Community Based Food Systems  
Extension-led training and project development  
Session: Thursday, February 25, 2010  
12:30-1:45 pm  
Participatory Decision Making & Collaborative Teams

Facilitation Plan

Presenters:
- Mary Lou Addor – Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NCSU)
- Laurie Mettam – Center for Environmental Farming Systems (NCSU)

Review Goals for session: (5 minutes)
- Introduce core values of community-building, participatory decision-making and principles of resilience for collaborative work, as they relate to building community.
- Teams apply information to current project during a practice session
- Share lessons learned with all teams

Present Information (15 minutes)
- Core values of community building & process management
- Participatory decision-making
- Principles of resilience for collaborative work

Small Group Work (30 minutes)
Gather into your project teams and discuss the following questions on the handouts.
- Background Information
- Discussion Questions

Report out (15 minutes)

Closure - Questions & discussion (10 minutes)
Handouts: Group Discussion

Gather into your project teams and discuss the following questions:

- How would you apply these core values, principles, and decision-making model within your practice?
- Where are you in the process of forming your team?
  - If you are building your team, consider why you are asking partners to the table.
  - What are the interests and assets of the various stakeholders as it relates to this project?
    - Individual level – community member’s specialized skills and talents, political influence, knowledge, etc.
    - Group level – collective expertise or resources such as volunteers, meeting space, etc.
    - Institutional level – financial and technical resources, etc.
- What are the challenges that you anticipate in building, maintaining, or expanding your community team (i.e., getting stakeholders to agree on their goals and how they are going to achieve their goals)?

Handout: Partner table

Identifying Potential Partners/Collaborators and their Resources

Goal/Project:

Committee/Working Issues Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Potential Partner</th>
<th>Organizational Type</th>
<th>Priorities as they relate to this project</th>
<th>Population reached</th>
<th>Resources Available</th>
<th>Benefit for partner</th>
<th>Any conflicts with partner involvement *</th>
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* Conflict of interest
Definition of Collaboration:

Collaboration – “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.” (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001)

Core Values of Community-Building:

- **Focus on possibilities/asset mapping** - Each community has the resources to solve their own challenges whether that community is the workplace, rural town, or urban center. “The most sustainable improvements in community occur when citizens discover their own power to act.”

- **Value social capital** – Regardless of economic status, invite all stakeholders to the table and ensure their voice is heard. This helps build a sense of belonging to the group, accountability to the process and investment in the outcome.

Core Values of Process Management in Community Building:

- **Promote Full Participation**. Manage the process to give all involved a fair voice in contributing and learning from the differences in perspectives, approaches, backgrounds, and culture that can be found in the partnership.

- **Promote Mutual Understanding**. During the planning, implementation, and maintenance of the partnership, the participants can develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the perspective of others, and about the needs and goals, when the process allows people to exchange information about what is important to them.

- **Strive for Inclusive Solutions**. Design processes to avoid either/or decisions and advance opportunities to build win/win or "how can we... while at the same time..." solutions. The key to building integrative outcomes is to provide the means for people to make their interests known and understood.

- **Share Responsibility for Decisions**. The partners should share in the responsibility for decisions by being able to weigh in on choices that are important to them. Responsibility goes both ways. Sharing decision responsibility obligates the partners to find solutions to shared problems rather than fighting against alternatives, they dislike.

Principles of Resilience

Engage in the core principles when working in partnerships with others.

- The leadership in each agency participating in the project supports the goals that the collaborative teams are trying to achieve.

- Power among the leaders at the table is distributing equitably.

- In order to change a system, each component of the system will be impacted. For example, those organizations involved in promoting local foods would develop their own internal policies that support local foods – serve more local foods at the cafeteria.

- Group leaders agree on a method for dealing with conflict among the group members.

- Decision-making is agreed upon ahead of time and major decisions are transparent to all group members.

- Due to the decision-making agreements, subgroups can move forward quickly on projects because they understand what decisions and activities they are responsible for.

- Collaborative groups do not evolve into another bureaucracy. They are self-organizing systems that usually dissolve when the mission/project is complete.
• Written documents on the process, decisions, progress and outcomes are available to all stakeholders involved.

Principles in Process Design
• Strive for Inclusiveness of Participation. Partnership events should include credible representatives of the full spectrum of parties who are interested in or will be affected by a decision.
• Design Processes Collaboratively. Partnership processes should be designed collaboratively by those participating in them. This means that potential participants should be identified and brought into the planning process as early as possible, and that ongoing processes should be adapted as needed to effectively engage the capabilities and needs of all participants.
• Make Processes Transparent. Participants engaged in a partnership should have a clear idea of its purpose, who is responsible for organizing it, how processes will unfold, how decisions will be made and by whom, the role of the partners in the decision process, and how their ideas and concerns will be integrated into the final decision.
• Time Processes in Relation to Decisions. Public participation processes should be planned so that they can be informed by the most current information and shared in timely manner with regard to the decision process.

Principles in Information Integration
• Ensure Transparency of Information and Analysis. Information and analyses should be accessible and understandable to all members of the partnership. Be explicit about assumptions and uncertainties.
• Anticipate Information Needs. Partners should have opportunities to define the information they need, when they need it, and what they will do with it. Anticipate and help organize information provision and dissemination.
• Pay Attention to Both Facts and Values. Provide information and deliberation processes to allow the partners to evaluate trade-offs among things they value.

Citations:

Other References:
• Community-Based Food Systems in Michigan: Cultivating Diverse Collaborations from the Ground Up (online access at: www.joe.org/joe/2008august/iw1.php)