

Chapter III: Postgraduate Education

At one level, the scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities....Campuses would be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action.

– Ernest L. Boyer¹⁴

L **Leading a multifaceted organization committed to community change is enormously challenging.** It requires a remarkable range of skills. A leader must be skilled in motivating people and getting them to work together, analyze complex problems, devise creative solutions, and develop strategies for making significant gains with very limited resources. This requires wide-ranging knowledge of low-income communities and how they work, the economic, social, cultural, and political trends which influence them, and the issues and opportunities they face. It also demands strong skills in planning, management, and leading change. It's a tall order.

Most people who move into leadership positions as executive directors of community organizing groups, CDCs, or comprehensive community initiatives have had few opportunities to develop such a broad base of knowledge and skills. Many come instead from organizations or positions where they have specialized on one or two issues like housing or jobs. Others may have worked on several issues but had little management training. Few have an educational background which provides them with the knowledge base and analytical skills they need to analyze the deeper trends which – because they powerfully impact their communities – they must understand so they can help their organizations cope with a rapidly changing world.

This situation is aggravated by the dearth of opportunities for mid-career education for front-line directors. While they may find useful workshops or one or two courses on some aspect of management or fundraising, neither the nonprofit nor the aca-

demic world offers in depth education on the issues which directors must master to maximize their chances for success.¹⁵

This lack of mid-career education has severe consequences for funders as well as for community groups and the low-income people they represent. **The current crisis in talent makes it imperative that foundations, community groups, support organizations and networks concerned about poverty give new priority to fostering the growth of graduate programs. These programs should draw from the many disciplines which collectively can give people the breadth of knowledge and skills they need to tackle the interrelated issues of poverty, race, organization-building and community change.**

Research and interviews for this scan revealed that, while there are many postgraduate programs which provide students with pieces of an education for community change work, there are only two or three postgraduate programs which attempt to meet this need fully.

Leaders of community organizing groups, broad-gauged CDCs, comprehensive community initiatives and such other broad neighborhood transformation initiatives as the recent Empowerment Zone program would greatly benefit from a mid-career Master's level program designed specifically to meet their educational needs. In particular, such a curriculum should develop a student's core competencies in –

- Addressing issues of both *people and place*, and of *race, income and gender*;

¹⁴1996 Speech by Ernest Boyer, former President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

¹⁵Some exceptions to this general rule are discussed below.

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- *Being people-centered*, focusing on the involvement, development and transformation of the community's residents and leaders as the prime movers in community change;
- Organizing and involving the community through participatory processes, understanding residents, their culture and circumstances, and their forms of self-organization, and developing community leaders and ongoing vehicles through which they can influence their environment and expand their opportunities;
- *Being community-focused*, evaluating a community's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within an analytic framework which includes assessing the economic, social, cultural, and political trends which impact that community;
- Developing ongoing comprehensive planning processes in the community, including practical strategies for garnering the neighborhood support, resources, alliances and partnerships needed to bring about significant change;
- *Developing change leaders and organizations* by helping them study approaches to leading change within an organization and in its relations with other institutions, while building skills in planning, leadership education, board and constituency development, staff development, and participatory budgeting, monitoring and evaluation; and
- *Influencing policies* of public agencies and major private sector institutions through a combination of organizing, advocacy, partnership and inside/outside strategies.

Programs at Southern New Hampshire University and Antioch as well as the Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City and the Institute of Development Studies

at the University of Sussex in England share common elements which are critical to a mid-career program. All four programs are –

- *Part-time and "nonresidential"*, requiring only periodic short periods of residence on campus so that full-time people from significant distances can participate;
- *Both "academic" and experiential*, building knowledge, theory and analytic skills as well as practical experience; and
- *Multidisciplinary*, drawing from the special strengths of a broad range of academic disciplines as well as the knowledge of local leaders, organizational development specialists and other practitioners.

One Vision – An Innovative Program in Mexico

The Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City (UAM) demonstrates the potential of a mid-career program for practitioners. Its MA in Rural Development includes several excellent features which merit consideration if new programs are designed to meet the growing US need for mid-career education for community change agents.¹⁶

UAM has offered this Master's program for over twenty-five years. It was designed for mid-career people working on rural economic development, public health, education, or other issues throughout Mexico who could benefit from advanced education concentrating on the challenges of bringing about substantial change in rural areas. While assuming that MA candidates would already have degrees and experience in particular specialties like rural education, the program's designers developed the academic program to provide mid-career people with a **firm intellectual and practical grounding on how to use grassroots, "bot-**

¹⁶This profile is based on a site visit to UAM, UAM materials and interviews with faculty and students in Mexico City.

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tom-up” community development approaches to make greater gains on the issues they are addressing.

Students apply for this program from all over Mexico. The government provides free tuition for a one-year certificate program, a two-year Master's, or a full Ph.D. program. The three programs are fully integrated so that lower level classes lead into more advanced MA courses. Students use their own funds, scholarships or special grants to cover the travel and living costs incurred from spending every fifth week on campus. Since the students remain employed, some find their employers willing to cover these costs.

The curriculum proceeds in stages, starting with readings, research, and discussions concerning **Mexico's peasant population which is at the core of the program's “bottom-up” community development approach** to rural change. For three months students study peasant life and conditions, read extensively, conduct research and interviews in villages, and reflect on their experience. They interact with sociologists, economists, agronomists and other academics as well as practitioners who serve as adjunct faculty or workshop leaders.

When the students gather on campus, they work and learn in small groups for four days and then spend Fridays in cross-group dialogue. While everyone reads the same materials, each small group takes a different perspective on those readings. For example, while one group analyzes peasants in relation to the land or the broader economy, another assesses how rural people traditionally organize themselves and what new forms of organization are emerging. Yet another group will discuss peasants and their culture. Friday's joint discussion allows students to compare what they have learned using different perspectives, a particularly stimulating approach to cross-disciplinary learning.

Students also study the process of change in order to become more effective change agents themselves. Since each student wants to increase his/her ability to improve rural

education or public health, for example, each benefits greatly from learning how to assess the economic and political situations they face and alternative ways of altering those situations. Therefore, several months are devoted to providing students with the academic background and skills they need to analyze the economic, cultural, social and political situations in their home provinces and how they affect the issues on which they work. For example, in preparing to conduct social and cultural audits, students read extensively from sociologists and observers of rural life and institutions, are trained in interviewing people, and learn how to conduct a “power analysis” of their political environment. They devote one month to each audit, preparing analyses and written products for discussion with faculty and their peers. They then proceed to audit the next facet of their environment.

This experience prepares students to choose a practicum on a local issue or project on which the student wishes to make significant progress. For example, a public health specialist may choose a project she wants to expedite by developing a more sophisticated analysis of the obstacles to progress, potential allies and the best strategies for enlisting their support. Her practicum then consists of conducting that analysis, testing new strategies in action, assessing progress and drawing lessons from that experience.

More than twenty classes of students have received MA degrees from UAM, with recent classes averaging 25-30 students per year. Unfortunately, UAM has had no funds to evaluate its impact over time, or even funds with which to track its alumni informally through periodic meetings and on-line contact. It therefore is impossible to evaluate fully its impact in particular states or departments or in the overall field of rural development in Mexico. However, it seems highly likely that UAM's influence through its more than 300 graduates has been substantial, and that it would have been amplified had there been outside support for maintaining an ongoing network of mutual support and learning.

Mexico's peasant population is at the core of the program's "bottom-up" community development approach to rural change.

One intriguing aspect of UAM's approach is that they have avoided the pitfall of limiting themselves to one school of thought concerning how change happens. Using American terms, they do not stress "development" or "organizing", "advocacy" or "service delivery." They do not restrict their students to people who work in the nonprofit sector, or the community-based nonprofit subcategory of that sector, or in government agencies or support institutions. Instead they recruit from all those sectors with the understanding that all are essential to bringing about major change in how low-income people live and the opportunities they enjoy.

Furthermore, the program does not limit itself to one discipline like public health, education or economic development. Instead it is based on the supposition that all these approaches are part of a more comprehensive strategy for rural development and transformation. **It concentrates on the change process itself.**

The curriculum is based firmly on two fundamental principles. **First is the principle that lasting change must start with the people themselves**, who they are, how they are organized, what they see as their challenges and opportunities, and how they can participate in shaping their future.¹⁷ The second tenet is that, **whatever your role in the change process, a structured educational opportunity can help you build the knowledge base, conceptual understanding, and analytic, practical and participatory skills to be a more effective change agent.**

Another strength of UAM's program is its integration of the certificate, Master's and Ph.D. programs. This enables people to enroll for whatever level of education they need while maintaining the flexibility to decide later to continue their advanced education to the next level.

A New International Initiative on Participation, Development and Social Change:

The Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in England recently launched a **mid-career Master's in Participation, Power and Social Change** and has enrolled students from five continents.

Sussex is a "red brick" university, high quality but not prestigious, with a long tradition of educating people for overseas development work through its Institute for Development Studies (IDS). **IDS's new MA stresses participatory processes of development and social change.** It is designed for people working full-time who want a Master's level program through which they can study and practice ways of increasing the participation and influence of often voiceless people in the development process. Students spend two ten-week summers in residence at IDS for classes, intensive reading and research.

The first residential period prepares students for their work over the fifteen month MA program. It introduces them to key concepts and links theory with practice through case studies and discussion. The first residential term also introduces students to **methods and skills for participatory learning and assessment (PLA), facilitation, organizational development, participatory monitoring and evaluation, critical thinking and communication.** Students are prepared to analyze the organizational context of their own work situations or other situations they may encounter, to assess governance, accountability and participation issues, and to develop participatory processes to foster learning and development.

Students conclude this initial phase by devoting considerable time to developing individual learning plans for applying the theoretical concepts they are learning. They identify the concepts and techniques they will test

¹⁷In Paolo Freire's phrase they must become subjects instead of objects of history.

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in action and the central question they will explore when they return home. This includes their vision for social change, why they have structured their project in a particular way, and how they will measure whether their intervention is actually making a difference.

During the ten months between terms at the University, **students apply the participatory skills and techniques they have learned in concrete situations they face on the job.** They file quarterly reports on their experience, including personal reflections and a description of shifts in their thinking and practice. At midpoint they gathered in South Africa for a week during which each student made a 30-minute presentation on his/her experience and learning and joined others in small groups for critical reflection.

Throughout the ten months all students keep learning journals which they e-mail to their supervisors at IDS. Their supervisors are in touch with them frequently, helping them solve problems like being stymied from innovating by bureaucracies or politics. Academic supervisors also help students think through how to apply concepts and techniques for bringing about change which they learned at Sussex or developed on their own. Students are encouraged to create local learning groups to share experience and reflections with their local peers.

The final residential term is devoted to preparing a reflective essay distilling experience and lessons and a portfolio collection of evidence demonstrating what has resulted from their applying their individual learning plans in practice. Students make presentations on the basis of these papers, while also choosing among courses which either concentrate on issues many face in their own countries such as government decentralization or conflict or deepen their knowledge of particular learning techniques.¹⁸

What is the Status of Mid-career Education on Community Change in the US?

For twenty-five years Southern New Hampshire University has offered the only Master's level program in community economic development which is available to students from all parts of the US. It has pioneered in teaching people who work full-time for CDCs or other nonprofits or are otherwise engaged in supporting community development work. The Pratt Institute's planning degree and a now-dormant diploma program at the University of Illinois at Chicago have also offered postgraduate education to people working in community development, but those programs have been geared to reach only local students.

University-based training programs for mid-career professionals have had an extraordinarily difficult time raising foundation support. SNHU's program is almost entirely supported with fees, Pratt's mid-career training program was dropped when foundation support dried up, and Tufts' highly valued summer program for CDC staff and other nonprofits disappeared years ago because of funding problems.

In the **US, no graduate school currently offers a multidisciplinary Master's level education for mid-career people who wish to strengthen their knowledge and skills in subjects related to community organizing and community and social change** as distinguished from housing and economic development. This leaves large numbers of community organizers and people engaged in grassroots efforts to change public policies and reform institutions without postgraduate programs geared to meet their particular needs. This is an extraordinarily serious problem considering the enormous challenges and the great importance of organizing poor

¹⁸Interviews with Dr. John Gaventa, Senior Fellow, Participation Group, IDS, University of Sussex, and Dr. Peter Taylor, Coordinator, MA in Participation, Development and Social Change

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people and people of color into strong, representative organizations through which they can persuade government agencies, the private sector and major nonprofits to allocate resources and adopt policies to rejuvenate their communities and create new opportunities for people now being left behind.

Fortunately, this scan reveals that **there are many postgraduate programs which offer courses and even specialized tracks which can be of great value to people working on the front lines of community change.** Some planning and social work schools, for example, have strong tracks in community planning or community organization with field placements and practicums. Other graduate schools offer excellent individual courses in community organizing, leadership development, community-based planning, community-based social service delivery, and community involvement in public school reform. There are also equally good courses in nonprofit management, budgeting and finance and on the substance of the housing, jobs and other issues low-income communities and people of color face.

The problem is that these courses are scattered over different graduate schools in different institutions. They are not built around a single graduate school or center in coherent programs of study and practice. There are two reasons for this. First, no university other than Southern New Hampshire has decided to establish a graduate program focused on the professional challenge of addressing issues of race, poverty, community, and building grassroots nonprofit organizations. Second, the “tyranny of the disciplines” makes it extremely difficult for academics to pull together a multidisciplinary curriculum and faculty on *any* subject, let alone the neglected field of community organizing and development.

There are strong advantages to interdisciplinary approaches but they are rare. Because communities face many complex and interrelated issues, broad community change

requires a mix of strategies. To be fully prepared for this work, people need wide-ranging knowledge of several key issue areas and an extensive array of analytic and practical skills. They also require a firm grounding in the building of community-based organizations and institutions.

Programs attempting to meet this challenge go directly against the grain in most graduate schools. Those schools were created specifically to educate students and conduct research in a *single* academic discipline, and their reward systems are geared to supporting development of in depth expertise in that discipline.

This poses a serious dilemma for people wanting to develop broad knowledge and skills so they can build community organizations with the vision, power and capacity to bring about significant change in their communities and in policy arenas. The silos of different graduate schools get in the way. There are virtually no structured interdisciplinary programs which help students prepare for community change work by packaging together courses from different graduate schools, independent study, extensive field experience, and a thesis or capstone project.

This chapter highlights in blue boxes exemplary courses and approaches which should be considered in designing a new multidisciplinary Master's program.

What Components Are Needed in a Mid-career Education?

It is imperative that steps be taken to rectify this situation. The stakes are enormous: grassroots community organizations are tackling many of the toughest issues our country faces, and they face a leadership crisis. One central response to this leadership crisis must be to invest in expanding mid-career educational programs to help today's leaders develop the knowledge and skills they need to build strong organizations and tackle tough issues.

The remainder of this chapter draws from the experience of programs designed specifically to train community development practitioners as well as schools of planning and urban studies, social work, public health, nonprofit management, sociology and social psychology, regional economics, leadership studies, political science, divinity, law, public service and administration. **The diversity of the strands which could be brought together would be a great strength for such a new Master's degree. Such an approach, however, would face numerous practical obstacles because so many institutions are highly compartmentalized in separate departments for each discipline.**

In moving forward, there is much to be gained from a "cherry-picking" strategy, selecting the best programs and techniques from different types of graduate schools to develop a multidisciplinary Master's in community change. **The remainder of this chapter briefly scans the current status of community-oriented education in different types of graduate schools and highlights in blue boxes exemplary courses and approaches which should be considered in designing a new multidisciplinary MA program.**

Each of the following sections begins by highlighting the features and courses which a particular field of studies offers to a postgraduate program for community change agents. There is great potential in drawing from these disparate disciplines in designing a graduate

program to provide people with the knowledge, experience and skills they need for this demanding work.

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Mid-career education not requiring long residence
- Program developed for practitioners
- Students build strong peer networks
- Useful courses on –
 - Building Nonprofit Organizations
 - Nonprofit Management
 - Community Economic Development, Housing, Public Health, or another area requiring basic expertise
 - Community Organizing and Public Policy

A. Graduate Education for Community Development, Organizing and Broader Change

At the postgraduate as well as the undergraduate level, the few programs which have been designed specifically for current or future practitioners are most relevant to community developers, including those who staff or assist CDCs.

As noted above, the only Master's level community development studies program which draws students from all parts of the US is the Master's of Science in Community Economic Development program at Southern New Hampshire University. That 20-month program has many features which respond well to the realities and needs of its student body. Designed specifically for people who may have full-time jobs, it does not require long periods on campus. Instead it combines periodic classes on campus, ongoing distance learning and a practicum on a topic which the student is addressing through his or her job in the community development field.

The problem is that these courses are scattered over different graduate schools in different institutions.

The SNHU Master's program is designed to meet the specific needs of people in leadership positions in community-based organizations and the groups which assist them. It combines courses on management and planning with ones on real estate development, financing, and venture development – the sets of skills which are in greatest demand in CDCs. It includes a practicum which is related to each student's job responsibilities. Furthermore, several courses are taught by practitioners with extensive experience in developing and financing projects and dealing with the day-to-day challenges of management – people whom mid-career professionals find particularly useful as teachers and mentors. And the **students benefit greatly from being together on campus every few weeks when they can build strong, lasting networks of mutual learning and support with colleagues** from other CDCs and allied institutions. The SNHU program clearly merits replication in other universities so that its academic program becomes accessible to a great many more community development leaders.¹⁹

While the Southern New Hampshire program responds particularly well to the needs of economic and housing development specialists, it is designed for leaders of other community-based nonprofits as well. However, it is not intended to offer the wide array of courses which would help CDC leaders and others prepare to broaden their organizations' agendas to include such issues as education and youth development, health care, services for children and families, or sector-wide interventions, or to add extensive community organizing, leadership development or public policy strategies to their strategies to increase their impact.²⁰

The Pratt Institute's School of Architecture offers a Master's in Urban Planning which gives students from the New York region a

broad background for community development work. Geared for students who have full-time local jobs, Pratt's classes are at night or on weekends. Students can choose a concentration in Community Development which includes courses rarely offered by planning schools. Among the classes which are particularly helpful for those working in CDCs or closely related agencies are courses in economic development, community organizing, organizational development, and public policy.²¹

In addition, Pratt offers students a rare opportunity for intensive work on community-based planning and development projects through PICCED – the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Design. PICCED is a highly respected technical assistance and training center which is associated with the university but legally independent. It has a history of over thirty-five years of providing outstanding neighborhood and regional planning and design assistance to CDCs, community organizing groups, neighborhood and tenant organizations and the City. Several staff-members teach planning at Pratt while they devote most of their time to working on community planning and development projects. This technical assistance center provides an excellent base for students to learn planning skills while gaining direct experience with the dynamics of working with community-based nonprofits – a combination which offers early- and mid-career students a unique opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills.

In partnership with the Chicago Rehab Network, a coalition of CDCs, and other housing groups, the University of Illinois at Chicago offered a certificate program in Community Development for several years. This program was designed for mid-career practitioners in community development. When first created, it was based at Spertus College and granted an MA rather than a certificate, but the death of a key faculty-member led to its transfer to UIC

¹⁹This program is being launched in Florida in collaboration with the state CDC association, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and other state-based organizations.

²⁰There are no courses which focus on these issues, and the one class on community organizing is an elective.

²¹Interviews with Professor Ron Shiffman, Rex Curry, and current PICCED Director Brad Lander

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and conversion to a certificate program. It is currently dormant because of foundation cut-backs.²²

The UIC program **teamed academics and practitioners to teach** six courses, ranging from property management to public policy. There was a strong emphasis on neighborhood-based planning and development, including the building of CDCs and other grassroots groups. **A course on Organizational Development, for example, focused on community organizing, issues related to combining organizing and community development work, strategic planning and management issues for small nonprofits.** The course on Public Policy was equally practical, including study of such key issues as gentrification and the growing conversion of Section 8 and other federally subsidized projects to middle income use. It also covered important issues of strategy and built **skills in community organizing and advocacy.**

Concordia University in Montreal offers a Graduate Diploma in Community Economic Development rather than a Master's. It enrolls 20-25 students each year, and is offered in French one year, English the next, to attract students from both communities.

Concordia's program is interdisciplinary: faculty come from sociology, social work, economics, organizing, and policy backgrounds, and practitioners teach many courses. Although it is offered under the rubric of "community economic development", the program actually takes a broader view of community development – the development of a community's capacity to use various strategies and tools to address the issues it faces.

The Concordia program is designed to attract students who are working in a wide variety of nonprofit organizations including

community-based social services groups, CDCs and organizing groups like immigrant centers and unions. Its curriculum is thus aimed more broadly than the CD-oriented SNHU program, and includes courses on community organizing and public policy. For this reason, and because the program is for a shorter period, there is less emphasis on developing students' technical skills in development.²³

The faculty-members who originated the program chose the diploma route to expedite clearance by the university and have found this decision to be sound: Concordia's School of Community and Public Affairs has found practitioners and other students deeply interested in having the opportunity to study a variety of topics in depth, even without receiving a MA.²⁴ Furthermore **the diploma program has offered them the advantage of being able to enroll students who are not college graduates** – thus reaching practitioners who would be barred from a Master's program.

Concordia is now exploring the creation of a new MA program in participatory research and evaluation. This program would provide people in nonprofits with the extensive knowledge and skills they need to enter the growing number of community/university partnerships on an equal footing. They would promote the community's interests as research and evaluation topics are addressed.

Concordia requires all students to devote 6-8 hours per week for two terms working on a project. Most of these are carried out in grassroots settings, ranging this year from housing organizing to helping a Guatemalan village develop ecotourism. These field projects tie into a course which teaches them how to work on a project (setting goals, developing a strategic plan, etc.), provides opportunities for

²²Interviews with Joy Aruguete, Instructor at UIC and Chair, Chicago Rehab Network; Kevin Jackson, Executive Director of Chicago Rehab Network; Doug Gills, UIC faculty; and Wim Wievel, former Dean, Graduate School of Business Administration at University of Illinois at Chicago.

²³Interview with Professor Eric Shrage, Director, Graduate Diploma in Community Economic Development, Concordia University

²⁴Interview with Professor Lance Evoy, Institute in Management and Community Development, Concordia University

New university programs have emerged to teach about, research, and promote the strengthening of our democracy through the development of grassroots organizations and participation.

critical reflection in small groups, and requires a final paper synthesizing the student's experience and lessons from that experience.

B. Schools of Planning and Urban Studies

Planning schools vary greatly in the courses

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Focused on place
- On-site work with community groups
- Useful courses on –
 - Physical Planning, Mapping and Geographic Information Systems
 - Housing
 - Economic and Social Planning
 - Participatory Planning
 - Participatory Research
 - Study of Roles of Public, Private and Nonprofit Sectors

es they offer and their areas of concentration. Some are housed in Schools of Architecture and thus heavily oriented toward physical planning. Those are particularly strong in educating students for careers in neighborhood and urban planning and urban design, including the use of GIS systems to map conditions and trends in ways which facilitate analysis and decision-making.

Others like Pratt also stress the social, economic and institutional sides of planning, including the different roles public, private and nonprofit organizations play in planning the future of a neighborhood, city or larger region. Issues of democratizing the planning process and involving the people who are most affected (e.g. neighborhood residents) in participatory planning processes inevitably arise in this context, and many planning schools include courses and placements to prepare students to staff these participatory processes and work with grassroots groups and CDCs.

Pratt also stresses community-based and participatory planning, with a special emphasis on students who are already working. The Institute draws from professionals throughout the area to teach many of its courses, and its full-time faculty is deeply involved in practice, working with CDCs and other community groups on neighborhood planning, development, and other projects. Pratt's four areas of concentration are community development planning, environmental planning, preservation planning and land use planning.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIT combines the prestige of a nationally ranked university with a forty year commitment to community-based planning. It links urban and regional studies with urban planning, thus balancing its strengths in architecture and design with expertise on economic

Balancing Income Targeting and Poverty Deconcentration in Subsidized Housing: The Challenge of the Federal Section 8 Program

Michelle McDonough MCP '98

Michelle analyzed the impact of the repeal of Federal preferences for tenant selection in the project-based Section 8 program. She concluded that even where implementation is most successful, the pace of the desired change in the income mix of these projects will be slow due to the low natural turnover rate. Nevertheless, Michelle predicted a substantial loss number of units that would have been available for households experiencing the most severe housing problems. Her recommendations stressed that implementation should be context-specific and that HUD should consider vouchering out portions of the Section 8 units on a project-basis to create a more appropriate balance between income targeting and poverty deconcentration.²⁵

²⁵From course descriptions at MIT.

Students apply the participatory skills and techniques they have learned in concrete situations they face on the job.

and social planning issues. Several faculty members are deeply involved in working with community groups – ranging from CDCs to organizing groups and neighborhood associations – and the School’s organizational culture respects community work and activism on public policy issues. Its Housing Community and Economic Development (HCED) program group has “a commitment to social progress, a faculty working at the forefront of the field, and a student body committed to passionate involvement in complex urban issues.”

MIT’s planning curriculum provides students with multiple skills for their professional careers. These include the capacity to –

- analyze a city’s economic, social and political structures;
- learn about economic and workforce development, housing policy and development, and the building of social capital and networks; and
- develop skills in reflective practice.²⁶

HCED Master’s students can choose a housing or economic development track to deepen their knowledge of those fields. They also can take courses in other parts of MIT, Harvard or Tufts. The breadth of its program is illustrated by an example of how a recent student met her thesis requirement, summarized in the box on page 40.

In its most recent partnerships with communities, MIT has entered into **multiyear agreements with community groups** in which they detail the services which the groups need from students and faculty, and the commitments MIT makes regarding those needed services. This is designed to eliminate the problems which often plague “partnerships” – students cycling in and out of groups, often working on issues of their own choosing – and to provide continuing help on projects which the community groups select.

Cornell University

Similar traditions are strong at Cornell which offers students a choice of tracks including Land Use and Environmental Planning, and Economic and Community Development Planning. Several faculty members, including the most recent chairpersons of the department, are strongly committed to community-based and participatory approaches to planning and research. They require that students work extensively in the field, often in partnership with community-based organizations. They show their emphasis on community-based organizations and solution of urban issues in their materials:

“Our interests...We study and learn about cities and regions – the way they function (or don’t function) for the people who live and work in them. Since the world’s population is rapidly urbanizing, we need citizens and planning professionals with a sophisticated understanding of how and why cities and regions develop as they do.

“Our approach to teaching...We believe that learning in the classroom, in the laboratory or studio, and in the community contribute to an urbanist’s education. We provide opportunities to learn through internships and in hands-on workshops with real world clients as well as in the classroom. Two recent examples of student “off-campus” learning include participation in historic preservation activities on the famous Ellis Island in New York Harbor, and in an environmental justice workshop with planners in Harlem and the South Bronx in New York City, and the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey.”²⁷

²⁶Interview with Ceasar McDowell, former Director, Center for Reflective Community Practice, MIT

²⁷From MIT web-site

Students benefit greatly from being together on campus every few weeks when they can build strong, lasting networks of mutual learning and support with colleagues

University of California at Los Angeles

Until recently, UCLA had an unusually strong tradition of educating young people of color for careers in community planning and development. Many Los Angeles CDCs were staffed by recent graduates of UCLA's planning school, and several CD practitioners served as adjunct faculty. **The Community Fellows program brought low-income community leaders on campus to teach and study, and supported important participatory research and planning studies involving students, faculty and grassroots groups in unusually close and successful partnerships.**²⁸

For many years this emphasis had strong backing from the top ranks of the university as a response to community unrest and student pressure for the university to address the needs of Los Angeles' troubled neighborhoods. However, UCLA's story illustrates the vulnerability of university programs as well as their promise. As top leadership changed, and as a new Dean merged the planning school into a new School of Public Policy, there was a new emphasis on enhancing UCLA's academic reputation globally rather than stressing its service to Los Angeles. A stronger emphasis on research rather than service led to shrinking the adjunct faculty and outreach programs which had so distinguished UCLA as a strong partner with low-income communities. Today's academic program no longer is such a strong draw for people from low-income communities or others preparing for careers in community development and change.

Faculty members at other planning schools speak openly about the **vulnerability of their programs**. At Cornell, for example, planning school faculty recently had to mobilize alumni to fend off budget cuts which threatened to decimate key programs and even dismantle the planning school, leaving only a few of its courses remaining in the School of

Architecture or other departments.²⁹ Even at MIT where the Graduate School of Planning and Urban Studies is highly respected and apparently secure, faculty speak about how little others at MIT understand and value their work compared to work in the basic sciences, engineering and technology – the Institute's main emphasis.³⁰

It is worth noting that most planning schools have significantly narrowed their focus over the years. In the 1960s, when the civil rights and antipoverty movements combined with urban riots and student pressure, many planning schools became deeply involved with local community groups and progressive government officials in planning the revitalization of neighborhoods and other major community initiatives. Students were attracted to planning schools by their focus on cities and their neighborhoods and their broad approaches to planning encompassing economic and social as well as physical considerations. During that era of Model Cities, the war on poverty, and early federal support for CDCs, community groups often had the resources to bring in planners to work with the community in developing comprehensive neighborhood plans. However, as national concern with the future of cities, poverty, and neighborhoods waned, and as city government resources were reduced, the market for neighborhood planners and comprehensive planning also shrank. Planning schools have adjusted to the market by narrowing their curricula.

As the times have become more conservative, and government at all levels has reduced its social programs, "social planning" has disappeared as a field. Three decades ago, it was an area of specialization within many urban planning programs. It prepared professionals to analyze people's social needs, study the institutions and policies related to those needs,

²⁸Interviews with Gilda Haas, Mary Brooks, Allen Heskin, and other current and former UCLA faculty members

²⁹Interview with Professor Kenneth Reardon, Chairman, Department of Urban Planning, Cornell University

³⁰Interview with Professor Langley Keyes, MIT

Pratt offers students a rare opportunity for intensive work on community-based planning and development projects.

and prepare plans which nonprofits and government agencies used to address those needs. Social planners, for example, were trained to study such specific social groups as children, families, or the elderly, and such social needs as day care and health care, and to prepare the social components of a comprehensive plan for strengthening a community and revamping programs and policies.³¹

The Planners Network provides useful links among progressive planners, including academics, and the Association for Community Design provides a forum for community design centers. Their conferences and publications help people share experiences and lessons and explore pressing questions of mutual interest. Thus far, however, **these groups have not devoted much time to helping their members and others as they have developed their curricula and approaches to teaching, field placements, and career guidance. Expanded focus on these issues would be helpful** to people who now address those issues largely in isolation from their colleagues in other institutions and, equally importantly, from practitioners whose experience is invaluable and who can be of immense help in strengthening field placements and the students' search for jobs.

The disappearance of social planning as a field closely parallels what was, until recently, a real downtrend in the extent to which schools of social work stressed systemic responses to the problems people face, including the building of community-based programs and organizations. Instead they strongly emphasized preparing people for careers in counseling and helping individuals.

C. Schools of Social Work

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Focus on people and groups
- On-site work with community groups
- Dual degree combining social work and urban planning – combining people and place
- Useful courses on –
 - Analysis of Social Problems and Programs
 - Community Organizing
 - Organizational Development
 - Community Process Skills
 - Race and Diversity

At several schools of social work there is a strong tradition of community organizing studies. This goes back to the days of Jane Addams and Hull House, an early example of social workers creating an institution in the community to address social conditions and build local leadership. Most social work schools offer graduate students a choice between concentrating on courses related to clinical practice or concentrating instead on community studies. Community studies is an area of concentration because local conditions – including the strength of the social fabric, helping systems and community institutions – have such an impact upon neighborhood residents, and reforms at the neighborhood or policy level so greatly influence people's social conditions.

As with other disciplines, social work schools change their emphases to meet market demand. During the period from the late '70s through the mid '90s, as interest in changing policies to address issues of poverty and race waned, many social work schools deemphasized or dropped their community studies track. They concentrated instead on preparing

³¹Interview with Professor John deMonchaux, former Chair of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT

The UIC program teamed academics and practitioners to teach.

people for clinical practice, usually in middle class and wealthier areas. In recent years, however, Maryland, Michigan and others see growing frustration with the limitations of “top down” approaches and a shift back to strong interest in community solutions to societal problems. This is reinforced by the large numbers of former VISTAs, Americorps and Peace Corps Volunteers who want to continue their commitment to community service.³² These universities therefore have strengthened their programs to respond to this growing demand.

University of Maryland

Michigan, Maryland, Pittsburgh, Berkeley, Hunter and North Carolina are among the schools of social work which currently offer strong concentrations in community studies. The University of Maryland, for example, created a unique organization – the Social Work Community Outreach Center – to operate as a social work agency within the School of Social Work. Like a teaching hospital within a medical school, or PICCED within Pratt, the Center provides students with excellent field placements and on-the-ground mentoring in low-income communities. Students devote fully 50% of their academic time to their field placements, and several courses and writing assignments relate directly to those placements.

The Outreach Center thus provides students with practical experience, knowledge and analytic skills which are useful for careers with community-based organizations and government. Operating as a technical assistance organization with long-term relationships with community groups, the Center assures groups they will have continuing staff assistance from graduate students with faculty guidance and back-up.

Ten University of Maryland faculty members teach in MACO, the Management and Community Organization track. They offer courses in community organizing, community economic development, social action and non-

profit management. Through the Outreach Center they mentor students working with refugee groups, an Indian Center, CDCs and neighborhood groups. Their projects range from creating a reverse commute program to organizing Hispanic parents in a high school and helping residents persuade the City to keep neighborhood libraries open. Much of their course work and writing is directly related to their field placements.

In the 1980s leaders in the community-oriented side of social work established an association through which they could meet periodically with their peers for mutual learning and support. ACOSA (the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration) also publishes a journal and makes annual awards to outstanding educators and their partners.

University of Michigan’s Joint Planning and Social Work Degree

Michigan offers a **joint MA in social work and urban and regional planning** which provides students with an unusually broad background for a career of bringing about change at the grassroots level. **This dual degree enables students to balance social work’s emphasis on “people” and community organizations and institutions with planning’s emphasis on “place” and physical and economic planning and development.** Some students supplement this with nonprofit management courses, and there are opportunities to take related courses in other departments.³³

In their Social Work courses, dual degree students usually major in Community Organization, taking such courses as “Organizing for Social and Political Action”, “Planning for Organizational and Community Change,” “Multicultural, Multilingual Organizing” and “Managing Projects and Organizational Change.” At the Planning School students can concentrate in Community Development and Housing to

³²Interview with Richard Cook, Director, Social Work Outreach Center, University of Maryland

³³Interview with Professor Barry Checkoway, University of Michigan School of Social Work and School of Urban Planning

Field projects tie into a course which teaches students how to work on a project, and provides opportunities for critical reflection in small groups.

prepare for “work with local residents, neighborhood and community organizations, community development corporations, nonprofit housing developers, public agencies, consulting firms, and other private sector agents in efforts to secure decent, affordable housing; improve job opportunities; increase safety; and restore or maintain community stability.”

Their planning education includes extensive field work with community-based groups and learning techniques for analyzing neighborhoods, cities and regions and developing plans and programs for their future.

D. Sociology and Social Psychology

Highlights to Consider for Master’s in Community Change –

- Analysis of culture and issues of poverty, class, race, and the social psychology of race and prejudice
- Insight into informal and formal organizations and social movements
- Analysis of group formation and functioning
- Analysis of social trends and needs

Because issues of community, poverty and race relate to so many aspects of our society there are examples of courses on community organizing and development in many other types of graduate schools. Sociology was one of the first disciplines to concentrate on issues of poverty, race, community ties, and community organization. In bringing social science methods to the study of society, sociologists bring considerable insight into the functioning of informal and formal social groups. They develop expertise in analyzing how people relate to each other, find common interests, and organize themselves to accomplish tasks.³⁴

While most sociologists devote their careers to research, including important research on issues of poverty, race, and community, people who specialize in “applied sociology” are

often involved in the development of organizations and projects which address community or social issues or in their evaluation and improvement. Applied sociologists work on the full gamut of issues, from drugs to education, and also bring their skills to such issues as the solution of community level social problems and organizational management and change. Columbia Professor Sudhir Venkatesh, for instance, has used his sociological skills and techniques to provide **great insight into the informal organizations** which are so crucial to public housing residents – insight which can help inform local and national policy-makers as they address housing policy issues.

Like sociologists, some **social psychologists** teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels developed some of the first courses relevant to studying and changing low-income communities and the broader framework and norms in which those communities function. Their courses develop students’ ability to **analyze community trends and needs, the social psychology of race and prejudice, the culture of poverty, social movements, and group formation and functioning** as well as issues related to developing and sustaining representative community organizations.

Like urban planning and social work, the fields of sociology and social psychology have faced considerable challenges during this increasingly conservative era. Job opportunities for their graduates have shrunk as government interest in urban social problems has waned, and academic departments have been under pressure to adapt. At some universities, however, these trends have actually strengthened faculty who argue that sociology’s future lies in demonstrating how it can be applied in practical situations. The Society for Applied Sociology plays an important role linking these sociologists who are dedicated to using their skills and insight to provide solutions to social and organizational challenges.

³⁴Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. *American Project*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000

MIT has entered into multiyear agreements with community groups, designed to eliminate the problems which often plague “partnerships”.

E. Schools of Public Health

Highlights to Consider for Master’s in Community Change –

- Emphasis on link between community’s health and public health
- Community-focused
- Useful courses on –
 - Public Health and Environment
 - Participatory Action Research
 - Community Organizing and Education

Public health also has a strong tradition of emphasis on community and, often, community organizing. Epidemiologists and other public health experts concentrate on addressing preventive and other health issues at the community level through community education, community-based services, and community involvement. Whether the issue is HIV/AIDS, asthma, rat control, lead paint abatement or sanitation and sewers, public health experts focus their research, assistance and policy work on trying to change the community-wide practices which present a threat.

Public health specialists stress housing issues because of health concerns about unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Some tackle employment and economic issues because of their clear impact on health, while others emphasize the importance of education, day care and after-school programs in developing physically and mentally healthy young people. Some early American experiments in community organizing emanated from the public health field, including support for the development of cooperative and consumer-controlled health insurance plans in the 1930s and '40s. And the American Public Health Association

has long been community-oriented on issues of social policy because its members understand these links so well.

Harvard University

Harvard’s School of Public Health is an example of the tie between public health and a community organizing approach to change. It offers a course in community organizing which is taught by an adjunct faculty member who is an experienced organizer on health issues. The School’s policy courses also stress the importance of organizing the people who are most affected by a policy as well as broader coalitions which include service providers and other powerful allies. Berkeley, Michigan and others have a similar emphasis.³⁵

Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt has stressed community-based efforts for many years. Vanderbilt’s Center for Health Services emerged out of student protests in the 1970s and has, over time, created 23 community clinics and a training program for maternal and child health workers, or *promotores*. It also created a program combining home-visits to high risk pregnant mothers with advocacy on their issues which has been replicated in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Kentucky and West Virginia. Nevertheless, the Center has not succeeded in influencing the curriculum itself.

Participatory Action Research is stressed by several schools of public health as a particularly good tool for addressing public health issues. Meredith Minkler of Berkeley, Nina Wallerstein of the University of New Mexico, Barbara Israel at Michigan and others have done remarkable work involving people who are affected by an issue in conducting research on that issue and then using their new knowledge as the basis for advocacy.³⁶ The federal govern-

³⁵Interview with Susan Sherry, Adjunct, Harvard School of Public Health

³⁶Participatory research and evaluation is also stressed by people in several schools of planning and in such disparate institutions as schools of nursing and education. Professor Kenneth Reardon of Cornell’s planning school recently found more than 130 colleges and universities offering education in participatory action research.

The Community Fellows program brought low-income community leaders to the campus to teach and study, and supported important participatory research and planning studies.

ment currently provides over \$20 million per year for Community Participation in Health Grants which support participatory research projects on public health issues throughout the country.³⁷

Some public health schools are linked with closely related fields like planning and service delivery. New York University, for instance, has grouped health policy, urban planning, public policy and public administration in the Wagner School of Public Service in order to facilitate collaboration and study across disciplines that are often divided.³⁸

F. Schools of Public Policy, Public Administration and Public Service

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Some offer cross-disciplinary studies
- A few focus on the management needs of smaller nonprofits
- Useful courses on –
 - Public Policy Analysis
 - Nonprofit Management
 - Fundraising and Budgeting

A growing number of schools of public administration and management are developing special tracks on nonprofit management. However, these programs are seldom geared to prepare students for work in smaller, more grassroots nonprofits, and few are oriented to social and community change. They are designed instead to respond to the growing market for executives for such large nonprofit institutions as hospitals, libraries, and major service agencies.

The courses they offer nonprofit managers were often originally developed for public administrators. They may fit for managers of nonprofit institutions which resemble govern-

ment agencies in having large staffs, significant bureaucracies, well-established financial and management systems and procedures, and relatively constant budgets. They are not, however, so useful for people in much smaller organizations with minimal management staff, quite informal systems, and budgets which go up and down with the vicissitudes of foundation fundraising and other unpredictable factors. These managers must be far more entrepreneurial, versatile and quick to adapt to changing circumstances than administrators in larger management structures.

An example of how this plays out in university planning was furnished recently by the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. Interested in attracting additional students, and cognizant of the large number of nonprofits based in the Washington metropolitan area, its Dean and faculty decided to explore creating a new track in their MA program to attract students from nonprofits. In thinking through a possible curriculum, they identified a series of courses already in the course catalogue and packaged them together as a draft curriculum. They then consulted with several nonprofit executives for their reactions on whether their plan would attract students from the nonprofit sector.

The logic behind their design was driven heavily by economic factors – their desire to expand their student body while limiting costs led them to stress using current faculty and courses to meet their new students' educational needs. This approach is understandable in an era of financial austerity and competition for students. However, while broadening the market for courses which are already offered can increase income while keeping costs constant, **this financial drive leaves little latitude for creating courses which meet the special needs of people managing small nonprofits, or for hiring**

³⁷Interview with Professor Meredith Minkler, University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health

³⁸Interview with Professor Sonia Ospina, Wagner School of Public Service, New York University

UCLA's story illustrates the vulnerability of university programs as well as their promise.

academics and/or practitioners with the specialized backgrounds needed to teach those courses.³⁹

This approach limits universities' ability to meet the very different needs of people managing small nonprofits, including –

- management of an organization with a minimal management staff;
- participatory processes of planning and budgeting;
- budgeting and financial management with unpredictable income;
- fundraising from foundations, the community and a variety of other sources;
- development of board leadership and board/staff relations;
- volunteer management and support;
- leadership in the community and advocacy on community and policy issues;
- development of working relationships and influence with the public and private sectors; and
- evaluation and organizational learning in the context of a small organization working for community change.

Furthermore, few schools of management or public administration address the social and ethical issues which motivate people in the field of social change. Quite frequently, they wind up diverting people from nonprofit to government or corporate careers. Recent statistics from the Kennedy School of Government illustrate this: while 33% of their students come from nonprofit backgrounds, only 22% of their graduates go on to work in nonprofits. As one faculty member observed, the Kennedy School is often referred

to as the “second best business school in Boston” because corporate recruiters are as active recruiting students from JFK as from Harvard’s Business School.⁴⁰

Another sign of the impact public policy and management schools often have on their students comes from a recent study of lead staff people in social change organizations in New York and Boston by Frances Kunreuther when she was at Harvard’s Hauser Center. On the basis of her interviews with two dozen people in small nonprofits, Kunreuther concluded that nonprofit management education often actually weakens students’ social motivation. She urged that new educational tracks be created specifically to meet the needs of people engaged in community or social change work.⁴¹

Executive directors and top staff people in community organizations desperately need extensive training in management.

They are responsible for managing highly complex organizations with inadequate budgets and staffing levels. They are accountable for their performance and management to their boards, their communities, private funders, and, quite often, government agencies. And yet most people who move into top management positions in grassroots nonprofits come from backgrounds in community organizing or specializing on a specific community program or issue area rather than from experience in management. It is a rare executive director who has any educational background or other formal training on the key management challenges he/she will face. The need for new opportunities for mid-career education to provide this background is clear and immediate.

The New School University offers a Master’s in Public Administration which is quite different. **The New School strongly emphasizes**

³⁹Interview with Dr. Susan Schwab, former Dean, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland

⁴⁰Interview with Associate Professor Marshall Ganz, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

⁴¹Kunreuther, Frances. *Generational Changes and Leadership: Implications For Social Change Organizations*, a paper prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002.

At several schools of social work there is a strong tradition of community organizing studies.

advocacy and social change. Aida Rodriguez, past chair of Milano's nonprofit management program, says,

"The mission of our program is about empowering people to create social, economic, and political change, whatever they think that change should be. People come to our school because they deeply care about learning how to help their communities and the people who live in those communities."

It includes such courses as "Managing for Social Impact" and "Advocacy, Public Policy, and Social Change." The latter class is taught by Gara LaMarche, now President of Atlantic Philanthropics, and Michael Seltzer, a former Ford Foundation program officer. As part of their course work, many students conduct research and undertake other tasks for organizations that promote social change or provide services to the needy.

Carleton University in Ottawa has gone unusually far in creating cross-disciplinary curricula and research. It gathered together several disciplines under one Dean of Public Affairs and Management, including social sciences, social work, law, business, economics, public administration, and journalism. At the same time Carleton organized interdisciplinary research centers on such topics as Community Economic Development and The Voluntary Sector. **They grounded their teaching in practice as well as theory by recruiting practitioners to teach and stressing participatory research and field placements** with community organizations because "those on the margins ... seldom have all the resources they need to participate fully in university/community partnerships."⁴²

G. Democracy, Participation, Civics and Political Science

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Places community organizations within framework of efforts to strengthen democracy and participation
- Useful courses on –
 - Issues facing democracy in the US
 - Community Organizing
 - Participatory Techniques

Traditionally, political science and government studies focus on the public sector and government agencies, giving little attention to the role of nonprofits in addressing community and societal issues. Furthermore, **most strongly stress social science research methods and quantitative analysis, deemphasizing issues of leadership, creating and leading groups, and managing organizations and change processes. Few promote participatory approaches** for research, needs assessments, planning, and operating and evaluating programs.

However, as concern has grown about the decline in the number of Americans who vote or otherwise participate in politics, a number of new university programs have emerged to teach about, research, and promote the strengthening of our democracy through the development of grassroots organizations and participation. This movement parallels the growth of increasingly strong networks of community organizing groups which strongly emphasize their role as new vehicles for strengthening democracy by equipping ordinary people – including the poor and people of color – with the experience and skills to participate fully in public life.

These developments on campuses and in communities are complementary. Community groups have emerged to supplement government bodies in representing the interests of

⁴²Interview with Professor Ted Jackson, Carleton University

As with other disciplines, social work schools change their emphases to meet market demand.

people whose voice is seldom heard in political circles. They are therefore a key component for deepening democracy and should be seen as highly relevant to universities which are emphasizing democracy studies. However, so far there are few examples of universities developing new academic courses on community organizing and institution-building. Universities could use these courses as key components of future strategies, or focusing research, placements and partnerships on building stronger representative institutions and organizations in now marginalized, often powerless communities.

Nevertheless **there is considerable potential for developing courses on community organizing as an important strategy for engaging disadvantaged people in civic life.** This would build on strong intellectual roots in the United States, from Alexis de Tocqueville's emphasis on associations as being central to democracy in the US, through Hannah Arendt's observation about how democracy has weakened as the tradition of town meetings has waned, to neoconservative philosopher Peter Berger's emphasis on mediating structures as critical to empowering ordinary citizens vis-à-vis government, corporations and private sector institutions.

There are courses on community organizing in many colleges and universities. **One of the most exceptional is the course given at Harvard's Kennedy School** by Marshall Ganz, who is nationally known for his work as Director of Training for the United Farm Workers Union. It is described in Chapter II above and is designed specifically for replication at other universities.

Additionally, **Comm-org⁴³ offers curricular materials to anyone who subscribes to its list serve** and it also maintains a lively and useful dialogue among academics and practitioners interested in community organizing. **Its list serve also posts job openings** – a very useful service which gives college

students, faculty and grassroots groups an opportunity to match recent graduates with jobs.

H. Law Schools

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Clinical work with local leaders and organizers on important legal issues
- Skills in advocacy and rights-based work
- Skills in public policy and legislative analysis
- Useful courses on –
 - Poverty law
 - Constitutional rights
 - Civil rights

Many law schools offer courses on poverty law, civil rights, and issues of participation in government, including clinical placements with nonprofit groups and others working on these issues. These build on the close ties between Legal Services attorneys, other public interest lawyers and low-income community groups. Grassroots organizations often have relied on legal-aid and pro bono attorneys to represent clients from their neighborhoods on issues ranging from immigration rights to housing. These ties were reinforced over the many years when the federal Legal Services Corporation fostered the development of strong client organizations and consumer leaders as partners with local attorneys on legal issues requiring strong community roots and/or advocacy.

The principal intersection between law schools and grassroots groups is through clinical programs which place law students with community-based groups and clinics. In Washington, DC, for example, George Washington places law students with Ayuda to work on immigration, domestic violence and illegal trafficking issues, while Georgetown

⁴³<http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/>

Like a teaching hospital within a medical school, or PICCED within Pratt, the Center provides students with excellent field placements and on-the-ground mentoring in low-income communities.

Law places students with the Employment Law Center to represent day laborers and others victimized by their employers.

For decades Yale Law School has **paired faculty and students in working with local leaders and organizers on important legal issues** like rights to federal entitlements and the rights of tenants facing displacement from public housing renovation. This experience gives students important insight into the dynamics of low-income communities and the organizations which represent them. It helps them see the attorney/client relationship in a new light as they learn how to work with organizations whose leaders need to be taken through a learning process concerning the legal issues involved in their situation, how they can advocate most effectively, how to document their case and decide what remedy to seek, and how to pursue solutions in the courts and through negotiation.

Nevertheless, few law schools offer courses which focus on neighborhood issues and organizations as such. Stanford Law School is among the exceptions. It offers a seminar in Community Action for Social and Economic Rights. This seminar includes a practicum doing human rights work as well as a background in social and economic rights, institutional transformation, global social movements, power, participation and democratic practices.

Some law professors introduce their students to participatory action research as a particularly effective technique for expanding their knowledge of legal issues. Professor Lucie White of Harvard Law School, for example, teaches courses on procedure, social welfare policy, and **community-based advocacy on gender, racial, and economic justice**. She has involved students in the "Kitchen Table Conversations" initiative, a project to enhance the political voice of very low-income

Cambridge women, as well as such projects as a ten-year ethnographic study looking into the lives and work of low income African-American women in a Project Head Start pre-school.

Peru furnishes a fascinating example of the potential of building closer links between law school education and community work. In 1992, concerned about worsening social conditions and threats to human rights under a dictatorial regime, students at Catholic University Law School in Lima decided to offer legal advice and assistance by establishing a clinic in one of Lima's poor neighborhoods. This initiative was taken without backing from university faculty, but PROSODE grew from a student project to a partnership with some faculty to eventually becoming a formal course in the Law Faculty curriculum. It is carried out in coordination with the university department responsible for all university social outreach programmes to the community.

"PROSODE has today two groups of beneficiaries: students and the community. On one hand, students learn law in a different way, contrasting theory with the country's realities.... The activity in PROSODE gives social sensitivity to students and allows them to approach social problems from a legal perspective. On the other hand, the community benefits from our activities in many ways. We have developed different activities that allow the population to gain access to justice, get an education in human and civil rights, and build citizenship in an adverse context."⁴⁴

Over the years the program has expanded in scope and scale. There are now five community-based clinics where law students provide counsel with oversight and assistance from members of the law faculty. In addi-

⁴⁴Armas Alvarado, Henry. *Social Outreach of Law: Experiences from Linking Universities & Communities in Promoting Access to Justice in Peru*, 2003

This dual degree enables students to balance social work's emphasis on "people" and community organizations and institutions with planning's emphasis on "place."

tion, the students provide rights education classes in local high schools and training for "lay judges of justice" who provide mediation services in neighborhoods throughout Lima. The student-run radio station includes educational programs on people's rights as well as legal issues related to domestic violence and other key community problems. Finally, the students and faculty work with poor people and ordinary citizens to pursue legislative and other policy changes on legal issues which are important to them.

There is a strong interdisciplinary side to this ambitious series of programs in Lima. For example, in designing the rights education program for the schools and radio, students asked faculty from the psychology and communications departments to help them plan how to publicize the program and reach and teach people. They involved academics specializing in gender studies, public health, and other disciplines in the educational work and in developing strategies for winning reforms on issues where their specialized knowledge and connections were helpful.

I. Divinity Schools

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Stress on values, connecting faith and action
- Useful courses on –
 - Urban Issues
 - Community Organizing
 - Race and class

There is a long history of strong ties between graduates of divinity schools and community organizations. Churches have, in fact, generated much of the staff and volunteer leadership for grassroots organizations since the 1960s. This stems from strong traditions throughout the faith community – the social

gospel movement among Protestants, the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, the strong liberal humanitarian traditions in Judaism and Unitarianism, and the crucial role of African American clergy in the civil rights movement and in Black communities today. In a study conducted a decade ago by the Center for Community Change, the Center found that religious institutions had provided critical leadership and financial support to virtually every one of the hundred grassroots organizations it surveyed.⁴⁵

Some divinity schools have developed courses responding to the social motivation which attracted many students to the ministry. Most of these offer courses related to the "church in the world" and the "urban ministry", including **classes on community organizing, analyzing and working in low income neighborhoods, and the theological basis for the social justice movement and community work**. Graduates have frequently gone on to become community organizers and directors of grassroots groups, or provided volunteer leadership to groups representing neighborhoods where they are pastors or priests.

However, in recent years many seminaries have deemphasized their urban ministry courses. As the mainline Protestant churches decline in membership and are under assault for being too "liberal", their theological schools are finding fewer students attracted to the ministry by their interest in social change and the urban ministry.

Professor Robert Linthicum, for example, laments that his students at Claremont Theological School have little interest in the churches' role in tackling social issues or supporting community-based groups in distressed neighborhoods.

⁴⁵The churches have been important and constant financial contributors as well as sources of talented leadership. For four decades the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, parallel giving programs in the mainline Protestant churches, and giving and membership dues from local congregations have been especially significant sources of support for community organizing throughout the U.S.

Sociology was one of the first disciplines to concentrate on issues of poverty, race, community ties, and community organization.

While this emphasis has weakened in mainstream churches, Linthicum sees signs that **some evangelical seminaries are beginning to stress issues of poverty and community action.** He points to Eastern University in Philadelphia as being a forerunner for other evangelical schools.

Eastern has established the Campolo School for Social Change which offers a joint degree in divinity and social change as well as MS and MBA degrees in Urban Economic Development. They stress community organizing as a key approach for bringing about economic change and require all students to take two courses in community organizing. Those courses are taught by Professor Linthicum, who is also a consultant to two of the largest national networks of community organizing groups.

Campolo Dean Caleb Rosado makes sure **courses change their students' analysis of poverty from looking at the individual to also looking at the institutional causes,** "following Catholic social theory pioneered by Dorothy Day", a striking connection between evangelical and Catholic social teaching.⁴⁶ According to Linthicum, Eastern's courses on economic development and other topics get at the heart of the issues – Why are people hungry? Is there systemic injustice? Is the problem with the systems, not with the poor?

J. Leadership Studies

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Develops the students' knowledge and skills as change leaders
- Is for mid-career professionals
- Draws students from across the country
- Does not require long periods of residence
- Is multidisciplinary
- Uses participatory techniques in teaching
- Gives credit for experiential education
- Involves practitioners as well as academics as teachers and mentors⁴⁷

Leadership studies is a new academic field which is growing quite rapidly at the postgraduate level. It emerged from growing concern about the **need to prepare the next generation of leaders to provide the ethical and practical leadership which are needed** in all sectors of our society. Today virtually every university has at least one course in leadership studies and many offer minors in the subject.

Although there is a strong tradition of leadership development in community organizing, and a particularly rich history of popular education in Latin America and in such US social change organizations as the Highlander Center, there is little connection between university-based leadership studies and those more grassroots programs. University-based programs are instead heavily oriented toward educating leaders for our country's major institutions, including government. However, Jepson University in Richmond, the first institution to offer a major in leadership studies, includes a **course in leadership in social movements, community-based organizations, politics, and community problem-solving as well as internships with grassroots groups and discussions with community leaders.**⁴⁸

⁴⁶Interview with Dean Rosado

⁴⁷Interview with Professor Laurien Alexandre, Director, Antioch Ph.D. in Leadership and Change

⁴⁸Interview with Professor Richard Couto, Antioch Ph.D. in Leadership and Change

Peru furnishes a fascinating example of the potential of building closer links between law school education and community work.

Antioch University offers a mid-career Ph.D. in Leadership and Change program drawing students from across the US, ranging from Director of a small nonprofit to school superintendents and a Vice President of Boeing. Students are not expected to leave their jobs or spend long periods of time on campus. Instead, they meet for short residential sessions every three months at one of Antioch's several small campuses. The program is staffed by six full-time professors from different disciplines. With backgrounds in leadership, clinical psychology, social psychology, and management, they now work as an integrated team committed to combining the disciplines to enrich the students' education. It is noteworthy that the creativity and challenge of this approach enticed them away from various universities where they had higher salaries and tenure positions.

The program is “**competency-based**” rather than “**course-based**” – what matters is what you know, not how you learn it; you must demonstrate your mastery of the competency, not just have taken courses. In developing the curriculum, the faculty therefore first decided what they wanted students to know at the end of their education, and then designed backwards, allowing great flexibility so the competencies students have already learned experientially are given full credit.

Antioch's faculty believes that “leadership studies” should not be taught in the abstract but should instead be **connected to practice and particularly to how leaders themselves change and how they create organizational change**. Therefore students study, reflect on, and practice the process of leading change, mixing serious academic study of the great thinkers in the field with integrating and applying this knowledge. Adjuncts bring their experience and skills to particular students and studies, and third year students have mentors who are often practitioners, not academics. As part of the education, students work with their professors, mentors and advi-

sors to think through how they can tackle the organizational issues they face in their daily life.

Antioch **starts with the individual**. The first project on the research side of the curriculum is a reflective paper on a person's background in research, a self-assessment of his/her skills and needs, and a description of perplexing problems at work which they need to research and analyze. They then define what the research question will be and how it might be researched.

Despite its focus on each individual, the program **encourages collaborative learning on the theory that you cannot make significant change alone**. Antioch sees collaborative design, action and reflection as critical to the success of change efforts. Like IDS's international MA, the course of study teaches critical thinking, strategy, leading groups, conflict resolution, and ethics and values related to service to society.

K. Education

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Emphasizes community participation
- Involves parents, community and students in reform

Education is another area of study with a strong historic emphasis on the importance of **community participation, including fostering growing involvement on crucial issues of reform by parents, the broader community and students themselves**. This emphasis goes back to John Dewey and has many proponents today.

There are five strong contemporary reasons why some schools of education are strongly committed to fostering greater community involvement on educational issues –

Participatory Action Research is stressed by several schools of public health as a particularly good tool for addressing public health issues.

- The need for greater parental involvement in creating a learning environment at home which reinforces classroom teaching;
- The need for community-based preschool, after-school and youth programs to provide additional learning opportunities for children;
- The need for strong community support for the school system and school budgets;
- The need for strong parent and community involvement in pressing for school reform, providing vital allies for reformers within the system who face major political, bureaucratic and financial obstacles to change; and
- The need to empower students and develop their leadership skills so they become more invested in their schools, more motivated to learn, and better able to provide additional pressure for reform.

It is no coincidence that an educator was the great pioneer in foundation circles in creating the first serious philanthropic program of support for community organizing, advocacy of systemic reform, and community control of public schools. While Ford's Vice President, Paul Ylvisaker launched the Gray Areas Program and many other pathfinding programs to foster community organizing and institution-building in the 1960s. He then took that same emphasis back into a university setting as Dean of Harvard's School of Education.

L. Economics

Highlights to Consider for Master's in Community Change –

- Allows students to analyze and plan economic development at various levels
- Emphasizes grassroots organizing and advocacy as well as development
- Is interdisciplinary

Some economics departments house community-oriented classes. The University of Massachusetts at Lowell, for example, offers an MA in Regional Economic and Social Development. This program provides students with skills in **analyzing and planning economic development** at the local, regional, and national level. In its emphasis on community-based planning, the Economics Department stresses the need for **grassroots organizing and advocacy as well as community economic development projects** to enable low-income neighborhoods and people of color to have a significant impact on regional patterns of economic development and employment.

UMass Lowell students are placed with community organizing groups like the Merrimack Valley Project as well as with CDCs and groups like Lawrence Community Works which combine organizing, community planning, and development. This enables them to learn from those organizations and develop the skills they will need to help such groups in the future as staff, technical assistance providers, or partners in the public or private sector.⁴⁹ Working with those organizing and advocacy groups familiarizes students with the techniques those organizations have found to be effective in influencing public policies, decisions by the private sector, and

⁴⁹Interview with Professor Chris Tilly, Chair, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts at Lowell

It is no coincidence that an educator was the great pioneer in foundation circles in creating the first serious philanthropic program of support for community organizing and advocacy of systemic reform.

how key sectors of the local economy function so they are more beneficial to disadvantaged people.⁵⁰

The Economics Department at UMass Lowell is committed to **interdisciplinary studies**. It therefore draws on the fields of economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and urban planning. It prepares students for analyzing and acting on the social aspects of development, including **income distribution and workplace issues, and stresses the role of public policy, social action and social movements**. In another sign of its breadth, Lowell offers courses analyzing the impact of the globalization of economies, cultures, and ecosystems on communities.

Conclusion on Postgraduate Programs

This broad scan of postgraduate programs relevant to community organizing and social change reveals a far richer panoply of courses, research, student placements and partnerships than is commonly realized. This richness is usually hidden because such programs usually exist on the margins of universities, in scattered academic programs and centers focusing on poverty, race, community or a particular subject area.

These efforts are so isolated from each other and in so many academic nooks and crannies that their leaders know little or nothing about parallel initiatives in other academic disciplines or institutions. Needless to say, this fragmentation greatly limits opportunities for the people leading these efforts to learn from each other, share materials, or develop joint strategies for the future. Furthermore **this isolation increases**

the vulnerability of valuable university programs which have little backing from university administrators who are more concerned about traditional areas of study, responding to major new market opportunities, fundraising, institutional stability and prestige than about fostering reform and community-building.

The results are entirely predictable. Missed opportunities for learning. Exposure to the vicissitudes of university politics and economics. Little growth in interdisciplinary approaches to community studies. Infrequent teaming of academics and practitioners to educate mid-career people or the next generation of community change agents.

It is time to bring these academic initiatives out from the shadows, recognize their growing significance and potential, and provide them with the visibility, support and linkages they deserve and need.

The collective scope and scale of these many initiatives is impressive. They affect large numbers of students and involve substantial numbers of faculty-members. While most are small, limited to a single discipline, or not built on strong community partnerships, each has strengths and offers insights into what a more holistic, multidisciplinary curriculum could offer people in mid-career and younger students.

Furthermore, the fact that these initiatives have emerged in so many different departments demonstrates that people in an extraordinary range of disciplines are discovering the importance – as a practical necessity as well as for philosophical reasons – of teaching their students how to work with community residents to bring about positive change.

⁵⁰Organizing and advocacy groups can be especially effective in influencing economic and workforce development policies and programs which are geared to have a systemic impact on local economies, including sectoral intervention, industrial retention, employment linkage, and community benefits approaches. See series of reports by the Center for Community Change on these topics at www.communitychange.org. They also can have a great impact on housing. See *Moving to Scale in Improving America's Housing* at www.communitylearningproject.org.

Working with organizing and advocacy groups familiarizes students with the techniques those organizations have found to be effective.

Viewed collectively, these efforts therefore provide a far stronger base for moving community change studies to the next level than is generally recognized. **A great deal can be accomplished through a practical series of steps which, collectively, would advance the field significantly.** These steps include measures to –

- foster stronger links for mutual learning and support,
- increase the visibility of and appreciation for exemplary programs, and
- support emerging models of interdisciplinary study and fieldwork, including strong two-way community partnerships and the involvement of practitioners with academics in teaching.

These measures would not require great infusions of foundation support. In this era of limited resources, when it is extremely difficult to launch major new initiatives, a great deal can be accomplished through the judicious use of a series of relatively modest grants. These grants can be used to reinforce and expand efforts which are already under way, and whose leaders have demonstrated they have the vision, energy, resourcefulness, political skills and substance which are needed to make progress with limited resources.

Moving Forward on Postgraduate Education

There are four strategies which could open up new opportunities for midcareer professionals to gain the advanced education they need. Significant support for one or more of these strategies could contribute greatly to solving the serious leadership crisis which is facing the field of social and community change.

1. Support Networking Which Will Advance This Field of Study

A “networking and glue money approach” has great potential for strengthening community change studies, especially if it links educators and practitioners across international lines in a growing network for joint learning and action.

Now isolated people teaching community change studies in various disciplines could gain greatly from being linked with their peers in a growing network which enables them to learn from others’ experience and explore the challenges they face in, for example, working on an interdisciplinary basis, combining field and classroom studies, and involving practitioners in teaching. Peer learning through such an affinity group also would provide people with opportunities to work together to develop joint projects and strategies, such as collaborating in developing model curricula or taking joint action to raise the visibility of these important programs and increase support for them.

After the publication of the first edition of this study, the Ford Foundation provided a learning and planning grant to the International Working Group on University Education for Community Change, a group which emerged from discussion of the study. Its members are gaining greatly from the opportunity to learn from each other and to think through how an international network could help advance this field of studies while providing opportunities for peer learning and collaboration to its members.

A similar network would be of great value within the US. It would enable highly creative but isolated groups of academics and practitioners to learn from each other through a rich dialogue about the common challenges they face and the curricula, course materials, field experiences, and other approaches they are developing. Sharing ideas, experience, materials, and approaches could lead to significant strengthening of these programs and growing recognition of the contribution

A “seed money” strategy could be geared to promote replication of exemplary courses and approaches.

they can make in helping people tackle issues of poverty, race, community and democracy-building.

Establishing a peer learning network would be especially important at this point in history. In the US people committed to reform have been on the defensive, feeling beleaguered, “hunkering down”, running short of new ideas and inspiration, and thus apt to limit their vision of what is possible. The tendency among activists as well as academics in such an era is to stick to familiar approaches rather than to experiment with new ideas and more ambitious programs. This makes it especially important for academics as well as social change leaders to have new opportunities to learn about widely differing visions and strategies which can fortify them with new insights and ideas as they continue developing their own programs.

There are several elements which would enrich and increase the impact of this networking. The first would be to foster serious cross-disciplinary dialogue among academics who share a common commitment to education designed to address issues of poverty, race, and community and to reinvigorating democracy by ensuring that people of color have a “voice” as crucial decisions are made. **This process could explore what knowledge, tools and techniques the different disciplines have to offer practitioners, and vice versa. They could then concentrate on practical ways for building bridges across disciplinary lines** so that faculty, students and the communities themselves gain more from the breadth and richness of their potentially complementary approaches.

A second element of the networking would **add front-line practitioners and trainers to the dialogue and interaction.** This would help bridge the gap between academics and practitioners, familiarize them with each other’s experience and perspectives, and, in all likelihood, strengthen course offerings, placements, and partnerships. In particular, it could focus on such issues as –

- measures to increase the value of field experience to the students as well as the communities where they are placed,
- ways of involving social change leaders and other practitioners in the educational program, and
- approaches to participatory evaluation and research which can strengthen and inform social change groups and enable them to understand and increase their impact on important community and policy issues.

A third element in a network could focus on **strengthening links which already exist within particular disciplines.** In some disciplines such as urban planning and social work, there already are associations which offer annual conferences and other opportunities for exchange. In other areas such as community organizing and the urban ministry, list serves play a vital role in helping faculty and practitioners learn from each other as they develop materials, curricula, and participatory research efforts. These links and associations can help advance the field, but they are perennially short of resources with which to staff and enhance their efforts and place a new emphasis on curricular development and mid-career education. It would be useful to fortify the single-discipline networks which currently exist as well as to build such networks where they do not yet exist.

A “glue money” approach could be geared to promote replication of exemplary courses and approaches, such as: Marshall Ganz’ outstanding course in community organizing at the Kennedy School; courses on combining community organizing, community development and policy advocacy; and courses addressing the unique management challenges of leading and directing social change organizations. It could provide **limited funding to seed new courses and increase communication and coordination** among faculty-members teaching in the same institution so their courses could be threaded together to provide

Viewed collectively, these efforts provide a strong base for moving community change studies to the next level.

midcareer students with a relatively coherent and comprehensive program for building their knowledge and skills.

2. Create New Postgraduate Programs

Although no formal market study has been conducted, interviews and discussions with staff-members of community groups, community organizing groups, state and local coalitions and intermediaries make it clear that **there is a substantial demand for midcareer education in community change studies.**

Many factors converge to create this demand. The largest is the massive generational change which is just beginning to hit the nonprofit sector as leaders who came to this work in the 1960s retire. This shift places great demands on significantly younger, and often less experienced, people who will take their place.

Another critical factor is the great need to speed up the preparation and promotion of people of color into top leadership positions in organizations which were established specifically to give voice to people of color and others with lower-income backgrounds.

The process of developing a new midcareer program would be expedited by **concentrating on institutions which have demonstrated their openness to cross-disciplinary studies, midcareer education, experiential learning, the involvement of practitioners as adjuncts, real partnerships with communities, and recruitment of students from disadvantaged communities.** Most of these institutions are not as prestigious or as disdainful of “skill training” and service to the community as the major research universities, and their student bodies tend to have larger numbers of people of color, people with limited incomes, and midcareer students. Like Southern New Hampshire, they tend to be less well-known public universities, commuter colleges, community colleges and universities which emphasize continuing education and distance learning. It is noteworthy that many community-oriented programs which this scan

surveyed are based at such institutions as the University of Massachusetts at Boston and at Lowell, the Pratt Institute, Loyola University, North Park University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, LA Trade Tech, Antioch, Eastern University and Providence College.

Outside the United States, UAM in Mexico City, IDS in Britain and Concordia University in Montreal furnish examples of such programs and are described earlier in this volume. Other exemplary programs include the MA in Community Economic Development offered at the Open University of Tanzania, and the MA in Visionary Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Human Rights and Gender offered by the nonprofit-created African Rural University in Uganda. .

As with community college and undergraduate programs, it will be **vital that the planning process for new midcareer programs involve practitioners and organizations representing the potential source of and market for students.** This will ensure that the courses are practical as well as educational, and that they are able to attract a steady flow of students over time.

3. Model Curriculum Development

A third strategy would be to support development of a model curriculum for a Master's program and then encourage universities to consider adopting all or parts of it.

Funding for involving academics from different disciplines plus practitioners in designing such a curriculum could encourage broader cross-disciplinary collaboration while concentrating on the tough practical task of thinking through the combination of courses, readings, research, field experience and mentoring which would be most helpful to midcareer people.

This approach has been followed in developing model curricula in other fields and then nurturing and supporting their replication. Ideally a model curriculum would focus on people and place, on issues of income and

It is time to bring these academic initiatives out from the shadows and provide them with the visibility, support and linkages they deserve.

race. It would draw from the strengths of the different disciplines which are highlighted in this paper, providing midcareer people with an opportunity to expand their knowledge, analytical capacity, and skills in involving people and developing leaders and organizations.

This would also serious attention to developing a strategy for promoting the curriculum on different campuses. This could dovetail well with a strategy for fostering greater dialogue among people who are already teaching courses which relate to community change and organizing within a single discipline and across disciplines.

4. A fourth option is a cooperative education model.

Professor Paul Osterman of MIT's Sloan School of Management and School of Planning and Urban Studies suggests a coop education model. From his base at MIT Osterman has worked extensively with community organizers and leaders associated with Ernesto Cortes and the Industrial Areas Foundation, providing them with training and assistance on issues of workforce and economic development. He firmly believes in the importance of giving organizers and directors easy access to courses taught by academics whose knowledge can enrich their thinking and enhance their skills.

However, despite his own prestigious position, Osterman believes that universities are so impervious to change and so opposed to interdisciplinary studies that the initiative must come from the outside and be free of academic politics. He therefore advocates having a nonprofit take the lead and involve potential students/practitioners in thinking through a curriculum to fit their needs, identify the best

potential teachers from different local academic institutions and nonprofits, and recruit them to volunteer their time. Osterman sees this approach as having great potential in offering community change agents a coherent program of appropriate courses. Unlike many others interviewed, he does not believe that the absence of the credential of a MA or university-backed certification would be a major drawback. That issue, and the feasibility of creating an ongoing program with few outside resources and no institutional base and backing, needs further exploration.¹²

Some institutions of higher education are far more flexible than the MITs of the world. Community colleges, colleges without walls, institutions with progressive or adult education roots and others are more flexible and more likely to be accomodating in working with practitioners to create curricula which meet the specific educational needs of community change agents. In these institutions, there are some academics who value the needs, views and highly developed knowledge of experienced practitioners and who are willing to cross disciplinary lines to learn, collaborate, and create new programs offering practitioner education. What they lack is the initial impetus and support which are needed to get such programs underway.

Conclusion:

Every day we see evidence of why it is essential to invest wisely and in new ways in developing the social change leaders of today and tomorrow. New public policies widen the gap between rich and poor and dismantle the funding programs upon

⁵¹Interview with Professor Paul Osterman, School of Planning and Urban Studies, MIT

⁵²Dick Cone, who developed pioneering programs of university/community partnerships and service learning at USC, shares Osterman's skepticism about programs which are designed within universities. He sees the power imbalance between universities and disadvantaged communities as being so great that "partnerships" are seldom equal, and the programs and courses which result rarely respond to the needs of community organizations. He advocates for a shift from "outreach" to "in-reach." Cone advocates switching to a system in which community groups and leaders control financial resources, perhaps as a scholarship fund, and use this position of strength to define their educational and assistance needs and negotiate with university people for that help. This approach would enable groups to approach people in any university department, school or center on the basis of their ability to respond to the communities' priorities instead of being limited to faculty associated with a university's formal outreach program.

The most important first step is to create a network – preferably international – which brings together academics and practitioners across disciplinary lines.

which community-based development and service delivery are based. Racial tensions and the potential for conflict grow daily as people compete for increasingly scarce job and affordable housing. Growing social problems tear at the social fabric and weaken community institutions, demonstrating dramatically the need for strong vehicles for involving community people in taking charge of their neighborhoods and persuading government and the private sector to provide the resources and partnerships which are needed to build and sustain stable, healthy communities.

While it is unconscionable that our institutions of higher learning are currently doing so little to help address this crisis, it is truly hopeful that there are so many scattered university programs which -- with vision, visibility, support and true partnerships with committed, experienced practitioners -- could grow exponentially in the years ahead, strengthening

grassroots-led efforts to bring about positive change in our nation's low income communities.

These efforts could do much to help solve the crisis of leadership in the field of community organizing and community change. They could greatly expand the usefulness of colleges and universities in providing midcareer people with the additional education and skills they need to lead organizations which are tackling our nation's greatest social problems. They also could strengthen such education at the community and four-year college level. A network of educators and practitioners who share this vision would be a natural base for launching initiatives to develop model curricula and address the other recommendations in this report.