Change, Civic Education, and the Need for Leadership

- “Communities that view their citizens as their greatest asset and invest in the development of the full potential of all their people are those that will have the capacity to effectively compete in the global political, social, and economic arena.”

  Donald W. Littrell
- Rapid and widespread change in the world.
- Challenges of nurturing and maintaining our communities, people and structures.
Developing Community Leadership:
The EXCEL Approach
When is a community ready for a leadership program?

- **Listen** to what people are saying.

- **Observe** what’s going on in the community -- and what’s not?
Listen to what people are saying.

- Conversing and asking questions.
- Record information collected.
- Develop a list of concerns and desires for the community.
Listen to what people are saying.

- Develop a list of people who might have an interest in helping organize a local program.

- Develop a list of concerns and desires for the community.
Observe what’s going on in the community and what’s not.

- Is the community developing rapidly? Are changes being felt?
- Are existing leaders nearing retirement or burnout with no emerging leaders to take their places?
- Does leadership need to be shared among generations or among a broader segment of the population?
Observe what’s going on in the community and what’s not.

- Have current leaders changed in philosophy or methods to meet new challenges?
- Are community efforts splintered and uncoordinated?
- Do projects get started, but not completed?
Another Strategy

- What skills would community leaders need to handle such a crisis effectively?
- Could they make timely and appropriate decisions?
- Could they locate needed resources?
- Could they mobilize and organize citizens to work together?
Next Step

- Bringing people together.
EXCEL

EXperience in Community Enterprise and Leadership
Origins of the EXCEL Concept

- A Moberly, Missouri citizen shared his concerns about the community with a local University of Missouri Extension Community Development Specialist.

- Local University of Missouri Extension staff, citizens and faculty of the University of Missouri formed a partnership to develop those ideas and put them into action.
● In 1984 – first EXCEL conducted in Moberly, Missouri

● Over 7,200 Missourians have successfully completed the EXCEL program.

● Almost two-thirds of Missouri’s counties and communities have participated in locally driven leadership programs.
A significant number of counties expressed the need for Building Community Leadership Development as a priority issue in a recent plan of work process conducted by University of Missouri Extension.

The number of counties expanding to develop a specific community youth leadership development program grew to 34 in 2005 and additional interest is high.
• EXCEL is a process, not a prepackaged program.

• Allow 6 to 12 months for planning and organizing such a community leadership program.

• Local steering committee is responsible for planning and implementation.

• Ongoing support and assistance during the process is usually provided by a local facilitator from University of Missouri Extension.
Key Points in the Development of EXCEL

- Designed to help people become effective leaders.
- Create a network of active leaders.
- Ownership of EXCEL is with the community.
Key Points in the Development of EXCEL

- People are asked to apply to become participants.
- Budget developed by steering committee.
- Membership is limited.
- Results are long-term.
Developing Community Leadership: The EXCEL Approach Handbook

- Written for people with some experience in leadership or community development.

- Introduces concepts and methods for organizing and implementing programs.

- Relates primarily to developing a course of learning activities.

- Tabbed by topic: supplemental materials and references follow each section.
For more information:

- www.extension.missouri.edu/cd/cld
- www.extension.missouri.edu/publications
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

It is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead