Transforming Board Practice
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Module 7

Asking the Right Questions
Goals for this Module

Participants will be able to:

– Describe a program’s logic – how the world should work
– Integrate strategic thinking to adapt logic model to real world assumptions and factors
– Use techniques to infuse innovative thinking and imagination in program planning
Logic Models (LM)

A logical picture of what the program is doing and what it expects as a result
Every Day Logic Model – Family Vacation

INPUTS
- Family
- Budget
- Car
- Camping Equipment

OUTPUTS
- Drive to state park
- Set up camp
- Cook, play, talk, laugh, hike

OUTCOMES
- Family members learn about each other; family bonds; family has a good time
**Logical Chain of Connections Showing What the Program is to Accomplish**

**INPUTS**
- Program investments

**OUTPUTS**
- Activities
- Participation

**OUTCOMES**
- Short
- Medium
- Long-term

What we invest
What we do
Who we reach
What results

University of Wisconsin-Extension, Program Development and Evaluation
LM Benefits: What we are Finding:

• Provides a common language
• Helps us differentiate between “what we do” and “results” --- outcomes
• Increases understanding about program
• Guides and helps focus work
• Leads to improved planning and management
• Increases intentionality and purpose
• Provides coherence across complex tasks, and diverse environments
LM Benefits (Cont’d)

- Enhances teamwork
- Guides prioritization and allocation of resources
- Motivates staff
- Helps to identify important variables to measure; use evaluation resources wisely
- Increases resources, opportunities, recognition
- Supports replication
- Often is required!
Reflection

• BUT, the question that keeps coming to mind is, as we do program planning, HOW do we make sure we are being innovative, strategic and the BEST we can be organizationally?

• What are some things that will help make this happen?
Models Versus Techniques

Often Strategic Planning is more Planning than Strategic!

So we use techniques to infuse innovative thinking and imagination. One technique is:

Appreciative Inquiry
Principles from Appreciative Inquiry

• We understand the world by the questions we ask
• Change is happening
• Be intentional to imagine what you want
• Expect what you want to create
• The positive possibility is more powerful for real change
Positive is Powerful

- Placebo affect
- Pygmalion effect
- Organizational inner dialogue
- Positive thinking expands innovative thought
- Curiosity
Asking the Right Questions

• Human systems move in the direction of what they most frequently and persistently ask questions about.

What you study, GROWS
Omni Hotel

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwGNZ63hj5k&feature=related
The Art of the Question in Leadership and Change

- What’s the biggest problem here?
- Why do the same problems keep recurring?
- What can we fix easily?
- What can we do better next time?
- What possibilities exist that we have not yet considered?
- What’s the smallest change that could make the biggest impact?
- What would create a win-win?
Leading Rapid, Positive Change in Organizations (Bushe, 2007, p. 7)

• Make sure everyone KNOWS where they/we want to go
• All levels don’t need permission to act
• There should be willingness to and support for taking voluntary, visible action
• Leaders track innovation and progress and fan flames of innovation and initiative
Generative Questions

Eliciting Conversations that Challenge the Status Quo
(Bushe, 2007, pg 4)

• Novelty & Surprise
• Reality Reframed
• Building Relationships
• Heart & Spirit Engaged
What are the key points of this module?

– What did you find most useful?
– What can we improve upon?
– Other items you want us to cover?
Curriculum Modules

Module 1: Foundations for Transforming Board Practice
Module 2: Legal and Recruitment Issues
Module 3: Governance and Board Structure
Module 4: Enhancing Board Engagement
Module 5: Constructive Conflict
Module 6: Tools for Strategic Thinking
Module 7: Asking the Right Questions
Module 8: Board Meeting Communication
PDF copies of the curriculum modules are available for viewing on the NC Thrive portal:

http://communitydevelopment.ces.ces.ncsu.edu/local-government-nonprofits/
References

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