Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
energizing entrepreneurial communities

Community Prosperity Change Model

Growing Entrepreneurial Communities

09.04.15

Background and Introduction

Communities matter. Like families, they are building blocks of a healthy society. The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship's focus is on place-based development and the end game for our work is a growing number of prosperous communities. Prosperity, defined by www.dictionary.com, is "…a successful, flourishing, or thriving condition." At a minimum, our experience suggests that successful communities must be able to (1) renew themselves demographically and (2) create sufficient economic opportunities so that residents can achieve success, however they define it. However, a prosperous community is much more than these two minimum conditions. This piece summarizes the Center's emerging **Community Prosperity Change Model**.

Questions and Additional Information

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Prosperity Change Model

The graphic on page three highlights the major components of our prosperity change model.

Entrepreneurs – Our Starting Point. The Center's mission is to help community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. Our field work suggests to us that the starting point on a pathway to prosperity is investing in social, civic and business entrepreneurial talent. Communities with more leaders in the private, public and nonprofit sectors who recognize opportunities and are open to new ideas, who are willing to pull together resources and take well-managed risks, and who recognize the value of partnering to achieve common ends are more likely to be successful and achieve greater and more sustained prosperity.

Competiveness, Diversification & Resilience. Many entrepreneurs – social, civic and business – pursuing their dreams can organically increase the economic and social competitiveness of a community. They contribute to a more diversified economy and, often, community. Entrepreneurs are the drivers behind cluster-related value-added sectors, whether the reinvention of existing sectors (e.g. textiles in North Carolina) or the development of new sectors (e.g. wind energy in Kansas). Communities that are more competitive and more diversified have the essential conditions needed for resiliency – the ability to react positively in response to change. And, more resiliency is a necessary condition for sustained prosperity.

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Prosperity. For prosperity to be meaningful for the residents of a community, it must be sustained, broadly-held and enable individual economic and social mobility. Given the fundamental challenge of inequality in the US today, a truly prosperous community must be one that generates opportunities for all. Building the individual and family assets of community members, through productive work and entrepreneurial opportunities, creates the conditions for give-back and the creation of community wealth overall.

Community Philanthropy. Often communities struggle to find the resources to invest in strategies for creating prosperity. We believe community philanthropy represents the single greatest underdeveloped financial resource that can be mobilized for community building. Prosperous communities – with prosperous individuals and families – have a greater opportunity to grow community endowments and invest in community and economic development strategies that will support community building for generations to come.

Cycles of Progress. Becoming an entrepreneurial community – putting your community on a pathway to prosperity – requires a long-term commitment. As the graphic demonstrates, there is a cycle of progress that needs to be initiated – with a focus on entrepreneurial talent – and sustained over time – by building and developing community philanthropy in support of development. Set in motion, this prosperity change model can be self-perpetuating, no matter where you community's starting point may be.

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship's mission is to help community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. With our roots and hearts in rural America, we help communities of all sizes and interests by bringing *empowering research* together with *effective community engagement* to advance *community-driven strategies* for prosperity.

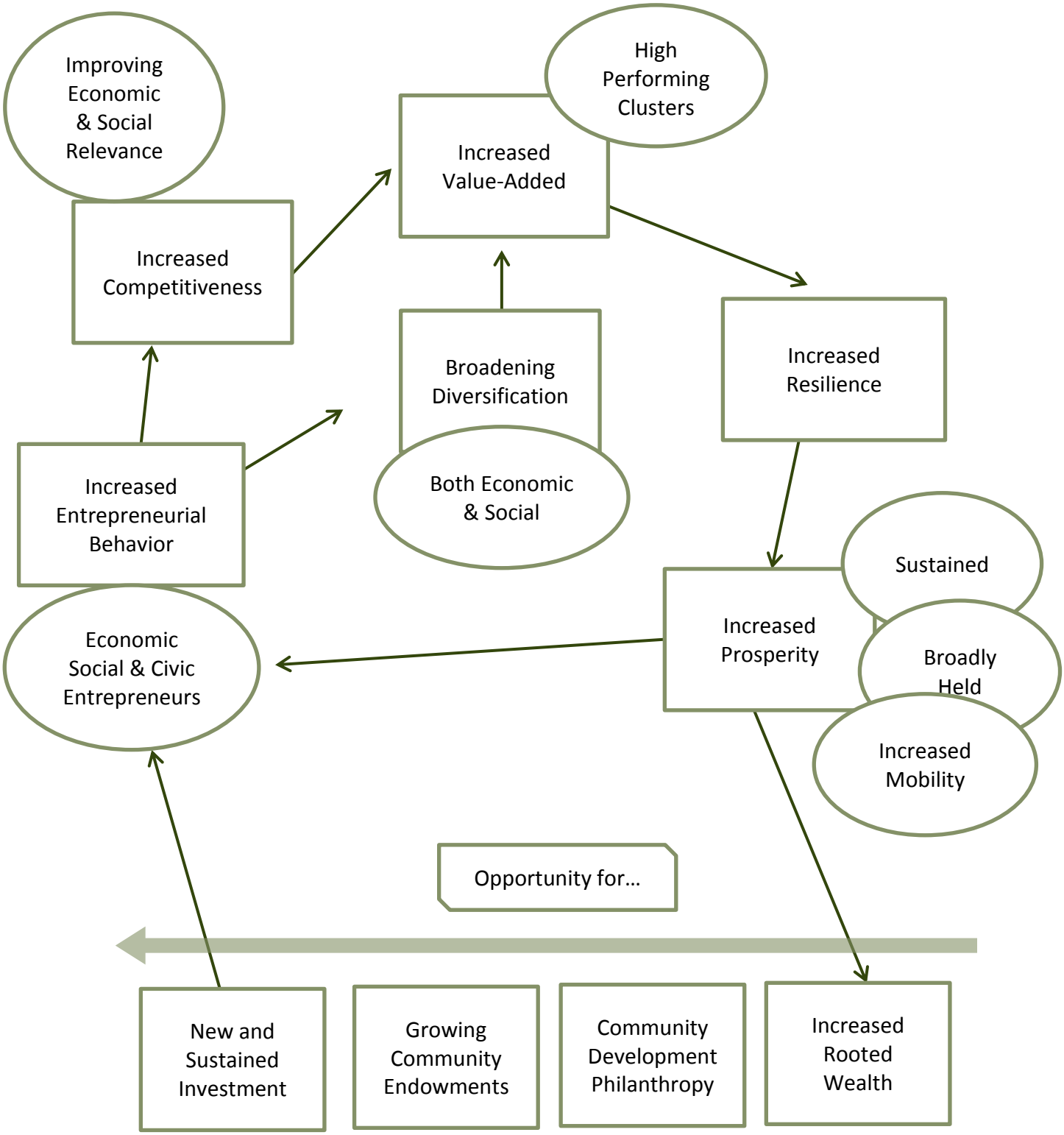
Our **Solution Area Teams** empower community leaders to find their own answers to the economic development challenges and opportunities they face:

- **Community Development Philanthropy** provides effective strategies to build local philanthropic capacity and generate development resources.
- **New Generation Partnerships** provides a framework for engaging young people now and attracting them in the future.
- **Entrepreneurial Communities** provides a roadmap for designing and delivering entrepreneurship strategies that work.

For tools and resources, visit the departments in e2 University at http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/library/e2university.html.

To learn more about the Center, go to www.energizingentrepreneurs.org.

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Opportunity for…
New and Sustained Investment
Growing Community Endowments
Community Development Philanthropy
Increased Rooted Wealth