NMSU CES Agent CRED Training

Organizing and Planning for Community Economic Development

J. Michael Patrick and Anil Rupasingha
Community Resource and Economic Development Specialists

May 21, 2008
Silver City, NM
The goal of the NMSU CES-CRED Program is to provide county agents and community leaders with---

- Research-based knowledge and information
- Educational programs and training
- Professional development
- Technical assistance
- Access to resources

---to empower and grow their communities, develop entrepreneurs, and enhance human and social capital development.
Our goal is not to turn county agents into economic development specialists, but rather to provide them with---

- a general understanding of economic development process
- professional support, including information gathering and interpretation tools
- knowledge of and access to resources

---to support their community economic development programs, projects and activities.
Purpose

• The purpose of today’s training session is to initiate the beginning of a partnership for the economic development of your communities.

• The partnership will involve local community leaders, NMSU personnel- county agents, extension specialists, other university professionals, and external resource providers in the purposeful process of achieving community economic development.
Definitions and Concepts

• We define community in terms of location: a neighborhood, a small town, a large city, a county, a region, a state, or a nation.

• Community economic development (CED) is often measured in terms of more jobs and greater incomes, which are important achievements.

• But CED it is more than jobs and income, it involves social, environmental, and economic change necessary to enhance quality of life.
Community Economic Development is organized community effort to ---

• build assets- (physical, human, and social capital)
• secure resources (information, knowledge, money, and policies)
• take strategically planned actions that increase the capacity of residents

---to improve the quality of life in their locality (community).
Questions

• How do you know when a community is developed?
• What characteristics/attributes do developed communities have that non/under-developed communities do not have?
• Improved quality of life is something most people want.
  – How should we define quality of life?
  – How do we know when quality of life has improved?
Generally speaking, individuals or single organizations can not, by themselves, improve a community’s quality of life. It takes a community-wide effort. It takes planning and follow-through.
Strategic Planning

• Planning for the economic development of a community is an on-going process.
• Communities can use strategic planning to envision their future and take appropriate steps, given available local and external resources, to achieve that future.
• Strategic planning does not evolve on its own. Successful strategic planning requires assembling a group of community leaders, stakeholders, and concerned citizens and getting them to honestly discuss their area’s economic strengths and weaknesses.

• This process allows the local economic development organization (EDO) to create a vision for the community but also takes into consideration the realistic constraints that might hamper realizing the vision.
Strategic Planning is a multi-step making process, usually involving the following steps:

- Pre-planning: Initiate and organize the strategic planning process
- Assessing the local community and economic competitiveness
- Formulating realistic goals, objectives and strategies
- Identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing projects
- Developing plans of action
- Implementing those plans
- Monitoring and evaluating outcomes
- Retooling and adjusting.
Consensus Building

• Consensus is key to any successful strategic plan. It should be one of the first and ongoing steps of a strategic plan.

• Consensus is reached only when all stakeholders are involved and engaged in an environment where all are fully informed and equally empowered.
• Who to include? Ownership of the plan will be influenced by who participates, their degree of participation, and who funds the process.

• Stakeholders are individuals, groups, and organizations with a vested interest in the overall future of the community.
• The key is to determine whom to include. For a group to claim to speak for the public interest, it must be widely representative of the viewpoints in the community.

• In general, it is better to limit the group of participants. This can be done by involving different people at different points in the planning process either as direct participants serving on steering committees or task forces, or indirect participants attending broader community forums or receiving and reviewing reports.

• There should be a core group that remains together throughout the planning process to ensure continuity and that the planning is seen through.
Strategies of Building Consensus

- Two common tools to bring about consensus are the **Nominal Group Process** and the **Delphi technique**.

- The **Nominal Group Process** is a structured problem-solving or idea-generating strategy in which individuals are brought together in a non-threatening environment to express and discuss their ideas. The process can help to clarify, prioritize, reach consensus, and make decisions on proposed alternative actions.

  Step 1: Generate ideas individually and privately on paper.
  Step 2: Present ideas to group.
  Step 3: Talk through the different ideas for clarification.
  Step 4: Reduce the number of ideas by having people select their highest priority(s).
  Step 5: Prioritize remaining ideas either by silent or public balloting.
  Step 6: Discuss results. Make sure to ask, at the end, if people are satisfied with the results.
The Delphi Technique is another approach to building and reaching consensus. Unlike the nominal group process, the Delphi process does not require (but may involve) face-to-face participation. Rather it uses a series of questionnaires.

Step 1: Develop a questionnaire focusing on a specific problem, issue or need. The questionnaire should be sent to an appropriate respondent group, such as community leaders.

Step 2: Develop a second response/clarification questionnaire. This questionnaire should summarize the results from the first questionnaire and asks for feedback on those results (send to same respondent group). The process is repeated until the facilitating organizers feel they have a firm agreement or understanding of the issue at hand.

Step 3: A final summary report is then sent to the respondent group.
Community Assessments

There are essentially two different ways to do community assessments.

1. **Needs/Deficiency Approach** causes you to focus on what is absent or problematic or what the community needs. Under this approach the community tends to rely on external resources to solve problems. The needs/deficiency model tends to view the community as a collection of needs or crisis.

2. **The Asset-Based Approach** is characterized by a community seeing itself possessing a wide range of resources (assets). Furthermore, reciprocity is a key concept of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), where the development issue is not what the community can do for its residents, but what its residents can do for the community. Community development is a process by which local capacities are identified and mobilized. Mobilization is connecting people with capacities to other people, local associations, and local institutions.

3. The two approaches are often combined.
Types of Assessments

- Community needs assessments
- Quality of life studies
- Community Economic Preparedness Index
- Business needs assessments
- Business retention and expansion assessment surveys
In Summary

Community Economic Development is organized community effort to ---

* build assets- (physical, human, and social capital),
* secure resources (information, knowledge, money, and policies)
* take strategically planned actions that increase the capacity of residents

--- to improve the quality of life in their locality (community).