



Community Catalyst

POWER & PARTNERSHIP LADDERS

Emerging New American Community Team

Ohio History Connection

Columbus, OH | JUNE 2019



Project Description:

ENACT connected 14 aspiring Central Ohio New American leaders with established community resources and fundamental civic education. Through its planning committee to its community partners, ENACT is rooted in the power of collective action.

Reflections: *Creating the ENACT Power & Partnership Ladder*

ENACT Team: After utilizing the Power and Partnership Ladders well into the second year of their project, the ENACT Team reported finding both tools useful.

For purposes of this exercise, the project team defined “residents” as the emerging New American leaders who volunteered to take part in the 1.5-year leadership program. Of the Resident Power Ladder, they report: “It is a great tool to see the net change over the life of a project. It distills how much power residents and partners gained (or didn’t) in a concise, quick reflection. We set out to take ENACT fellows on a journey all the way up the ladder and this helped us confirm that in many ways we were successful.”

From the onset of their project, the ENACT team succeeded in bringing numerous and diverse community partners in to help produce the program. Partners range from large, established nonprofits to small, grassroots organizations which in some cases operated like voluntary resident associations. The team found that the Organizational Partnership Ladder distilled their experience around the work of engaging these partners. “We were hoping to bring several partners closer from information sources to advocates. It was tough work based on the size of the institutions with which we were partnered. It was also challenging because every partner was starting at their own location on the ladder and with their own willingness to move up it.”

For museums or libraries who’d like to use this tool to support their community catalyzing work, the team advises, “If you and your organization can’t learn to give up control, it will be reflected on this tool and in the results of your work.”

ABCD Team: In working with the ENACT Team on their Power and Partnership Ladders, ABCD Site Consultant Joe Erpenbeck writes:

- This was an interesting conversation with Ben and Ibrahima on the organizational partners. They did so much work prior to implementation on identifying and building relationships with possible partners. They noticed how some did not follow through and dropped out and how they adjusted

when this happened. I don’t think they appreciated how significant their work was in this area until we had this conversation. They very much placed co-creation and control in the hands of their partners as this project developed.

This conversation was valuable in exploring how the shift in control happened over the project. We reflected how in initial conversation the participants were receivers of information, almost students in a structured learning process. The process included pulse checks which provided valuable information and the project was tweaked a little to start the shift. There was more time allotted for conversation and feedback.

- One of the first shifts came in how the [New American ENACT] participants wanted to be recognized. They changed from “participants” to “Fellows.”
- This discussion identified the impact that the conversation on gifts and assets had on the project. As the Fellows identified their gifts you could the shift in possibility and control. It was now in the hands of each of them to design what they wanted to do and to build on the assets in their own community. Ben and Ibrahima commented this was the hope in the initial design and were happy to see how the Fellows took control, enlisted others and were leaders around what they care about in their neighborhood.
- For me this conversation solidified how much Ben, Ibrahima and the Ohio History Museum grasped and wrestled with the principles of ABCD as the project progressed. A Museum as I learned is typically not a nimble institution and can be set in its ways. There were the tensions that community builders within institutions often must navigate. This conversation pointed out how from the start the Museum was committed to this and some of the ways Ben and Ibrahima learned to operate and be flexible.
- This exercise and our conversation have impact for institutions and the organizers we sometimes refer to as “gappers” [individuals working “in the gap” between communities and institutions.]



NOW & IDEAL



"Residents" are defined as...

The emerging New American leaders who volunteered to take part in the 1.5-year leadership program.

in control

Design, build and implement a community advocacy project.

Define project topic, time, location, recipients and goals

Manage funds for projects before project launches

Identified their gifts, community assets and ideas

Develop worksheets and budgets

Implement ideas with freedom

IN YEAR ONE

After day of advocacy, began to advocate around community challenges they were merely informing about before

Share information with Project Staff via "pulse check" surveys to ensure the program and planning committee were creating a program that benefited them

advisors

During the first year, their voice was a source of information to those teaching partners

Renamed themselves "Fellows"

info sources

AT PROJECT LAUNCH

Ask presenting organizations about the organization and about existing problems between their community and the institution

Receive information from community institutions / organizations at workshops

recipients



E.N.A.C.T. ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIP LADDER



AT PROJECT LAUNCH



NOW



IDEAL

“Our planning committee partners helped us shape and build this program from the beginning. We benefited from having existing relationships so we could go to them with a very loose framework and trust them to be honest and open from the beginning. They were there from the beginning to hold us accountable and act as an advocate for the interests of the communities and fellows.

Since OHC retained control of final decisions, we didn't put them in the control area, but realistically, they had de facto veto power on decisions if they were concerned with the direction of the program.”

—Ben Anthony, OHC Staff

in control

Planning Committee Partners (Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio, Columbus Metropolitan Library, YMCA)

- Helped shape and build program
- Respond to loose frameworks presented by OHC
- Hold OHC accountable
- Advocate for interests of the communities & fellows
- Had de facto veto power on decisions if they were concerned with the direction of the program

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Workshop / Topical Community Partners (Habitat for Humanity, Columbus Police, Franklin County Sheriff, Columbus Recreation and Parks, Columbus Public Health, Columbus City Attorney's Office, etc)

- Act as topical experts to share their knowledge and experiences with the fellows

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“We hope that these partners' interaction with the fellows and New American Communities in Columbus encouraged them to move up the ladder to become advocates for immigrants and refugees in Central Ohio, but if that happens, it happens due to proximity and as a byproduct of engaging with these up and coming advocates rather than being a core goal of the program. Each partner comes into the grant at their own place on the ladder. Some are strictly information sources, while some are closer to being advocates in their daily work.”

—Ben Anthony, OHC Staff

recipients

Partner Groups:

Workshop / Topical Community Partners (Habitat for Humanity, Columbus Police, Franklin County Sheriff, Columbus Recreation and Parks, Columbus Public Health, Columbus City Attorney's Office, etc)

Planning Committee Partners (Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio, Columbus Metropolitan Library, YMCA)

Prepared for the Institute of Museum and Library Services by the DePaul University and ABCD Evaluation Team in collaboration with the Ohio History Connection. Photos courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.

TO LEARN MORE: Ohio History Connection www.ohiohistory.org
IMLS Community Catalyst Initiative www.ims.gov/cc