was accompanied by a surge in group task completion. A planner noted, "Once this…decision was made that we were going to go do our own thing…it was easy, no power struggles…all of that just went smoothly without power struggles—without anybody's personal agendas of any kind on there." One planner's perception is that the people that agreed with the decision were the ones that were "left standing." The planners that wanted to foster inclusion remained engaged. The participant shared:

> ….I felt like there was a power struggles towards the beginning. But I don't feel like it's the same organization that it was…I felt like we're talking about two different

> organizations. Some of the early meetings…and the people who continuously show up to the meetings now are two different functioning organizations.

In addition, one member believed that the adoption of a name may have negatively impacted the program's sustainability—particularly during the recruitment efforts for additional program planners. The planner shared:

> One of the negative decisions we made early on was continue to not name the program. We were almost a year into meeting before we actually chose a name…I think without the name early on it was difficult to actually identify who we were and where we were going even though we had the training we wanted to use, the program we wanted to use, we could not even present that program to anyone for lack of a name and we tabled it several times over before we actually came up with one…Choosing a name was not the most major decision but I think it should have been a primary [one] so that we did it earlier and were able to identify ourselves earlier than we have so far.

While naming the program was a lengthy deliberation early on, eventually the diverse group agreed to adopt a name and fully support it whether or not it was personally preferred. In the end, the program was simply entitled, "Advancing Massix."

Overall, diversity and inclusion was initially a barrier to dialog for a number of reasons. However, as the group grew to trust and engaged in dialogue, inclusiveness in the group led to an inclusive interpretation of the program's goal. Research shows that rural communities are notorious for maintaining the status quo through the perpetuation of power and privilege (Young, 1993; Murray & Greer, 1998). However, participants agreed that diversity and inclusion resulted in the adoption of a completely new leadership program that would be administered in a new way. The severing of ties with the CBDG would have maintained status quo, thereby

propagating the power and privilege dynamic prevalent in the area. This action research study revealed that diversity and inclusion were essential to rural change once internal and external barriers to change had been overcome. Subsequently, the one planner that formerly wanted to revamp the CBDG leadership program changed. Upon reflection, the planner shared, "I can look back and see…I really think that was the best thing and the right decision to do" in reference to severing ties with the CBDG.

Faith-Based Leader Engagement in Program Planning

Although a diverse group of leaders were engaged in the planning effort, senior level faith-based leaders were not. However, an unanticipated outcome was the involvement of mid-level and lay church leaders. Data revealed that 57.4% of the LDWG were currently or formerly mid-level ministerial leaders or lay church leaders in their places of worship. These individuals were engaged in the planning process. An overview of the findings is provided in the table.

Table 23

Engagement of Faith-Based Leaders

Research question	Category	Subcategory
In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts?	Non-engaged senior-level leaders	• Potential program supplements • Potential program marketing or recruitment function
	Engaged mid-level and lay leaders	• Fully engaged in the planning process

Despite outreach and direct recruitment efforts, senior pastors were noticeably absent from the community leadership development program planning effort. The recruitment efforts ranged from individual requests via a snowballing technique to a presentation to the Massix Ministerial Association. The efforts did not yield one recruited senior pastor.

Literature revealed that faith-based leaders can be key constituents for community change initiatives (Kaplan, Calman, Golub, Ruddock, & Billings, 2006). However, what the literature did not relate was the extent of demands on the rural leaders. While recruitment efforts were met with interest, a lack of time in already overwhelmed schedules was provided as the reason for the absence of some.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of educating and training lay people to coordinate, facilitate, and educate the community for initiatives. These efforts garnered great support and met with great success. In some instances, the lay person was specifically chosen to operate within their particular congregation as its representative with the support of church pastors. Such lay members with leadership potential were identified, sometimes with the recommendation of pastors (Hale, Bennett, Oslos, Cochran, & Burton, 1997).

Although they were not planners, church leaders have been identified to contribute meaningfully to the effort in ways that are minimally invasive to their current pastoral duties and community engagement schedule. Faith-based institutions are one of the best avenues to reach the masses in the rural area. For one, places of worship have been identified as vehicles for marketing and recruitment. In addition, pastors will be sought to facilitate one community leadership lesson one evening per year. Last, pastors will also be asked to identify emerging leaders that would be candidates for the new leadership program.

Program Planners Learn and Develop Individually and Collectively

The third research question spoke to the learning experienced by the volunteer planners individually and collectively. The LDWG members experienced personal growth as well as organizational development as evidenced in the data by instances of single-loop and double-loop

learning. In addition, the LDWG demonstrated five behaviors that are characteristic of learning organizations. A summary is provided in Table 24.

Table 24

LDWG Learning—Individual and Organizational

Research Question	Category	Subcategory
How do rural volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively?	Learning through single-loop learning	• Rural south social norms • Power and privilege
	Learning through double-loop learning	• Abandonment of rural social norms • Inclusion-inspired change • Unlearning • Personal responsibility and transformation
	Learning organizations	• Shared vision of inclusion • Dialogue and shared learning • Personal commitment to development • Sense-making of inclusion • An inclusive Massix

Chris Argyris (2002) identified instances of single-loop and double-loop learning. The former is descriptive of individuals operating based upon learned behaviors. Learning was simply adhering to the status quo. In the latter, individuals question the boundaries of action and introduce opportunities for change by reconsidering established beliefs.

Learning Through Singe-Loop Learning

Single-loop learning is a cycle by which individuals operate within the status quo (Argyris, 2002; Coude, Tonneau & Rey-Valette, 2011). There is no discussion, dialogue or reflection that challenges previously conceived notations. In this learning cycle, creativity is stifled and change is impossible. Initially, the LDWG participants were self-inhibited by the boundaries of norms in rural southern communities.

Many instance of single-loop learning were evidenced during the planning of the leadership development program. One example is the self-imposed management of dialogue based upon the social norms of southern hospitality and the socio-political context of the rural South. In these instances, participants managed and/or minimized the quality of dialogue or, as one participant stated, simply "left things unsaid." In those instances, internal conflicts restricted true engagement or a challenging of those norms. In reflection, a participant noted,

> …I know, even for me, I was very choicey [sic] about what I say because this is a small community. It is very political…I just wanted to bring attention to the fact that there are a lot of things unsaid, but there are reasons why…I had to be aware of who you are talking to and how you're talking and what you're saying. So it's just different.

Learning Through Double-Loop Learning

Double-loop learning is characterized by instances of challenging boundaries (Argyris, 2002; Coude, Tonneau & Rey-Valette, 2011). As the LDWG progressed, after comfort and trust were developing, participants were empowered to engage in conversations that challenged the status quo. They began to envision a more expansive, inclusive leadership program that was not bound by the variables that would typically exclude Massix residents. The result was double-loop learning that involved crossing social norm barriers, new awareness of personal responsibilities and transformations, and unlearning and learning in action.

A major instance of double-loop learning is when a participant embraced a new organizational norm of engaging in what could become fierce conversations. As several participants noted, the typical norm of rural organizations was an understanding of politeness and non-confrontation. However, at the encouragement of a facilitator, these participants re-envisioned an organization with a flat organizational structure in which they were comfortable to

share their diverse experience. This produced notable changes in the direction of the program. For one, when discussing the recruitment of additional community planners, one participant expressed to the group a desire to avoid the typical wealthy White male and actively seek diverse individuals that could increase the organization's learning.

In addition, when power and privilege was sensed, participants did not feel it necessary to yield to the powers that be. One participant reflected that a major community leader involved in the planning would not be the leader of the effort. The participant declared:

> It was like, 'I want to be lead person in this whole process,' but I think we just need to leave those roles alone and concentrate on what the real issue is…You're not going to be the leader now. We're all going to work together. We're all leaders.

Another participant explained, "I just felt that all of us were on the same playing field, so to speak. We all were professionals in our own right for whatever our careers that we've chosen. There was no 'big I, little you.'"

The participants challenged the norm instead of adhering to single-loop processes that would have hindered learning and, perhaps, prevented change. It is noteworthy since "a culture of disrespect and fear squelches learning" (Marsick & Watkins, 1994, p. 357). The original inhibition produced by power and privilege was overcome. When the boundaries of rural social norms were crossed, whether perceived or actual, the LDWG members engaged in a more meaningful way instead of "correcting" their behavior to adhere to the norm in Model I fashion. Argyris (1976) posited that, in double-loop learning, "The governing variables are valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment" (p. 368). The possibilities of the new program became limitless.

Data also revealed individuals experienced a heightened awareness of personal responsibilities and transformations. One noted, "I guess what I've learned from this work group is [that] I, myself, have got to step up and be a leader…making sure that people have access and are aware [of] the different opportunities they can get." Another respondent explained,

> I think it hit home for me when we actually got [to] the recruiting phase…we were asked to reach out to other people in various sectors of the community…I think that was the moment where I realized [that] if you want people to be involved, you have to go out and make contact with people. And that's where I realized that, now, it's on me. And because I know what has to be done, now I have to go and do it.

The planners noted taking ownership of promoting awareness and inclusion in the community.

The LDWG also experienced a paradigm shift in thinking that led to embracing change instead of resisting it. Regarding the decision to sever ties with the CBDG, one participant shared the following reflection:

> … I really did [wonder], for a couple of meetings, 'Why are we doing this? We've got a program. Let's make it the program that we want…why do we have to mess with the political [aspect of] things…And now, I can look back and see…I really think that was the best thing and the right decision to do.

In essence, the planner, as well as another, was willing to unlearn previously held notions. They were willing to think about their meaning-making and consider the meaning-making of others through dialogue and discussion. In the end, both were impacted by the shared experiences of the diverse community planners. Although one still expressed a degree of reticence, both planners acknowledged the flaws of the former program and were open to exploring a new leadership offering that would be accessible to the community at large.

The principle of inclusion itself inspired learning experiences. One of the LDWG members stated:

> You have to get outside of your own comfort zone—outside of what you are used to and what you are familiar with, even the people you are familiar with. Once you say, 'inclusive,' those people are already there. You have to go out and meet new people of new ethnicities and new races and new religions and…sometimes that takes a little bit of effort to go into areas that you've never been to include people that you've never met.

The planner restructured the concept of inclusion from a narrow perspective to an all-encompassing one. The resulting change in perspective was reflected in actions to recruit diverse planners for the planning effort..

Last, many participants reported personal transformations. In one instance, a participant identified herself as a community leader instead of just a business owner in the community. The participant stated:

> I think I learned…from this whole thing is that I myself am a leader in our community. And I just never had dreamt that. I always knew I was a leader of my own company, but not in the community. And it just forced me to think differently and made me want to connect more and to be involved more with the community to make sure that other people as well have all the opportunities that can be afforded to them.

In that stead, she began to take up the actions of a community leader by informing the community of the new program and taking ownership of its success through her efforts. Another described redefining her role in a participatory community planning effort versus her more dominant professional role. The individual described:

> So learning how to be…a participant [that was] here to learn...I got a good perspective on when to speak because I probably speak less at those meetings than I speak at any other meetings that I ever go to. But that's a valuable lesson, I think, is to spend more time learning as opposed to…dominating, which I tend to do.

The lasting impact has been encouraging more discussion and dialogue in her profession. Last, a planner's learning produced a motivation for more community engagement. It was stated:

> I think because of the awareness that it has given everybody, you're now aware of what's lacking in the community. I mean, leadership is just one aspect when you really look at leadership and all the things that being a true leader entails. It opens your eyes to a multitude of other areas in the community where something may be lacking and I think that has been a motivator to find ways to do other things.

The planning process, and its subsequent community engagement, confirmed the need for the program and inspired personal ownership of the effort. Last, a planner that commuted to work in the community described a new sense of belonging. Speaking of former outsider perspectives, it was shared, "Nobody knows me and I don't know them, so I don't have a role…I don't have family here, so nobody knows my name…I don't feel that way anymore. Like, I know a lot of people and I'm involved..."

Learning Organizations

Watkins and Marsick (1999) define a learning organization as an entity that continually learns and changes. The entity accomplishes this by "alignment and the collective capacity to sense and interpret a changing environment to generate new knowledge through continuous learning and change; to embed this knowledge in systems and practices; and to transform this knowledge into new products and services" (Watkins & Marsick, 1999, p. 80). Peter Senge and

colleagues (1994) identified five characteristics of a learning organization. The data revealed these qualities along the development of the LDWG. These include a shared vision, team learning, personal mastery—including a focus on the impact of passion and commitment, mental models, and systemic thinking.

Shared vision of inclusion. Planners of the LDWG established a shared vision of an inclusive community leadership program. However, as literature notes, the ties of commitment and interest were strong due to a linkage with the participants' personal goals (Murray & Greer, 1998). For the employers, the leadership program represented an opportunity to train talent. In other scenarios, the program held linkages for community development efforts. Last, adult educators recognized the value of the program for adult learners at the respective institutions of higher learning. A planner noted, "I can see how this could benefit [my employer] so much… my interest in and my passion being this [business]." The planner suggested that, perhaps, the earlier members of the LDWG either did not see the benefit of the program in relation to their personal interests or that they perceived a negative impact to their personal interests and motivations due to the decisions made by the group. The latter notion may explain the eventual disengagement of the CBDG. Research suggests that if personal goals are not in line with the shared vision established by the group, individual learning and the development of a learning organization can be hindered (Coude, Tonneau & Rey-Valette, 2011). Senge (2006) holds that vision is a motivation to learn. Without it, disengagement is likely. The participant continued, "[Those who] had a vested interest in that [an inclusive program] might have been the ones that…stayed. Like, I can't wait…I want to recruit some [of our clients] to do this." In reflecting on the process of developing a shared vision and learning to work together, one participant noted:

> We had to drill and talk and drill and talk….more and more and over and over until we could finally could say that this is what we want, this is what we need and this is how we're going to get it.

Therefore, a critical component to the shared vision was team learning.

Dialogue and shared learning. As has been noted, dialogue and discussion became a common method of team learning. Although it was somewhat hampered initially by the internal and socio-political barriers to full inclusion, the LDWG worked past the deterrents to engage in meaningful conversations based upon their diverse experiences and backgrounds. In addition, other Archway Partnership communities that developed leadership programs were invited to present at several meetings throughout the planning period. The sessions were learning experiences in which best practices and suggestions based upon reflection were shared with the group of community planners. Last, individual learning assignments were summarized for the entire group, which included exploring the leadership programs of various regions throughout Georgia. Routinely, learning was shared with absent planners via email. However, the learning moments were so impactful that one planner reported feeling excluded, even after being updated following a meeting. The planner notes:

> It's hard to think of a time when I was excluded; it's such a tight knit group. But a minor incident, I guess, would be…a meeting that I missed…and although I got emails about what the meeting was about later on, I felt like I had truly missed a part of something because I knew that although the emails and notes and follow ups would give me a brief description of the meeting, I knew that there was a lot of discussion that I probably would have wanted to hear or be a part of in order to get the most of it.

Stringer (2007) noted that "the type, nature, and quality of relationships in any social setting will have direct impacts on the quality of people's experience and, through that, the quality of outcomes of any human experience" (p. 28).

Another participant explained:

> I think the most beneficial contribution a person can give is their individual perspective. And I say that because no one has the same history or experience, whether it be personal experience or work related experience, and I think that the biggest benefit is when someone can come to the table and say, 'This is what I've been through, this is what I've identified as being an issue for Massix County. Maybe this is something our group could focus on or could help with or lend a stable suggestion that could maybe help in some kind of way'…so I think the individual perspective has been the biggest benefit.

The narratives reveal a key characteristic of the LDWG—an innate interest in individual learning and value for personal mastery.

Personal commitment to development. The LDWG is an organization whose members represent the diverse constituents of the Massix County community. Each matter under discussion in the planning benefited from the personal and professional experiences. The survey data revealed the benefit of formal and informal (experiential) leadership experience in professional and government settings. In addition, several participants had completed state and regional leadership programs, including the program hosted by the CBDG. Last, a number brought perspectives as members of key community organizations from the educational sector, business and industry sector, government sector, and social organizations. Prior to their involvement in the LDWG, many had personally excelled in the areas of community engagement, leadership, and education. As data and literature suggests, organizations with

members that are committed to personal growth and change are key to the development of a learning organization (Senge, 2010). In addition to their wealth of experience and education, the final LDWG demonstrated a passion and commitment to the objectives of the planning effort.

Passion and commitment. As one participant described, there was a "falling away" in the composition of the LDWG. The ones that remained engaged seemed to all have a personal interest and intrinsic motivation to accomplish the goals of the organization. One planner noted, "You saw who didn't show up at the second meeting or the third meeting…And conversely, you saw who showed up, brought energy, brought ideas and was committed to the process." In addition, another planner commented:

> This table might have been close to full on those first couple of meetings and you saw the folks that [said] 'this [isn't] for me,' …and they demonstrated that by not showing up at the next meeting or the meeting after that…The folks who stuck it through said, 'This is important, I want to be involved.'

To also note the factor that may have separated the original members from the latter, a planner shared, "Obviously, you [the remaining participants] have a personal commitment why this is important to you…"

Although various members initially started with the group, one belief is that participants disengaged because of an inability to perceive the program as relevant to their personal goals. Still others felt that those who were committed to change remained involved. Senge (1997) suggests that "only genuine commitment can bring about the courage, imagination, patience, and perseverance necessary in a knowledge-creating organization" (p. 32). Nonetheless, those that remained had to challenge some of their beliefs before the group could move forward together.

Sense-making of inclusion. Research findings revealed espoused theories and theory-in-use propositions. The most notable surrounded the dilemma of hosting the new program with the CBDG. Although the CBDG expressed no interest in changing its exclusive practices, some believed that separating to create an inclusive program was not ideal. The shared vision of inclusion (principal) was contrary to remaining with the CBDG (action). One participant shared their thinking concerning the issue. It was explained:

> …Would it make sense to just attach this or integrate those? And so I was kind of stuck on that—thinking that was the most logical solution. But then again, as I was alluding to before, the people around the table said, 'No, that's the problem. The perception of that problem, how people are selected for that particular program—that's part of the problem. This program needs to be separate.' And so, I guess, that was the first ah-ha for me. It was like, 'Okay. I get it.'

Another planner who had been negatively impacted by the perceived privileged selection process of the CBDG concurred with the notion of remaining with the organization. It was stated:

> I was under the same impression [as the other planner] was under. Why recreate the wheel, you know? So, many of us had to get rid of that…idea of why we're going to do this different thing than when we already have something where we could add on to it. So, I can concur with that initial perception of it. It was also some different ideas that all of us had about who it should be for and…we left it as anybody [who] wants it…

In the end, both participants got on board and there was consensus to move forward without nesting the program with the community organization. The latter participant described, "And now, I can look back and see…I really think that was the best thing and the right decision to do." However, there is still concern regarding the decision's impact on program sustainability. This

was a defining moment for the planners as well as for the development of the LDWG. The decision was an instance that demonstrated a degree of systems thinking.

An inclusive Massix. The ability of a learning organization to analyze itself and be responsive to improve system outcomes is a characteristic of systems thinking (Senge, 2010). The decision to sever ties with the CBDG accomplished several purposes. One, it was in line with the shared vision established earlier on by the group of community planners. In addition, the decision allowed the group to emerge from a state of stagnancy after iterative cycles of discussions on the issue. One participant described, "[I thought], 'Thank God we can just move forward and not keep talking about this' because I felt like there were three or four meetings [where that was] the hurdle." But the decision was also impactful on a systemic level. By severing ties with the CBDG in order to create an inclusive leadership program, there was the potential of connecting with more sectors in the Massix community. Therefore, the impact of the program on the community was a system that became boundless.

For one, the decision allowed for the LDWG to continue to learn and develop. Prior to the change, a member describes the atmosphere of meetings. It was shared, "It's like a turf war and we don't want [a] turf war. We're looking for different…because when you do things the same thing over and over again…you're going to get the same results." It was even speculated that the separation was evidence of a larger systemic problem. It was expressed, "The people who chose to not be part of the process, maybe they're part of the problem, in a sense, of what this program is trying to do to bring the community together." In order to create inclusion, the program could not be institutionalized at a major community organization was committed to exclusion. Moving past the hurdle, a planner described the LDWG as "much more focused and

goal oriented as opposed to…theories or philosophizing…now we're very driven and goal oriented."

Throughout, the planning process of the LDWG there was evidence of single and double-loop learning. In addition, the LDWG as an organization demonstrated the five characteristics of a learning organization: personal mastery, systems thinking, shared vision, mental models, and team learning. Data suggests that the thread that connected individual and organizational learning for the creation of a new sustainable, inclusive leadership program was grounded in the inclusion of diverse planners.

Meta-Analysis Across Findings

As the action research study evolved major concepts became evident. Strategic planning, sustainability, diversity and inclusion, power and privilege, as well as individual and organizational learning appeared interrelated. The following meta-analysis, first, describes the paradigmatic shift of planner perceptions of sustainability as a result of their attention to diversity and inclusion; second, discusses how diversity and inclusion, as well as time, were presented as power and privilege; last, speaks to collective learning that led to an organizational change that produced an inclusive leadership program.

Program Planner Perceptions of Sustainability

Data surrounding the definitions of sustainability and sustainable community programs indicated that strategic planning processes and decision-making with neural skilled facilitation that built the capacity of the volunteer community planners created sustainable community programs as long as time was allowed for the growth and development of the planners individually and collectively. Before exploring measures of sustainability, the LDWG were asked by the researcher to characterize their definition of the term. As literature suggests, the

typical factors of human and financial resources was evident (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). However, other outliers perceived as factors that impact program sustainability were identified by the group. For instance, several planners identified relevance as an indicator of community support. One respondent explained:

> I define program sustainability as the ability of a program to stay alive and to stay relevant within the community more than just its starting phase. Even years down the road [the program should] still be relative to the community. A program that has only one of two seasons and then dies away from lack of interest, of course, is not sustainable, it has not made its greatest impact, I don't think on the community.

Another stated, "So, if we've got all those other things in place and we're meeting a need and seeing the results, then I believe it will be successful and continue and feed upon itself in a good way." Without maintaining interest and being attractive to potential recruits and community supporters, the perception was that the effort would eventually fail even if human and financial resources were sufficient.

Power of Diversity and Inclusion in Change Efforts

Despite the internal and external forces that challenged change, the program planners took up power in order to plan a leadership offering that was meaningful to the Massix community. In general, rural community change efforts benefit from diversity and inclusion (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). Even though the LDWG were few in number, they represented the interest of various community organizations. In addition, the commitment to change was evidenced by their sustained involvement throughout the period of leadership development program planning.

Typical diversity efforts seek to increase the number of diverse participants (Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). This includes those with power and privilege. However, a critical mass existed so that the contributions of diverse constituents were not overshadowed. A planner noted:

> It's much easier to come to a consensus with seven or eight people than it is with twenty people. While I don't think it would be good to exclude too many people…it did speed up the process and we seemed to get more done.

Speaking of the separation, a participant was able to overcome the effect of power and privilege to meaningfully advocate for change. Succinctly, the individual shared: "You invited me to be a part of this…this is the whole process…you're not going to be the leader now. We're all going to work together. We're all leaders…We're all going to benefit." Another planner stated, "The people who did not want to participate in creating something new didn't participate…there is a cadre of people who are creating a positive change in community…a small group of dedicated people [can] change the world." Scott Page (2011) noted that "diversity enables systems to flourish, to be robust, and also touch on efficiency and innovativeness (p.196)." The interaction of diverse community planners resulted in a synergistic effect (Page, 2011). Rather than identifying the LDWG in group stages of pre- and post-recruitment, one volunteer community planner described the LDWG as two different ones. The original group was rifled with power struggles that inhibited progress whereas the second group flowed with ease and comfort after the disengagement of a powerful and privileged CBDG.

Time—A Privileged Commodity

The planning of the rural program was also influenced by factors that could be deemed as power and privilege or elements of diversity and inclusion. One participant identified time as a crucial element that determined who was privileged to participate in program planning and who

was not. Either the member held a leadership position and could take the time to meet during regular work hours or the member had the support of a leader that allowed for meeting time. In addition, planners whose participation was encouraged by their employer were privileged to regularly attend meeting. One community participant recalled, "It made it a lot easier…It meant I could go to my CEO and say 'I've got this [letter]' and they'd say, 'This is important. We need this. We want to have representation.'" The privilege of time and the power of a connected employer worked well on the behalf of most participants.

In contrast, some participants were unable to attend meetings when their professional work prevented their attendance. Therefore, holding weekday afternoon meetings was deemed a potential hindrance to the inclusion of other community members whose schedules did not permit their attendance. In some cases, the utilization of technology to communicate updates allowed planners to remain included. In addition, committee meetings were held at flexible times—allowing for the inclusion of others that had not been to the regular LDWG meetings. Updates were given to all attendees in those cases. Doodle, an online scheduling tool suggested by one of the LDWG members, was used to determine the best meeting dates and times for all committee members.

Diversity and Inclusion Made the Difference

In conclusion, the key to change can be traced back to the inclusion of a diverse group of program planners. Diversity and inclusion were leveraged and resulted in a different leadership program. "Learning organizations capitalize on difference because solutions can often be found outside the norm and because they are organizations where the norm is polyphonic" (Watkins & Marsick, 1999, p. 359). The facilitators effectively established a flat structure that weakened the impact of power and privilege in order for the inclusion of diverse community planners to

prosper. Eventually the participants got past internal and external hindrances to establish relationships of trust and openness that allowed for the sharing and free flow of diverse ideas and perspectives, which the LDWG welcomed. (One participant described the LDWG as "a tight knit group.") However, the planning process was not without obstacles. Diversity created an impasse when discussing the institutionalization of the new leadership program with the CBDG. The group was eventually able to move past the issue. And although recruitment yielded few new planners, the defining moment from the participants' perceptions was the eventual disengagement of those that were not willing to learn and effect change when the need for change was evident.

As evidenced by interviews, every research study participant held that diversity and inclusion made the difference in the establishing of a new leadership program administered in an inclusive manner. One planner shared, "I think there is a diversity of experiences that have certainly guided the creation of this program to the point of where it is." Another shared, "Diversity…allows this program to be different from every other program. I think our group has someone who has experience in every faucet of life…It has kept our group from becoming a money-power-privilege type [of] dynamic." Again, "Diversity drove the direction of the group…those that showed up not only reflected the full demographics of the community but brought…a diversity of skills and interest." Diversity was "maybe even the pushing or the guiding force of why we needed it." It was "underwriting all decisions in some ways."

A planner reflected, "…Our group is what is needed to reach those people who have the capability [but] just have never been taught the fundamentals of being a leader or have never been given the opportunity to express their true leadership capabilities." For one, the attention to developing leaders was personal. Taking part in the planning of an inclusive leadership

development program, he considered, “I’ve paid back…” And although the planning has taken close to two years, the LDWG members that remained are excited about the future of the leadership program as they transition from their role as planners to program administrators. The diverse group’s disposition can be summed up by a statement made by one the participants: “As long as we come to the same conclusion for the good of everybody.”

The decision to sever ties with the CBDG was not a light one. But the shared vision of inclusion contradicted the operating principles of the former program host. Marsick and Watkins (1994) posit, “A vision is something to strive for in the face of dissonant reality” (p. 359). And, again, “Organizations are increasingly realizing the power of vision-driven change” (Watkins & Marsick, 1999, p. 83). Senge (2006) noted, “Shared visions compel courage so naturally that people don’t even realize the extent of their courage. Courage is simply doing whatever is needed in pursuit of the vision” (p. 194). Too, Murray and Greer (1998), concluded that “for rural communities to be effective as agents of change, they need a vision of where they wish to be at some stage in the future” (p. 255). Robinson and Green (2011) asserted that, “To achieve its community-building goals, [community development] efforts often must challenge the political and/or economic position of community or national leaders” (p. 15).

The planners felts that a change had to be made in order for the vision to be fulfilled. However, it is hoped that the separation was not taken personally. One planner reflected on his experience participating in community-based efforts. “For a while,” the participant said, “I just took everything personal, too. But I learned and I talked and I prayed and I said [to myself], ‘You can’t take it all personal.’” In fact, there are hopes that all disengaged constituents will take part in the program that has been developed. It was shared with Senge that former adversarial relationships can be overcome when individuals realize “their established ways of

coping…are clearly not going to suffice (Senge, 2003, p. 50). And the group hopes to draw back those that did not endure the planning process and disengaged during the early meetings when there were more discussions than decisions. One planner explained, "I'm hoping…they'll come back…when they find out that something has been done." But there are few regrets for the planning process. A volunteer planner shared:

> We knew there was a need for it and what I've learned is that there [are] people ready and willing to step up and walk the talk and that's been inspiring for me to see…This is exciting to be [a] part of this group. It's great to see a community respond to the need with such enthusiasm and creativity.

For the sacrificial separation, the LDWG hopes that the community as a whole experiences positive change as a result of the new leadership offering that is open to everyone that wants to attend. Anticipated outcomes include better prepared emerging leaders, more effective individuals in current leadership roles, increased volunteerism on boards, as well as a succession planning for future leaders of the Massix community. As a planner noted, "Even years down the road [the program will] still be relative to the community." Another shared, "We knew we had to do something that would be sustaining for a very long period of time, to work continuously, and to see true deposits within the community and see it actually work." All of the strategic measures taken by the LDWG in planning the leadership program were in the hopes of translating personal development and success into a greater degree of inclusion and community development in the rural South area of Massix County, Georgia.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The action research case study investigation of the dynamics of rural community leadership development program planning produced outcomes for the research and practitioner communities. Three primary research questions that guided this study were: 1) What key strategies do volunteer community program planners employ to plan a sustainable community leadership development program? 2) How do diversity and inclusion impact power and privilege in rural South community program planning efforts? In particular, how do faith-based leaders, as leaders of rural community organizations, engage in program planning efforts? 3) How do volunteer community program planners learn and develop individually and collectively? This chapter presents conclusions and implications drawn from a multi-year, time-series action research study of the Massix Leadership Development Work Group. The chapter will begin with a summary of the findings that addresses each research question detailed in Chapter 5 before discussing conclusions drawn from the study. Then, implications for practice will be discussed followed by recommendations for future research. Finally, a concluding statement on Advancing Massix's final state and outcomes of the rural planning effort is made.

Summary of Findings

The Massix Archway Leadership Development Work Group consisted of a diverse group of program planners charged with developing a leadership program for the rural community of Massix County. The action research case study yielded findings that revealed key strategies employed by the volunteer group to plan a sustainable program, the impact of diversity and

inclusion in rural planning efforts, and the individual and collection learning experience by the participants. In the process, the role of faith-based leaders was specifically examined.

Strategies for Program Sustainability

To plan a sustainable program, the community of Massix created a partnership with Archway Partnership of the University of Georgia. After data collections and a scan of the community, efforts began to create a leadership offering that attended to the needs of the community. Strategies employed included the use of neutral skilled facilitators that were external to the community. The community-sanctioned facilitators convened the initial group of planners and continually invited other relevant parties to enter the planning process. The group conducted a SWOT analysis and determined the target audience over successive meetings early in the planning phase. The diverse group of planners was encouraged to engage in dialogue, even concerning sensitive topics in order to further the planning process.

Typical program planning processes and decision-making were integrated into the planning. In addition, capacity building items were conducted that promoted shared learning and learning in action over the course of the planning effort. Other program planning factors included establishing collaborative partnerships and networks. An intentional recruitment effort was conducted to strategically broaden the LDWG. Another decision to enable a broader inclusion was to initially sever ties with the CBDG, a major community stakeholder that traditionally offered a leadership development program geared towards the business and industry community. The planning effort spanned almost two years, allowing time for the growth and development of the planners as well as for the group development of the LDWG.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Midst of Power and Privilege

Including a diverse representation of the community was purposeful and the focus of an action research intervention. As the planners represented the diverse demographics of the community and as various community organizations participated, their interests were negotiated at the planning table. However, initially, diversity and inclusion were barriers to planning efforts because of the rural southern social context. Planners reported experiencing internal hindrances to fully engaging in dialogue. These included attending to the social norm of southern hospitality, feelings of superficial tokenism, having an outsider mentality, and the perceived socio-political ramifications of what was communicated in the planning effort. As time passed and the planners and the group grew, diversity and inclusion became the impetus for change as the planners advocated for the creation of an inclusive program that was accessible to everyone. The collective empowerment weakened the status quo that hampers rural development and decision-making. By extension, the examination of faith-based leaders in the planning of the program revealed that senior pastors were not engaged. Planners recognized the social value of the predominant organization and sought other methods in which the rural pastors and churches could support the program, such as marketing and the identification of potential consumers. However, unexpectedly, the planners that were engaged had experience as a leader in their respective faith-based communities.

Individual and Organizational Learning

The planning effort revealed instances of single and double-loop learning. For example, the initial adherence to southern social norms and the initial lack of dialogue that allowed power and privilege to operate unchallenged were evidence of single-loop learning. However, as previously noted, the LDWG eventually challenged the internal barriers to prevented dialogue.

The result was establishing a more inclusive program. Other instances of double-loop learning included instances of unlearning as well as paradigm shifts in personal responsibility for community leadership. The LDWG also typified a learning organization in that a shared vision of inclusion was established, shared learning in the form of dialogue representing diverse interests, personal commitment to development as evidenced by planners with passion and commitment, sense-making of inclusion, as well as a systemic view of Massix.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: A planning table of multiple community organizational stakeholders and diverse community constituents creates the conditions for the development of inclusive, sustainable community programs.

From a systemic perspective, Senge (2003) held that "those organizations that excel in harnessing the power of variety to have considerable advantages in attracting and retaining diverse talent, as well as in achieving business results (p. 49)." From this action research case, it can be concluded that the designing of inclusive community programs begins with the inclusion of program planners that are representative from the target audience. Cervero and Wilson (2006) recognized the importance of including the target population in the planning efforts. Diverse stakeholders are critical to program planning success since such groups inspire creativity, productivity, and individual and collective learning (Allen, 2010; Argyris, 1980; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Crossan, 2003; Marsick & Watkins, 1994; Netting et al., 2008; Senge, 2006). In addition, in this study, the inclusion of various community stakeholders promotes sustainability and allows grassroots community-based efforts to benefit from collaborative partnerships and networks (Altman, 1995; Hanson & Salmoni, 2010; McCann et al., 1995; Netting et al., 2008; Young, 1993). McCann and colleagues (1995) assert that community-based interventions should

take advantage of existing "community assets and infrastructures" (p. 65). In addition, research supports the engagement of faith-based organizations as a collaborative community partners and networks versus planning stakeholders (Kaplan, Calman, Golub, Ruddock, & Billings, 2006; Young, 1993).

For rural communities such as Massix, in which power and privilege is used to uphold the status quo, the inclusion of diverse perspectives can overcome strong resistance to change (Allen, 2010; Altman, 1995; Davidson, 2011; Hanson & Salmoni, 2010; Murray & Greer, 1998; Young, 1993). In addition, Allen (2010) and Page (2007) believed that the inclusion of individuals with power and privilege as advocates for change was promising. However, establishing a common goal that attends to the multiple interests of the convened group is essential to the success of such an effort (Page, 2007). Netting and colleagues (2008) held that "engagement, sense-making, and discovery" (p. 118) with attention to meeting the "broadest goals and values" (p. 28) of the representative group were important aspects of the program planning efforts. Planners are able to "produce results they care about [and] accomplish things that are important to them" (Crainer, 2008, p. 71)

Conclusion 2: A flat organizational structure, skilled facilitation, and intentional group dynamic techniques can foster the collective empowerment of diverse community planners.

In action research, Stringer (2007) upholds the engagement of neutral facilitation in the midst of power-impact community-based efforts whose role "is not to push particular agendas but to neutralize power differentials in the setting so that the interests of the powerful do not take precedence over those of the other participants (p. 213)." However, for facilitating and managing change in the rural South, the roles and skills of facilitators are key since change efforts are resisted. In contrast to Stringer, Forester (1999) advocated for the engagement of

progressive planners that "do not work on a neutral stage" (p.3), but "think and act politically…to anticipate and reshape relations of power and powerlessness" (p. 3) in the midst of power-impacted planning efforts. While the former framework allows empowerment to emerge in the midst of power and privilege, the latter framework of facilitation actively reshapes the power dynamic. Community-based facilitators that operate with the principles of progressive planners, then, employ multiple techniques of mediated negotiation and take on multiple roles to attend to the multiple interests of planning stakeholders and constituents and seek to change the power dynamics that negatively impact community-based change efforts (Forester, 1999).

By extension, then, is consideration of the organizational structure of the power-impacted planning group. Stringer (2007) noted that such groups "generate trust within less powerful groups, so that they are willing to participate in arenas in which previously they have been mistreated or demeaned" (Stringer, 2007, p. 213). One approach is a flat organizational structure of the planning group (Diamond, 1984; Stringer, 2007). However, Forester (1999) held that "planners can expect (with a few exemplary, democratically structured exceptions) that the organizations in and with which they work will systematically reproduce sociopolitical relations" (p. 79). Therefore, facilitators operate skillfully to minimize informal stratification mechanisms.

Conclusion 3: An outcome of community-based action research and interventions is personal and organizational learning and change.

Action research is a method of collective inquiry, action, and evaluation (Stringer, 2007). "Community-based action research seeks to change the social and personal dynamics of the research situation so that the research process enhances the lives of all those who participate" (p. 20). While there is an acknowledgement that action research builds the capacities of individuals to better engage in communities—which is the unit of analysis of such efforts, action research

interventions may also inspire transformational learning (Stringer, 2007; Senge, 2003). Senge (2003) cited Argyris and Schön, who concluded that "learning is fundamentally about action" (p. 48).

Further, Senge (2003) asserted that "the fantasy that somehow organizations can change without personal change, and especially without change on the part of the people in leadership positions, underlies many change efforts doomed from the start" (Senge, 2003, p. 48). He insisted that it was a mistake to espouse change "without ever inquiring about how they themselves may be a big part of the changes needed" (Senge, 2003, p. 48). The implication is that engaging in organizational change processes can effect change in individuals that are willing to critically reflect on themselves (Crossan, 2003; Senge, 2003.)

Senge held that "the key idea of Argyris and Schön's theory of personal dimensions of organizational learning is working continually to discover gaps between what we say and what we do" (Senge, 2003, p. 49). Engaging in the community field as an action research interventionist can inspire the individual to critically reflect on their identity and meaning-making of the social context in which they are engaged. Too, reflecting on "learning in action" moments can also be an impetus to inspire personal learning and change. This may be an unanticipated outcome of community-based action research and its change initiatives.

Conclusion 4: For rural communities, diversity and inclusion in program planning efforts are associated with program sustainability.

Program planning is incomplete without attention to program. Alfonso and colleagues (2008) even suggest designating program sustainability as the primary function of a participant in community efforts. In this study, establishing collaborative partnerships and networks with diverse community organizations and connecting with diverse individuals provided access to the

diverse skill sets and resources required for its sustainability (Alfonso et al., 2008; Hanson & Salmoni, 2010). Such relationships make the best use of existing "community assets and infrastructures" (McCann, 1995, p. 65). However, the most effective use of diversity and inclusion for program sustainability occurs during the planning phase of program development. For one, research supports the inclusion of the target audience in planning efforts (Cervero & Wilson, 2008). In addition, Young (1993) encouraged the engagement of community organizations "in the embryonic stages...to build as much ownership as possible" (p. 20). Therefore, the degree to which diversity and inclusion impacts program planning correlates to the degree of program sustainability in rural communities.

Implications for Practice

Senge supports the development of actionable knowledge (2003). Several implications for practitioners of community development efforts can be derived from this study. Practical concepts include developmental stage-setting activities, digital inclusion, grassroots organizational inclusion, and inclusive critical mass. Each is discussed.

Stage-setting Activities to Foster Group Development

Developmental activities on the front end of any group planning effort are suggested to foster individual and group learning and development. For rural contexts, this may include addressing barriers to dialogue, such as southern hospitality, perceptions of tokenism, and issues with belongingness. Such developmental activities should be designed to build the capacity of planners to communicate, build trust, effectively engage in dialogue on sensitive issues of power and privilege, and to foster a sense of inclusion. Done at the beginning of the planning process, they would also build ownership through the development of a collective vision and clear means by which the success of the program would attend to participants' personal and/or professional

interests. The immediate benefit is an adjustment in the learning and developmental curve of the individual and, subsequently, the organization. Group development is especially important in planning efforts with an imposed timeline.

Senge (2003) proposed several factors that support a skills-building component for volunteer community planners. For one, stage-setting could work to prepare "the individual to recognize personal errors and the opportunity to be open to embrace change (Senge, 2003, p. 50). He further noted that "it will require not only a new design and engineering know-how but new business models, whose implementation will threaten political and institutional established interests and therefore will require sophisticated interpersonal learning skills…that few possess today" (Senge, 2003, p. 50). However, with stage-setting developmental activities that build the capacity of planners, the stage is set for deep learning and change. Argyris (2002) holds:

> As participants begin to craft new and more effective conversation, they realize that existing Model I organizational defensive routines could be used to evaluate the new dialogue as ineffective, immature, politically foolish, and so forth. This leads to dialogue about their responsibility to begin to change their defensive routines (p. 214).

Further, Argyris (2002) supports "a Model II crafting would include illustrations, would encourage inquiry, and would encourage testing" (p. 215). Facilitators can empower individuals to be aware of their defenses that resist change (Diamond, 1986). Argyris (1976) holds:

> Learning to become aware of one's present theory-in-use and then altering it is a very difficult process…Learning about double-loop learning through lectures, reading, and case discussions will lead to learning at the espoused level rather than at the level of theory-in-use (p. 370).

Utilization of Technology to Foster Digital Inclusion

The utilization of technology has the potential of fostering remote inclusion in community-based efforts. Online inclusion can create an environment of shared learning, foster reflection, serve as a forum for surveys and other instruments, and allow for the meaningful engagement of those without the flexibility to attend face-to-face meetings. The online medium can also be a tool for garnering informal feedback from community members. Hosting an online forum through which planners and other community stakeholders can engage in meaningful dialogue prior to meetings so that more sectors are represented in decision-making is one option. Other strategies of inclusion should also be utilized, such as teleconferencing, video conferencing, and the like. Although there can be drawbacks to such an approach, the benefits are promising. Ruso (2012) held that "electronic collaborative discussions through [the] internet" (p. 381) was effective for service-learning students. The data revealed that the medium fostered service-learning capacity-building (Ruso, 2012). This could also be a promising means of including rural faith-based leaders.

Grassroots Community Initiatives through Grassroot Organizational Inclusion

The model of inclusion for adult program planning of Cervero and Wilson (2006) suggests that program planning efforts should include all stakeholders impacted by the program. Community-based efforts, then, would have to engage numerous stakeholders and community organizations. Factors such as logistics and time made such an effort improbable. However, the inclusion of a representative number of diverse constituents is useful.

An alternate model of rural inclusion engages mid-level workers and laborers as viable proxies for executive community leaders. In addition, even though the shared experiences of senior executives are inherently unique, the breadth of experiences may fail to represent the

diversity of the constituents in rural communities. By executives supporting the engagement of lower level workers, the interests of the organizations can be negotiated in the planning effort.

And research suggests that the presence of such powerful individuals could silence or overshadow the contributions of others. Mid- and low-level employees operating in proxy may be better able to relate to the shared experiences of those that do not have the rare power and privilege of senior administrators. However, the power of buy-in of senior level executives cannot be denied. The strategy also ensures the support of senior-level community stakeholders that are the decision-makers for community organizations. Senge (1997) held that the future consisted of developing community leaders that were local line leaders, executives, and "internal networkers…who move about the organization spreading and fostering commitment to new ideas and practices (p. 32)." (Senge, 1997; Cervero & Wilson, 2006). It will be essential, however, to ensure that the group "be required to explore the minority views" (Argyris, 1980, p. 211).

Exclusively Inclusive--Critical Mass for Leading Rural Change Efforts

Since rural areas may lack human and capital resources necessary for development, the inclusion of diverse planners is necessary for rural community change efforts. However, too much diversity can have a negative impact on group cohesion and performance (Allen, 2010; Page 2007). This was evidenced in the LDWG when the multiple interests of stakeholders created an impasse regarding the target audience for the program. One participant observed:

> There is a critical mass to be productive—not too few, but not too many. When a facilitator suggests that it be limited, the question I have is, "What do you mean?" It sounds exclusionary. I think it needs to be inclusive. The challenge is to grow to be inclusive but not so large that it's dysfunctional and we self-destruct.

As previously noted, "The idea is to get the right people in the room—those whose presence is critical for doing the job" (Netting et al., 2008, p. 23). However, care should be taken to avoid a power packed planning group that marginalizes minority and underrepresented populations (Stringer, 2007). In future efforts, the selective recruitment of a diverse group of planners is suggested. The defining characteristics of the committed community planners in the LDWG included those with a passion for community engagement, an ability to link their professional work with the planning objectives of the group, a personal motivation to build the community by giving back, and a desire to create a capable pool of leaders for succession planning. However, the overwhelming characteristic appeared to be the willingness to learn evidenced by valuing diversity and diverse perspectives (Ferdman et al., 2010). There is a critical mass for the inclusion of diversity such that efforts are not thwarted by diverse individuals representing interests that do not converge to solutions that attend to multiple interests (Allen, 2010; Page, 2007).

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study raised additional questions and issues for future study. Several recommendations will be presented to advance the study of adult and organizational learning and development that is the impetus for systemic change. They include investigating the contextual validity of the study, a multi-level model for rural communities, the mechanisms for collective empowerment in rural communities, the impact of time as a privileged asset in rural planning efforts, and the impact of reflection on rural change efforts.

The Contextual Validity of the Study

The first recommendation for future study is to explore the dynamics of a similar community planning effort in a different context. Although studies have been conducted

involving similar concepts in international rural communities, it would be of interest to determine if the same findings emerge in metropolitan areas (Datta, 2005; Wijnberg & Colca, 1981). The comparison and contrasting of the characteristics of the overall study—its findings and conclusions—is relevant to the body of knowledge on community program planning. In the end, it would determine the role that context plays in such efforts—if the findings are highly contextual or generalizable and "applicable to a wide variety of contexts" (Stringer, 2007, p. 192). The findings and conclusions could be deemed transferable based upon the results of such a study.

Multi-Level Inclusion Models for Rural Communities

Cervero and Wilson's (2006) model of inclusion held that every stakeholder affected by the adult learning program should be represented at the planning table. However, this study found that senior administrators and senior pastors did not engage or remain engaged in the planning effort. Therefore, a formal study that investigates the utilization of mid-level leadership and working-class laborers would, perhaps, result in the inclusion of more community leaders via their representatives. The study would replicate the inquiry of the positionality of the mid-level and worker bees' influence on program planning efforts in rural communities. Senge (1997) proposes a future in which "communities of diverse and effective leaders who empower their organizations to learn with head, heart and hand" (p. 32) is critical since problems persist "for which hierarchical leadership alone is insufficient and [a need exists] to harness the intelligence and spirit of people of all levels of an organization to continually build and share knowledge (p. 32.)"

Identification of Collective Empowerment Mechanisms in Rural Communities

The skill and positionality of community planning facilitators and a flat organization structure of the group set the stage for collective empowerment. However, the mechanisms that undergirded strong advocacy for change in the face of power and privilege that attempted to influence the effort from both internal and external sources is notable. Therefore, it is recommended that more study be done into the specific mechanisms of the collective empowerment of traditionally disempowered individuals in rural communities. Such study could yield tools for leading transformative change.

Senge (2006) stated, "I believe that all real, deep change comes out of people making choices, often profound choices" (p. 72). Such an investigation would be meaningful to adult learning principles and organizational development, particularly in a context with "diverse parties, often including those that have very low trust and maybe a high level of antipathy for one another" (Senge, 2006, p. 73). Senge (2006) also suggests that a shared vision enables individuals to take up courage in order to fulfill the vision.

Time as a Privilege in Rural Planning Efforts

Time has two dubious impacts on community-based program planning efforts. For one, having the time to attend planning sessions during traditional work hours was a privilege that the community planners were afforded by their employers. However, community program-planning may have a timeline for completing benchmarks in the planning process. A similar study of the planning effort in which the impact of time is central is recommended. For one, the entire landscape of program planners and the program planned may have been vastly different since those without the privilege of time would have the opportunity to participate. This is typically a factor for communities that consist largely of working class laborers that earn hourly wages in

positions that would penalize missed time. As previously stated, Cervero and Wilson (2006) upheld the engagement of the target audience in community planning efforts.

In addition, Batten and Holdaway (2010) studied the contradictory impact of timelines on community-based health initiatives. Typical of top-down change initiatives, timelines rushed deliverables but weakened individual and collective development that impacted the program and participation (Batten & Holdaway, 2010). Time is a multi-faceted parameter of community-based planning efforts. Further studies on its impact can translate to best practices that maximize the benefit and minimize the inherent weaknesses that time can present to the development of sustainable rural programs. Argyris suggests:

> Best practices that claim to produce leadership, learning, and change consistent with Model II shows that they do not do so. These programs may have the virtue of taking less time in terms of days required to attend a course or participate in a change program, but a closer examination indicates that they may incur greater transaction costs when participants resist them and then cover up the resistance (p. 217).

Therefore, without the inclusion of the target audience and having time to allow for individual and group learning and development, deep change is resisted and superficial (Batten & Holdaway, 2010; Cevero & Wilson, 2006).

The Impact of Reflection in Rural Change Efforts

An unexpected outcome of the study was the difference that reflection had on three participants. Therefore, the purposeful employment of reflection in rural community change efforts deserves further study and attention. Reflection is considered a quality of leadership development as well as a tool of action-oriented change. Argyris supports the development of reflective practitioners that, after acting, "think about governing values and…about criteria for

how to test a claim so that there is no error" (Crossan, 2003, p. 44) as a learning experience for those that "unknowingly maintain the status quo" (Crossan, 2003, p. 44).

Reflecting about action can be a powerful tool in the development of individuals, and therefore, the organization. By acknowledging Model I theories-in-use, individuals remove the blind spot that would perpetuate "self-fueling processes that maintain the status quo, inhibit genuine learning, and reinforce the deception" (Argyris, 2002, p. 212). The deception is being "unaware of the programs in our heads that keep us unaware" (Argyris, 2002, p. 213). However, Argyris (1980) asserts that such reflective activities should emphasize the development of Model II behaviors instead of "thinking about selling, manipulating, and winning" (p. 212), aspects of Model I theories-in-use.

"Reflective action for contrasting one's espoused theory with his or her theory-in-use demands awareness of individual and organizational governing variables" (Diamond, 1986, p. 557). Greenwood (1998) studied the role of reflection in single and double loop learning. The findings revealed:

> Single-loop learning is the result of instrumental means-end reflection on human action, whereas double-loop learning is the result of reflection on the norms, values, and social relationships which underpin human action. Seriously reflective practice is a function of double-loop learning…(Greenwood, 1998, p. 1052).

Therefore, organizational reflective practice is useful in other planning efforts since it allows the opportunity for changes and modifications while planning is underway. It is believed that "undesired consequences can be prevented by reflexive practice…[when] program actors within organizations critically scrutinize their actions" (Pluye et al., 2004, p. 129).

Advancing Massix

The engagement of Archway Partnership, a community-neutral organization, its skilled facilitators, and a diverse, inclusive community planning group resulted in a new leadership program in Massix County developed to meet the needs of the community at large. The decision resulted in a controversial critical incident—that of severing ties with the CBDG, a major community organization that wanted to adopt the new leadership program. However, the inclusive vision adopted by the group threaded every decision and even undergirded the Leadership Development Work Group's decision to create a separate program offering since the CBDG was not amenable to changing certain exclusive practices.

Although the decision to sever ties with the CBDG felt as if we were compromising the sustainability of the program, we acknowledged that we could not feasibly create a program offered in a manner that was not accessible to all residents. The decision to sever the ties was a precarious one—some believed that it would negatively impact sustainability while others believed that it would prove to be beneficial. Eventually, the CBDG disengaged from the planning group.

However, as with emergent processes based in dynamic community settings, external forces caused the planning process to evolve unexpectedly. The Massix Archway professional transitioned to a directorial role in the CBDG and, as such, re-engaged the group. In the end, both the CBDG and the Technical College became community partners with the effort—a result that may not have happened had the program been absorbed earlier by the CBDG.

Severing is a word that seemed to have a harsh connotation. But it's a useful tool in many applications, including horticulture. The Bible relates an incident in which cutting was used for a negative outcome as well as for a positive one. In the passage of John 15:2, Jesus

Christ stated: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." One cutting was to permanently separate. However, the other cutting, or severing, was simply to make room for more growth.

While the CBDG leadership program did not build leadership capacities, the past graduates unanimously agreed that it was effective in its stated purpose: community economic development. However, its exclusive practices limited the number of lives it touched as well as the developmental capacities of its graduates. While the decision resulted from collective empowerment, it was not a power play. The objective of the Leadership Development Work Group was not to sever ties to create separation, rather, its intent was to establish an inclusive leadership development program such that individuals, organizations, and the Massix community would all benefit.

The implications for rural communities and rural change efforts are promising. While engaging in dialog that is sensitive and absent of the norms of politeness and southern hospitality is uncomfortable, it is necessary for growth to occur. While dominant rural structures that resist change may disengage, there are still future opportunities to reconnect.

Severing ties was not the overarching outcome of the rural planning effort. It was simply a critical incident that was an unfortunate occurrence during the planning effort. But "severing ties" was symbolic of the commitment of a diverse group of planners to take up power in order to protect the interests of the community at large and cut ties to old rural systems that perpetuated power and privilege favoring certain sectors of the Massix community. The decision was simply a by-product of acting on the behalf of a community of people and organizations that had been marginalized and left out of a community leadership opportunities. One LDWG planner reflected on the two-year rural change effort and summarized the Advancing Massix experience:

…You saw who showed up, brought energy, brought ideas, and was committed to the process. And I think what I learned was [that it was] the people who were committed to creating something new and different. The people who did not want to participate in creating something new didn't participate. And so, that, again, affirms my belief that the people who have stayed involved are going to make Massix (pseudonym). Otherwise, everyone would have walked away from it. So, I've learned that there is a cadre of people who are creating a positive change in [the] community and that's been encouraging…And so, I wouldn't say it's changed my ideals, but it's certainly reinforced my hope and my inspiration that a small group of dedicated people can change the world, to paraphrase a famous quotation.

Amen.

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Appendix A: Empirical Review of Church Community Development

Arthur(s)	Subjects	Data Collection Techniques	Selected Salient Results
Farnsley (1998)	Congregations of an urban area	Survey for Partners for Sacred Places	Estimated net congregational contribution to society: $144,000 per year on average $33,500 was direct financial support Other contributions were volunteerism, staff time, donated space, and in-kind donations
	Congregations of Washington, DC area	Survey for the Urban Institute	Estimates congregations only spend $15,000 per year on community services and programs
	100 congregations 6 urban areas		Average total budget: $150,000
Bachelder (2000)	430 metropolitan areas		Poverty and crime are much less likely to reach critical mass in politically-integrated metro areas
Littlefield (2005)	315 churches in the Northwest 320 churches in the Midwest Denver churches Atlanta churches		Churches actively engaged in one or more outreach program: • 69% in the Northwest • 66% in the Midwest • 66% in Denver • 85% in Atlanta Activist Churches: • Methodist (77%) • Baptist (65%) • Pentecostal (60%) • Older churches • Larger churches • Church building ownership • With more community programs • Class status
	635 churches in the Northeast		The Pastor of all denominations found their mission to be combining practical

	and North Central		assistance with spiritual guidance
	Over 1000 churches in different regions of the country	Large-scale survey	20% of churches provide some form of community wide economic or institutional development

Appendix B: Intake Survey

Demographic & Leadership Profile

Name _____ Date _____

PART I: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your gender? Male Female
2. What year were you born? _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity? _____
4. Do you reside in Massix County? □Yes □No City _____

PART II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE

5. Are you currently employed? □Yes □No
Employer _____ Title _____ Location _____

6. Please describe your leadership roles in the *current* or a *former* workplace.
_____
_____
_____

7. Are you a member of a civic, community, or social organization? □Yes □No
(Please list) _____ -
_____

8. Please describe your leadership roles in the *current* or a *former* organization.
_____
_____
_____

9. Are you a member of a faith-based institution (such as a church)? □Yes □No
Institution _____ Denomination _____ Location _____

10. Please describe your leadership roles in the *current* or a *former* religious institution.
_____
_____
_____

For additional space, please provide the survey item number and the response on the back.
Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C: Recruitment Intervention Interview Guide

1. For this initiative to be a success, who should be at the leadership development issue work group "planning table"? Why?

2. Who is currently not represented in our planning process? Why do you think they are not involved?

3. What expertise or perspective do you bring to our planning process?

4. Whose "interests" do you also represent?

5. What will be some challenges of involving those not currently part of the process?

6. How can these challenges be circumvented?

Appendix D: Critical Incident Interview Guide

CRITICAL INCIDENT GUIDE

1. To begin, tell me a little bit about how you came to be a program planner in the Massix Archway community leadership development program.

2. Next, I'd like you to tell me about your experience as a member of the planning team.

   a) Think of a when you felt included. Please describe the incident as a story, i.e. describe the setting, the context, the characters involved, etc. What was your role? Describe what happened first, what triggered the incident, what you did, and how it turned out.

   b) Think of a time when you felt excluded. Please describe the incident as a story, i.e. describe the setting, the context, the characters involved, etc. What was your role? Describe what happened first, what triggered the incident, what you did, and how it turned out.

3. What made you feel comfortable to participate in the planning effort? What made you feel uncomfortable to participate in the planning effort? (Probes may be used based upon observations.)

4. Did you actively recruit other community members to take part in the study? If so, can you describe your recruitment efforts and its outcomes? (Probes may be used.)

5. Now I'd like to explore what you believe were critical incidents that occurred during the program planning process up to this point that impacted program sustainability.

   a) First, how do you define or characterize a sustainable community program?

   b) Think about a time when you felt a decision was made that you thought would positively impact the sustainability of the leadership program. As a story, please describe the setting, the context, the characters involved, the critical incidents, what happened, how you communicated your views, and how things turned out.

   c) Think about a time when you felt a decision was made that you thought would negatively impact the sustainability of the leadership program. As a story, please describe the setting, the context, the characters involved, the critical incidents, what happened, how you communicated your views, and how things turned out.

6. Overall, what did you learn as a planner in the rural community leadership development program? How did you learn it?

7. What has been the impact of power, privilege, and diversity?

Appendix E: Partial List of Reviewed Documents

- Georgia's Community Leadership Initiative: Building local capacity to support the economic growth and viability of rural Georgia (Program evaluation for 2002-2007 and recommendations Coordinated by Louise Hill, Fanning Institute, UGA, Prepared for the Georgia Rural Development Council)
- Archway Partnership Project: Ellis-Massix County Listening Session Report (August 11, 2008, Prepared by Fanning Institute for VP for Public Service and Outreach at UGA)
- Massix Archway Leadership Development Steering Committee Meeting Notes (February 24, 2009)
- Archway Partnership 2011 Annual Report
- Archway Partnership 2010 Annual Report
- Archway Partnership 2009 Annual Report
- CBDG Leadership Program 2007-2008 Curriculum manual
- CBDG leadership materials
- Community Effecting Change (CEC) materials
- Massix Archway LDWG communications
- Massix Archway LDWG committee meeting communications

Appendix F: Focus Group Guide

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Round Robin

1. Describe the expertise that you brought to the program planning effort for the development of a leadership program.

(Engaging those that do not respond)

2. What else did you have to learn in order to meaningfully contribute to the planning? How did you learn it?

3. What beliefs did you originally hold at the beginning of planning for the leadership development program?

4. What beliefs were validated throughout the planning process? What beliefs were challenged?

5. Describe a major "Aha" learning moment that actually **changed** your initial beliefs?

6. Looking back, during the planning of the leadership program, what did you have to unlearn?

7. What factors have you found that make for a sustainable rural community leadership development program and why?

8. How did diversity and inclusion impact program planning and the final program planned?

9. How have you changed since taking part in the planning effort?

10. How has the program you originally imagined transformed into the current program offering after the planning process?

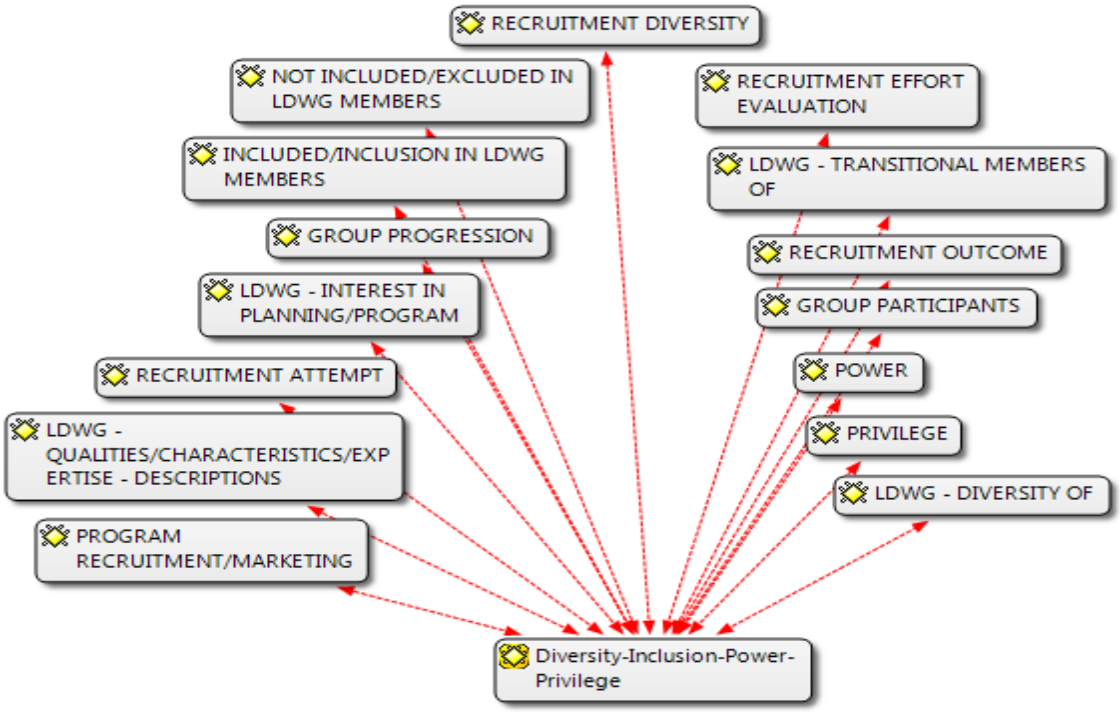
11. How has the leadership development work group changed?

Appendix G: Coding Scheme

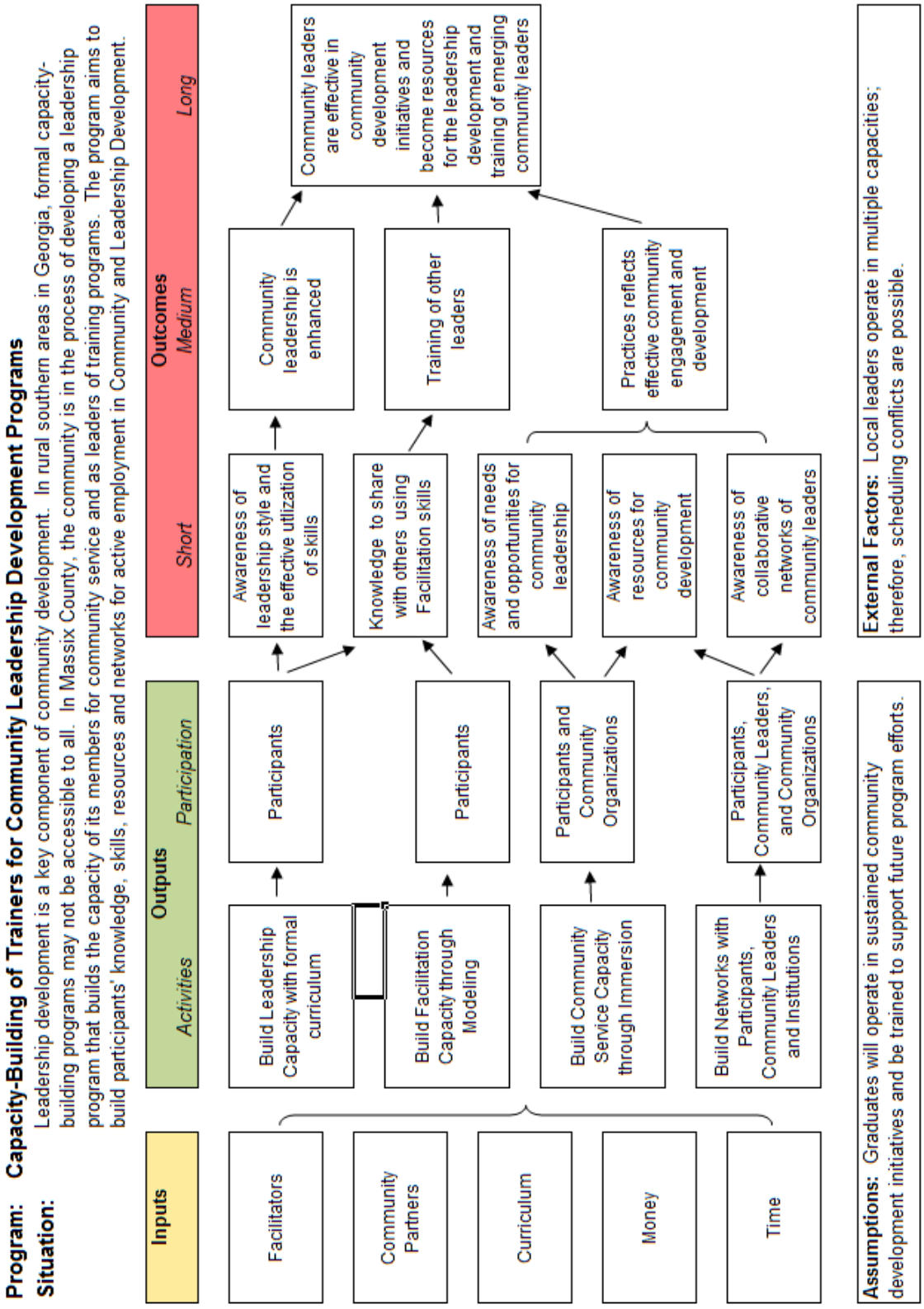
Codes Generated from the Data

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM OUTCOMES
CHANGE - NEW OR OLD PROGRAM
CHANGE EFFORTS (IN GENERAL)
COMFORT
COMMUNITY - GRASSROOTS
COMMUNITY - LEADERS
COMMUNITY - RURAL SOUTH QUALITIES
DISCOMFORT/UNCOMFORTABLE
FACILITATION
FAITH/FAITH-BASED/CHURCH
FIRST/FIRST FEW MEETINGS (BEGINNING)
GROUP PARTICIPANTS
GROUP PROGRESSION
GROUP SYNERGY
INCLUDED/INCLUSION IN LDWG MEMBERS
LDWG- SMALLNESS OF
LDWG – COMMITMENT OF
LDWG - DIVERSITY OF
LDWG - HOW THEY WERE RECRUITED/CHOSE - CHARACTERISTICS
LDWG - INTEREST IN PLANNING/PROGRAM
LDWG - PARTICIPATION OF
LDWG - QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS/EXPERTISE - DESCRIPTIONS
LDWG - TRANSITIONAL MEMBERS OF
LEARNING- LACK OF UNDERSTANDING
LEARNING EXPERIENCES
NOT INCLUDED/EXCLUDED IN LDWG MEMBERS
POWER
PRIVILEGE
PROGRAM RECRUITMENT/MARKETING
RECRUITMENT ATTEMPT
RECRUITMENT DIVERSITY
RECRUITMENT EFFORT EVALUATION
RECRUITMENT OUTCOME
REFLECTION
SUSTAINABILITY - DECISION THAT IMPACTED IT
SUSTAINABILITY - MEASURE TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMS

Diversity-Inclusion-Power-Privilege Family Tree



Appendix H: Logic Model of Leadership Development Program



Appendix I: Leadership Development Offerings in Massix County

Factors	Leadership Massix	Massix Archway
Origins	Created in response to Leadership Georgia initiative and propelled by the development of such programs by other local Community Business Development Giants	Established as a response to community priorities determined at a listening session attended by 100 members of the community where community leadership development and the engagement of church leaders emerged as a common theme.
Objectives	Community economic awareness (based upon survey of program graduates)	Capacity-building community leadership development (as determined by the executive board, leadership steering committee, and listening session participant feedback)
Participants	Business owners and employees of CBDG member businesses and organizations Participants are selected by superiors No standard criterion	Non-restrictive (the community-at-large) Recruitment of church leaders, among others Motivation is key
Logistics	Participants tour the community one weekday out of the month for an 8-hour period	To be determined
Cost	$200 Paid by CBDG-member business or organization	To be determined
Curriculum	Immersion in the community to promote community economic awareness	Purposed to have curriculum-based “traditional” leadership development components Actual curriculum to be determined (Potentially, the Fanning Institute curriculum for

		leadership development may be adopted and was used hereafter for comparison)
Leadership Capacity-Building	Does not attend to leadership capacity-building knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and abilities Attends to tools and resources for community engagement Provides an environment for networking	Proven capacity-building knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and abilities Proven tools and resources for sustained civic engagement Provides an environment for networking
Outcome	Increased awareness of businesses and industries in the rural area	Proven sustained community development
Goal Perspectives	Community economic development from a business perspective (better the operation of the business or organization for economic well-being)	Community development from a community betterment perspective (economic and social well-being)
Alignment with Organizational Mission	The CBDG identifies leadership development as a critical area of focus for economic well-being	A standard practice of Archway Partnership is community capacity-building and leadership development
Use of Evaluation	Participants evaluate activities	Measureable outcomes are required for the leadership program. The Fanning Institute curriculum was proved effective in the 2002-2005 five-year evaluation

Appendix J: Fanning Recommendation

Suggestions for Ellis City (pseudonym)

Leadership is a life-long journey

Ensure that everyone, regardless of age or circumstance, has an opportunity to develop themselves as community leaders.

The intent is to promote active and informed leadership as an essential component of successful community economic development, to build local capacity

Adult Leadership Class:

Recruitment of program participants

The steering committee will need to give thought to who they want to participate and how will these participants be recruited.

- An emphasis on potential and emerging leaders who reflect the demographic characteristics of the community, including participants ages 18-25.
- Your recruitment approach might include posters, ads, news articles, letters of invitation, civic club presentations or other strategies good in your community. Often Steering committee members need to do individual asking and recruitment for an inaugural program.

An application form that includes a program schedule, commitment form and relevant information about the applicant for the selection process will need to be developed.

Instructor Training (Train the Trainer) for Local Leadership Programs

- The training is conducted over a two day period (a sample agenda follows). The training does not have to be conducted on two consecutive days.

- 10 to 15 participants should be recruited from established community leaders who have good communication skills and some skill in teaching or facilitation.
- Instructors must be willing to take a neutral role in facilitating the sessions. In other words, they will check their agendas at the door when facilitating the local leadership program.
- Time commitment will depend upon the Steering Committee's decision on program format and length. Generally instructors commit to facilitate one or two sessions and are partnered with another instructor to team teach the session. Team teaching in encouraged insuring that facilitators maintain a neutral role in the delivery of the program.

Considerations/Decisions to be made before launching the Instructor Training

Steering Committee Composition:

- Is the Steering Committee going to be the Archway Executive Committee or a sub group recruited by the Archway Executive Committee?
- Selecting Steering Committee members is probably the most important responsibility in implementing a community leadership program. Members should be representative of the diverse class the program is hoping to attract. Even though there is no magic number, the average size of a Steering Committee may vary from 5 to 11 members.
- The Steering Committee should be representative of and willing to engage additional collaborating organizations.
- Selected instructors/trainers

Curriculum

Decide which curriculum you want to use:

The 4th edition curriculum is used most often with emerging leaders at the grassroots level. There are 8 modules in the 4th edition curriculum. The module topics are:

- Understanding Community Leadership
- Effective Communication
- Valuing Community Diversity
- Group Dynamics
- Conducting Successful Meetings
- Group Problem Solving and Decision Making

- Managing Conflict
- Building Communities through Partnerships and Collaboration

The 5th edition is most often used to provide leadership skill development components to a Community Leadership that wants to devote time to additional sessions on community issues or concerns such as education, health care, law enforcement, etc.

- Understanding Leadership
- Communicating Effectively
- Making Group Decisions
- Building Communities Through Collaboration
- Leading Community Change

Each session in both curriculums is designed to be taught over a 3 ½ hour period. With each of these curriculums, the Fanning Institute recommends and it is required for the Community Leadership Grant Program that 3 additional sessions be developed based on available local resources. The additional session topics are:

- Knowing your community (socio-demographics)
- Economic development
- Local governance

Program Format

The Steering Committee will need to make decisions on program format which can have an influence on instructor recruitment. This will also be influenced by your target audience for the program. Some questions to consider are:

- What will be time format for the program? A full day, partial day or evening program?
- How often will the sessions occur? Consecutive weeks, twice a month or once a month?
- Will you offer meals or snacks and how does this need to be worked into the schedule? What will the instructors' role be in facilitating the food?
- Will the program meet at one location or move to different locations?

Proposal
Leadership Development Program
Leadership Massix

The Fanning Institute
University of Georgia
July 2011 P ROPOSA L TO S E R V E L E A D E R SHI P MASSIX , ELLIS , GEORG I A JULY, 2011

OVERVIEW

The Fanning Institute (Fanning) is a unit of Public Service and Outreach at The University of Georgia (UGA). Fanning includes multi-disciplinary team members who serve communities and organizations throughout Georgia and the Southeast. Core service areas include: leadership development; facilitation, mediation, and public engagement; community economic development; city and regional planning; strategic planning; law and public policy; and historic preservation and design.

This proposal responds to a request by the UGA Archway Partnership in Massix County and Leadership Massix. It is based upon the experience of Fanning in the design and delivery of community leadership development curriculum and programs. This proposal is divided into four sections: purpose and scope of the program; anticipated outcomes; budget; and appendices.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Fanning proposes a **two-phase initiative**. The first phase will encompass a series of training sessions for existing leaders who comprise the Leadership Massix steering committee. The second phase will feature a "train-the-trainer" program for participants

of the first phase to equip them to deliver the Fanning curriculum through future Leadership Massix offerings. The proposed programs will be designed to equip emerging and existing leaders to exercise action-oriented leadership in serving those they serve.

Phase I will be facilitated by Fanning faculty from July to December 2011 utilizing content from the *Fanning Institute's Community Leadership Program Curriculum*. Fanning proposes two options to consider:

Option A would involve five core module sessions. These are: (a) Understanding Leadership, (b) Communicating Effectively, (c) Making Group Decisions, (d) Building Communities Through Collaboration, and (e) Leading Community Change.

Option B would involve these five core modules plus up to four additional modules to choose from. Possible additional modules include: (f) Valuing Community Diversity, (g) Group Dynamics, (h) Conducting Successful Meetings, and (i) Managing Conflict.

For either option, Leading Community Change will be the final module and will include a facilitated exercise to identify a real-life community issue and develop a community action plan for addressing this issue.

Appendix L: Interventions Considered

Proposed Intervention	Research Basis	Selection	Client Decision-making
Recruiting the support of more community stakeholders (professionals in the community, churches, community organizations) • More players • Pull in faith-based representatives • Ask the IWG who else	Who's at the planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)	Will proceed with intervention Need to be comfortable to be there and to participate Help identify the void in the community	The goal is to make sure we have a good mix (diversity), where people work and where people live, and to promote community networking and demographic representation of the county. We have several "heavy weights." We need more "worker bees" (laborers) to include at the planning table. The community organizations will know who the working class laborers are. They are not necessarily administrators in the organizations, but members and/or active participants of the churches, community organizations, and employers. The client and I identified three diverse church leaders to recruit to the table: An African-American female pastor and ministerial association officer, a Caucasian associate pastor who is a graduate of Leadership Massix and is currently involved in community service initiatives, and a Hispanic church leader.
Multiple community stakeholders	Creating ownership, determining relevance, attending to multiple stakeholder interests (Hanson	Will not proceed with intervention	The goal is to get the right people in the room to support the effort.

	& Salmoni, 2010)		
Leadership development program planning	Program planning – characteristics of leadership development curriculum (Cervero & Wilson, 2006)	Will not proceed with intervention	The intervention will be conducted by the IWG, which embeds ownership and fosters shared learning.
Team building interventions	Group team-building (Kasl et al., 1997)	Will not proceed with intervention	It is believed that team building will work itself out as the group continues to form. Respect for each other's contribution and interest in each other has grown. It is believed that all have good intentions. All are trying.

Appendix M: Profile of Original LDWG Constituents (Baseline Data)

Profile	Intake Survey of Original LDWG Members	All Engaged Original LDWG Members
Gender	Males: 2 of 7 (28.6%) Females: 5 of 7 (71.4%)	Males: 3 of 9 (33.3%) Females: 6 of 9 (66.7%)
Age	Frequency: 30, 33, 39, 40, 47, 48, 54 Under 30: 0 (0%) 30-39: 3 (42.9%) 40-49: 3 (42.9%) 50-59: 1 (14.3%) 60 and over: 0 (0%)	
Race	White: 3 of 7 (42.9%) Black: 4 of 7 (57.1%)	White: 4 of 9 (44.4%) Black: 5 of 9 (63.6%)
City of Residence	Ellis: 6 of 7 (85.7%) Other Massix City: 1 of 7 (14.3%)	
City of Employment	Ellis: 6 of 7 (85.7%) Other Massix City: 1 of 7 (14.3%)	Ellis: 8 of 9 (88.9%) Other Massix City: 1 of 9 (11.1%)
Professional Community Sector	Health/Medical: 1 Local Federal Employee: 1 Municipal Employee: 2 Post-secondary Public Education: 2 Secondary Public Education: 1	Health/Medical: 1 Local Federal Employee: 1 Municipal Employee: 2 Post-secondary Public Education: 4 Secondary Public Education: 1
Profession	Leadership: 5 of 7 (71.4%) 1 Asst Director 2 Directors 1 Asst Dean 1 Superintendent Working Class Labor: 2 of 7 (28.6%) 1 Instructor 1 Comm Devt Specialist	Leadership: 5 (55.6%) 1 Asst Director 2 Directors 1 Asst Dean 1 Superintendent Working Class Laborer: 4 (45.4%) 1 Assoc Professor 2 Instructors 1 Comm Devt Specialist
Church Affiliation	Affiliated: 6 of 7 (85.7%) Methodist: 2 Baptist: 2 Holiness (Pentecostal): 1 Non-denominational: 1 Not Affiliated: 1 of 7 (14.3%)	
Church Leadership	Ministerial Leader: 1 of 7 (14.3%) Ordained elder Lay Leader: 4 of 7 (57.4%)	

	Planning Committee member and past Youth Department Coordinator Wedding Coordinator Assistant Secretary and Program Coordinator Youth Group Volunteer No Leadership: 2 of 7 (28.6%)	
Community Organizations other than Churches (excluding LDWG)	*Frequency: 0, 0, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10 (28 organizations, 27 different organizations)* Boys & Girls Club: 1 CBDG: 2 City of Massix: 1 Club of Ellis: 1 Community Action Committee:1 Dietary Managers Association: 1 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: 1 Ellis Area Employers Committee: 1 Ellis Junior Service League: 1 Ellis Kiwanis Club: 1 Ellis Rotary Club: 1 Ellis Massix Tourism Council: 1 Ellis & Massix Observer: 1 Friends of Massix City: 1 Georgia Municipal Association: 1 Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority: 1 Macon County Kiwanis Club: 1 Masonic Lodge: 1 Massix City Guild: 1 Municipal Committee: 1 NAACP: 1 Other Massix Archway effort: 1 Presidential Pathways Travel Association: 1 The Technical College Culinary Advisory Committee: 1 The Technical College Marketing Advisory Committee: 1 Massix County Parks and Recreation: 1 United Way: 1	

Appendix N: Overview of Desired Constituents and Recruitment Efforts

Frequency	Community sector	Recruitment attempted	Evaluation
4	Education: public and private secondary and public post-secondary	2 individuals in the post-secondary public education sector	Unable to commit due to job-related travels and time commitment
4	Church organizations and Clergy	1st Cycle: 3 Senior leadership contacted directly	Unable to commit due to time constraints and the responsibilities of their offices.
		2nd Cycle: Massix Ministerial Association meeting—participation solicited by addressing the group	They were engaged and asked meaningful questions concerning the effort. However, there were no commitments.
		3rd Cycle: Requested a member of church leadership	Recruitment efforts continue
4	Civic and Community Organizations: Kiwanis, Rotary, Boys and Girls Club	Organizational linkage was not a primary determinant in recruitment	Post-recruitment—From 27 to 31 different organizations represented
3	Government: Mayor and Commissioners, Someone from the City and County	None	There are currently three representatives from municipalities
3	Business and Industry: Hospital (healthcare), nursing home (home health), drug store, pharmacist, therapist	4 recruits solicited based upon employer: minority business owner, large employer, and a professional at a	3 recruits engage. 2 eventually disengaged. However, the minority business owner continues to make

		financial institution	significant contributions.
2	Diversity: Ethnicity, Cultural Background, Demographics, Socio-economic status "all walks to truly represent the community (a leader from each sector)"	3 recruits attempted based upon ethnicity--Hispanic and Indian	1 Hispanic recruit engaged but did not continue with the group.
1	President Carter	No recruitment attempts	No noted contact was made
1	Scouting Organizations	No recruitment attempts	No noted contact was made
1	Stakeholders: Parents and students	No recruitment attempts	No noted contact was made
1	Target Audience	Attended to in other parameters	Inclusive to all
1	Skills-based: "Who can help us figure out logistics"	Attempted to recruit a marketing professional	Although interest was expressed, the individual did not engage with the LDWG

Appendix O: Post-Recruitment Profile of LDWG

Profile	Intake Survey of Consenting LDWG Members Post-Recruitment	All Original Engaged LDWG Members and All Five Recruits
Gender	Males: 2 of 8 (25%) *Females: 6 of 8 (75%)*	*Males: 6 of 14 (46.2%)* *Females: 8 of 14 (53.8%)*
Age	Frequency: 30, 33, 38, 39, 40, 47, 48, 54 Under 30: 0 *30-39: 4 (50%)* 40-49: 3 (37.5%) 50-59: 1 (12.5%) 60 and over: 0	
Race	*Black: 5 of 8 (62.5%)* White: 3 of 8 (37.5%)	*Black: 7 of 14 (46.2%)* *Hispanic: 1 of 14 (7.7%)* *White: 6 of 14 (46.2%)*
City of Residence	*Ellis: 7 of 8 (87.5%)* *Other Massix City*: 1 of 8 (12.5%)	
City of Employment	*Ellis: 7 of 8 (87.5%)* Other Massix City: 1 of 8 (12.5%)	*Ellis: 11 of 14 (76.9%)* *Other Massix City: 2 of 14 (15.4%)* *Unknown: 1 of 14 (7.7%)*
Professional Community Sector	Health/Medical: 1 Local Federal Employee: 1 *Minority Small Business Co-Owner (CEO): 1* Municipal Employee: 2 Post-secondary Public Education: 2 Secondary Public Education: 1	Health/Medical: 1 Local Federal Employee: 1 *Minority Small Business Co-Owner (CEO): 1* Municipal Employee: 2 *Post-secondary Public Education: 5* Private Manufacturing Industry: 1 *Private Financial Business: 1* Secondary Public Education: 1 *Unknown: 1*
Profession	*Leadership: 6 of 8 (75%)* *1 Business Co-Owner (CEO)* 1 Asst Director 2 Directors 1 Asst Dean 1 Superintendent Working Class Laborer: 2 (28.6%) 1 Instructor 1 Comm Devt Specialist	
Church Affiliation	*Affiliated: 7 of 8 (87.5%)* Methodist: 2 Baptist: 2	

	Holiness (Pentecostal): 2 Non-denominational: 1 Not Affiliated: 1 of 8 (12.5%)	
Church Leadership	Ministerial Leader: 1 of 8 (12.5%) Ordained elder *Lay Leader: 5 of 8 (62.5%)* Planning Committee member and past Youth Department Coordinator Wedding Coordinator Assistant Secretary and Program Coordinator *Co-Teach of Youth Bible Study* Youth Group Volunteer No Leadership: 2 of 8 (25%)	
Community Organizations other than Churches (excluding LDWG)	Frequency: 0, 0, 2, 4, 5, *6*, 7, 10 (34 organizations, 31 different organizations) *Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority: 1* Boys & Girls Club: 1 CBDG: 2 City of Massix: 1 Club of Ellis: 1 Community Action Committee:1 Dietary Managers Association: 1 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: 1 *Downtown Development Authority: 1* Ellis Area Employers Committee: 1 Ellis Junior Service League: 1 Ellis Kiwanis Club: 1 *Ellis Rotary Club: 2* Ellis Massix Tourism Council: 1 Ellis & Massix Observer: 1 Massix City Guild: 1 Friends of Massix City: 1 *Georgia Association of Community Care Providers: 1* Georgia Municipal Association: 1 *The College Nursing Advisory Committee: 1* Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority: 1 Macon County Kiwanis Club: 1 Masonic Lodge: 1	

	Municipal Committee: 1 NAACP: 1 Other Massix Archway effort: 1 Presidential Pathways Travel Association: 1 The Technical College Culinary Advisory Committee: 1 *The Technical College Marketing Advisory Committee: 2* Massix County Parks and Recreation: 1 United Way: 1	

Appendix P: Pre-Survey Facilitation Summary

Advancing Massix (pseudonym)

[redacted], 2013

Facilitation Skills Development Pre Survey Summary

Please rate yourself on each of the items below comparing your ability and knowledge in each dimension before the workshop. Fill in a rating number for each item.

	To Some Extent			To A Great Extent
1. Feel comfortable using icebreakers	1	2 *4*	3 *7*	4 *8*
2. Can use varied teaching methods	1	2 *7*	3 *9*	4 *5*
3. Understand value of self-assessment	1	2	3	4

		2	*12*	*17*
4. Have an awareness of logistical factors	1 *1*	2 *7*	3 *9*	4 *4*
5. Can handle problem behaviors	1 *1*	2 *12*	3 *6*	4 *2*
6. Understand that a facilitator is not a presenter	1	2 *3*	3 *12*	4 *6*
7. Feel comfortable using visual aids	1	2 *1*	3 *9*	4 *11*
8. Can articulate strategies for effective facilitation	1	2 *9*	3 *10*	4 *2*

*** Red numbers indicate response tally**

Appendix Q: Post-Survey Facilitation Summary

Facilitation Skills Development Post Survey Summary

Advancing Massix (pseudonym)

[redacted], 2013

Please rate yourself on each of the items below comparing your ability and knowledge in each dimension after the workshop. Fill in a rating number for each item.

	To Some Extent			To A Great Extent
1. Feel comfortable using icebreakers	1	2	3 *3*	4 *16*
2. Can use varied teaching methods	1	2	3 *7*	4 *12*
3. Understand value of self-assessment	1	2	3 *4*	4 *15*
4. Have an awareness of logistical factors	1	2	3 *7*	4 *12*
	1			

5. Can handle problem behaviors in the group		2 *2*	3 *9*	4 *8*
6. Understand that a facilitator is not a presenter	1	2	3 *3*	4 *16*
7. Feel comfortable using visual aids	1	2	3 *3*	4 *16*
8. Can articulate strategies for effective facilitation	1	2	3 *8*	4 *11*

*Red numbers indicate response tally

Mention 3 strategies:

1.Collaboration

Not a presenter
Make everyone feel comfortable

Managing conflict

Inclusion

Visuals

Conducting successful meetings

Be organized

Managing conflict

Inspiring and facilitating group conversations

Self assessment

Empowering & encouraging others through direct actions

Understand that a facilitator is not a presenter

Keep people moving

Use varying teaching methods

Sensitive to/knowledgeable about the group dynamics

Visual aids

Engage

2.Problem Solving & Group Decision Making

A part of group

Manage time

Effective communication

Types of learning

Group interactions

Effective communication

Engage your audience

Group problem solving/decision making

Encouraging creativity and diversity

Role playing

Adapting to the environment to facilitate through the use of learning/communicating styles

Staying focused/on task

Include the participants do not present the entire session

Use of visuals (and others) to best serve the needs of all learning styles

Group participation

Move around the room/take turns with others

3.Communication Styles

Not necessarily an expert

State goals

Group dynamics

Ice breakers

Role plays, speaking/auditory

Understanding leadership working together

Provide adequate logistics

Conducting successful meetings

Creating a welcoming inclusive atmosphere

Visual aids

Balance of leading & following

Positive attitudes

Knowledgeable and organized of topic

Self assessments

Be prepared/know material well

Appendix R: Facilitation Evaluation

ADVANCING MASSIX (pseudonym)

Train the Trainer – [redacted], 2013

This evaluation helps us plan for the next program, as well as measure how we met your program's goals.

Your feedback is *Very Valuable* to us… thank you for answering the questions as completely as possible!

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Program Objectives & Goals							
1.	The program met its stated goals and objectives.	17	3				
2.	The topics discussed were valuable to my own leadership development.	18	2				
3.	The program challenged my thinking.	17	3				
4.	I was provided an opportunity to get to know other participants.	18	1				
5.	As a result of this program, I learned important new leadership ideas and skills.	17	3				
6.	I would recommend this program to others.	19	1				
Instructor Quality							
1.	The instructors had excellent knowledge of the subject.	20					
2.	The instructors were organized and prepared.	19					
3.	The instructors' teaching styles were effective.	19	1				
4.	The pace of the program was appropriate (e.g., not too fast or too slow).	17	3				

5.	The instructors encouraged an exchange of different ideas and experiences.	19	1				

What can we do to serve you better?

1. Overall, what did you like most about this program?

   I have a slight fear of public speaking & this gave me more confidence.

   The atmosphere: laid back and comfortable which encouraged learning & engagement

   The energy and professionalism

   You all did an awesome job!

   The interactive development of skill sets. The "learn by doing" approach

   Working with and meeting new people.

   Team work

   The presenters—knowledgeable, warm & engaging

   Participants' delivery of the different lessons

   Ignited excitement for helping. Gave me ideas for utilization.

   Facilitator involvement and encouragement

   The material was appropriate and relevant. Facilitation was engaging. It was definitely a capacity building experience in regards to leadership, community engagement, and facilitation.

   The group participation activities were fun while being highly educational.

   Working in different groups

   Love the entire program!

   Participation among everyone

   It was open to all points of view and experiences

2. What did you like least about this program?
   It was on the weekend, ha ha
   Nothing
   Takes time, but that is me, this turned into a positive that I was worried about.
   Don't have many weaknesses to note
   The length- 2 ½ days is a little long.
   I enjoyed it all!
   N/A
   N/A
   The days seemed too long
   There was nothing negative
   It was on a Saturday ☺
   Loved it all!
   Limited time to prepare collectively for facilitating module.

3. What can we do to serve you better?
   Stay in touch.
   Nothing-keep going.
   Visit more often.
   Great Job! Not necessary
   N/A
   Keep in touch!
   Continued support
   I appreciate the opportunity for continued contact and support as we move forward.
   Keep in touch ☺
   Great Job
   Tell the participants to pay close attention to your modeling styles, then take note of your characteristics

4. Additional comments:

Awesome job!!

Many thanks for deeply rewarding time.

Thanks!

Great job!

Awesome

The synergy among the facilitators was amazing. They challenged us, inspired us, and invested in a wonderful future for our community

Thanks for all your help!

[redacted], [redacted], and [redacted] are great!

Great weekend! Enjoyed our facilitators, [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted]! Come back to see us! [redacted]

Thank you!