Nonprofit Popup Series: Needs Assessment, Asset Mapping & Issue Identification

Presented by:

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Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON
DANE COUNTY

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension

- Mission - Fulfill the Wisconsin Idea

- County Partnership

- Local Programming
    - 4-H & Positive Youth Development
    - Agriculture / Horticulture
    - Health & Well Being
        - Nutrition Education to low income individuals
    - Human Development & Relationships
    - Natural Resources
    - Community Development

UW- Extension
Community Development Institute

Extension's community development educational programming assists leaders, communities, and organizations to address community issues.

- Community Economic Development
- Local Government Education
- Community Food Systems
- Organizational & Leadership Development

Why this session?

Questions for the sector:

- Are leaders of new nonprofit organizations doing preliminary research to inform their activities?

- Are needs being defined based on personal experience or on community experience?

- Are organizations aware of each other?

- Are organizations addressing symptoms of problems or getting to root causes?

- Are we missing opportunities for nested work and/or collaboration?

Objectives for today

- Make the case for doing background research prior to developing organizations, initiatives, and projects

- Introduce concepts of needs assessment and asset mapping

- Recognize how community issues may be nested in relationships of power and political/economic structures

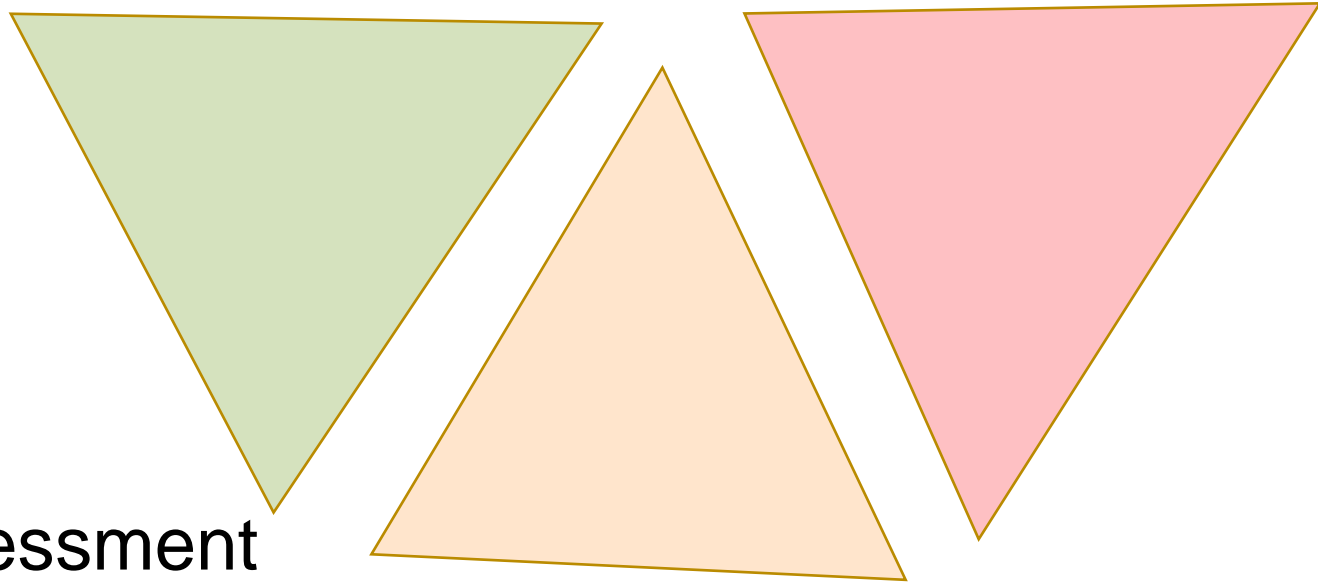- Introduce tools for conducting community-based research

The best organizations are learning organizations

What we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.

adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds
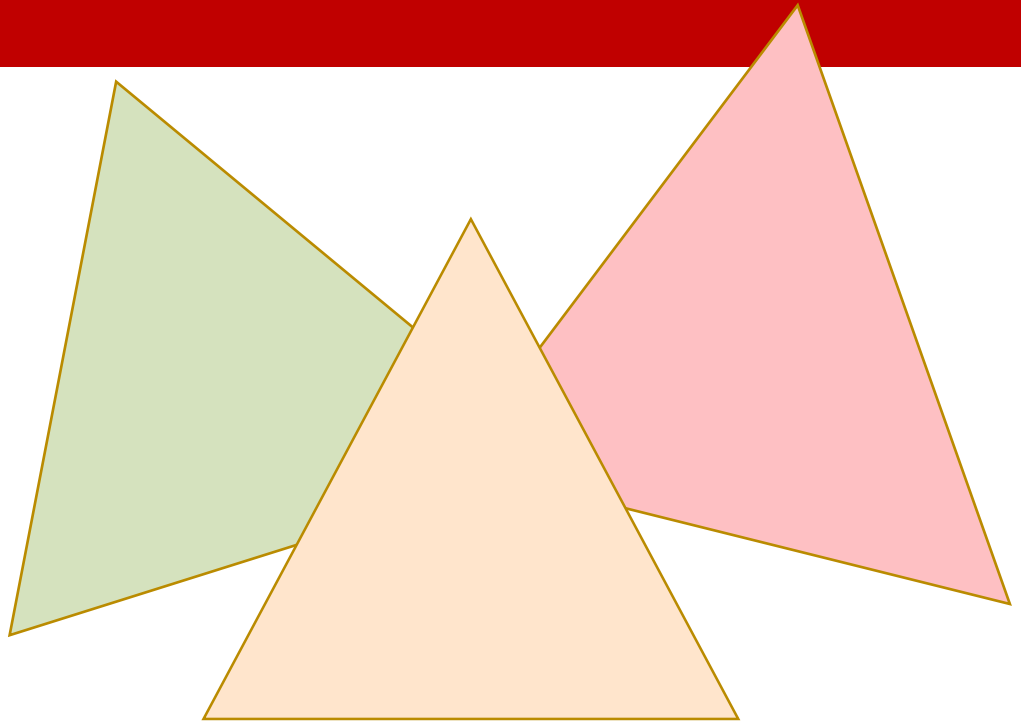
Three angles on community research

- Needs Assessment

- Asset Mapping

- Issue Identification

Three angles on community research

Needs Assessment - Asset Mapping - Issue Identification

Community-based participatory research

CBPR is a means for transformational learning and change-making that empowers people and groups to use their voice, position, and power to improve the community.

Needs Assessment

- Needs – the gap between what is and what should be

- Needs can be felt by an individual, a group, or an entire community

- Why do a needs assessment?
  - To gain a deep understanding of the community or of a community issue
  - To identify problems, issues, and gaps in services
  - To make decisions about priorities for program design or improvement
  - Involves community members from the beginning of the process

Needs Assessment – steps

- Recruit a planning group that represents all stakeholders and mirrors the diversity of the community

- Identify purpose: why do you want to conduct the assessment?

- Determine what data is already available

- Figure out what other information you need

- **Determine methods**

- Determine who you will gather information from

- Decide who will collect the data

- Analyze data

- Share data with the community

Needs Assessment – methods

- Analyze existing data

- Listening sessions or public forums

- Interviews

- Focus groups or community conversations

- Direct observation; participant observation

- Surveys

Cross Plains Market Analysis

Asset based community development (foundation for asset mapping)

- Resources, or assets, can include anyone or anything that can be used to improve the quality of life

- Everyone has something to contribute (gifts)

- Focus on the strengths and capacities of the people and organizations of the place

- Assets can be mobilized to build community or community capacity, and to deliver services where needed

Community Engagement

What it isn't:

- Asking for input
- Recruiting people to contribute to your agenda

What it is:

- **Identifying the individuals that already care about your agenda and mobilizing their action**
- **Finding out what individuals care about and supporting their self-directed actions**

Asset Mapping

- Is a strategy to identify assets in a community and to engage them

- Deploys community members as researchers

- Starts with identifying purpose and the range of resources to be mapped

- Can include institutions (organizations, civic associations, community resources) as well as resident "gifts" and interests

Information Gathering Strategies

- **Crowd-sourcing**
- Photo-documentation
- Transect mapping

Asset Mapping – a Community building approach

- Create a resident leadership team
- Select the geographic area for action
- Draw first asset map

Asset Mapping a Neighborhood: First Map

Asset Mapping (cont.)

- Identify individual gifts and passions
  - Interview leadership team
  - Leadership team interviews people whom they already know (~5)
  - Interviewees then interview (~5) people who they know
  - Snowball interviewing
- Draw second asset map
- Connect people with the same passions to act collectively

Asset Mapping a Neighborhood: The Action Map
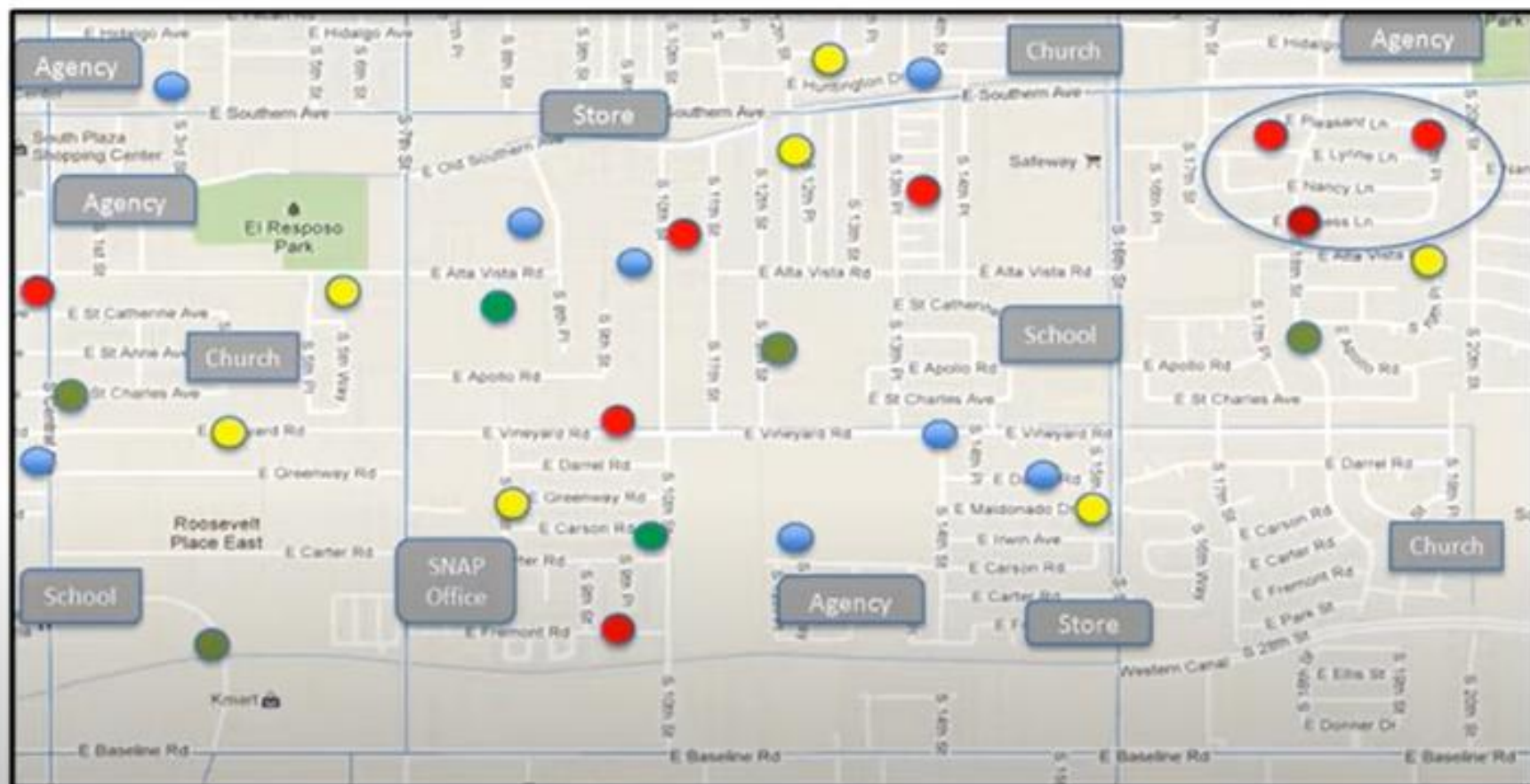
Issues focus: Grounded in Community Organizing

- Issues are more specific that problems, and include solutions or partial solutions

- Moving from individual level of analysis to collective level of analysis

- Facilitation of power analysis and systems analysis

- Building collective power

Issues focus: Attention to Power

- Issue focus asks:
  - Who has power with regard this issue?
  - How are things done with regard this issue?
  - How is the community affected by this issue?

- People-led definition of interventions

- Goals of issue work
  - Build the power of the group; alter relations of power
  - Win on the issue
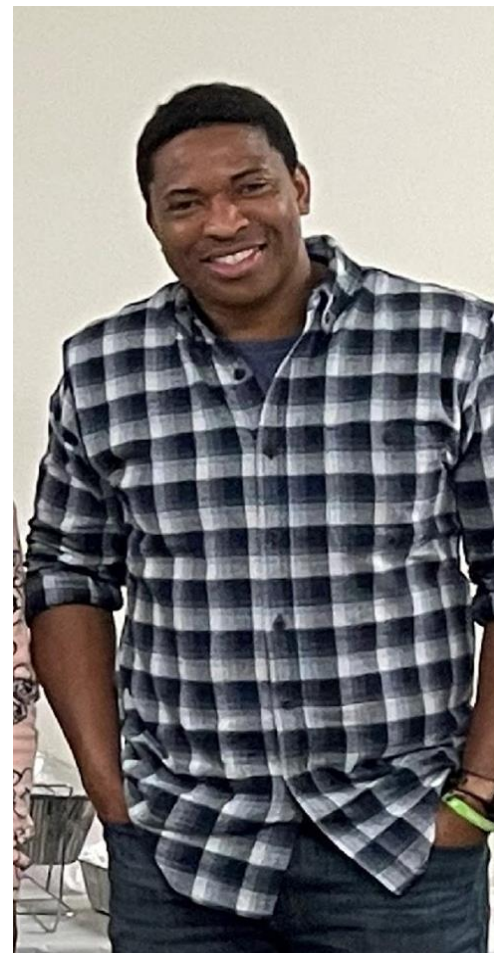 - Result in a real improvement in people's lives

How to identify and work on issues

- Issue collection
  - Door knocking; house meetings; constituency meetings
- Build relationships
- Identify a target
- Cutting an issue
  - Precise
  - Organizable
  - Winnable

Examples

Reflection & Discussion

Please put comments in the chat box (ideas for future sessions; ways to improve the session)