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Project Abstract:

Disengaged citizens, contentious public discourse, and racial inequality have become some of the greatest challenges communities are confronting. South Africa, like many other low- and middle-income countries, is dealing with these enormous challenges and addressing the needs of a rapidly growing and changing population.

To encourage maximum citizen participation in addressing these issues, devoting resources to develop local leadership capacities is critical. This proposal emerged as a response to a direct request from Stenden South Africa (SSA) – following Dr. Majee’s invited public lecture on community development at the institute. The primary objective of the proposed work is to enhance collaborative programming, community leader training, and research between University of Missouri Extension (MU Extension), University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL), University of Western Cape (UWC) and SSA.

Through this training workshop and stakeholder meeting we will:

- a. identify current barriers and opportunities for community leadership development in resource-limited communities
- b. learn how to adapt the Neighborhood Leadership Academy (NLA) for the local context
- c. empower faculty and community members by conducting training in an evidence-based/empirically s 0 13.985ey-1.9 ()9 (b)o(c)42mited c
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Four faculty members from Stenden SA plus thirteen community leaders from the Port Alfred region completed the training, which was held May 20-31, 2024. Participants included non-profit organization staff and volunteers, teachers, grassroots project leaders, and former elected officials.

Guest speakers included the former mayor of Port Alfred, funders from Global Leading Light and The Learning Trust, plus many opportunities for the participants to share their experiences and expertise during the program.

Stenden SA coordinated several tours to visit local neighborhoods and projects developed by our class participants and through university-community partnerships.

Participants completed an end of program evaluation for the NLA program that included a post-pre rating of their knowledge of core program skills, reviews of the effectiveness of the program, and opportunities to comment on most/least helpful components, planned action, and overall impressions of the workshop (the same evaluation is used in our US program).

The average score for knowledge change on the question "I know how to write and make a "pitch" for my community project" went from 1.92 to 3.82 after the program (change of 1.90).

I understand the key strategies for effective, community-based fundraising: average pre score: 2.17, post: 3.92, change of 1.75.

I have an understanding of my leadership strengths and weaknesses: average pre: 2.25, post: 3.92, change of 1.67.

I know how to effectively engage volunteers, neighbors and partners in my project: pre: 2.25, post: 3.92, change: 1.67.

I have the knowledge and tools necessary to build capacity for, and lead, my organization: pre: 2.17, post: 3.83, change: 1.67.

Additional comments:

- Thank you very much for assuring me I am on the right track with community development, using asset based community development method
- Keep up the good work, come back to see our progress, continue to communicate with us and mentor our work
- Let me start with the facilitators
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PARTICIPANTS' REPORTED NEXT STEPS TO BUILD ON THEIR LEARNING:

- Teach my community what I have learned in this workshop
- Organizing a community of practice, with the like minded / unlike minded community leaders
- Create videos of CBP (community building principles) on social media
- Actually do a training course in my community
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