

This article was downloaded by: [University of Minnesota Libraries, Twin Cities], [Jodi R. Sandfort]

On: 24 February 2012, At: 07:58

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Community Development

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcod20>

### InCommons: supporting community-based leadership

Jodi R. Sandfort<sup>a</sup> & Laura Bloomberg<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, 55455, USA

Available online: 22 Feb 2012

To cite this article: Jodi R. Sandfort & Laura Bloomberg (2012): InCommons: supporting community-based leadership, *Community Development*, 43:1, 12-30

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2011.645045>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## InCommons: supporting community-based leadership

Jodi R. Sandfort\* and Laura Bloomberg

*Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, 301 19th Avenue South,  
Minneapolis 55455, USA*

Cohort-based community leadership programs (CLPs) are a common approach to enhancing knowledge, skills, and networks within a particular community. However, the CLP model is resource intensive and, as a result, limited in impact. This article describes an alternative approach being undertaken on a statewide scale. InCommons is focused on activating a network that lets people find each other so they can share credible knowledge, resources, and insights for solving community problems. One dimension involves finding and sharing the information people need in a leadership commons. Another offers support through well-facilitated gatherings that allow communities to make progress in spite of thorny differences. Using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, we explain the theory of action informing the whole initiative and assess initial implementation in terms defined by community leaders. As such, this article provides practical insights for those interested in increasing the scale and impact of their work with community-based leaders.

**Keywords:** capacity building; leadership; technology-based development; philanthropy

### Introduction

The 2009 Nobel Prize for Economics was awarded to political scientist Elinor Ostrom for her work on a new model of collective action she calls the Commons. Within western capitalist democracies economists have posited that self-interest creates a “tragedy of the commons” because individuals deplete shared resources for private gain (Hardin, 1968). In contrast, Ostrom and her colleagues draw attention to situations, where communities leverage trust and cooperation to develop and share “common-pool resources,” observing that, sometimes, traditional divisions between public and private are inaccurate (Bollier, 2007; Lessig, 2001). Among other things, Ostrom and colleagues examine how *research-based knowledge* can be shared as a common resource (Hess & Ostrom, 2007); informed by Ostrom’s model, this article highlights a statewide initiative focused on sharing the *practical knowledge* of community-based leaders.

In late 2010, following 18 months of planning and design work, an array of institutional partners – including regional foundations, Minnesota’s land grant university, statewide media, religious, and cultural institutions – launched

---

\*Corresponding author. Email: sandf002@umn.edu

InCommons. The initiative focuses on encouraging and supporting the courageous leadership necessary to engage communities and solve problems. Yet, like a few recent efforts (Wituk, Ealey, Clark, Heiny, & Meissen, 2005), InCommons focuses on nurturing community leadership at a statewide scale. To achieve this reach, each institutional partner commits its own staff resources to help develop anew “town square” for community-based leaders (Public Strategies Group, 2009). Explicitly, InCommons focuses on supporting leadership acts (Daloz, Keen, Keen, & Parks, 1996; Earl, 2007; Parks, 2005; Pigg, 1999; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004), rather than working exclusively with individuals holding positions of formal authority. InCommons also highlights the need for leadership in places where contrary world views and knowledge collide, where attention to the common good is needed (Block, 2009; Crosby & Bryson, 2005). In it, we conceptualize “community” broadly, as a group of individuals who share something significant – geography, religion, age, or ethnicity.

This article describes a participatory action research (PAR) approach woven into the initiative’s core. We describe the initial research grounding the project and our resulting theory of action that shaped the strategies and tactics employed. We also assess the implementation of InCommons to date, in relation to both community leaders’ criteria of success and concepts from our theory of action. This approach, and the newness of the initiative, does not allow an assessment of long-term outcomes, *per se*. Rather by describing and assessing the emergence of this ambitious initiative, the hope is to motivate others to consider how community-based leadership might be supported on a larger scale.

### **Research approach and data sources**

In the InCommons initiative, we adopted an explicit PAR approach. McIntyre (2008) describes PAR as a “braided process of exploration, reflection, and action” focused on articulating and exploring a theory of action, examining impact, and providing relevant information that enables stakeholders to make programmatic adjustments quickly. While, in practice, PAR takes many forms, it is typically based on five key tenets. First, the research process and assessment are contextual; their relevance is determined by local stakeholders and the degree to which research provides insight into practice. Second, the evaluative criteria of assessment are determined by participants as they act and learn over time, rather than *a priori* by formal theory. Third, the PAR process is best understood as development evaluation (Patton, 2007) not process or summative evaluation. Rather than making definitive judgments of success or failure, its active purpose is to name problems, propose solutions, and use data to engage in continuous improvement in an initiative. Fourth, as a research approach, PAR places a premium on stakeholder engagement, seeking to include multiple voices, thereby enhancing awareness, and empowerment in the process. Finally, the active interplay of research and practice promotes learning among participants and researchers alike.

The PAR applied to InCommons produces evidence about the ongoing process of change and can be shared with a broad audience to promote formative learning among the key stakeholders closest to the work (McTaggart, 1997; Patton, 2002). Given the initiative’s ambition – and the authors’ dual roles as active participants and researchers – this approach was the most prudent to employ in this case.

Our analysis and resulting theory of action benefit from an array of data sources, summarized in Table 1. First, we draw upon a phone survey of 400 randomly-sampled households conducted in Fall, 2009 is part of the assessment of community need (Wilder, 2009). Survey participants, ranging in age from 18 to 95, were asked a

Table 1. Data sources informing emergent theory of action and early implementation of InCommons.

Data source	Key questions addressed	Informants	Analysis
<i>Phone survey:</i> Wilder Research (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most significant state and community problems?</li> <li>• What is the nature of this community and our leaders?</li> <li>• What is our assessment of our quality of life?</li> </ul>	Four hundred randomly-sampled individuals	Quantitative descriptive summary of responses to forced choice questions
<i>Structured community meetings:</i> Rausch and MartinRogers (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most significant state and community problems?</li> <li>• What is the nature of this community and our leaders?</li> <li>• What is our assessment of our quality of life?</li> </ul>	Seven hundred and ninety-seven representatives of culturally specific groups under-represented in the phone survey (e.g. African American, Native American, Hmong, Latino, Liberian, and Somali)	Quantitative descriptive summary of responses to forced choice questions
<i>Interviews with formal leaders:</i> Grassroots Solutions (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to engage communities to solve problems?</li> <li>• How does one support community engagement efforts?</li> <li>• How does one connect and engage individuals and civic institutions with the tools and spaces that could be created through an initiative like InCommons?</li> </ul>	Forty representatives from civic institutions, networking organizations, advocacy groups, leadership programs, and the media	Qualitative analysis of key emergent themes
<i>Interviews with non-positional community leaders:</i> Brown et al. (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do individuals choose to exercise leadership?</li> <li>• How do leaders engage other individuals and their communities?</li> <li>• What do leaders need do to sustain and/or grow community engagement?</li> </ul>	Twenty-five individuals without formal authority but recognized as community leaders, sampled to represent gender, age, and geography	Qualitative analysis of key emergent themes

series of questions to identify the most significant state and community problems and community assets, assess their quality of life and community leadership. The responses were weighted based on 2008 American Community Survey to guarantee gender and age representation. To ascertain how these issues were experienced by ethnic groups under-represented in the statewide picture, the researchers held eight community meetings focused on the same questions. The meetings were hosted by community organizations and religious communities who recruited 797 participants from the African American, Latino, Hmong, Somali, Liberian, and Native American communities (Rausch & MartinRogers, 2010).

We also draw on data from 40 semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives from Minnesota civic institutions, advocacy groups, leadership programs, and the media. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted by consultants as part of a preliminary engagement audit (Grassroots Solutions, 2010). The interviews elicited these formal leaders' insights about engaging others in public problem solving and their opinions about essential supports for community leadership. All interviews were transcribed, coded inductively, and deductively using QSR NVivo 8 software (Lewins & Silver, 2007) and summarized in developmental reports to the InCommons partnership team.

Our own University research team conducted 25 additional semi-structured interviews with non-positional and community-based leaders (Brown, Fleetham, Shurilla, & Simonson, 2010). The sample was developed through a snow-ball technique focused on identifying individuals from diverse backgrounds who were recognized community leaders. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 78, with representatives from ethnic minority groups included. The participants were asked questions about community involvement and leadership, engagement tools, and essential resources. All interviews were transcribed, coded inductively, and deductively using QSR NVivo 8 software and summarized in developmental reports.

Finally, we reviewed and analyzed significant initiative documents, including engagement, communications, and business plans were conducted. Throughout, we compiled materials and reviewed notes from stakeholder meetings, working groups, and events. As part of the initiative PAR process, these materials are assessed in relation to emerging theories of action and actual initiative implementation.

### **Determining and responding to community needs**

Our multi-faceted analysis clearly indicated that, like many Americans at the beginning of the twenty-first century, people in Minnesota are concerned about the seeming proliferation of social, economic, and environmental problems and the apparent inability of traditional institutions to respond to them.

While local problems are quite tangible, the broad community phone survey documented that solutions are often illusive. The poor economy, K-12 education, and healthcare were the most frequently cited problems. Only 38% of respondents thought people in their community understood community problems; and only 40% reported their community was effective at solving problems and improving the quality of life. Reported levels of trust of among formal leaders – business, elected officials, and cultural elites – were also low and averaging 63%. However, 90% of respondents were hopeful and optimistic about the future. Three-quarters reported a sense of urgency to solve their community's biggest problems and 75% also reported

that they believed people like them could have at least a moderate impact in making their community a better place to live.

Data from under-represented ethnic groups were similar, yet brought different issues into focus. While participants also were concerned with the economy, education, and healthcare, they were significantly less likely to see their community as effective in solving problems and improving their quality of life. Participants were less willing to define communities geographically, rather they focused on ethnic or cultural affinity. Taken together, these data informed the emerging theory of action; while problems certainly exist, the community would improve by moving from a focus on problems to one stressing possibilities, generosity, and restoration. We needed to broaden our lens beyond a focus on geographic communities to recognize the importance of communities of affiliation.

Analysis of semi-structured interviews with formal and informal, non-positional leaders revealed a belief that community-level change requires both leadership and an engaged community (or “organized base”) to move an idea or solution forward. Those interviewed reflected that people exercise leadership because of passion, self-interest, and invitations from others who recognize their potential. They act in ways that show they can listen well, bring a variety of perspectives to the table, and share power and responsibilities with others. Leadership and engagement of others do not just happen; it requires a vehicle (a need or topic), face-to-face relationship building, and a long-term commitment.

Our interview analysis also pointed to the importance of particular resources for engaging others. Participants reported a need to access others’ stories of success and failure, tap into relevant information filtered by credible entities, and connect in meaningful ways with others engaged in community-level change. To sustain their efforts or have larger impact, participants emphasized the importance of developing new relationships, accessing tools, and having opportunities to learn with others how to build new skills. When asked how InCommons needed to evolve, participants stressed that while scale was important, the initiative also must be grounded in real community presence and promoted over time. InCommons should involve people who are credible because they have performed community-level work. Finally, the initiative should evolve through shared ownership with community leaders, even as it is supported by staff within the institutional partner organizations.

These diverse data sources and ongoing analysis of their meaning directly shaped InCommons’ theory of action and initial implementation.

### **InCommons theory of action**

Rather than using one social science theory or framework, the program theory of action draws on an array of concepts to help develop a plausible and sensible model of how InCommons might work (Bickman, 1987). Weiss (1995, p. 72) suggests such theories help “represent the stories that people tell about how problems arise and how they can be solved . . . These stories . . . whether they are true or false, are potent forces.” In this case, the theory is that a statewide network can support and amplify the courage and skills of community-based leadership. While activities in the network will be decentralized, and emerge in relation to community concerns, the network itself is bolstered by several essential propositions.

*Proposition #1: Funders can positively impact systems change by relinquishing some decision-making control.*

Scholars have long debated whether or not private foundations realize their potential in making social change (Bailin, 2004; Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004; McKersie, 1999). Philanthropy is a unique institution, insulated from both the political accountability of government and the market demands of business. Because private foundations possess this freedom and significant financial resources, their potential for impact is high. However, often widely heralded initiatives fail to achieve their promised objectives. Some private foundations now employ a range of strategies and use diverse tools to shore up their operations and improve effectiveness (Fulton & Blau, 2005; Sandfort, 2008; Silver, 2004).

When developing these strategies, funders must first grapple with their values and goals to identify a unique focus (Frumkin, 2006). They also must consider a thorny two-fold question: *How do we instigate change* and *How do we sustain it?* McDonnell and Elmore (1987) suggest a continuum of such strategies that – when applied to philanthropic activities – highlights multiple paths to increasing effectiveness. One strategy involves imposing mandates that establish specific rules intended to govern designated actions and ensure compliance. While compliance with mandates often follows, it is difficult to sustain compliance after the grant funding ends. Another strategy of inducement is more commonly used by foundations because it involves using their key resource – money – to inspire specific actions, such as replications of a model programs deemed successful elsewhere. However, research increasingly documents that replicated models often are less successful than the original intervention (Gira, Kessler, & Poertner, 2004). A third philanthropic strategy is capacity building, which is less prescriptive than mandates or inducements but entails investing in material or human resources to insure progress toward or achievement of desired results.

A final strategy for resolving these questions is to focus on system change. This approach shifts authority among sectors and requires private funders to divest themselves of authority to mandate, induce specific activity, or define specific narrow results. Instead, funders embrace the ambiguity within complex systems for the potential of more significant, long-term results aligned with a community's self-identified needs. Normatively, none of these four change strategies is inherently more desirable than any other; ideally, a private foundation establishes the optimal fit between their goals, desired outcome, and any of these approaches.

The goal of InCommons focuses on inspiring and supporting the courageous leadership necessary to engage communities and make progress on thorny challenges. As such, a strategy of mandates or inducements would not be effective. While many community leadership initiatives focus on capacity building, the foundations involved in InCommons were more ambitious. They embarked on a systems change strategy, where they released control and engaged others in developing ways to achieve the goal.

The initial ideas emerged from a design lab sponsored by one of the foundations and a state land-grant university, aligned in their desires to better support and magnify the work of community leaders (Aman, 2011; Public Strategies Group, 2009). The designers envisioned a new civic infrastructure, where leaders could find and share both practical knowledge gleaned from experience, and resources, such as research and tools, developed in other ways. Implementing this vision required

finding other large institutional partners willing to change their operations and demonstrably support systems change.

Initially, six other statewide institutions agreed and – without large financial grants from the foundations – dedicated senior manager and staff time to co-create the initial parameters. Together, organizers began to imagine a network supporting dialog about collective challenges, exchanging problem-solving resources, and showcasing leaders engaging others to move issues forward. The communities – rather than the foundations or institutional partners – determine the substantive issues being highlighted (Pigg, 1999). This approach required institutional partners themselves to experiment with new practices for working with communities.

*Proposition #2: Sharing practical knowledge as commons resources can enable community-based leadership.*

Another dimension of the InCommons theory of action is grounded in supporting the development and sharing of a common pool of practical knowledge. Traditionally, leadership scholars studied individuals, trying to ascertain the traits, behaviors, and skills which enabled them to mobilize followers (Burns, 2003; Cohen & March, 1974; Thomas, 1988). Many scholars now focus on leadership activities, recognizing that most individuals can act in ways that inspire others and create change in a specific setting (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Earl, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Nohria & Khruana, 2010). Making this conceptual shift, community-based leadership can be seen as a unique phenomenon, based on the specific community's knowledge, skills, and sources of authority that confer power (Pigg, 1999).

For people interested in community development, strengthening and enhancing this type of leadership can be a potent strategy (Emery, Fernandez, Gutierrez-Montes, & Butler Flora, 2007; Pigg, 1999). Formal community leadership programs (CLPs) can develop from this orientation and provide opportunities for participants to learn community-specific information, co-create common purpose, and develop new networks of influence. Often these programs operate by bringing diverse people together in a cohort over time to enable deeper learning. While scholars have studied the success of CLPs in meeting these goals, the generalizability of such examinations are usually limited to a small scale and the mechanisms of actual influence remain challenging to ascertain (Brown & Nylander, 1998; Wituk et al., 2005). However, it does seem that community characteristics and training practices can create social capital, build trust, bridge differences, and engage others (Chazdon & Lott, 2010; Mandell, 2010).

Rather than sponsoring cohort-based CLPs, the InCommons theory of action emphasizes these expectations of reciprocity and trust to engage more people as leaders. This initiative creates a leadership commons to generate and share the resources people need to take leadership roles in communities. At its most basic, *commons* is a way of referring to resources shared by a group, the things it inherits, creates, and monitors jointly. Such things are not held by the enclosures of financial markets or governments but are rather understood to be free, with open access. Traditionally, public service activity, such as volunteerism, and institutions that provide open access to resources, such as libraries, played important roles supporting the commons (Boyte, 2004; Daloz et al., 1996; Lohmann, 1992). Yet, social activists and scholars are beginning to reassert the importance of commons-based solutions to broader social, environmental, and economic problems given growing concerns



about the undue influence of the market on civic life (Bollier, 2007, 2008; Boyte, 2011; Poteete, Janssen, & Ostrom, 2010).

Scholars studying shared natural resource systems – fisheries, forests, land, and water – find many examples, where individual interests are met by attending to collective needs (Dietz, Ostrom, & Stern, 2003; Lam & Ostrom, 2010; Ostrom, 1990, 2010). Sharing does not deplete resources, if they are adequately protected. But the nature of the protection must be created by the people using the resources. They must commit to providing, managing, and governing them to assure sustainability of resources for all.

Information communication technologies create new opportunities. The interactive internet enables sharing creative and knowledge products, such as photographs, music, and scientific research, with significantly reduced transaction costs. The advent and rapid development of Wikipedia – whose content is donated and monitored by volunteer contributors around the globe – is one often cited example (Bollier, 2008; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Many other shared resources now exist, such as YouTube (videos) and Flickr (photos), all supported by nimble and interactive information technology infrastructures (Bollier, 2008; Collins, Morgan, & Patrinos, 2003; Hess & Ostrom, 2007; Lessig, 2001).

As will be described in more detail, InCommons uses new technologies to enable the sharing of diverse knowledge resources useful to community-based leaders. The theory of action presumes this type of knowledge is abundant. Existing institutions and incentives, however, provide few opportunities to share and benefit from what is learned when leaders, for example, improve water quality in the river running through their town, help their community integrate new Americans, or develop safe places for their youth to gather after school. By encouraging people to see this type of practical knowledge as valuable (and thus worthy of being shared), creating a platform that decreases the costs of such sharing, and stressing open access and transparency, a knowledge commons is being created (Benkler, 2006; Bollier, 2008; Ghosh, 2007). Theoretically, assumes participants have some level of self-interest and InCommons capitalizes on it by tapping the human desire to be recognized and validated for hard-earned insights from leadership experiences.

*Proposition #3: Creating twenty-first century spaces for civic engagement supports the process of complex community change.*

Community-based leadership does not depend on positional authority, rather it emerges from complex interactions within particular contexts (Pigg, 1999). The interactions among people, the rules at play, and everyday chance encounters can significantly determine the direction and outcomes of change efforts. Particular events often are highly interdependent and effective leadership capitalizes on the dynamics of complex systems (Hazy, Goldstein, & Lichtenstein, 2007; Jennings & Dooley, 2007; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Paarlberg & Bielefeld, 2009; Wheatley, 2006). In these situations, opportunities for dialog and deliberation are quite significant. They can create the conditions where positive change can unfold.

Free, public space, where citizens gather to discuss and debate the most pressing issues of the day and make collective judgments, is a foundational concept in modern democracies. Yet, today many people worry that these norms of dialog and deliberation, of collective responsibility and accountability, have significantly deteriorated, fueling political polarization (Block, 2009). Free spaces existing between our private lives and large-scale institutions provide settings where people

can learn public skills, civic values, and establish deeper group identity (Boyte, 2004; Evans & Boyte, 1986). They provide opportunities to gather, away from home or work, to establish connections and deliberate, and to understand both what holds us together and creates discord. The interactive internet also offers ways to reinforce face-to-face free spaces. As longtime internet observer Phil Agre describes, “Face-to-face meetings will always be indispensable for cementing relationships and sharing worldviews, but the internet is valuable before and after those meetings” (cited in London, 2007, p. 3). A large-scale initiative like InCommons focused on supporting community leaders is using such insights and new capabilities to seed systemic change.

These propositions, as part of a larger InCommons theory of action, explicitly and implicitly guided program planning and implementation and helped structure a chain of events (Patton, 1986, 2002).

### **Core values and developmental strategies**

The results of the initial research were reviewed, examined, and debated with the institutional partners, helping to refine a theory of action and shape an emerging initiative. The partners developed a business plan and agreed that staffing would not all be paid with foundation grants. Instead, partner institutions would dedicate time to developing and implementing specific elements of the plan. The initiative name, InCommons, was selected to stress the collective benefit of sharing and receiving from others. Responding to leaders’ articulated needs for a long-term commitment, transparency, and co-creation, a four-phase development framework was developed to engage others: Introduction and awareness building (2010–2011); awareness building, testing, and refinement (2011); statewide growth (2012); and developing a multistate scale (2013 and beyond).

At the outset, all institutional partners agreed to core principles: InCommons would focus on state and local community issues, creating opportunities for participants to have new experiences that pushed boundaries and built trust. The initiative would strengthen social networks by both improving access to practical knowledge and resources, and building skills and experience with authentic community engagement. Partners agreed to align their ongoing events and activities, such as conferences, training programs, community meetings, and to have larger impact. Partners would help identify and tell the stories of individuals demonstrating community leadership. Most importantly, partner institutions would share ownership with community leaders and focus on unleashing this grassroots power rather than enhancing their own institutional position.

Consistent with the theory of action, several strategies were developed: Web-based *resource sharing* and *idea competitions* focus on sharing and elevating the practical knowledge of community leaders. *Gatherings* and *building capacity for uncommon conversations* focus on creating spaces, where community concerns can be explored and solutions developed.

### ***Sharing web-based resources***

Applying Ostrom’s concept of common-pool resources, a unique web platform to find and share practical resources relevant to community problem solving was created. Combining the functionality of social networking and resource aggregation,

a beta version of InCommons.org was launched in late 2010. People use the platform to find and offer resources, ideas, and best practices. After creating a profile, they can join discussion groups, ask specific questions, and locate tools and resources that might help in their situation. Since launch, the website has received a monthly average of over 5800 visits.

In assessing other commons-based peer production sites, Benkler (2006) points out that sites have two evolutionary phases – creating the content and focusing on quality assurance. Attending to creating and populating web content is important at first to respond to initial users' needs, establish relevance, and motivate participation (Lui & Sandfort, 2011). For InCommons, institutional partners initially took the lead in finding, developing, and sharing relevant resources on the website (e.g. links to ongoing training programs, relevant media stories, abridged summaries of research articles). Substantive topics were prioritized based on pressing challenges and community interest – obesity, public budgeting, and youth programming – and partners excavated relevant resources from within their institutions. They also listened to research informants, attendees at face-to-face gatherings, and individuals identified by the partners, developing specific resources relevant to their needs. Rather than a typical one-to-one technical assistance model, the institutions shared identified resources at the InCommons website, enabling others to access them. To date, more than 650 resources about diverse topics are shared in this way.

The first phase, also identified people comfortable sharing ideas, resources, and questions virtually. In moving to subsequent phases, there are expectations that users of the on-line resources will also become resource contributors. The initiative's brand, web narrative, and highlighted leadership stories all communicate a message about participation in the new community of purpose. The first phase resources are high quality and relevant to improve confidence of the knowledge commons. Site features also invite participation and co-creation; if a user searches on a topic with no existing resources, they are invited to pose a question to the online community, to generate more helpful responses. To date, over 6500 people have profiles enabling them to share resources and benefit from the InCommons online community.

### *Enabling idea competitions*

Another strategy intended to enhance online engagement involves using a competition to recognize innovation and engage citizens in developing solutions to collective problems (Berger, 2008). Referenced in the popular literature as “ideagoras” (Tapscott & Williams, 2006), the idea competitions have gained prominence in recent years as corporations, foundations, and the media leverage the power of the internet to capture innovative ideas on a grand scale. One of InCommons' institutional partners, the international non-profit Ashoka, has successfully run many such competitions on its website and their expertise benefited the project.

To date, InCommons has hosted seven idea competitions focusing on diverse challenges, such as reducing obesity, expanding multicultural programming, preserving water quality, and promoting innovative environmental initiatives. Calls for participation are prepared and people are encouraged to submit ideas or innovations that successfully address that challenge. When ideas or projects are nominated, others can comment to enhance, critique, or offer suggestions. Most competitions also use wide citizen participation, or “crowd sourcing,” to narrow

ideas or select final winners. Winners receive professional recognition or a modest financial prize.

For private corporations or foundations, the platforms' ability to engage diverse participants in the online community, publicize innovative ideas, and reduce staff time reviewing proposals are all appealing. As Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation explained, "At [the competition site] all of the solutions are posted so that everyone can read them and perhaps build on one another's solutions. They are not in the same room, but they can collaborate virtually, making it possible to create a different and better solution" (Nee, 2009, p. 14). In the past year, Minnesotans have generated over 920 ideas and tens of thousands have participated in online voting to identify semi-finalists or winners in the seven competitions. The submissions become additional shared resources in the virtual community, as people can learn of others already making progress on complex community issues. Although motivated by the potential of winning and the recognition or financial benefits, the ideas and program descriptions become potent, collective resources to elevate the work of everyday leaders, and make it more accessible to all.

### *Crafting unusual gatherings*

While the initiative uses the virtual tools of the interactive web to support and inspire knowledge sharing, it also stresses the essential role of face-to-face connections in making progress on important issues. InCommons gatherings are in-person convenings, meetings, and events where people are invited to listen, learn, and strategize about action. They differ from typical meetings or conferences in intent and process.

All InCommons gatherings cultivate a sense of respect, belonging, and responsibility for co-creation. They are designed by trained facilitators to reflect a clear purpose but no predetermined outcome, using proven methods to engage people with a diversity of perspectives. High-quality relevant information, such as objective data, scientific evidence, or case studies, aids in deliberations. Evocative tools, such as art, music, metaphor, or physical movements are used to inspire creativity and new awareness. Coming out of each gathering, a product or story is harvested to document the progress that occurred and allow information to be shared virtually for those not present. Care is paid to simple hospitality, assuring that physical and social barriers to participation are removed and high-quality logistics, space, and refreshments exist to support the work.

The University of Minnesota hosted one of the first InCommons gatherings in October 2010. *Connecting community leaders for renewal and action* brought together graduates from nine different university-based leadership programs. Program participants from school districts, city and county governments, media, and non-profit organizations were invited from targeted geographic areas across the state. In keeping with InCommons gatherings principles, the agenda had a clear three-part purpose: Strengthen a network of leaders across multiple sectors, connect communities to InCommons resources, and inspire participants to engage others across sectors in their communities. The actual gathering agenda, though, was co-created by participants. In a two-day facilitated session, participants identified and discussed the most pressing issues in their communities and explored how they might benefit from engagement with InCommons and the University. The conversation topics were broad, ranging from assuring smooth transitions for school-aged children to enhancing rural economic development, protecting water quality to

privatizing public service. Conference themes, insights, and tools were harvested and made available to others on the initiative website. In addition, staff followed up with each participant to learn more about these leaders' ongoing needs, respond to specific informational requests, and encourage resource sharing among participants via InCommons.org.

Other, InCommons gatherings have brought together other alumni from leadership programs or focused on specific topical areas: Healthcare access, racial disparities in education, rural economic development, environmental sustainability, and the state's budget crisis. To support high quality convenings across these topics, the initiative has focused on building facilitators' capacities to design gatherings that are purpose-driven and impactful.

### ***Building capacity to host uncommon conversations***

The needs assessment stressed the importance of improving people's abilities to engage others in addressing community concerns. To do so, we identified a core of common practices, the "Art of Hosting," (Art of Hosting, 2011; Block, 2009; Holman, 2010) which facilitators could use to design and facilitate gatherings in ways consistent with community needs or presenting situation. In fact, the Art of Hosting provides an operating system for InCommons gatherings consistent with the proposition that complex community change requires both structured and nimble process support. Like open source computer programmers who share code, Art of Hosting practitioners freely shares process tools designed to work within complex human systems.

In fact, there is an international Art of Hosting community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Members apply these techniques in diverse contexts, focusing on youth employment, economic development, indigenous people's rights, and European Union governance. Columbus, Ohio has used Art of Hosting strategies as part of re-envisioning health care, higher education, business networks, and social services in that community (Frieze & Wheatley, 2011). These experiences and lessons learned are shared with other facilitators working in this international community of practice.

The Art of Hosting process of design and implementation views change as occurring in complex, dynamic systems. By posing provocative questions to people convened around a specific purpose or topic and supporting them with engaging facilitation practices, the approach yields significant advances in collective understanding. The Art of Hosting process is also driven by a belief that individuals are more committed to change if they see themselves as contributors in planning discussions and decisions. Some core hosting practices include circle dialog, appreciative inquiry, open space technology, and world café (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010; Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000; Owen, 1997), but new techniques are continually being developed by community members. The Art of Hosting integrates these techniques and encourages facilitators to select processes consistent with the presenting issues and contexts. However, in Hosting, facilitators do not merely use these techniques to advance a predetermined agenda. Rather, techniques are selected and employed to elicit the resources and abilities inherent in the community gathered. When paired with on-line resource sharing, the Art of Hosting creates the potential for broadening the impact of InCommons.

InCommons is currently building Minnesota's Art of Hosting community of practice as a strategy to expand capacity to host gatherings at a larger scale.

Experienced facilitators receive three or four complimentary days of training and, in return, offer an equivalent number of facilitation days pro bono to InCommons gatherings. To date, we have trained over 150 facilitators and are conducting research on their longer-term practice using the engagement methods. Trained facilitators communicate regularly, in-person and virtually, work together on projects, and share their learning, thus mirroring the learning community envisioned for the larger InCommons initiative.

### Analyzing early implementation

Consistent with the PAR approach, we can now turn back to criteria generated during the needs assessment phase to assess early implementation of this community leadership initiative. In initial interviews with 65 formal and informal leaders, participants expressed excitement and apprehension. In particular, they noted the significant risk involved when philanthropic institutions employ such a systems change strategy. Many stakeholders experienced a very real loss when a trusted philanthropic funder moved away from deploying financial resources to impose mandates, induce change, or build pre-determined capacity. For a systems change initiative to work, stakeholders stressed the importance of the initiative having a *visible presence in communities* and the need for partners to demonstrate a *long-term commitment*. They asked that InCommons operate with *transparency and credibility* and assure *co-creation and shared ownership* in the true spirit of a commons.

These characteristics shaped the emerging theory of action and encouraged use of particular strategies. Table 2 summarizes these desired characteristics, further describes their attributes and how they relate to the dimensions in the theory of action. It also illustrates how the first phase of InCommons has demonstrated these aspirations. For example, members of a gatherings working group pay considerable attention to identifying potential facilitators to be trained who have knowledge of and experience with diverse settings, to allow InCommons to be rooted in community issues. In addition, the internet platform provides transparency in providing resources, such as research translation and process tools, and outcomes from InCommons gatherings.

We have made progress consistent with leaders' desires – creating a genuine presence in community, promoting the effort over time with a phased approach, using credible sources and technology to be transparent, and adjusting tactics in the spirit of co-creation.

Yet, there are other ways the initiative does not yet fulfill the aspirations of the theory of action. For one, while the theory acknowledges the ambiguity of systems change, these conditions are difficult to weather. While many stakeholders recognize the need and appreciate the value of community-defined goals, they also struggle to change their behaviors. Some of these challenges arise from lack of experience with a large scale self-generating community like InCommons. Large institutions are accustomed to being accountable to sponsor-funded initiatives and can lose sight of InCommons operational details in the absence of grant responsibilities. Some individuals question whether their experiences with solving problems are sufficiently worthy to be shared with others. Some facilitators worry about sharing failures with others through their community of practice because they are unaccustomed to that level of professional vulnerability. InCommons is

Table 2. Community-based leaders desired characteristics of InCommons\*.

Desired characteristics and attributes	Illustrative activities	Relevance to theory of action
<i>Genuine presence in community:</i> Rooted in local experiences and non-partisan focused on making change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop range of web-based resources and applications open to all</li> <li>• Illuminate stories of courageous leaders to inspire others</li> <li>• Concentrate efforts in some geographic places and ethnic communities</li> <li>• Involve diverse facilitators in training and community of practice to support gatherings</li> </ul>	Sharing knowledge resources Creating spaces for community change
<i>Promote over time:</i> Embracing non-linear change processes with long-time horizon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt phased approach using multiple strategies</li> <li>• Sponsor idea competitions and follow-up, promoting and supporting finalists</li> </ul>	Funders relinquishing some control Creating spaces for community change
<i>Transparency and credibility:</i> Operated without regard to institutional, cultural, or geographic boundaries; promoting quality resources and gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use new information technologies to share knowledge and reinforce social networks</li> <li>• Involve respected institutions as institutional partners to help curate web-content</li> <li>• Adopt high quality facilitation practices and ongoing support for practice</li> </ul>	Funders relinquishing some control Sharing knowledge resources Creating spaces for community change
<i>Co-creation and shared ownership:</i> Soliciting feedback and evolving because of feedback from contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing improvements to functionality of website</li> <li>• Enable facilitators to shape ongoing community of practice</li> </ul>	Funders relinquishing some control Sharing knowledge resources

Note: \*Developed through an analysis of semi-structured interviews with over 65 informants consulted during initiative development.

asking people to operate from a fundamentally different paradigm from conventional public affairs work.

Another challenge comes from the inherent tension between the initiative's commitment to community realities and its statewide reach. Individuals have particular experiences with InCommons: They observe the state's public radio station being more engaged in local issues, attend a gathering on a timely public policy issue, or find relevant resources on-line. They are inspired when voting in an idea competition, enjoy recognition as a competition semi-finalist, or find their own facilitation practice changed because of training they've received.

Yet, it is difficult for them to see the initiative as larger than these particular experiences (Aman, 2011). Because of the commitment to shared ownership, the institutional partners have hesitated to define InCommons beyond its goal of

supporting courageous community leadership. But this has created some governance and structural challenges. The research on knowledge commons development stresses that clear governance and operational rules are important to encourage contribution, sharing, and guarantee protection of resources (Bollier, 2008; Hess & Ostrom, 2007; Lessig, 2001). Yet, operational concerns, such as website functionality and communications, have occupied disproportionate staff and institutional partners' attention. Long-term sustainability likely will hinge on instituting clearer governance and "rules in use" about sharing and using community resources.

Finally, while many people hunger for a setting where they can engage in deep dialog on important issues, others are calling for immediate action. People feel pressure to move quickly to find solutions and demonstrate results, even in the face of a divergent understanding of problems, change strategies, and desirable outcomes. InCommons gatherings slow people down. As Toke Moeller, one of the Art of Hosting founders often says, "You need to go slow in order to go fast." Yet most people are not used to spaces where uncommon conversations occur, differing worldviews interact, and more fundamental change can grow. While some InCommons gatherings bring people together who quickly agree about the problem, solution, and act to resolve the issue, often initial gatherings are just the beginning of the change process. What is needed is a longer-term process of listening, challenging, and reframing issues to allow better solutions to emerge. This type of leadership takes time, patience, and courage (Block, 2009; Holman, 2010). It is central to the mission of InCommons.

As researchers, we are continually using the theory of action with partners to deepen a collective understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of creating this community-based leadership commons. Use of PAR approach, both produces evidence about an ongoing process of change and promotes formative learning among the stakeholders closest to the work. While still in the initial phases, there are some implications for others interested in fostering community-based leadership development.

### **Implications for community-based leadership development and further inquiry**

The InCommons initiative is a new model of community-leadership development. It is a systems change initiative designed to inspire and support the courageous leadership needed to engage communities and solve problems. It leverages the power of the interactive web to share and generate practical knowledge abundant in communities, while at the same time cultivating a new level of intentionality and impact in face-to-face gatherings.

These strategies are distinct, yet complimentary to the more traditional cohort-based CLPs. Such programs can be powerful for participants. But often it is difficult for others not present to benefit or even understand the type of change created in those programs. InCommons clearly operates at a larger scale and future evaluation and research will document the mechanisms of influence present.

However, the theory of action suggests by sharing and connecting others, we will change the dominant social narrative that leadership is scarce. Every day acts of leadership show that it actually is abundant. In the current social environment infused with cynicism, this type of message and reframing of experience is important. By describing the underlying theory of action and assessing initial development of



InCommons, we hope others will be encouraged to seek promising new approaches to bolstering leadership at large scale in communities.

InCommons is still in its initial phase of development (introduction and awareness building) and the jury is still out on its long-term sustainability, impact, and replicability. Up to this point, the PAR has been intentionally inclusive, designed to incorporate community stakeholders' multiple perspectives about early success indicators during this first phase. As InCommons matures, evaluation efforts must keep pace and balance such inclusiveness with an ability to measure the sustained impact of a broad-scale initiative, where both strategies and desired outcomes may manifest themselves in different ways across different communities. This will likely entail blending the PAR strategies and developmental approach (Patton, 2007) with a deeper focus on cluster evaluation and measuring consistent indicators of replicability (Kellogg Foundation, 2007), regardless of specific community-level outcomes identified by specific community-level stakeholders. Measuring the durability of the underlying construct of *leadership as an abundant resource inherent in communities* will remain a constant element of InCommons evaluation.

## References

- Aman, J. (2011). *InCommons: Creating seeds of change. Evaluation report*. Minneapolis, MN: Public & Nonprofit Leadership Center, Humphrey School, University of Minnesota.
- Art of Hosting. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.artofhosting.com>
- Bailin, M. (2004). *Philanthropy in practice: Great expectations versus getting the job done*. State of Philanthropy 2004. Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.
- Baldwin, C., & Linnea, A. (2010). *The circle way: A leaders in every chair*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Berger, L. (2008). How changemakers' "collaborative competitions" harness the wisdom of crowds. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6(1), 67–68.
- Bickman, L. (1987). The functions of program theory. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 33, 5–18.
- Block, P. (2009). *Community: The structure of belonging*. New York: Berrett-Koehler.
- Bollier, D. (2007). The growth of the commons paradigm. In *Understanding knowledge as a commons: From theory to practice* (pp. 27–40). Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Bollier, D. (2008). *Viral spiral: How the commoners built a digital republic of their own*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Boyte, H. (2004). *Everyday politics: Reconnecting citizens and public life*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.
- Boyte, H. (2011). Free spaces and civil society. In M. Edwards (Ed.), *Oxford handbook on civil society* (pp. 343–362). London: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, E., Fleetham, S., Shurilla, A., & Simonson, D. (2010). *What do courageous leaders need to be effective?* Unpublished master's of public policy, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.
- Brown, J., & Isaacs, D. (2005). *The world café: Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Brown, R.B., & Nylander, A.B. (1998). Community leadership structure: Differences between rural community leaders' and residents' informational networks. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 29(1), 71.
- Burns, J.M. (2003). *Transforming leadership: A new pursuit of happiness*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Chazdon, S.A., & Lott, S. (2010). Ready for engagement: Using key informant interviews to measure community social capacity. *Community Development*, 41, 156.
- Cohen, M., & March, J. (1974). *Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Collins, F.S., Morgan, M., & Patrinos, A. (2003). The human genome project: Lessons from large-scale biology. *Science*, 300, 286–290.
- Cooperrider, D., & Whitney, D. (2000). *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Crosby, B.C., & Bryson, J.M. (2005). *Leadership for the common good: Tackling public problems in a shared-power world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Daloz, L.P., Keen, C., Keen, J., & Parks, S.D. (1996). *Common fire: Leading lives of commitment in a complex world*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Dietz, T., Ostrom, E., & Stern, P. (2003). The struggle to govern the commons. *Science*, 302, 1907–1912.
- Earl, J. (2007). Leading acts in a leaderless movement. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 50, 1327–1349.
- Emery, M., Fernandez, E., Gutierrez-Montes, I., & Butler Flora, C. (2007). *Leadership as community capacity building: A study on the impact of leadership development training on community*. New York: Routledge.
- Evans, S.M., & Boyte, H. (1986). *Free spaces: The sources of democratic change in America*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Frieze, D., & Wheatley, M. (2011). From hero to host: A story of citizenship in Columbus, Ohio. In M. Wheatley & D. Frieze (Eds.), *Walk out, walk on: A learning journey into communities daring to live the future now* (pp. 188–215). New York: BK Currents.
- Frumkin, P. (2006). *Strategic giving: The art and science of philanthropy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fulton, K., & Blau, A. (2005). *Looking out for the future: An orientation for twenty-first century philanthropists*. Cambridge, MA: Global Business Network.
- Ghosh, S. (2007). How to build a commons: Is intellectual property constrictive, facilitating, or irrelevant? In C. Hess & E. Ostrom (Eds.), *Understanding knowledge as a commons: From theory to practice* (pp. 209–245). Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Gira, E.C., Kessler, M.L., & Poertner, J. (2004). Influencing social workers to use research evidence in practice: Lessons from medicine and the allied health professions. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 14, 68–79.
- Grassroots Solutions. (2010, April). *Engagement audit findings*. St. Paul, MN: Grassroots Solutions.
- Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 1243–1248.
- Hazy, J., Goldstein, J., & Lichtenstein, B. (2007). Complex systems leadership theory: An introduction. In J. Hazy, J. Goldstein & B. Lichtenstein (Eds.), *Complex systems leadership theory: New perspectives from complexity science on social and organizational effectiveness* (pp. 1–13). Mansfield, MA: ISCE Publishing.
- Heifetz, R.A., Kania, J.V., & Kramer, M.R. (2004). Leading boldly. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2, 21–31.
- Hess, C., & Ostrom, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Understanding knowledge as a commons: From theory to practice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Holman, P. (2010). *Engaging emergence: Turning upheaval into opportunity*. New York: Berrett-Koehler.
- Jennings, P.L., & Dooley, K.J. (2007). An emerging complexity paradigm in leadership research. In J. Hazy, J. Goldstein & B. Lichtenstein (Eds.), *Complex systems leadership theory: New perspectives from complexity science on social and organizational effectiveness* (pp. 17–34). Mansfield, MA: ISCE Publishing.
- Kellogg Foundation. (2007). *Designing initiative evaluation: A systems-oriented framework for evaluating social change efforts*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- Kouzes, J.M., & Posner, B.Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lam, W.F., & Ostrom, E. (2010). Lessons from the dynamic complexity of development interventions: Lessons from an irrigation experiment in Nepal. *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management*, 43, 1–25.
- Lessig, L. (2001). *The future of ideas: The fate of the commons in a connected world*. New York: Random House.
- Lewins, A., & Silver, C. (2007). *Using software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Lohmann, R.A. (1992). *The commons: New perspectives on nonprofit organizations and voluntary action*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- London, S. (2007). Civic networks: Building community on the net. In R. Norgaard (Ed.), *Composing knowledge* (pp. 186–201). New York: Bedford/St. Martins.
- Lui, H., & Sandfort, J.R. (2011). Open source platforms for citizen engagement: Examining Ashoka's design and implementation. *Nonprofit Policy Forum*.
- Mandell, J. (2010). Picnics, participation and power: Linking community building to social change. *Community Development*, 41, 269.
- Marion, R., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2001). Leadership in complex organizations. *Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 389.
- McDonnell, L., & Elmore, R. (1987). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. *Educational Administration and Policy Analysis*, 9, 133–152.
- McIntyre, R. (2008). *Participatory action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McKersie, W.S. (1999). Local philanthropy matters: Pressing issues for research and practice. In E. Condliffe Lagemann (Ed.), *Philanthropic foundations: New scholarship new possibilities* (pp. 329–358). Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- McTaggart, R. (1997). *Participatory action research: International contexts and consequences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Nee, E. (2009). Q&A: Judith Rodin. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2(2), 1–20. Retrieved from [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/q\\_a\\_judith\\_rodin/](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/q_a_judith_rodin/)
- Nohria, N., & Khurana, R. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of leadership theory and practice*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolutions of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: Polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review*, 100, 641–672.
- Owen, H. (1997). *Open space technology: A user's guide*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Paarlberg, L., & Bielefeld, W. (2009). Complexity science – An alternative framework for understanding strategic management in public serving organizations. *International Public Management Journal*, 12, 236–260.
- Parks, S.D. (2005). *Leadership can be taught: A bold approach for a complex world*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Patton, M.Q. (1986). *Utilization-focused research*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M.Q. (2007). Evaluation for the way we work. *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, 13(1), 28–33.
- Pigg, K.E. (1999). Community leadership and community theory: A practical synthesis. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 30, 196.
- Poteete, A.R., Janssen, M.A., & Ostrom, E. (2010). *Working together: Collective action, the commons, and multiple methods in practice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Public Strategies Group. (2009). *Leadership for the 21st century: A catalytic strategy*. St. Paul, MN. Retrieved from: <http://www1.umn.edu/pres/bush/docs/Design%20Lab%20Pub%20Final.pdf>
- Rausch, E., & MartinRogers, N. (2010). *Developing courageous leaders and engaging communities in solving problems*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=2317>
- Sandfort, J.R. (2008). Using lessons from public affairs to inform strategic philanthropy. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 37, 537–552.
- Senge, P., Scharmer, C.O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B.S. (2004). *Presence: An exploration of profound change in people, organizations, and society*. New York: Currency Doubleday.
- Silver, I. (2004). Negotiating the antipoverty agenda: Foundations, community organizations, and comprehensive community initiatives. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33, 606–627.
- Tapscott, D., & Williams, A.D. (2006). *Wikinomics: How mass collaboration changes everything*. New York: Portfolio.
- Thomas, A.B. (1988). Does leadership make a difference to organizational performance? *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33, 388–400.

- Weiss, C.H. (1995). Nothing as practical as good theory: Exploring theory based evaluation for comprehensive community initiatives for children and families. *Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, 65, 123–142.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wheatley, M. (2006). *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Wilder Research Center. (2009). *Developing courageous leaders and engaging entire communities in solving problems: 2009 household survey in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research Center.
- Wituk, S., Ealey, S., Clark, M.J., Heiny, P., & Meissen, G. (2005). Community development through community leadership programs: Insights from a statewide community leadership initiative. *Community Development*, 36, 89–101.