

Emerging New American Community Team

Ohio History Connection

Columbus, OH | APRIL 2019







Project Description:

ENACT connected 15 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.

Grantee Reflections:

Creating & Adapting the ENACT Logic Model

In their goal to strengthen the leadership and impact of emerging New Americans in Columbus, OH, Ibrahima Sow and Ben Anthony of the Ohio History Connection museum applied their own assets – community organizing skills, embeddedness in the community they wished to support, and cultural knowledge – to build a malleable project that partners and participants alike could actively co-create. Their recent work to revise their original logic model as part of an application for funding to lead a next iteration of the project has yielded not only an improved project design but also insights into effective community engagement practices and how a logic model can best be used to support them.

Neither team member had created a logic model before asked to do so at the beginning of the project. They found it a challenging but valuable process. Ben recalls, "We come from a background of just getting on the ground and 'doing it.' . . We knew how to do [the work] but we never really sat down and explained it in that format, so that was a unique challenge for us . . . to communicate it in such a condensed way as a logic model."

Looking back, the team has recognized the effectiveness of their intuitive methods of developing and utilizing their logic model in ways that would enable their partners and the program participants (emerging New American leaders known as "Fellows") to co-create the project with them. Additionally, the make-up of the project team itself included a powerful level of "embedded" engagement, in the form of one staff-person leading the project, Ibrahima Sow. "When he was hired by our bosses," explains Ben, "it

was directly from these groups [within the New American community]." Through Ibrahima, the community's perspective was "in the room" from the project's onset.

After holding approximately 3 internal meetings about it, the team brought the model to partners for 5 rounds of revisions – a process which Ibrahima's role as a project representative and trusted community member made remarkably easy and natural. "There was no cold open," says Ben. "We were going into rooms because of Ibrahima and Ibrahima's connections. There were hugs not handshakes. So it's not a matter of 'Hey, will you do this?' It's, 'Ibrahima's got this great idea. Help me build it.' And they'd go, 'Yeah, great, cool. We know you. This is easy."

"It was so encouraging when we heard back from them [about the model]." Ben recalls, "That was when we started solidifying a committee planning model that was collective." They found that bringing partners an unfinished, "half-baked" model increased cocreation. "The two of us have had enough background in community work that we knew we it had to be half-baked. It couldn't be nothing. 'Sure it's a halfbaked idea, and we want you to bake it with us."

Not only did this foster partner engagement--it also yielded key insights into the plan's viability. "Our community partners molded it. You know, we took it to them and when we were explaining topics, for example, for what we were going to educate the cohort in. They were like, 'OK, this is fine. I don't know about this one. These are two you are missing.' And it was two [topics] that never occurred to us as far as topics to delve into that they were like, 'That's great and all and the framework of this is fine but, you know, topically you're not quite hitting the mark."

Finally, the team found that asking partners to help mold the logic model provided an important gauge for partners' actual investment and enthusiasm. "Based on who gave us better feedback, you could really see who the engaged partners were, and you immediately sort of felt out who was like, 'Yeah this is great, whatever.' . . You could tell who could see it working and being really successful or if they're like, 'Alright, fine, we'll be a part of it' – like they're checking a box."

As partners responded to the model, the team learned the value of their instinctive decision to seek both larger institutions and smaller organizations as partners. "I think in the bones of this that we build early on, was a good blend of institutional, city-wide partners and grassroots partners – smaller orgs and these big, kind of 'heavy-hitter' orgs. Because some of the challenges we had were some of these partners rolling off. You need this balance, because . . . as these groups roll off, it isn't, 'Oh god, we don't have a planning committee!' You had stability from YMCA and the library but you had authenticity and you had relevance from these grassroots organizations. And

"We were looking at the thing we built and thought, 'We can do better... There's a lot of money in there... from spring to ocean, how much of it is making it to ocean?"

Ibrahima adds, "I picture myself as having a bucket at the spring and walking to the ocean and thinking, 'This isn't enough!"

Ben Anthony, Community Engagement Coordinator Ibrahima Sow, ENACT Project Director Ohio History Connection you had accountability. [The small organizations] were very willing to come to the room and say, 'OK we all know that this sounds great on paper. It's not going to work.' So that balance has been another early-on that we built in."

Once it launched, the project benefited from the regular "pulse checks" that Ben & Ibrahima had included for gathering feedback and ideas from Fellows and partners. This flexibility of design was also supported by the structure of the grant. Ibrahima reflects, "We're really fortunate because the Catalyst grant allows us to change things midway, to really identify what's not working and change it instead of just chugging through it and making a report at the end. We were fortunate to be able to tweak things as we go and really come out at the end with a working model."

The team's new grant application process has created the opportunity to seriously reflect on and refine the project's design. "We [chose] to make a new Logic Model," Ben says, "to take our learnings and apply [them]. It was a really intensive month of regrinding the same sausage to see what we get." The team found this "forced reflection" extremely valuable. "It was a very stressful process of course, as grant writing is, but on the back side of it, it was a mechanism for us to learn NOW. . . It really condensed the timeline to make us more cognizant of what has been working and what hasn't."

Many components remained. "We changed formats and some of the logistical stuff that we learned, but all in all the core of it stayed pretty much the same, and that was a big takeaway. Because our Fellows have been so engaged."

The components which will remain are:

- the high involvement of community partners and participants in ongoing project design and adjustment,
- including a balance of small grassroots and larger institutional partners from community,
- Fellows who are already active emerging leaders, and
- recruiting Fellows from the small partner organizations.

Activities and practices the ENACT team will change in the next iteration include:

- increasing opportunities for intra-cohort learning among Fellows,
- building a more substantial budget for food, and
- including more traditional professional development components in the Fellowship experience.

Additionally, a practice which the team plans will implement but was not able to express through the logic model is "routing as much money as humanly possible to the Fellows and their projects."

Ben recalls, "It was something that the two of us really challenged ourselves to be better at. Because the first time we were writing this, we hadn't written any grants... And then, we looked back and [realized that] if you are lucky enough to do this kind of thing and get funding for [it], you have a responsibility to make sure the pipeline does not stop at you and it goes all the way down... We were looking at the thing we built and thought, 'We can do better... There's a lot of money in there, and ... from spring to ocean, how much of it is making it to ocean?" Ibrahima adds, "I picture myself as having a bucket at the spring and walking to the ocean and thinking, 'This isn't enough!"

Going forward, the team plans to improve their logic model by increasing its visual accessibility through experimenting with layout and color while continuing to adapt and adjust their leadership development model to become a nationally replicable structure for many other communities to foster leadership from the grassroots level of New American communities.



E.N.A.C.T. LOGIC MODEL

OBJECTIVES >

OUTPUTS

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Connect ENACT
participants to
existing community
resources in the areas
of safety, libraries,
civic engagement,
parks and recreation,
health and housing

- 1. Readings, videos and blogs focused on community resources and current events
- 2. Resource workshops to connect participants with:
 - a. Columbus Metropolitan Library
 - b. Ohio History Connection
 - c. Columbus Department of Public Health
 - d. Columbus, Reynoldsburg and/or Hilliard Department of Public Safety
 - e. Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority
 - f. Columbus, Reynoldsburg, and/or Hilliard Recreation and Parks Department

- 1. Participants indicate increased knowledge about services and resources available in the areas of safety, libraries, civic engagement, parks and recreation, and/or health and housing in Central Ohio
- Participants demonstrate increased use of services and resources in the areas
 of safety, libraries, civic engagement, parks and recreation, and/or health and
 housing in Central Ohio
- 3. Participants share information about resources and services within their broader communities

Increase ENACT participants understanding and engagement in civic processes

- Instructional workshops focused on government structure and general civic processes at the State, County, and City levels
- 2. Interact with local elected officials
- 3. Create unstructured time for feedback post workshops
- 4. Participate in a day of advocacy at the Ohio Statehouse
- Design and implement a plan to advocate for an issue or topic important to their community within the State, County or City government

- 1. Participants increase knowledge of State, County and City government structure
- 2. Participants increase knowledge of the civic process at the State, County and City level
- Participants indicate they have gained skills to advocate for themselves and community than before joining ENACT
- 4. Participants indicate they gained confidence to advocate for themselves and community than before joining ENACT

Foster meaningful cultural exchange and awareness of challenges that Central Ohio New Americans may confront between ENACT participants and community partners

- 1. Dedicate time within each workshop for community feedback and discussion with community partners
- 2. Organize a planning retreat w Fellows upon selection
- 3. Create a planning committee with representatives from core community organizations to create workshops with partnering community organizations:

Planning Committee Core Organizations

- a. Somali Community Association of Ohio
- b. Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS)
- c. Iraqi Association of Ohio
- d. Bhutanese Nepali Community Center
- e. Ohio History Connection
- f. Columbus Metropolitan Library

Partner Organizations

- g. Columbus Public Safety
- h. Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks
- i. Columbus Department of Public Health
- j. Reynoldsburg Division of Police
- k. Reynoldsburg Parks and Recreation Department
- I. Hilliard Division of Police
- m. Hilliard Recreation and Parks Department
- n. Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority

- 1. Participants create connections with other community organization leaders
- Participants feel respected and listened to by partner community organization representatives
- 3. Partner community organization representatives report gaining insight on how to better collaborate with Central Ohio New American organizations
- 4. Partner community organization representatives indicate that their knowledge of the concerns and issues of Central Ohio New Americans increased
- 5. Partner community organization representatives indicate that interaction with participants and planning committee has created stronger or new connections within the Central Ohio New American community

OBJECTIVES

OUTPUTS

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Increase ENACT participant's sense of belonging in Central Ohio

- 1. Invite participants to social activities across Central Ohio
- 2. Instructional and resource workshops hosted across Central Ohio
- 1. Participants indicate that after completing ENACT they feel an increased sense of belonging in Central Ohio

Disseminate the results of ENACT model

- 1. Disseminate final results of ENACT via online and in print resources
- 2. Engage in more video work to capture changes and impacts
- Participate in relevant IMLS and LAM field conference(s) and meetings to share findings of ENACT model

- 1. Increase awareness of opportunity for engagement with New American and Refugee Communities
- Advance LAM field best practices and offer a useable approach in Outreach and Community engagement with New American communities

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- 1. Participants utilize partner community resources in daily life
- 4. Partner community organizations utilize the connections made with other partner community groups during ENACT in future programming
- 2. Participants share lessons about advocacy and community resources within the Central Ohio New American community
- 5. New American Central Ohio residents gain skills to better advocate for themselves and their community

- Partner community organizations use results of ENACT to guide future planning
- b. New American Central Ohio residents feel an increased sense of belonging in the Central Ohio Community at-large

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