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Gunderson, Hagen E. ***A Pilot Study for Evaluation of North Dakota State University Extension Facilitated Interventions***

Abstract

This pilot study generated data needed to develop a survey to evaluate facilitated interventions conducted by the North Dakota State University Extension Facilitation. The study examined the application of the Kaufman evaluation Model, method, timeframe, and instrument; as well as additional constructs applied in the analysis. Participants from two interventions were interviewed. Based on analysis of the narratives (using the *Listening Guide*) the study concluded that the Kaufman Model was most appropriate as an evaluative framework for the facilitations—those that exhibited success and sustainability, and contributions to external stakeholders and society; and those that did not. These findings support the use of qualitative research methods in evaluation efforts.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter I: Introduction

Evaluation of community and organization development outcomes is useful in determining the effectiveness of facilitated interventions. Evaluation is also necessary, especially in the private sector; to establish a rationale for funding, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately justify the continuation of such programs. Facilitation of community and organization development can provide great potential value to the community and society as a whole. In this respect care, consideration, and diligence in evaluation are especially warranted.

The Center for Community Vitality department (CCV)/North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service Facilitation conducts interventions to facilitate the development of organizations, groups, and communities across North Dakota. A survey has been proposed to collect needed evaluative data of those facilitated interventions however; no data currently exists upon which to design such a survey.

Between March 2009 and May 2011 The North Dakota State University (NDSU) Center for Community Vitality (CCV) Extension Service facilitated 15 non-profit sector interventions across North Dakota. Reports compiled by the facilitators suggest that CCV Extension Service efforts were valuable to stakeholders, and have the potential to move their initiatives in a positive direction. However, no formal, outcome-focused evaluation has been conducted to determine the long-term impact of those interventions. Data is needed to establish the impact of goals and action items that resulted from the facilitations, specifically in regard to *community capitals,* and changes in conditions within the organization, group or community. The data would also indicate areas for improvement of future facilitations, and provide a basis for rationale for future funding of Extension Service facilitation efforts.

About the Extension Service Facilitation

The NDSU Extension Service Facilitation operates within the CCV to provide research, programs, and resources to organizations, groups, and communities throughout the state of North Dakota. The CCV "…build[s] capacity for collective and informed decision making by bridging, building and expanding internal and external networks and partnerships and expertise, programming and funding" (Center, 2010, para.2). In support of this mission the CCV provides educational services and programs that focus on building and enhancing: community infrastructure, business climate, and civic involvement. Some examples of programs and services offered include: Asset-Based Planning, Community Development, Entrepreneurship, Leadership Development/Rural Leadership North Dakota, and Heritage and Cultural Tourism. The costs of services to North Dakota Residents are relative to the specific cases and service requested.

The CCV department/NDSU Extension Service Facilitation provides facilitation services to North Dakota businesses, groups, and communities. Kathleen Tweeten, Marie Hvidsten, Ed.D, Lynette Flage, Ph.D., and Jodi Bruns conduct facilitations as individuals working with various groups. Following is a list of sites associated with the facilitated interventions that occurred between March 2009 and May 2011:

- I-29 Consortium
- NDSU Graduate School
- NDSU Department of Veterinary and Microbiological Sciences
- Pembina County Job Development Authority
- Pembina County 4-H Council
- Pembina County Residents Group

- Pembina County Faith in Action
- LENS Economic Development Sub-Committee, Walsh County
- Pembina County Historical Society
- Cavalier, North Dakota Town Hall Meeting
- Pembina County Historical Preservation Commission
- Velva, North Dakota Housing Development
- Dickenson, North Dakota Airport Authority vision and development
- USDA REAP/CONAC strategic planning
- ND Department of Health, Water Quality Monitoring Council

Description of Pilot-study Facilitations

From this list, the Walsh County Economic Development Sub-Committee (LENS), and Pembina County Residents Group (PCRG) were chosen to be the focus of a pilot study intended to generate information necessary to develop a broader-reaching survey. The LENS facilitation was conducted on August 30, 2010 (approximately one singular year prior to the pilot study) and addressed residents' desire to promote the assets of the region and to recruit others to the area. The PCRG facilitation occurred on December 16-17, 2008; and was updated in May of 2009 (approximately two years and three months prior to the pilot study). Through that facilitation a wide range of goals were defined: 1) promotion of tourism and economic development among local entities, 2) beautification of properties, 3) work-force retention and recruitment, 4) housing and infrastructure development, and 5) improvements to community services and education.

Overview of Facilitation Techniques

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Asset Mapping were used to identify existing strengths within the organizations, groups, or communities; as well as areas of desired improvement. The

Seven Community Capitals as described by Flora and Flora (2004) provided a framework for understanding and communicating assets, needs, and strategies of the organizations, groups, or communities; stakeholders collaboratively identified goals and objectives (including timeframes and action items). The facilitator provided a summative report following the intervention.

Statement of the Problem

The CCV department/NDSU Extension Service Facilitation conducts interventions to facilitate the development of organizations, groups, and communities across North Dakota. A survey has been proposed to collect data needed to evaluate those facilitations, but there is no data upon which to design such a survey. This study will generate the needed data by pilot testing application of the Kaufman evaluation Model, method, timeframe, and instrument; as well as additional constructs applied in the analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this study are to: 1) determine what impact time—duration between the event and data collection has on the effectiveness of the evaluation, and 2) validate the proposed Interview Guide for incorporation into a survey instrument by establishing a link between the constructs of the instrument and the Kaufman evaluation model.

Research Questions

1) What was the impact of the facilitated interventions to the success and sustainability, and contribution to external stakeholders and society, as illustrated through the application of the Kaufman evaluation model?

2) Which programs (or elements of programs) did not exhibit success and sustainability, or contributions/benefits to external stakeholders and society in terms of the Kaufman evaluation model?

Definition of Terms

Appreciative Inquiry (AI): A cooperative, coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives life to an organization or community when it is most effective and most capable in economic, ecological, and human terms (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8).

Asset Mapping: A mobilizing tool that identifies resources with economic or social value such as individuals, physical structures, natural resources, and organizations (Krile, 2006, p. 23).

Bridging social capital: Connecting or "bridging" diverse individuals and groups, making it possible for them to work together (Krile, 2006, p. 13).

Collaborative process: One of three approaches to qualitative data analysis which include: participant observation, sensitivity to participants' concerns, focus on descriptive data in the initial phases, non-standardized instrumentation, a holistic perspective, and the search for underlying themes or patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9).

Community Capitals: Resource or assets within a community which, when invested, create new resources. They include: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capital (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 17).

Conceptual framework: Explains, either geographically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs or variables—and the presumed relationships among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18).

Facilitation/Facilitator: A type of public servant. Someone who aids, assists, and encourages people (Krile, 2006, p. 186).

Facilitated Interventions: Communities form groups to take a certain kind of action—efforts that go beyond what any individual can accomplish alone (Krile, 2006, p. 187).

Ideal Vision: The measurable definition of the kind of world we, together with others, commit to help deliver for tomorrow's child (Kaufman, 2006, p. 174).

Inputs: Human resources, capital, physical resources, existing rules, regulations, policies, and laws (Kaufman, 2006, p. 38).

Isolation: Conditions of rural-urban connectivity divide in communities that are rural and remote and those that are persistently poor (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 11).

Listening Guide: The analytical process of "listens to" a person's story *four* different times, listening, in a sense, for different voices of self, telling different narratives of relationship (Brown & Gilligan, 1991, p. 45).

Macro: The results and their consequences for what an organization can or does deliver outside of itself (Kaufman, 2006, p. 38).

Meaning making: Considering how the factors of participants' lives interacted to bring them to their present situation (Seidman, 2006, p. 18).

Mega: Results and consequences for external clients and society (Kaufman, 2006, p. 38).

Mega Thinking: Thinking about every situation, problem, or opportunity in terms of what you use, do, produce, and deliver as having to add value to external clients and society (Kaufman, 2006, p. 175).

Micro: The results and their consequences for individuals and small groups within the organization (Kaufman, 2006, p. 38).

Organizational Elements Model (OEM): Defines what an organization uses, does, produces, and delivers with external client and societal value added (Kaufman, 2006, p. 37).

Poverty: The inability to afford basic necessities. Most experts believe that the poverty definition sharply underestimates—by as much as a factor of two—the incidence of poverty in this country today (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 21).

Processes: The means, processes, activities, procedures, interventions, programs, and initiatives an organization can or does use in order to deliver useful ends (Kaufman, 2006, p. 178).

Return on Investment (ROI): A calculation to compare the cost and benefits of the program (Phillips, 2004, p. 67).

Rural and remote: Refers to counties that have small populations and are far from metropolitan centers (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 22).

Tourism area: Rural communities in high amenity areas [experiencing] rapid growth: high immigration, high housing costs, and a service [industry] economy (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 21).

Transference: A change in job behavior [as a result of] people attended a training program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 52).

Urban Sprawl: Communities within commuting distance of large metropolitan areas often referred to as *exurban* (Flora & Flora, 2008, p. 22).

Visioning: The process of answering two questions: *What do we want the future to be like?* And, *Why is it important that the future be like that* (Krile, 2006, p. 57)*?*

Methodology

Of the 15 facilitations conducted between March 2009 and May 2011, two were selected for study based on four criteria: date of facilitation, stated goals of the organization, interviewee knowledge and willingness to participate, and location-proximity to the interviewee. The pilot interviews will include one or two participants at each of the two locations. The sites chosen were: 1) Residents of Pembina County conducted December 16-17, 2008 and updated May 2009; and 2) LENS Economic Development Sub-Committee on August 30, 2010. The difference in timeframes of the two facilitations will allow a comparison between the two in order to determine the optimal point-in-time for conducting evaluations.

The NDSU Extension Service Facilitation developed interview questions and protocol specifically for the survey development pilot study. It consisted of (12) questions pertaining to stakeholder reactions, and changes that were perceived to occur as a result of the facilitated interventions. Two weeks prior to each of the scheduled interviews stakeholders were provided with the document developed from the facilitation, along with a copy of the interview questions. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face with each of the two individuals at their respective locations—one in Pembina County, the other in Walsh County. An audio recorder will be used to capture interviewee's responses. The data will be compiled in aggregate form so that the subjects remained anonymous. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study was gained (prior to the interviews) from both NDSU and the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Participants were asked to sign a consent form, and were informed of their option to withdrawal at any time—either verbally or in writing. Participants were provided contact information for NDSU research dept. and IRB, and UW-Stout researcher and IRB.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided the framework for the evaluation pilot-study by providing background information about the CCV, and the Extension Service Facilitation and its activities. Next, a description of the pilot study and an overview of facilitation techniques were presented. Finally, the need for the study was defined in the problem-statement; followed by an explanation of the aim or purpose of the study (stated as objectives). In Chapter 2, the research of others is presented which illustrates the varying arguments, theories, and other considerations relative to this study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

A successful evaluation of any training program or intervention begins with a solid plan––one that answers fundamental questions such as: what will be evaluated, when the evaluation will occur, how success of the program will be measured, what data is needed (and from whom), how the data will be collected, and how the data will be analyzed. In this chapter some of the literature available that pertains to these questions is presented. This study will examine the history and rationale for models of evaluation, and draw comparisons between three predominant models: Kirkpatrick, Phillips, and Kaufman evaluation models.

Evaluation Models

An evaluation model has been found to provide a starting point for the evaluation. It framed the intervention/program in terms of intent and outcome and provides the criteria for decisions regarding the "what, when, why, and how" of the evaluation. Evaluation models have established guidelines by which the researcher can organize the complex process implicit in evaluation. Without first determining an appropriate framework and outline, the resulting evaluation might be off target, insufficient, or non-transferable—regardless of how well intentioned.

Miles and Huberman (1994) described the role of a *conceptual framework* to establish categories and constructs which contain the elements of the study and their interrelationships, thus clarifying the focus of the investigation (p. 18). An appropriate model was one that accounted for the various elements, factors, and interrelationships identified in the conceptual framework. There were several models, which were found to be widely accepted, each with unique characteristics inherent in their design. The challenge to the researcher was to determine which (given the strengths and limitations of each) was best suited for application. Following are overviews of the Kirkpatrick, Philips, and Kauffman evaluation models:

Kirkpatrick model.

Kirkpatrick introduced the four levels of evaluation model in 1959 through a series of articles published in the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) journal. The purpose was to clarify and consolidate existing thought among educators and training professionals as to what constituted evaluation. Some modifications to the model were made over the years resulting in the development of a system for program evaluation that was widely accepted around the world; and applicable to a variety of fields including technical, sales, safety, and education (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

The Kirkpatrick model was linked closely with instructional design principles and assumed that inputs, processes, and objectives are established in the design phase to ensure that training programs are efficient, effective and yield measurable results. The evaluation component of instructional program development would also be considered and planned in the design phase reflecting the inputs, processes, and objectives. The reason for evaluation as stated by Kirkpatrick (2006) was to justify the cost of training, determine whether or not to continue the program, and to find ways to improve the program—all necessary elements in establishing the credibility and importance of the training department. Kirkpatrick's (1959) research identified 4 levels of evaluation: 1) reaction—participants' satisfaction with the program; 2) learning—measured in increase in participants' knowledge, skills, and attitude as a result of the program; 3) behavior—evidence of transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitude to the workplace; and 4) results—a measurable benefit to the organization as a whole in terms of business results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 21).

The Kirkpatrick model, for many, defined evaluation. However, it may not apply in all situations. A case study involving Caterpillar Inc. in 2002 (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) leveraged this model to evaluate a pilot study for a leadership development intervention. Three major issues arose from the Caterpillar case: the inapplicability of level 2, the constraints regarding instrumentation at level 3, and the inability to establish monetary gain at level 4. The shortfall at level four was of particular concern. Level four, considered by many to be the most significant point of evaluation, was the hardest to prove in terms of monetary gain verses training cost. The following is a summary of the pilot evaluation at Caterpillar (p. 186-199).

Participant reaction (level 1) was measured immediately following completion of the pilot program. A questionnaire was used at the conclusion of the course to gain participants' reaction regarding course quality, content, and relevance. Learning (level 2) was excluded from the evaluation because an assessment (of this nature) of the senior-level participants was deemed improper. Information regarding behavior change (level 3) was collected using a "score sheet" that asked questions about productivity, employee engagement, product quality and "other areas". According to the Kirkpatrick model this level of evaluation would have included an on-site observation of work behavior as well as supervisor interviews to determine change in participants' performance. Again, assessment of this kind was deemed out of place. Pre-tests and post-tests would also have been utilized at this level—subject to budgets. However, in this case neither was used. Results (level 4) were identified through one-on-one interviews with participants to record stories and descriptions—using the narrative process (a qualitative method) to illustrate their experiences and perceptions about value that was added as a result of the program/intervention. An attempt was made at this point to establish monetary benefits (an integral component of level 4 evaluation). The monetary benefits that were described, however, were subsequently discounted when participants' response to questions regarding attribution and confidence indicated uncertainty that monetary improvements had resulted from the intervention. Finally, according to Kirkpatrick (2007), a Level 4 Evaluation should generally take place one year after completion of the program. In some instances, as in the case of the Caterpillar initiative, adherence to that timeframe may not be possible. As stated earlier, Level 4 results have been the most difficult to prove—even under the best timeframe scenario. Program evaluators (and organizational leaders) may have to be satisfied with *evidence* of program impact at this level in the absence of proof, find justification for cost in the three first levels, or use a different model.

Philips model.

The increasing trend toward justification in terms of measurable Return on Investment (ROI) has prompted training professionals and program evaluators to seek a new model of evaluation. Philips (1996) identified six factors as contributing to this trend: 1) as training budgets increase, so do demands for accountability; 2) competitive strategies rely on effective programs; 3) many programs fall short of expectations; 4) accountability is increasing throughout organizations, including training and development departments; 5) many top-level leaders now expect ROI information; and 6) training professionals use ROI information to justify their efforts (p. 10). One example of this trend involves a literacy training intervention at Magnavox Electronics Systems Company (Philips, 1996, p. 11). Decision-makers at Magnavox wanted to know if their investment in training to improve employees' math and reading skills would also result in an increase in corporate dividends. This example illustrated organizational interest in ROI, and the need for modification of the traditional four level model of evaluation. The Kirkpatrick approach addressed results of training—reduced absenteeism, turnover, and material cost; and improved productivity. However, it did not directly support the analysis of information regarding monetary benefit compared to the cost of training. For this, Phillips (2004) added a fifth level. Data from level 4 (and sometimes levels 1-3) was converted into dollar amounts (benefits) from which training costs were subtracted. The annual net program benefit was then divided by the cost of training to yield ROI in the form of a percent. In the case of literacy training at Magnavox, the cost-benefit ratio was 8.4:1—a return on training investment of 741%. Stakeholders viewed the program as a tremendous success based on the data in spite of the program designers' assessment that the figures were "conservative" (p. 10). Intangible benefits were presented in narrative form along with the ROI data. The impact of the literacy-training program at Magnavox (to improve verbal and math skills among employees) was improved performance including a reduction in rework and scrap. The attention paid to evaluation of the project met the organizations desire to see those benefits expressed in quantitative terms (Philips, 1996).

Kaufman model.

Both the Kirkpatrick and Philips models focused evaluation on the basis of what benefits the programs brought to the organization or groups and individuals within the organization. The Kaufman (1995) model broadened the scope of program evaluation to include (in addition to the constructs of the Kirkpatrick and Philips models) benefits to external clients and to society. Kaufman insisted that the responsibility and purpose of each organization is to plan for and make contributions to: 1) society and external clients—Mega, 2) the organization and its ability to deliver externally—Macro, and 3) small groups and individuals within the organization—Micro, in that order. Processes and inputs were then added to form what Kauffman described as the Organizational Elements Model (OEM) (p.38). The results and consequences associated with each of these five factors or levels were the basis for evaluation. Kaufman (2006) illustrated the inter-related importance of evaluation at each level:

Mega level results, (outcomes) encompass social impact and collective social gain, individual self-sufficiency and self–reliance, and continued profits or funding. Evaluation at this "ultimate" level is of equal importance to the other levels, and is based on the belief that the organization can and should contribute toward fulfillment of the *ideal vision*—shared societal goals that include such ideals as: peace, safety, health, ecology, equality, etc. Evaluation at the *Macro* level (outputs) considered benefits delivered to external clients and society while *Micro* level (products) evaluation considered achievement or development at the individual and group levels. Finally, Kaufman (2006) explained that *Processes* evaluation includes method, means, media, and activities involved in production of results; and *Inputs* constitute operating conditions and available recourses that support results.

Kaufman (2006) further argued that evaluation should be a comparison between actual results and intended results, and should be conducted only for the purpose of continual improvement. A needs assessment provides the criteria for evaluation, and both qualitative and quantitative data should be used. The evaluation should "go beyond conventional evaluation frameworks" (p. 120) by including Mega level results and consequences to achieve "evaluation plus" (p. 120). The *ideal vision* (an integral component of Mega) that Kaufman described was similar to the *Dream Phase* of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) wherein participants envision and identify elements of a desired future for the purpose of strategic planning (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Krile, 2006). Initiatives such as facilitations that employed principles/techniques including asset mapping, visioning, and appreciative inquiry were best evaluated through the use of a model based on similar principles. Furthermore, if the initiative/program to be evaluated has as its primary intent: contributions to society and external clients, the model chosen should contain evaluation at that (Mega) level.

Rural Community Development

Rural community development, as described by Flora, and Flora (2008) addressed the social and economic implications of four conditions that exist within rural communities today: 1) urban sprawl, 2) rapid growth in tourism areas, 3) on-going poverty, and 4) isolation of rural and remote locations (p. 20). These conditions represented a need for community based programs and initiatives to bring about change. In this context communities addressed historical events that influenced existing conditions/problems to be addressed. And they examined the role and inter-play of resources, and the decisions made at both the individual and institutional levels regarding control and access to those resources.

Flora and Flora (2008), defined "seven community capitals" (p. 17) as resources/assets that exist in a community and which, when invested, generated new resources or *capital*. The seven capitals included: *Natural capital*—land, water, and air natural resources; *Cultural capital*—belief systems and values of individuals within the community; *Human capital*—abilities and skills belonging to members of the community; *Social capital*—social connectedness and sense of shared future between groups and among individuals; *Political capital*—the ability to impact social, government, and market standards/conditions that in turn influence the availability and distribution of resources; *Financial capital*—money that is invested to increase value at the civil, state, and market levels; *Built capital*—the community infrastructure (roads, schools, factories) that support residents and other capitals. These seven community capitals were interrelated, interdependent, and formed the basis for member-initiated community development.

Efforts toward Rural Community development was dependent on the basic assumption that there was worth in rural communities in terms of food production, protection of natural resources, fostering of value systems associated with humans and nature, and support and development of biodiversity (Flora & Flora 2008). History has impacted present conditions and trends, namely the availability of, and access to community capitals/resources. An understanding of the drivers of those trends was needed in order to influence outcomes and make decisions upon which to move forward. Flora and Flora further stated the importance of acknowledging the interrelatedness of the community capitals; that development efforts should include all seven capitals. Finally, political decisions had an effect on access and control over community capitals, and thus rural life and conditions. Groups and individuals made choices either within existing political framework or worked to create new policy that would affect availability and distribution of community capitals.

Similarly, Luther and Wall (1998) identified “20 Clues to Rural Community Survival” which framed community assets and resources, and described practices and priorities: (p. 9).

1. Evidence of community pride.
2. Emphasis on quality in business and community life.
3. Willingness to invest in the future.
4. Participatory approach to community decision-making.
5. Cooperative community spirit.
6. Realistic appraisal of future opportunities.
7. Awareness of competitive positioning.
8. Knowledge of the physical environment.
9. Active economic development program.

10. Deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders.

11. Acceptance of women in leadership roles.

12. Strong belief in and support for education.

13. Problem-solving approach to providing healthcare.

14. Strong multi-generational family orientation.

15. Strong presence of traditional institutions integral to community life.

16. Attention to sound and well-maintained infrastructure.

17. Careful use of fiscal resources.

18. Sophisticated use of information resources.

19. Willingness to seek help from the outside.

20. Conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself.

Developing community leaders.

Krile (2006) defined a community leader as "a person who works with others to develop and sustain the health of the community" (introduction, p. xiv) but asserted that the simple definition in practice represents a complex task. Krile suggested that *Three Core Competencies of Community Leadership* were necessary to facilitate change. This was congruent with the assumptions of Flora & Flora (2008), and reflective of values and conditions illustrated in *20 Clues to Rural Community Survival* (2006). The three competencies included: *Framing Ideas, Building Social Capital, and Mobilizing Resources*. As leaders undertook projects to improve their communities they first created focus by (collectively) *framing ideas* in such a way that defined the objective, means, and rationale for the project. Then, *building social capital* became necessary and implied establishing and maintaining relationships that facilitated combined effort and sharing of resources. Finally, *mobilizing resources* described the enlistment of a sufficient number of people and support from the community, businesses, and policymakers required to enact the project (p. 2). Krile (2006) stressed the importance for leaders to recognizing the difference between process and product:

> Products are *what* get done—specific outcomes, programs, or changes in the community. When used in combination, the competencies make it possible for community leaders to create better products in the community. Process refers to *how* things get done in the community—who gets included, how decisions are made, the way people work together, and related factors. Skilled community leaders use processes that build a sense of community *and* get things done (p. 1).

The attention Krile (2006) afforded to *process* coincided with Kaufman's (2006) "Process"—as an Organizational Element and level of evaluation (p. 38). The pilot study also recognized the importance of *process* by involving participants through interviews and the sense making of their experiences in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the facilitations. In this way, the concept of process linked the facilitated interventions to the community initiatives, and finally to the evaluation efforts.

Summary

Chapter 2 illustrated the varying arguments, theories, and other considerations relative to this study. It included an examination of: three evaluation models, factors regarding rural community health and development, and the challenges and tools of effective community leadership. The literature supported the Kaufman evaluation model as the one most pertinent to this pilot study because it uniquely identified and aligned with the elements, processes, and principles of the facilitated interventions (rural community development). In Chapter 3, methodology, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and study limitations are presented.

Chapter III: Methodology

The CCV department/NDSU Extension Service Facilitation conducts interventions to facilitate the development of organizations, groups, and communities in North Dakota. Between March 2009 and May 2011 the CCV facilitated 15 non-profit sector interventions, providing research, programs, educational services, and resources that focus on building and enhancing: community infrastructure, business climate, and civic involvement. A survey has been proposed to collect needed evaluative data of those facilitations however; no data currently exists upon which to design such a survey. This chapter presents the methodology by which research was conducted, for the purpose of 1) determining what impact time duration (between the event and data collection) has on the effectiveness of the evaluation, and 2) validating the proposed survey instrument by establishing a supportive link between the constructs of the instrument and the Kaufman evaluation model. The methodology regarding subjects, instrumentation, collection and analysis of the data, and the limitations of the study are presented in the following paragraphs.

Subject Selection and Description

Of the 15 facilitations conducted between March 2009 and May 2011, two were selected for study based on four criteria: date of facilitation, stated goals of the organization, interviewee knowledge and willingness to participate, and location-proximity to the interviewee. The pilot interviews will include one to two participants at each of the two locations.

The rationale for limiting the interviews to two sites is that the amount data collected would be more manageable yet sufficient for a pilot study—providing a framework for replication and means to identify categories, families, and nodes for NVivo coding analysis of a subsequent survey. Also, the variance in timeframe between the two pilot sites provides a base of comparison for scheduling evaluations. A survey would provide more comprehensive data. In order to develop a survey, however, a timeframe for evaluation and appropriate model must first be identified. In addition, the proposed survey instrument must be validated and coding analysis identifiers determined.

Sample characteristics.

The sites chosen were: 1) Residents of Pembina County conducted December 16-17, 2008 and updated May 2009; and 2) LENS Economic Development Sub-Committee on August 30, 2010. The difference in timeframes of the two facilitations allowed a comparison between the two in order to determine the optimal point-in-time for conducting evaluations. The significant characteristics these facilitations share (and which they have in common with other facilitations conducted by the NDSU Extension) are that 1) facilitations focused on identifying goals and action items toward community development (as defined through community capitals), 2) Appreciative Inquiry was used in the process of identifying goals and action items, and 3) participants were members of the communities in which the interventions took place. One individual from site 1), and one individual from site 2) were interviewed (N=2).

Instrumentation

The NDSU Extension Service Facilitation developed interview questions and protocol specifically for the survey development pilot study. It consisted of (12) questions pertaining to stakeholder reactions, and changes that were perceived to occur as a result of the facilitations. The interview guide is shown in Appendix E.

Data Collection Procedures

Two weeks prior to each of the scheduled interviews stakeholders were provided with the document developed from the facilitation, along with a copy of the interview questions. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with each of the two individuals at their respective locations—one in Pembina County, the other in Walsh County. One participant at each of the two sites was interviewed. An audio recorder was used to capture interviewee's responses. The data was compiled in aggregate form so that the subjects remained anonymous. IRB approval for the study was gained (prior to the interviews) from both NDSU and the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Participants were asked to sign a consent form, and were informed of their option to withdrawal at any time—either verbally or in writing. See Appendix B for the IRB application and approval; and see Appendix D for copy of the consent form.

Methods—Interviewing

Interviewing as a means of data collection is well suited to qualitative research and this pilot study. It allows participants to make sense of their lived experiences through language, and can provide the researcher with in-depth social and educational insight through inquiry (Seidman, 2006). The term *participant* is used because it reflects the idea that respondents' role is one of active involvement and equal status with the interviewer (Tolman and Brydon-Miller, 2001). Further, Marecek, Fine, and Kidder (2001) described researcher and participant both as "active agents" in the interview process, co-creating meaning through interpretation of participants' stories.

The meaning making that results from storytelling in interviews is an essential component to understanding for both the researcher and participant. According to Bertaux, "If given a chance to talk freely, people appear to know a lot about what is going on" (Bertaux, as cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 8). Bertaux explained that the difference between the study of natural science and social science centers on the "significance of language" —that subjects of social science inquiry have life experiences and can talk about them. Schultz, (1966) suggested that complete understanding of another person is not possible. However, by placing behavior in context, as interviewing does, meaning is created. The "subjective understanding", described by Schultz, that comes out of the meaning participants create may be best attained through interviewing (Seidman, 2006).

Interviewing as a research method.

As asserted by Locke (1989), "the adequacy of a research method depends on the type and purpose of the research being conducted" (p. 11). For qualitative inquiry, interviewing is the obvious choice. Seidman (2006) describes interviewing as the "basic mode of inquiry", and the method "most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language" (p. 8). Still, there are reasons researchers may be dissuaded from using this method. Tolman and Brydon-Miller (2001) warn of the influence of the qualitative/quantitative debate (QQD), and the political pressure and questioning of the scientific validity of qualitative measures in general. Seidman (2006) addressed these criticisms by pointing out that even in quantitative study, data and analysis are subject to researcher bias; and that the solution is to recognize researcher influence and account for it, stating further that "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" are criteria for useful data. (p. 23). Tapan (2001) agreed and posed that validity is achieved through "interpretive agreement" within an "interpretive community" (p. 51). Additionally, Marecek, Fine, and Kidder (2001) expressed that validity is a product of allowing participants to "make sense" of their own experiences, in the context in which they were "lived", and presented in the participants' own words (p. 33). The pilot-study at NDSU strove to answer research questions about the impact of the facilitated interventions in terms of the key stakeholders who were directly involved. The interviews provided a means to capture the experiences of the participants in the context in which they occurred. Furthermore, it was important in this study that participants contributed—through the interview process— to the meaning-making of their experiences.

Planning and Piloting.

In order for the researcher to promote and respond in a careful and thoughtful manner to participants' disclosure it is imperative that the study is structured, focused, and well planned. Interviews are essentially an open-ended method of inquiry. Without a well-established plan, researchers may be at risk of interjecting their own views of the world rather than allowing participants' meaning to emerge (Seidman, 2006). Seidman (2006) offered: "The best advice I ever received as a researcher was to do a pilot of my proposed study" (p. 38). A pilot study involving a small number of participants followed by reflection, discussion, and revision of the research approach has several benefits: 1) It allows the testing and verifying of questions; 2) provides an opportunity for researchers to examine and assess their technique; and 3) brings to light potential technical/organizational pit-falls regarding access to participants, and conducting (and recording) interviews (Seidman, 2006, p. 39). The NDSU pilot study obtained information useful in developing a survey. The results of this pilot study will validate the questions and indicated an appropriate timeframe; and established workable model (Kaufman Model) for evaluation of the facilitated interventions.

Interviewing technique.

The "craft of qualitative research interviewing", according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), is best practiced not through adherence to rules of interviewing, but by mastering techniques that "concentrate on the subject and subject matter of the interview" (p. 123). They described a "semi-structured life world interview" (p. 27) approach in which a prepared script or guide shapes the course of the interview. The degree to which the script is predetermined (and strictly adhered to) depends on the purpose of the study. The nature and sequence of the questions are also dependent on the nature of the inquiry. A further consideration in preparing the interview script is that of the *Thematic and Dynamic Dimensions* of interview questions (p. 131). The thematic dimension of an interview question pertains to the knowledge it produces, whereas the dynamic dimension denotes the effect of the question on the interpersonal relationship between participants. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that both are important; and that the researcher should ensure that "abstract wording of the research questions" does not inhibit the flow of the interview (p. 133). Additionally, the researcher should remain cognizant of the analysis phase—clarifying ambiguity during the interview, and retaining an understanding of what is being asked and why.

The interview questions as a research tool vary according to the topic (theme) and relationship (dynamic) of the inquiry. Knowledge and understanding of the various types of questions allow the interviewer to focus on the "immediate meaning of an answer, and the horizon of possible meanings that it opens up" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 134). Types of qualitative research questions include:

A. Introductory Questions—that provide insight into participants' experiences regarding the topic.
B. Follow-up Questions—encourage participants to elaborate or introduce additional elements of importance to the topic.
C. Probing Questions—the interviewer further investigates the content of participants' responses.
D. Specifying Questions—"operationalizing questions" that elicit a more precise response.

E. Direct Questions—the interviewer presents “topics and dimensions” directly related to and following participants’ accounts of elements that are meaningful to them.

F. Indirect Questions—describe “projective” questions that may indicate participants’ attitudes not directly expressed.

G. Structuring Questions—allow the interviewer to maintain the forward direction of the interview by asking a directive (or re-directive) question.

H. Silence—participants use a “pause in the conversation” to reflect on their response, then continue with new information.

I. Interpreting Questions—the interviewer may ask a direct question regarding the interpretation of a response, or simply rephrase a response to clarify the interpretation (p. 135-136).

Each of these question types is relevant to this pilot study and is represented (or implied) in the Facilitation Questions-Interview Guide (see appendix E.). Not withstanding, *Active Listening* or “the art of second questions”, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), “is as important as the specific mastery of questioning techniques” (p. 138). Here the researcher remains open to, and thoughtful about what develops in the course of the interview. It requires an attention to the theme and interpersonal relationship as they relate to the research question. Active listening allows the researcher to focus on applying sensitivity and intuition to the immediate situation instead of “rule following” and “what question to pose next” (p. 139).

Ethics.

Merecek, Fine, and Kidder (2001) insist that ethical issues in qualitative research encompass more than the protection of individual participants rights concerning informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. They include such questions as: “Who owns the data?”

Whose interpretation counts? …Can the data be used against the participants? Will the data be used on their behalf?" (p. 39). In addition, Brydon-Miller (2001) described researchers' obligation to administer and evaluate the research process on the basis of "its ability to generate broad community participation and on its political, social, and economic impact" (p. 80). Similarly, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) observed that the potential for "social contributions" should be considered when assessing the value of the proposed research project. They stated: "Social science research should serve scientific *and* human interests" (p. 62). This final point is of special significance to the pilot study because it relates directly to the Kaufman (2006) Model—and to the Facilitated Interventions, specifically regarding societal contributions evaluated at the Mega level (p. 4).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data management and protection of data are of equal importance to qualitative research as they are in quantitative studies. The researcher must ensure (a) high-quality, accessible data, (b) documentation of analyses that were conducted, (c) retention of data and documentation of subsequent analyses (p. 45). The raw data from the pilot-study (audio analogue recordings) were digitized, catalogued—using alpha aliases and numeric identifiers, and filed with the transcripts. The files were made available to key stakeholders; and copies were stored on disk for seven years—protected in a fire-safe box. Documentation of any subsequent analysis was also filed and stored.

Data Analysis

The recordings obtained from the two pilot study interviews (PCRG and LENS) were later transcribed to written documents. The seven community capitals: Cultural, Social, Human, Political, Natural, Financial, and Built capitals provided the constructs by which themes were established using the *Listening Guide*—a qualitative analysis method that employs four levels of listening to derive meaning from participant's narratives. According to Mauthner and Doucet (1998) "The particular issue which strikes us as central, yet overlooked, in qualitative data analysis process and accounts is that of how to keep respondents' voices and perspectives alive, while at the same time recognizing the researcher's role in shaping the research process and product" (p. 119). This treatment of, and attention to narrative supports a main purpose of the pilot-study, which was to identify (through analysis of the data—in narrative form) constructs upon which to design a survey.

Narrative Inquiry and Listening Guide.

Webster and Mertova (2007) insisted that the complexity of the human experience can not be captured through traditional statistics-based analysis. The perceived insufficiency of empirical methods to illuminate the richness of participants' life experiences—the "whole story" has resulted in an increasing interest in Narrative Inquiry (p. 16). Also gaining acceptance as a qualitative method is the *Listening Guide.* Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch (2003) described it as "a way of systematically attending to the many voices embedded in a person's expressed experience" (p. 157). The *Listening Guide* implies multiple "listening" sessions in which the researcher delineates different "voices" within the narrative that illustrate various complexities of the story/relationship (Brown & Gilligan, 1991). Listening to interview recordings while reading transcripts allows the researcher to track the voice(s) through the interview, focusing on one aspect (voice) and then another. In this way, "the intricate structure of a person's experience of self and relationships" (p. 45) is uncovered. The first listening session brings forth the story and context. In the second listening session the researcher identifies the "I voice"—the experience from the perspective of self of the narrator. At this stage the listener develops a stronger, more involved connection with the speaker. This relationship (of reduced objectivity) encourages disclosure—sharing of meaning. Brown and Gilligan (1991) referred to this as the "relational method" in which the listener/researcher plays a "responsive" role that facilitates greater subjectivity in the interpretation of the narrative (p. 47). The third and fourth "listening" sessions reintroduces the research questions, relating them to the analysis of the various "contrapuntal" voices that were identified (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003, p. 164). Way (2001) suggested that Narrative Inquiry and the *Listening Guide* are complementary (p. 115); and Gilligan (1993) expressed the importance of Narrative and the *Listening Guide* to understanding the "whole story" by stating: "The way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (p. 2). The *Listening Guide*, applied to the NDSU pilot study, provided greater subjectivity in analysis of the narratives—stories of the participants. It helped to ensure that the research questions were not imposed on the data; and it allowed the complexities of the participants' experiences to surface.

Qualitative analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) observed the increasing acceptance and broadening application of qualitative methods that allow researchers to identify and explain complex human relationships as well as uncover unexpected phenomenon. Still, some criticism remains. Miles and Huberman cited issues such as: labor intensiveness, potential for researcher bias, generalize-ability of findings, validity, reliability, and credibility of conclusions. Qualitative study is also becoming more complex as researchers attempt to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. The main problem however, as seen by Miles and Huberman (1994), is a lack of shared "confidence in findings" (p. 2). As a solution, the authors called for the entrenchment of "shared ground rules" among researchers that imply explicit methods, sensible cannons, quality, and documentation for analysis and drawing of conclusions (p. 245). Miles and Huberman rationalize that the understanding of social phenomenon “in the mind” must also be expressed in terms of “the objective world”. They further suggested that these necessary real-world constructs might only come as a result of analysis that establishes links to phenomenon through regularities and sequences. This pilot-study employed a systematic approach to data reduction, displays, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Limitations

The small sample size (N=2), and the reliance on a single (interview) instrument for data collection were limiting factors in the study. Also, the shortage of data regarding preexisting conditions (conditions prior to the facilitations) made it difficult to make comparisons. Finally, no formal evaluations (levels 1, & 2) were conducted immediately following the initial facilitation events, that took place between March 2009 and May 2011, that would have provided additional information.

Summary

Chapter 3 outlined the methodology regarding subjects, instrumentation, collection and analysis of the data, as well as the limitations of the pilot study. In Chapter 4, results/findings are presented followed by a discussion in Chapter 5.

Chapter IV: Results

A pilot study of the Walsh County Economic Development Sub-Committee (LENS), and Pembina County Residents Group (PCRG) program facilitations was conducted to generate data needed to develop an evaluative survey of facilitated interventions sponsored by the North Dakota State University Extension Facilitation. The interviews tested the proposed evaluation model, method, the timeframe used in the pilot study; as well as additional constructs (*Listening Guide* and reflection journal) in order to verify and validate effectiveness; and development of a broader survey.

Evaluation model

The Kaufman evaluation model was well suited to the pilot study because the constructs of the model matched the context of the facilitations (Kaufman, 2006). Unlike the Kirkpatrick and Philips models which focus primarily on tangible benefits to the organization—measured in terms of cost versus return, the Kaufman model accounts for benefit in terms of legacy and sustainability, evidenced in tangible and intangible value to the community and to society as a whole. This model performed especially well in the context of the non-profit initiative (facilitations) where program cost was not a primary factor in evaluation, and where program value and effectiveness was not easily measured in numbers (Phillips, 2004). Similarly, the constructs of the model—benefits to community and society, tangible and intangible, now and in the future, were relevant to facilitations constructs, which are: aiding the strengthening of rural communities, through (comprehensive) collaborative development, for the purpose of sustaining/improving rural communities and ensuring their legacy for the future (NDSU Extension Service website, 2011; Flora & Flora, 2008).

Method

The pilot study tested application of the interview method and found it to be fundamentally useful in obtaining relevant narrative. Interviewing as a method of qualitative research represents a significant commitment of resources. However, the benefit—information and insight—derived from the meaningful narrative, which was a result of interviewing, justified the expenditure. This finding was consistent with the literature. Seidman (2006), for example, described interviewing as the "basic mode of inquiry"; and cited it as the method "most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language" (p. 8). For this qualitative pilot study, interviewing was the best choice.

Evaluation timeframe

Evaluation timeframe—the duration between the event and data collection—was considered in the study because of its impact on evaluation effectiveness (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Findings indicate that the timeframe between the facilitation interventions and the pilot study was too long, resulting in a number of undesirable outcomes: 1) delayed inquiry diminished research accuracy in ascertaining participants' reaction to the program; 2) the late evaluation impeded timely program follow-up that would have enabled participants to maintain program focus and direction; 3) participants were reluctant to engage in discussion about their stalled project, or had forgotten details of the facilitation.

Analysis constructs

The pilot study tested additional constructs (the *Listening Guide* and reflective journal) applied in the analysis (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003). The interview narrative––participants' account of their experiences of the facilitations—was rich with meaning. The *Listening guide* (see Appendix F) proved to be an effective means of narrative analysis, and provided distinct benefits. For example, researcher bias was a concern in this study. The potential for bias may lead to what Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to as a lack of shared "confidence in findings" (p. 2). The *Listening Guide* addressed researcher bias, thereby improving confidence in findings while maintaining research subjectivity. Similarly, the application of the *Listening Guide* ensured that the research questions were not imposed on the narrative, thereby allowing the complexities of meaning to emerge; and, as a consequence, enhancing shared confidence in the findings (Gilligan, 1982). The researcher also maintained a reflective journal throughout the pilot study to be alerted to any biasing dispositions or preconceptions that might exist involving past personal experiences.

Resulting Central themes

Through the analysis process, themes and sub-themes emerged that were congruent with the constructs of the Kaufman model, and relative to the research questions:

Theme 1) Facilitation fosters long-term sustainable community development.

Facilitations represent tangible and intangible value with regard to long-term sustainable community development. Participants expressed strong endorsement of the facilitations and viewed the facilitator as an expert who understood rural issues. "She took a room full of people from around the county and got us talking. She knew what questions to ask us and compiled the response" (LENS interview). Additionally, facilitations promoted volunteerism, legacy, sustainable leadership, learning and communication, and long-term vision/planning, which support Macro and Mega goal attainment (Kaufman, 2006). "We can be a part of that…It's working, we're still here" (PCRG interview). Diverse programs manifested financial benefits, providing community stability and sustainability. "[Development] brings new wealth into the community. It creates jobs indirectly, some directly" (PCRG interview).

However, participants expressed some uncertainty about the purpose of the interviews and the nature of the questions. “Okay, so the question is what now” (LENS interview)? “You tell me what you want” (PCRG interview). “I don’t know if I’m answering what you want” (LENS interview).

Theme 2) Facilitations validate and align community effort, promote participation, cooperation and support.

The legacy of a shared and diverse culture within communities impacts pride, community strength, and fosters resiliency in leaders. “[We] have a strong religious background and strong ethnic backgrounds that people continue to carry on...children grow and learn about the community. They learn to respect it” (PCRG interview). Youth were also found to exhibit courage and authenticity, which are encouraged and recognized by elders and leaders. “[Agencies] are very aware of what the teens and the youth would like and they are not afraid to tell” (PCRG interview). These attributes and encouraging factors of success—as products of facilitation—promote hope and inspire confidence, which increase participation, and foster a sense of community. “[Facilitation] validates what we’re doing…that we’re on the right track… It gives everybody a direction and goals…same purpose” (PCRG interview). Finally, involvement of government agencies and businesses, through networking, supports progress and allows for distribution of funds. “Our community was really good to help with the finances” (LENS interview). “We network…that is a strength we have” (LENS interview).

The study also determined however, that changes in project focus due to lack of direction—sustainable leadership/vision and follow-through—resulted in stalled project momentum and disengagement. “We had this meeting and it was really good…then all of a sudden we didn’t know where to go from there. I think we had a good group and we should have followed through on it more" (LENS interview). Participants further expressed the importance of a focused plan and follow-up. "If you have a plan…and stick by it and everybody's on the same page you can't beat it. If everybody stays focused" (PCRG interview). Finally, participants expressed concern about sustainable leadership. "We realized we needed to have a leader and nobody would do it" (LENS interview). "I'd like to train another generation…how do we get them involved? That's where we could use some more help" (LENS interview).

Theme 3) Importance of leadership, volunteerism, and observable results

Transformative leadership—servant leadership style and role modeling—promoted engagement. "As far as leadership, it just needed to be done so I'm glad to do it" (LENS interview). Similarly, collaboration and volunteerism yielded success and mutual support. "You rely on volunteers…everyone volunteers" (PCRG interview). However, a need for further leadership development was emphasized. "I would suggest that even our core group should have had a little more leadership training…we may have progressed a little better, faster" (LENS interview). A need for broader involvement of NDSU extension, that would include education in community interconnectedness and interdependency, was also expressed. "Our plan is to get more [communities] involved. We just need to educate the people…to convince people that we need to think globally" (LENS interview).

Participants also felt frustration due to skepticism and resistance from community members regarding spending. They expressed a need for observable and measurable results that would bolster support for spending, and increase volunteerism. "I think [the] general public gets nonchalant, or unexcited, uninterested, because it takes too long…it's like yeah, they're never going to get that done…they really want it done" (PCRG interview).

Theme 4) Fear and loss create uncertainty

Participants communicated a sense of loss from discontinued facilitation—NDSU support. “I never understood her [facilitator] job wasn’t being replaced and I was very disappointed…I think this is really needed” (LENS interview). Fear about the future of rural communities, and concern regarding limited funds and diminishing resources was also expressed. “Funding is always a problem” (PCRG interview). “Our areas are getting really, really more rural and our population is diminishing. So our resources are probably, not draining, but...(LENS interview). Subsequently, a desire for continued and broadened support from NDSU was expressed. “I would like to see NDSU continue. But I think extension needs to broaden itself to have things like this [facilitation and education] for our communities” (LENS interview).

Construct categories for Survey Development

NVivo™ qualitative analysis software employs a “word frequency query” to identify frequently used words within the interview text, and a “text search query” to reference those words to specific passages within the text (QSR International website, 2011). The “code” words and passages are then organized under “nodes” headings to aid the researcher in identifying emergent “themes”. Two categories emerged from this analysis (through the listening guide), which represent constructs and contain words that could be applied to NVivo™ software for the purpose of survey development. (It is noted however, that this form of coding does not replace close analysis of the source material). The categories, identified as either *contributing* or *noncontributing* components of the facilitations, were derived from participants’ statements that implied progress toward, or away from, Macro and Mega goal attainment (Kaufman, 2006).

Contributing:

- Endorsement of facilitation reflecting tangible and intangible benefit

- Volunteerism, information/communication and learning—education
- Diversity of programs exhibiting long-term vision/planning
- Financial benefit and observable, measurable, communicated results
- Legacy, diverse and shared culture impacting community pride, strength, resiliency; and fostering hope, confidence and sense of community
- Support from government agencies and businesses/networking
- Leadership, role modeling, and collaboration

Noncontributing:

- Shift of program focus resulting in disengagement and stalled momentum
- Frustration from lack of visible progress, follow-through, volunteer participation, and shared understanding of objectives
- Sense of fear and loss regarding future of rural communities, and discontinued facilitation/NDSU support
- Funding limitations, community skepticism, pushback regarding spending
- Lack of sustainable (defined) leadership/vision

Summary

Chapter 4 began by restating the purpose and objectives of the pilot study, relative to the research questions. Research results were then presented regarding the evaluation model, method, timeframe, and analysis constructs. Themes that emerged through the analysis were also presented, and included relevant statements by participants. Finally, evaluation constructs were listed in terms of contributing and noncontributing components of the facilitations. Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the results and their implications, limitations of the pilot study, conclusions, recommendations for future study, and reflection.

Chapter V: Discussion

Rural communities are important and valuable assets to North Dakota. Their success and sustainability, however, depends on a network of support that includes government agencies and businesses, community leadership and volunteers, and support from learning institutions. NDSU Extension Facilitation efforts represent a vital contribution to that network of support—to the benefit of individuals, communities, and to society as a whole—now, and in the future.

In order to continue and improve NDSU Extension Facilitation efforts requires an effective means of evaluation be developed. This pilot study, (by testing the proposed evaluation model, method, timeframe and analysis constructs), provided information with which to develop an evaluative survey that would address that need. The findings of this study are also significant in their applicability to evaluation of other initiatives (especially those in the non-profit sector) that promote long-term tangible and intangible benefits to stakeholders and society.

The pilot study examined the application of the Kaufman evaluation model, interview method, and timeframe; as well as additional constructs applied in the analysis (Seidman, 2006). Participants from two facilitated sites were interviewed. Based on analysis of the narratives—using the *Listening Guide* (Gilligan, 1982)—the study found the Kaufman Model to be the most appropriate evaluative framework for the facilitations—identifying characteristics of success and sustainability, and contributions to external stakeholders and society; as well as identifying those that did not. The study also revealed that the interviews were effective in generating meaningful narrative, and that the *Listening Guide* was useful in deciphering the complexities of the narrative. Finally, the study indicated that a shortening of the timeframe of evaluation might prove beneficial in terms of follow-up, and clarity and engagement of participants during the interview process.

Limitations

Limiting factors of the study are comprised of four considerations: 1) The small sample size (N=2), and the reliance on a single (interview) instrument for data collection limited comparison and testing of alternate instrument(s) respectively. That said, the sample size, although small, provided sufficient information and insight—through comprehensive analysis involving the *Listening Guide*—to answer the pertinent research questions. 2) The shortage of data regarding preexisting conditions (conditions prior to the facilitations) made it difficult to make comparisons. 3) No formal evaluations were conducted immediately following the facilitated events between March 2009 and May 2011. Lastly, 4) Terminology pertaining to community capitals—wording of the interview questions—required interviewer explanation.

Conclusions

The Kaufman model was appropriate and effective in providing a framework in which to identify aspects of the facilitations that supported long-term success and sustainability, and benefits to stakeholders and society; and in identifying those aspects that did not. The interview method was especially effective in the context of facilitation evaluation. It allowed participants the opportunity to provide the substantial narrative needed for the analysis, and it provided an opportunity for (face-to-face) follow-up of the facilitations. The *Listening Guide* and reflective journal were effective constructs of the analysis—drawing meaning from the complex narrative and managing the potential for bias.

The LENS interview took place one year following the facilitation. The PCRG interview occurred more than two years following facilitation. In both cases the timeframe was too long (for three reasons): 1) Participant-reaction (to programs) is best ascertained immediately following the program/facilitation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006); 2) one year or more without follow-up from facilitator allows the possibility for loss of project momentum; and finally, 3) after one or two years participants have likely "moved on" from projects that did not develop or exhibit progress, in which case participants' would likely prefer to talk about "new" projects—diminishing the effectiveness of the evaluation. Evaluation at an earlier point in time would allow an opportunity for facilitation follow-up to refocus participants' efforts and regain lost project momentum.

Recommendations

Four recommendations for future study include: 1) Sampling and interviews, and a combined use of survey and interviews could be used to triangulate and validate findings. A review of NVivo™ software revealed shortcomings with regard to important aspects of qualitative analysis. Coding software does not allow for identification of the emotional component in the narrative, and impedes the relational aspect of analysis. A survey and sample of interviews may prove more beneficial in this respect because both would incorporate the *Listening Guide* and reflective journal as constructs for analysis. Additionally, all sites should be evaluated while incorporating a shorter time frame between facilitation and evaluation. 2) A more concrete and comprehensive array of metrics for evaluation—such as a balanced scorecard approach—could provide: constructs for a survey; a method for follow-up; and a basis for determining return on investment (ROI). Such an approach, involving the application of business and management skills, might also aid participants' efforts toward goal attainment. 3) Grant funds could provide the resources necessary to further facilitation efforts, improve follow-up, and establish a more comprehensive evaluation program. 4) Finally, revision of the interview questions might aid participants' understanding, and allow for standardization and consistency for facilitation evaluations.

Opportunities for further consideration

The following questions emerged from this study that would benefit from further investigation.

1) How might the instrument (interview questions) be improved—to increase congruence between interviewer and respondent? Could a list of questions be developed that would apply to (be appropriate for) all of the facilitated sites?
2) What might be a more appropriate and effective timeframe (following facilitation) to conduct evaluation?
3) Would a balanced scorecard approach, developed between NDSU and the participant communities, constitute more concrete/definitive evaluation measures of success?
4) Would a larger survey using the results of this study provide greater insight?
5) How could this study—using the *Listening Guide*, interview method, and Kaufman Model—be expanded or replicated to other communities or similar programs?

Summary

Chapter 5 began with a brief discussion of the implication of the results with regards to the effectiveness of the evaluation model, method, timeframe, and constructs of analysis used in this pilot study. Study limitations were listed, followed by conclusions, which reflected the practical application of findings to the focus of the research—NDSU facilitation evaluation. Then, recommendations for future study were presented; and included a list of new questions that emerged from the pilot study.

Reflection

This pilot study has been an enjoyable and fulfilling learning experience for me. And it has been an honor to contribute (in a small way) to the important work that NDSU Extension is doing on behalf of rural communities in North Dakota. Therefore, I feel a certain sense of loss as the pilot study project concludes. However, I am encouraged in my belief that this learning experience has prepared me to accept new challenges; and to contribute more effectively and in a broader capacity to the Training & Development profession, to my community, and to society as a whole.

Most remarkable, regarding the yearlong internship/research project in which I participated, have been the collaborative efforts of the individuals involved: Community Leaders who participated in the interviews; Lynette Flage, Ph.D. NDSU Extension Service Northeast District Director; Marie Hvidsten, Ed.D Rural Leadership Specialist/RLND Program Director, North Dakota State University Extension Service; and Dr. Jeanette Kersten, Ed.D Program Director, MS in Training & Development, University of Wisconsin Stout. The sharing of commitment, ideas, and resources that made this project possible—and successful—exemplifies the assertion that "collaboration" is not merely an idealistic, academic concept; but an essential ingredient for success—a tool that productive, innovative work-groups actually use. I find this discovery especially exciting; and I imagine ways in which the effort-multiplying effect of collaboration could be used to advantage in other initiatives.

Other points-of-learning also stand out: 1) the literature review task seemed almost overwhelming at times. The information gained, however, proved invaluable as I proceeded through the research process. For example, an understanding of the dynamics of rural communities allowed me to better relate to participants in the interviews; and knowledge regarding the variety of ways in which the *Listening Guide* has been applied in the past allowed me to more effectively implement it in the analysis of the participants' responses to questions. 2) I had some concerns regarding the accuracy, completeness, and bias of the analysis. I found that input from my research advisor—Dr. Kersten—helped to illuminate meaning, fill gaps, and identify bias. 3) In general, I had doubts regarding my inexperience as a researcher. I would like more practice (for example, with interviews) in order to improve my abilities. I have a sense that I biased some responses with leading comments. It would be interesting to observe/study with an experienced researcher. 4) Careful management of time proved imperative. From May 2011 to April 2012 I logged 599 hours. My spouse often referred to my research as "the other woman". However, I feel the time was well spent; and it was gratifying to contribute to such a meaningful project. 5) In considering the use of NVivo™, there arose the question of structure vs. sensitivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I wonder if there might be a way to incorporate the timesaving attributes of NVivo™ with the relational sensitivity of the *Listening Guide*. 6) While studying subjectivity in qualitative research I became aware that meaning is made through understanding participants' stories (not the other way around). I was reminded of this at my Dad's suggestion that referring to participant's statement as "supportive [to the theme] sounds like you said something and they supported it". 7) People who are struggling need hope for the future. I know this from my own experiences, and I hear it from others. Former Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens spoke at a ceremony on March 12th 2012, which commemorated the city's recovery from the flood of '97, stating the importance of hope and faith. 8) Legacy—ensuring a better future—is an idea presented in much of the literature. I especially liked the point made by Judt (2010) that we are not self-made individuals (as many in this country would like to think), that the benefits we enjoy are a result of collective past efforts; and that we as a society have a responsibility now to act on behalf of future generations.

Lastly, this experience—working with Community and University Leaders who are committed to improving the lives of others—has inspired, in me, a greater sense of social responsibility. As a result, I have decided to focus my efforts for employment on areas and organizations that offer opportunity for me to impact community and benefit society.

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Appendix A:

Letter of Invitation to Conduct Study for NDSU

NDSU
Extension Service

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Rural Leadership North Dakota

September 21, 2011

To: Hagen Gunderson
University of Wisconsin – Stout
Master Organizational Development

From: Marie Hvidsten, Ed.D.
Rural Leadership Specialist
NDSU Extension Service

Regarding: Invitation to conduct research at NDSU Extension Service

I am writing to invite you to be part of a research project with the NDSU Extension Service, specifically the Center for Community Vitality (CCV) Facilitation staff. The research project is to collect information from members of organizations in North Dakota where the CCV Facilitation staff has worked with their organizations in the past 1-3 years.

This research project includes interviews with members of organizations we have worked with to ask them questions about our facilitation and what has happened since the facilitation took place. Once the interview data has been collected the next step is to aggregate and analyze the data, sharing conclusions from the data with the CCV Facilitation staff.

Rural Leadership

Appendix B:

IRB Application and Acceptance

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report
Printed on 9/24/2011

Learner: Hagen Gunderson
Institution: North Dakota State University
Contact Information Phone: 701 799-5107
Email: gundersonh@my.uwstout.edu

Social/Behavioral Research Course:

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 05/14/11 (Ref # 6012249)

UW-Stout Human Subjects Training Certification

Please print this page for your records.

Name: Hagen Gunderson	**Stout ID:** 126817
College or Unit: College of Education, Health and Human Sciences	**Training Date:** 1/27/2011 7:29:36
Department: Training and Development (M.S.)	**Phone:** 701 799-5107

Comments:

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
Office of the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer
NDSU Dept. 4000
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive
Research 1, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

701.231.8995
Fax 701.231.8098

Federalwide Assurance #FWA00002439

Thursday, June 09, 2011

Dr. Marie Hvidsten
Center for Community Vitality
Morrill Hall 309

Re: IRB Certification of Human Research Project:

"Facilitation Evaluation"
Protocol #**XX11293**

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Lynette Flage, Kathy Tweeten, Jodi Bruns, Hagen Gunderson**

Study site(s): **varied** Funding: **n/a**

It has been determined that this human subjects research project qualifies for exempt status (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on the protocol form received 5/25/2011 and consent/information sheet received 6/6/2011.

Please also note the following:

- This determination of exemption expires 3 years from this date. If you wish to continue the research after 6/8/2014, the IRB must re-certify the protocol prior to this date.
- The project must be conducted as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, pre-approval is to be obtained from the IRB, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to subjects. A *Protocol Amendment Request Form* is available on the IRB website.
- Prompt, written notification must be made to the IRB of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB policies.

Thank you for complying with NDSU IRB procedures; best wishes for success with your project.

Sincerely,
Kristy Shirley
Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

Appendix C:

IRB Addendum from NDSU

Institutional Review Board ...for the protection of human participants in research

North Dakota State University
Sponsored Programs Administration
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive
NDSU Dept #4000
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)

RECEIVED
SEP 26 2011
Office of Sponsored Programs Administration

Protocol Amendment Request Form

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments.

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation scheme, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.

Protocol Information:

Protocol #: **XX11293** Title: **Facilitation Evaluation**

Review category: ☒ Exempt ☐ Expedited ☐ Full board

Principal investigator: **Marie Hvidsten** Email address: **marie.hvidsten@ndsu.edu**
Dept: **Center for Community Vitality**

Co-investigator: Email address:
Dept:

Principal investigator signature, Date: Marie Hvidsten 9-22-11

In lieu of a written signature, submission via the Principal Investigator's NDSU email constitutes an acceptable electronic signature.

Description of proposed changes:

1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)*: **October 1, 2011**
   ** Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.*

2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:
   Hagen Gunderson will be listed as a co-investigator. This change is needed for Hagen to receive IRB approval from the University of Wisconsin-Stout.
   5/14/2011 KSCM

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?
   ☐ No
   ☒ Yes: *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-*

Appendix D:

Solicitation Notice, Consent Form

Facilitation Evaluation

Evaluation purpose: To determine value of NDSU Extension facilitation efforts on organizations, groups, and communities.
Evaluation objectives are to determine:

- Whether things are different in the organization, group or community because of the NDSU Extension facilitated activity.
- The community capitals affected by goals and action items following the NDSU Extension facilitated activity.

Method:

- Within 6 months to one year after facilitation activity, 30-40 minute phone call or face-to-face interview scheduled with stakeholder (key individual) worked with during facilitated event.
- Two to three weeks prior to interview, stakeholder sent the document developed from facilitated event for review and asked to have on hand during the interview.
- Interview completed with protocol below

Interview Protocol

Thank you for this opportunity to visit about the ______________________(event) facilitated by NDSU Extension staff on ________________ (date). We are doing research on the facilitation services our organization provides and are interested in your feedback. I would like to ask you some questions that will help us identify the public value of our facilitation efforts on your organization, group or community.
I hope that you will agree to participate in this interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time with no consequence.
This interview should take approximately 30-40 minutes and will be aggregated with other interviews across the state to help determine the overall public value of extension facilitation efforts. Your name will not be used in any aggregated data so no one will trace specific responses to you.
In case of questions about the research you can contact Marie Hvidsten, NDSU Dept. 7390, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108 or marie.hvidsten@ndsu.edu or 701-231-5640. You may also contact Hagen Gunderson, 1014 4th street N., Fargo, ND 58102 or gundersonh@my.uwstout.edu or 701-799-5107.
Contact NDSU Human Research Protection Office, 701-231-8908, or ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu with any questions about your rights as a research subject or to file a complaint regarding the research. You may also contact UW Stout Research Services, 715-232-1394 or uwstout.edu/rs/humansubjects.cfm

_____________________________________ _________________________

Participant Signature **Date**

Appendix E:

Facilitation Questions-Interview Guide

Interview questions

1. Describe the ways in which your expectations were met regarding the facilitated event on (________________________) date?
2. (Probe for natural capital items as applicable).
    a. Describe the projects or activities in progress or completed that affected the natural resources in the area (water, air, soils, beautification, parks and recreation).
    b. Provide examples where dollars were received, spent, or invested for these projects or activities? How much approximately?
3. (Probe for cultural capital as applicable).
    a. Describe the impact these projects or activities had on the culture of the group?
    b. Describe the impact on diversity (socio-economic, racial, ethnic, gender)? Please provide examples or a story. Tell me about how this has impacted diversity?
4. (Probe for human capital as applicable).
    a. Tell me about the people working on these projects, their talents and abilities?
    b. Describe individuals and instances of leadership?
5. (Probe for social capital as applicable).
    a. Tell me how these projects or activities in progress or completed have strengthened networks, partnerships or connections?
    b. Describe what new committees, groups, or partnerships have formed?

c. Describe your experiences with volunteers. In what ways has this impacted the community? Approximately how many volunteer hours would you estimate have been provided?

d. Tell me about what you have observed about these individuals and situations?

e. Tell me about what has been learned?

f. What stories are being shared? By whom?

6. (Probe for political capital as applicable).

   a. Tell me about the people who have been empowered as a result of this project.

   b. In what ways are people more comfortable voicing their opinions or ideas to decision-makers?

7. (Probe for financial capital as applicable).

   a. Describe instances where groups have invested money in community projects?

   b. In what ways have grants, loans, gifts, or other funds enabled projects or activities?

8. (Probe for built capital as applicable).

   a. What physical structures or infrastructure were newly built or renovated?

   b. What resources were used to accomplish this building or renovation?

9. If the facilitations had not gone on, what would you have done?

10. What can you suggest to improve the process, and/or effectiveness of our facilitations?

11. If you could place a dollar value on the facilitated process, approximately what might that be?

12. What would encourage you to use NDSU Extension again for a facilitated event?

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to work with you!

Appendix F:

Listening Guide Analysis-Sample Format

Q	Transcript	L1 Plot	L2 I	L3 Evidence of societal benefit	L4 Absence of benefit, (expressed need)
1.	H: The bulk of these questions kind of focuses on the impact that NDSU's facilitation had on the seven community capitals. There are some other questions about your satisfaction with the... W: Yeah. I'm not real happy that they got rid of the position. I'll tell you that right now. You mean Lynette Flage's position, is that what you're talking about? H: Yeah. Actually, the facilitator or the facilitated event you did on August 30. W: Yes, I wish they would have replaced her position. H: Oh, they didn't? Cause they moved her up. W: Yeah, they moved her up and as far as I know I don't think they're replacing her. I	The respondent clearly indicated disappointment that the facilitator position was vacant. Respondent was very happy with the facilitation--"drawing in both sides and working with us".	I'm not real happy I'll tell you I wish they would I know I don't think I thought We're talking We're talking	Positive reaction from respondent regarding both facilitation and facilitator. Facilitation brought together two separated groups. Members from both groups were engaged through relevant questions; and their responses recorded.	Continued facilitation support needed from NDSU. A sense of loss yields frustration, loss of hope for the future