

# Community Development through People and Place

## The Evolution of Focus: HOPE, Detroit, Mich.

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**Problem:** Impoverished communities in central Detroit face significant structural, economic, demographic, and other problems that negatively impact their quality of life. Focus: HOPE is using people – and place– based approaches to reducing these disparities.

**Purpose:** This study is conducted to explore how people-oriented CDCs differ from place-based CDCs in their strategies, challenges, and capacities, using Focus: HOPE as a before and after case study.

**Methods:** Data from interviews conducted by the author are used to analyze the success of Focus: HOPE's community development capacities in their expansion from people to place.

**Results and conclusions:** Focus: HOPE exhibits flexibility in pursuit of their mission by shifting to place-based strategies. The organization successfully employs its capacity, especially network capacity, in this evolution. Structural problems still need to be addressed through political capacity to achieve long-term goals.

**Keywords:** community development, people versus place, Focus: HOPE, Detroit

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This case study explores the evolution of the Detroit-based community development nonprofit organization, Focus: HOPE. Focus: HOPE's early community development efforts focused on building capacity at the individual level. More recently, Focus: HOPE has expanded to include activities to improve the neighborhood around its campus. The purpose of this paper is to explore how people-oriented CDCs differ from place-based CDCs in their strategies, challenges, and capacities, using Focus: HOPE as a before and after case study. In the first section, I provide some background on Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and, specifically, CDCs in the Detroit context. In the second section, I describe the history of Focus: HOPE and explain some of the organization's reasons for evolving from investing in people alone to also investing in the physical neighborhood around their campus. In the third section, I provide some demographic background on the HOPE Village neighborhood and compare it to other nearby localities. This comparison indicates that the HOPE Village neighborhood provides a particularly challenging demographic setting for Focus: HOPE's work. In the fourth section, I describe Focus: HOPE's current community development efforts and how they align with Glickman & Servon's five components of community development capacity. In the fifth section, I evaluate Focus: HOPE's capacities using interview data gathered with Focus: HOPE staff and allies. In these interviews, I

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asked individuals to identify accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities in the HOPE Village Initiative. Through staff interviews, I found that though Focus: HOPE's place-based programs have been moderately successful, challenges in internal political capacity and engagement will need to be overcome for future success in the neighborhood. Ally interviews further showed that network capacity has been particularly important to Focus: HOPE's transition to place-based strategies. Finally, I summarize lessons to be learned from Focus: HOPE's expansion from focusing on people to place and provide recommendations for other CDCs.

## Overview of Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) have emerged as important actors in impoverished communities in the United States in the last half century. Understanding their efforts, history, and evolution provides the context for Focus: HOPE. In this section, I introduce CDCs and describe their functions and activities, operation, history and challenges.

The definition of CDCs is broad because these organizations engage in an array of activities. From a theoretical perspective, Community Development Corporations can be defined as "a deliberate response to perceived inequalities in neighborhood quality and livability," (Vidal, 1995: 208-209). CDCs are distinguished from other non-profit socially-oriented organizations by their ties to place. CDCs focus on specific geographic areas, varying in scale from a neighborhood to an entire city depending on the organization (Ash et al, 2009: 8). CDCs are especially important in poor neighborhoods. CDCs typically emerge in poor neighborhoods where the capitalist political economy has failed to fulfill the needs of communities (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012: 1). Community development is thus "an effort people make to increase their options when only limited human, social, and economic capital are at hand" (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012: 5). These ties to community and place broadly unite the variety of CDCs.

CDCs pursue a range of different activities which tend

to fall under three categories. CDCs typically work to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods by: (1) increasing the presence of affordable housing, (2) initiating commercial development, and (3) facilitating community building. Historically, affordable housing development is the activity most commonly associated with CDCs, though this has been changing since the 2008 recession. As a result of this change, commercial development has been of increasing importance to CDCs aiming to revitalize economically depressed communities. Finally, community building includes community organizing and increasing opportunities and services for residents, such as offering access to credit, providing education, and other social services. These community building and community organizing activities show the connection that CDCs have to the areas that they serve. "This connection puts CDCs in a better position than city wide agencies in knowing the most pressing needs of their service area and tailoring their activities to address them," (Ash et al, 2009: 8).

One of the longest debates in community development is between *place*-based and *people*-based approaches to improving life in impoverished neighborhoods. Place-based approaches are grounded in the spatial concentration of poverty and unemployment. According to Crane & Manville, "Marked by low incomes, high social service demands, deteriorating housing stock, and high unemployment rates, these places often have inadequate infrastructure and public services, failing schools, and few jobs matching the skills of residents," (2008: 2). However, place-based strategies are criticized by some as being either blunt and indirect or, at worst, ill-conceived bribes to force the poor to stay in poor places. People-based approaches, on the other hand, are not limited to particular places, but rather are based on other personal circumstances. These are seen as less wasteful and better targeted, and allow residents of impoverished neighborhoods to move, if they prefer, to better opportunities without losing program eligibility (Crane & Manville, 2008: 3). The mobility of people-based approaches can nonetheless be criticized for weakening community ties and neighborhood identity.

Given these limitations, Crane & Manville argue that place-based and people-based approaches separately address two often-conflated problems. People-based approaches best tackle problems of individual poverty, in which individuals lack adequate private resources such as food, job skills, jobs, inexpensive transportation, affordable housing, or adequate income. Place-based strategies address spatial externalities that result in a lack of community goods. These challenges, in which specific places experience underinvestment and inadequate provision of spatial public goods, include safety, education, transit, community identity, political networks, and the spatial externalities of geographically linked housing and labor markets. The two sets of issues are distinct, though not wholly separate (Crane & Manville, 2008: 3). Both must be addressed by community development in order to successfully serve impoverished neighborhoods.

CDC funding comes from a variety of sources. Traditional CDCs working on affordable housing development received 30-40% of their funding from developer fees prior to the 2008 recession (Ash et al, 2009: 6). Developer fees are paid by developers directly to CDCs or to low-income housing funds, as required by local laws (Robinson, 1996: 1656). In Detroit, CDCs also receive large amounts of funding from grants, like the federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) that fund Detroit's Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF). CDCs may also receive funding from philanthropic foundations and financial institutions. This funding is often routed through intermediaries, including state or city governments, the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and community development trade organizations, such as the Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD) (Ash et al, 2009: 20-21). These private, local, and federal funding sources are crucial in keeping CDCs afloat in face of declining rates of housing development.

Funding for CDCs represents a fairly recent effort in a long history of federal assistance to poor communities. Federal assistance to poor communities was officially initiated in the 1930s; however, many of the core principles of community development policy were rooted in

the Progressive Era of 1890-1920. Federal efforts were greatly expanded in the New Deal of the 1930s, though not all policies were place-oriented (O'Connor, 2012: 16). In the postwar years, the federal government made two massive investments in community development that had profound impacts on cities. These can be broadly categorized under the two categories of suburbanization incentives and geographic expansion through government funded defense spending. The first included incentives like homeownership subsidies, business tax incentives, and highway funding to permit the development of the suburbs. The second category, "the continued investment in defense and related industry that transformed once underdeveloped regional economies, particularly in the south," enabled further expansion outside cities (O'Connor, 2012: 18). However, beginning in the 1950s, distressed areas in older cities and rural communities began to look like permanent "pockets of poverty," (O'Connor, 2012: 18). The federal response in urban renewal and area redevelopment revolved around housing, local redevelopment, and subsidies for private industry, though no effort was made to redirect market forces. This failure to address underlying structural problems limited what could be accomplished by urban renewal and area redevelopment programs.

Communities began looking beyond federal sources for solutions. The limitations of the federal urban renewal and area redevelopment efforts contributed to the upsurge in community-based activism and reform in the 1960s. It was during this time that CDCs were born (O'Connor, 2012: 18). CDCs began in black urban neighborhoods in the movement for black economic self-determination of the post-war years. In 1965, the federal Economic Opportunity Act was amended to create the Special Impact Program (SIP), which provided block grants to community-based organizations and placed development funds in the hands of communities. CDCs were deradicalized and professionalized under government and foundation auspices. The CDC movement subsequently expanded and diversified in the 1970s to become the central institution for local development (O'Connor, 2012: 22). This continues today.

Though CDCs have made significant strides in improving some communities, they continue to face three main challenges. Over the past 40 years, community development corporations have evolved from a quixotic small-scale movement to a mainstream set of practices and institutions that are increasingly assuming the functions of local governments (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012: 1). At the same time, CDCs are facing a crisis in the post-recession years. Following the widespread scaling back of housing developments as a result of the economic collapse in 2008, many CDCs have been challenged to redefine their organizations. Some have embraced a more comprehensive approach to community development, recognizing that community needs are complicated and interrelated at the neighborhood level. Because development on this level can be physical, economic, or social, CDCs can still address neighborhood needs and support themselves by engaging in economic and social development rather than the physical development of housing. A problem with this new expanded approach to development, however, is that the system that presently supports CDCs emphasizes physical development activities (Ash et al, 2009: 3).

A second challenge faced by CDCs is that their work is unconventional and their impacts are difficult to measure. They often have to ‘swim against the tide’ (O’Connor, 2012: 11), as their tactics tend to go against the norm. “Federal community development policy is notorious for reinventing old strategies while failing to address the structural conditions underlying community decline,” (O’Connor, 2012: 11). Since the 1960s, the market-driven norm has been to invest in human capital, economic growth, and bring people to jobs (rather than jobs to people). This puts CDCs’ anti-poverty tactics of investing in place in a marginal position, particularly in declining communities (O’Connor, 2012: 12). It can also be difficult to measure outcomes like “building local capacity”, “mending the social fabric”, “cultivating indigenous leaders”, and “encouraging community empowerment”. Thus, it is hard for CDCs to quantitatively measure progress in these important community building activities (O’Connor, 2012: 12).

A third challenge occurs at the institutional level. According to Glickman and Servon, “CDCs wrestle with systemic, structural problems in the economies of cities. Quite clearly, most long-term economic trends are beyond the control of neighborhood groups. This makes their jobs especially daunting” (Glickman & Servon 2012: 55). Furthermore, community development has been undermined by federal policy that supposedly aims to support it.

“One lesson from historical experience, then, is that community development policy has been undermined by recurring patterns in the structure of policy. Internal contradictions, marginalization, weak political coalitions, fragmentation, associationalism, second-tier status, and institutionalized racial inequality have kept community development policy swimming against the tide,” (O’Connor, 2012: 14).

Though the federal government funds CDCs through the CDBG program, they simultaneously fund the very business incentives, homeownership subsidies, and highway funds that drain city cores of human and economic capital. In this way, federal policy seems to be simply treating the symptoms of a larger disorder while failing to address the causes.

As a result of these three challenges, the context in which CDCs rise to advocate for and improve their impoverished neighborhoods is complicated to navigate. O’Connor stated, “jobless inner-city ghettos on the post-industrial landscape represent the products of economic restructuring and industrial relocation, of racial and class segregation, and of policy decisions that have encouraged these trends,” (O’Connor, 2012: 11-12). One of the cities most emblematic of these trends is Detroit. In the last 50 years, Detroit reflects a history of urban sprawl, redlining, racial tensions, post-industrial job loss, and a lack of city planning. This history has created the perfect conditions for CDCs to make positive changes.

In conclusion, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) have become influential advocates for impoverished communities in the United States in the last half

century. CDCs face significant challenges in redefining their functions in the post-recession financial climate, accurately measuring their progress, and addressing the broader structural problems confronting their communities. Understanding their efforts, history, challenges, and evolution provides the context for Focus: HOPE. I delve further into Detroit's CDC context in the next section.

## **The Role of Community Development Corporations in Detroit**

CDCs have become important actors in Detroit as advocates for its impoverished urban communities. Detroit is facing significant challenges in city politics and democracy in its transition through deindustrialization. As such, local CDCs face additional challenges along with those faced by CDCs nationwide.

Due to the history of disinvestment in Detroit's urban core, CDCs have formed in various Detroit neighborhoods. Many have come together as members of the Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD), Detroit's CDC trade association. Its mission is "to advocate for policies that will strengthen Detroit's CDC industry and, in turn, its neighborhoods" (Ash et al, 2009: 2). CDAD currently lists 50 CDC members on its webpage, along with 20 Neighborhood Improvement Association members, 9 community group members and 11 other partners (Community Development Advocates of Detroit, 2015). These members partake in a broad range of activities. According to a survey conducted by Community Legal Resources of 32 Detroit CDCs in 2008, approximately 53% listed affordable housing as one of their activities; approximately 47% did commercial development; and approximately 47% had programs for returning vacant land to productive use. Seventy-three percent listed community organizing as one of their activities. Other activities listed include greenways and park maintenance, facade improvement programs, youth services, home repair, homeownership counseling, education, foreclosure prevention counseling, main street programs, food systems / urban agriculture, and small business loans or microloan programs (Ash et al,

2009: 8). Given this diversity in activities, Detroit's CDCs can be seen as a microcosm of those found nationwide.

Detroit CDCs face some additional challenges around city politics and democracy along with the challenges faced by all CDCs in the aftermath of the economic recession. CDCs in Detroit have had to adapt to changes in local leadership. Though philanthropy has stepped up to fill in gaps in government funding, Detroit CDCs have largely had to work around local government instead of with it (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). Though CDCs want to act as a voice for the community, when they work around elected leadership, it raises concerns about what happens to democracy. Many Detroit CDCs are reluctant to sidestep representatives that have been elected by the people, yet have had to pick up the slack where local government, with its cumbersome and ineffective bureaucratic structures, is unable to provide for communities. Simultaneously, since philanthropy in the city has taken a large role in funding, it has also been able to dictate where and how development happens (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). An example of this is Detroit's Blight Taskforce, which is operated and funded by private business owners. Though executives like Dan Gilbert have good intentions and want to be involved in local communities, Detroit CDCs are concerned about the lack of control of these private initiatives in neighborhood change. These tensions in city leadership and the quantity of philanthropy players involved have motivated Detroit CDCs to assert their role in the process of determining how communities develop.

In the context of these complexities, community development advocates in Detroit are eager to see the role of the CDC industry elevated. There are currently many tensions and potential complications involved between the bankruptcy proceedings and its aftermath on the one hand and large-scale investment on the other. Community development advocates are therefore calling for the elevation of their industry as a representation of community voices in these processes (Personal Communica-

tion, 8/21/14). CDCs see themselves as representing their communities' interests due to their extensive community organizing efforts. If Detroit's CDCs were engaged as stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes, their involvement would ensure that residents' voices are heard. CDCs are often seen as being in positions of weakness since they need financial capital to achieve their goals. However, Detroit's community development advocates argue that the city government and philanthropic interests are also in need of the skills and programs that CDCs offer in order to reach their own goals to better the city. As such, community development advocates believe that their industry should be respected for this expertise, and as representatives of the needs of the community, in order for the city to move forward (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). They are thus aiming to become further engaged as stakeholders in the city's major decision making processes.

To conclude, CDCs are key players in many impoverished communities such as Detroit's core. In addition to the various challenges faced by all CDCs after the 2008 recession, CDCs in Detroit face additional challenges around city politics and democracy in the period of Detroit's bankruptcy and its aftermath. Detroit CDCs are pushing to gain greater control in city decision making around development. This is the context in which Focus: HOPE has grown to engage in community development.

## Overview of Focus: HOPE

In this section, I provide a basic overview of Focus: HOPE by discussing the history of the organization and then its current programs. I then detail the organization's evolution from a people-based civil and human rights organization into place-based community development functions through the HOPE Village Initiative.

Father William Cunningham and Eleanor Josaitis founded Focus: HOPE after the 1968 civil uprisings in Detroit. Due to the organization's context and original functions, Focus: HOPE describes itself as a civil and human rights organization. The mission they originally

adopted continues to this day:

“Recognizing the dignity and beauty of every person, we pledge **intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty and injustice**. And to **build a metropolitan community where all people may live in freedom, harmony, trust and affection**. Black and white, yellow, brown and red from Detroit and its suburbs of every economic status, national origin and religious persuasion we join in this covenant,” (Focus: HOPE 2015: "Focus: HOPE Mission and Values", emphasis added).

The two main tenets of the mission—(1) intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty, and injustice, and (2) building a metropolitan community where all people may live in freedom, harmony, trust, and affection—require comprehensive approaches. The mission acknowledges the importance of both people and place in rebuilding its community.

The three main areas in which Focus: HOPE operates today are (1) the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, (2) the Workforce Development and Education programs, and (3) the neighborhood revitalization programs, now categorized under the HOPE Village Initiative. Focus: HOPE began operating its Commodity Supplemental Food Program in 1971 to address the disparity in food needs between the city and the suburbs. The USDA-administered program, established in 1971, provides a free monthly supplement of food to low income mothers, children, and senior citizens. Since its establishment, Focus: HOPE has distributed the equivalent of 524,966,371 meals to Detroiters (Focus: HOPE 2014: 1).

The original mission to bridge disparities naturally expanded to additional areas; workforce development and education programs followed shortly thereafter. These programs were aimed at addressing inequity in both job training and opportunity, starting with breaking down barriers for African Americans and women in the machinist industry. Since its 1981 founding, Focus: HOPE's Machinist Training Institute has graduated 2,867 Detroiters. The organization's other workforce

development programs include the Information Technologies Center, with 1,910 graduates since 1999, and the Center for Advanced Technologies, with 309 graduates since 1993 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 1). Focus: HOPE's neighborhood revitalization efforts are its most recent. I describe and analyze these more in depth in the following sections.

## Focus: HOPE's Evolution to Place-Based Strategies

While Focus: HOPE's deep impact on the city and its metropolitan area is undeniable, leadership noted that its impact on the surrounding neighborhood was much less apparent. In 2009, when Focus: HOPE began developing a strategic plan, the organization realized that it had begun doing things beyond meeting the basic needs of food, employment, and education. Over time, the organization has engaged in efforts to shape the built environment. These began when a tornado ravaged the neighborhood in 1997, damaging several Focus: HOPE buildings and a multitude of homes throughout the area. The organization worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and neighborhood residents to secure funding for rebuilding (Personal Communication, 8/11/14). As a meeting point for several different community organizations, Focus: HOPE began building its community development capacity in the early 2000's. The organization began working on some significant brownfield redevelopment projects in 2002, acting as a funding hub and catalyst for bricks-and-mortar development, and working with others on community organizing around illegal dumping and safety.

“Focus: HOPE Revitalization was established in 2002 as a Michigan non-profit Corporation through its Community and Economic Development department, Focus: HOPE Revitalization works hand-in-hand with government and community organizations to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood. It addresses neighborhood quality of life issues by rehabilitating housing, developing new housing, tearing down abandoned housing, revitalizing parks and public

spaces, facilitating commercial revitalization, and working to stop illegal dumping in the area,” (Alan C. Young & Associates, P.C. 2015).

In 2005, Focus: HOPE worked with 25 stakeholders in the neighborhood to create a Community Development Strategic plan, which it then began to implement. In 2009, a team began evaluating the current situation in the neighborhood and thinking about the elements of a comprehensive strategy for creating positive change and move their mission forward. That strategic plan led to Focus: HOPE taking on a third focus area—neighborhood revitalization—targeted at the 100 block area (approximately 723 acres) around the campus (Personal Communication, 8/11/14). This area includes approximately 1,700 housing units, 5,300 residents, 23 churches, and 75 businesses (Focus: HOPE 2015: "The HOPE Village Initiative"). The vision was for Focus: HOPE to take on a catalyst role as an anchor organization in the neighborhood, and to bring additional partners to work toward comprehensive community change. This vision took the form of the HOPE Village Initiative (HVI), with a 20-year goal that by the year 2031, 100% of the residents in the area would be Educationally well-prepared, Economically self-sufficient, and living in a safe and supportive Environment (Focus: HOPE 2015: "The HOPE Village Initiative"). These three E's are a core part of the initiative's theory of change.

Focus: HOPE considers the environment to contain both physical and social components. On the physical side, there has been an emphasis on using areas destroyed by the 1997 tornado in the Oakman East area to build footholds to address endemic issues. These include blight, which they address by demolishing houses, and the noxious remnants of old industrial buildings, which require various types of remediation (Personal Communication, 8/11/14). Work in the Oakman East area led to four major developments. The first was the Village of Oakman Manor, a development of senior residences built on a set of long-vacant contaminated lots in collaboration with Presbyterian Villages of Michigan. The next was Cool Cities Park, which was built on the site of an old gas station. Third, the Bell Building, the biggest of



Figure 1. Locating the HOPE Village Initiative (Beauchamp et al 2010).

these developments, was developed by the Neighborhood Services Organization as permanent supportive housing for individuals formerly experiencing chronic homelessness. The fourth development, Oakman Place, is a set of apartments developed by Lutheran Child and Family Service. Some of these apartments are for young adults who aged out of foster care. Despite these tremendous successes with development in the Oakman East area, Focus: HOPE prefers to continue focusing on catalyzing and coordinating change in the neighborhood as a whole, and brings in others to take the lead on big developments (Personal Communication, 8/11/14).

The necessity of this shift from people to place was brought to the forefront by the 1997 tornado, as physical deterioration became especially obvious in its aftermath. Focus: HOPE's investments in *people* through its social programs were making a positive impact, but the organization realized that to truly create positive change within the space in which they had been rooted they

would need to be paying attention to additional *place*-based needs. This is consistent with Crane & Manville's view that investment in both people and place is needed to solve the often-conflated problems of individual poverty, on the one hand, and spatial externalities and community goods on the other (2008: 3).

Focus: HOPE has embodied responsiveness, resilience, and flexibility throughout its evolution from people to place. Responsiveness is defined by Glickman and Servon as a CDC's ability to change focus and direction in response to shifts in the environment in which it works, while resilience is a CDC's ability to rebound from setbacks and continue the pursuit of its mission even when the environment in which it works is uncooperative. Together, responsiveness and resilience make up flexibility (Glickman & Servon 2012: 2012). Focus: HOPE has certainly exemplified responsiveness in its path to creating the HVI. Though its programs initially focused on providing social services, the organization recognized



that the needs of the community went beyond these basic necessities. Focus: HOPE has also been very resilient in many aspects of its operations, including the HVI. The environment in which the organization works is incredibly challenging, both in the condition of the neighborhood and in the broader context in which they operate. In the face of this various complex challenges, of which most cannot be solved by the organization alone, Focus: HOPE has remained resilient. The comprehensive approach they take allows them to continue operating some programs even as others stagnate in the face of challenges, and thus continue to pursue their community development mission.

Though Focus: HOPE functions as a CDC, it is not always thought of one by those involved in community development in the city for two main reasons. First, Focus: HOPE does not focus on development in the way many typical CDCs do. The organization has not envisioned new development as a primary component of the HOPE Village Initiative. Focus: HOPE will instead focus on working with existing structures and on building community gardens and agriculture in more vacant areas. Secondly, the long standing success of Focus: HOPE's food center and workforce development programs dominate the organization's reputation. Since these programs are open to any Detroit resident, Focus: HOPE is largely seen as a city-wide organization without ties to its neighborhood (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). However, Focus: HOPE did win the coveted Detroit CDC of the Year award in 2009, showing that it is starting to win acceptance of its role in the neighborhood.

“Focus: HOPE received the MASCO Corporation Foundation Community Development Corporation of the Year award for its efforts to create a vibrant community and engage in physical revitalization and community building along with several partners. This award recognizes Focus: HOPE as one of the preeminent community development organizations in the City of Detroit” (Focus: HOPE 2009: 5).

Changing this perception and spreading awareness of its

new HOPE Village Initiative has been one of the main obstacles to success in the organization's community development mission.

Many Detroit CDCs have struggled to adapt to the challenges brought by the recession. During the last 10 years, a large number of traditional Detroit CDCs that relied on housing development as their main line of business went out of business. This long list includes North Star, Northwest Detroit Community Development, and Ravendale. Focus: HOPE, instead, took an approach that involved assembling land and financing and attracting development partners. This resulted in over 200 units of new housing at a time when only a few other CDCs were having success developing housing (Personal Communication, 4/17/15).

Focus: HOPE is well connected throughout Detroit, and its interactions with the community development industry are not an exception. Focus: HOPE has been a member of CDAD since 2002, and one of the managers of the HVI serves on CDAD's board. In the past, Focus: HOPE has partnered with CDAD around capacity building and workforce development training. The organization has also participated extensively in CDAD's Public Policy Committee. (Personal Communication, 8/11/14). However, Focus: HOPE is much larger, has more capacity, and has been established longer than most other Detroit CDCs. For comparison, Focus: HOPE employs a total of 229 people, including 14 full-time staff within the HOPE Village Initiative (Focus: HOPE 2014: 1). This is significantly larger than other area CDCs such as the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation that employs 12 staff; the Southwest Detroit Business Association that employs five staff; and Doing Development Differently in Detroit (D4) that employs four contractual staff. Despite these differences, leadership of CDAD regards the HOPE Village Initiative as an amazing model for other CDCs and would be interested partnering for peer-to-peer sharing in the future (Personal Communication, 8/21/14).

In summary, Focus: HOPE began by approaching its mission of overcoming disparities and building a metropolitan community through people-based food, work-

force development, and education initiatives. Though these programs have been largely successful, the organization's leadership noticed that they had not been enough to make a noticeable impact on the neighborhood around its campus. Due to this fact and to a 1997 tornado that ravaged the neighborhood, Focus: HOPE began expanding to place-based strategies. This evolution has culminated in the creation of the HOPE Village Initiative, with a goal that by 2031, 100% of residents will be educationally well-prepared, economically self-sufficient, and living in a safe and supportive environment. Focus: HOPE exhibited responsiveness, resilience, and flexibility in this expansion from people-based to place-based strategies. The organization has accomplished much in this transition despite their unconventional approach to development, including winning Detroit CDC of the Year in 2009. However, the organization's reputation citywide is still widely dominated by its success in its people-based initiatives.

## The HOPE Village Initiative Neighborhood

This section presents the demographic background for Focus: HOPE's community development work. The tables and maps that follow illustrate various social indicators for vulnerability in different parts of the Metro Detroit Area. I include the HOPE Village Initiative Area (referred to throughout as the HOPE Village) along with the 48238 zip code in which it lies. I also include data for Grandmont-Rosedale and Brightmoor, nearby neighborhoods with strong CDCs. The last two columns show data for the City of Detroit and Metro Detroit, here including Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties. The data are from the 2010 American Community Survey (5-year estimates) and the 2000 Census. These data demonstrate the demographic challenges faced by Focus: HOPE and other entities working for community

2000	HOPE Village	48238 Zip Code	Grandmont-Rosedale	Brightmoor	Detroit	Metro Detroit
Families Below Poverty	666 (28.3%)	2,748 (24.9%)	393 (7.9%)	1,990 (24.5%)	47,920 (21.7%)	85,876 (8.2%)
Woman-headed Households	1,453 (34.5%)	6,209 (38.0%)	1,437 (22.5%)	3,921 (32.1%)	106,386 (31.6%)	233,971 (15.1%)
SSI Recipient Households	614 (14.6%)	1,878 (11.5%)	278 (4.4%)	1,070 (8.8%)	36,382 (10.8%)	74,443 (4.8%)
Elderly 65+	1,523 (14.7%)	5,925 (13.2%)	1,136 (6.1%)	1,951 (5.6%)	99,056 (10.4%)	491,592 (12.2%)
Homeownership	1,505 (35.8%)	8,218 (50.2%)	5,703 (89.4%)	6,489 (53.2%)	184,647 (54.9%)	1,107,926 (71.5%)
Households with Children Under 18	1,509 (35.8%)	6,645 (40.6%)	2,968 (46.5%)	5,686 (46.9%)	139,663 (41.5%)	554,608 (35.8%)
25+ With Less Than High School Education	2,257 (34.4%)	8,135 (30.3%)	1,218 (10.5%)	5,098 (26.6%)	171,253 (30.4%)	478,594 (18.1%)
Median Household Income	\$26,639	\$25,619	\$62,653	\$19,551	\$29,526	\$51,595
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>10,353</b>	<b>44,909</b>	<b>18,733</b>	<b>34,598</b>	<b>951,270</b>	<b>4,043,467</b>

Table 1. Social indicators for vulnerability in various subsets of Detroit in 2000.  
Source: 2000 Census.

2010	Grandmont-					
	HOPE Village	48238 Zip Code	Rosedale	Brightmoor	Detroit	Metro Detroit
Families Below Poverty	641 (40.5%)	3,016 (31.3%)	440 (10.0%)	2,209 (40.3%)	48,105 (29.4%)	109,797 (11.2%)
Woman-headed Households	952 (32.3%)	5,393 (32.6%)	1,276 (20.6%)	3,110 (33.8%)	82,241 (30.3%)	223,353 (14.9%)
SSI Recipient Households	450 (15.3%)	1,172 (10.7%)	258 (4.2%)	1,010 (10.5%)	26,939 (9.9%)	66,789 (4.4%)
Elderly 65+	1,039 (12.0%)	6,552 (14.6%)	1,653 (9.8%)	1,884 (7.0%)	83,659 (11.1%)	498,063 (12.7%)
Homeownership Households with Children Under 18	1,096 (37.2%)	8,760 (52.9%)	5,277 (85.1%)	4,993 (51.9%)	147,688 (54.4%)	1,084,518 (72.2%)
25+ With Less Than High School Education	1,191 (23.1%)	6,619 (23.1%)	1066 (9.6%)	5,174 (32.9%)	107,686 (23.1%)	337,348 (13.0%)
Median Household Income	\$19,384	\$24,937	\$67,394	\$28,534	\$28,357	\$54,209
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>8,651</b>	<b>31,743</b>	<b>16,947</b>	<b>23,845</b>	<b>759,340</b>	<b>3,908,965</b>

Table 2. Social indicators for vulnerability in various subsets of Detroit in 2010.

\*2010 data from the 48238 zip code are an approximation based on all census block groups within the zip code boundaries and should not be directly compared to 48238 zip code data from 2000.

Source: 2010 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

development in the city.

The social indicators show that Detroit is struggling relative to the metro region. The City of Detroit lost 20.2% of its population, almost 200,000 people between 2000 and 2010, while Metro Detroit experienced a much smaller loss of 3.3% of its population. This is evidence for the continued trend of urban sprawl that has emptied Detroit's urban core in the years since the Second World War. However, while Detroit experienced a mere 0.4% gain in families below poverty, the metro region saw a gain of 27.0%, showing clear evidence that poverty is beginning to spread beyond the urban core. The data also show an increase in median household income of 5.1% in the metro region from 2000 to 2010. During the same period, Detroit showed a 4.0% decrease in median household income. This shows that although the growth of poverty is slowing in the city, overall income is not yet increasing.

The HOPE Village is also struggling relative to the City of Detroit. The HOPE Village is home to more families below poverty (40.5% compared to 29.4% in 2010) and woman-headed households (32.3% compared to 30.3% in 2010). There is also lower homeownership in the HOPE Village (37.2% in 2010) compared with the City of Detroit (54.4% in 2010). Overall, the HOPE Village shows changes similar to those seen in the City of Detroit from 2000 to 2010. The HOPE Village experienced a loss of 16.4% in its total population, which was slightly lower than Detroit's 20.2%. Median household income also differs significantly, as it dropped 27.3% in the HOPE Village compared to a drop of only 4.0% in Detroit. Overall, the populations of vulnerable groups in the HOPE Village decreased by percentages greater than the loss in population in almost all categories. This shows some improvement of demographic conditions in the neighborhood between 2000 and 2010. However, demographics in the HOPE Village are still weaker than

DIFFERENCE	HOPE Village	48238 Zip Code	Grandmont-			Metro Detroit
			Rosedale	Brightmoor	Detroit	
Families Below Poverty	-25 (-3.8%)	268* (25.7%)	47 (12.0%)	219 (11.0%)	185 (0.4%)	23,921 (27.0%)
Woman-headed Households	-501 (-34.5%)	-816* (-14.2%)	161 (11.2%)	811 (5.1%)	-24,145 (-22.7%)	-10,618 (-4.5%)
SSI Recipient Households	-164 (-26.7%)	-706* (-7.0%)	-20 (-7.2%)	-60 (-5.6%)	-9,443 (-26.0%)	-7,654 (-10.3%)
Elderly 65+	-484 (-31.8%)	627* (10.6%)	517 (45.5%)	-67 (-3.4%)	-15,397 (-15.5%)	6,471 (1.3%)
Homeownership	-409 (-27.2%)	542* (5.4%)	-426 (-7.5%)	-1,496 (-23.1%)	-36,959 (-20.0%)	-23,408 (-2.1%)
Households with Children Under 18	-508 (-33.7%)	-1,309* (-20.7%)	-647 (-21.8%)	-1,686 (-29.7%)	-41,787 (-29.9%)	-52,558 (-9.5%)
25+ With Less Than High School Education	-1,066 (-47.2%)	-1,516 (-23.8%)	-152 (-12.4%)	76 (1.5%)	-63,567 (-37.1%)	-141,246 (-29.5%)
Median Household Income	-\$7,255 (-27.3%)	-\$682 (-2.7%)	\$4,741 (7.6%)	\$8,983 (45.9%)	-\$1,169 (-4.0%)	\$2,614 (5.1%)
TOTAL POPULATION	-1,702 (-16.4%)	-13,166 (-29.3%)	-1,786 (-9.5%)	-10,753 (-31.1%)	-191,930 (-20.2%)	-134,502 (-3.3%)

Table 3. Difference between social indicators for vulnerability in various subsets of Detroit between 2000 and 2010.

\*2010 data from the 48238 zip code are an approximation based on all census block groups within the zip code boundaries and should not be directly compared to 48238 zip code data from 2000.

Source: 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

in the City of Detroit overall.

The HOPE Village is largely within Detroit's second City Council district, with small portions lying within District 7 and District 5. The neighborhood also lies almost entirely within Detroit's 48238 zip code. Compared to its zip code, the HOPE Village has more families below poverty (40.5% versus 31.3% in 2010) and lower homeownership (37.2% versus 52.9%). However, the 48238 zip code lost 29.3% of its population between 2000 and 2010, while the HOPE Village lost only 16.4% of its population.

Grandmont-Rosedale and Brightmoor are somewhat larger neighborhoods on Detroit's west side. The population of the HOPE Village is 8,651, compared to 16,947 and 26,993 for Grandmont-Rosedale and Brightmoor respectively. Grandmont-Rosedale has been im-

pacted by its CDC, the Grandmont-Rosedale Development Corporation (GRDC), over the past 25 years. The Brightmoor Alliance, a coalition of nearly 50 community organizations, was formed in Brightmoor in 2000 and acts as an advocate for development in the area. Of the three neighborhoods, Grandmont-Rosedale shows the strongest numbers, with relatively low percentages of vulnerable groups, including only 10.0% of families below poverty and high homeownership at 85.1%. These rates are significantly better than those in the HOPE Village. However, Grandmont-Rosedale also has a high elderly population, which increased by 45.5% between 2000 and 2010. Grandmont-Rosedale is significantly stronger than the City of Detroit, with numbers more comparable to those of the metro area. This is due to a variety of factors, including stronger housing stock and median household incomes in the area; however, the

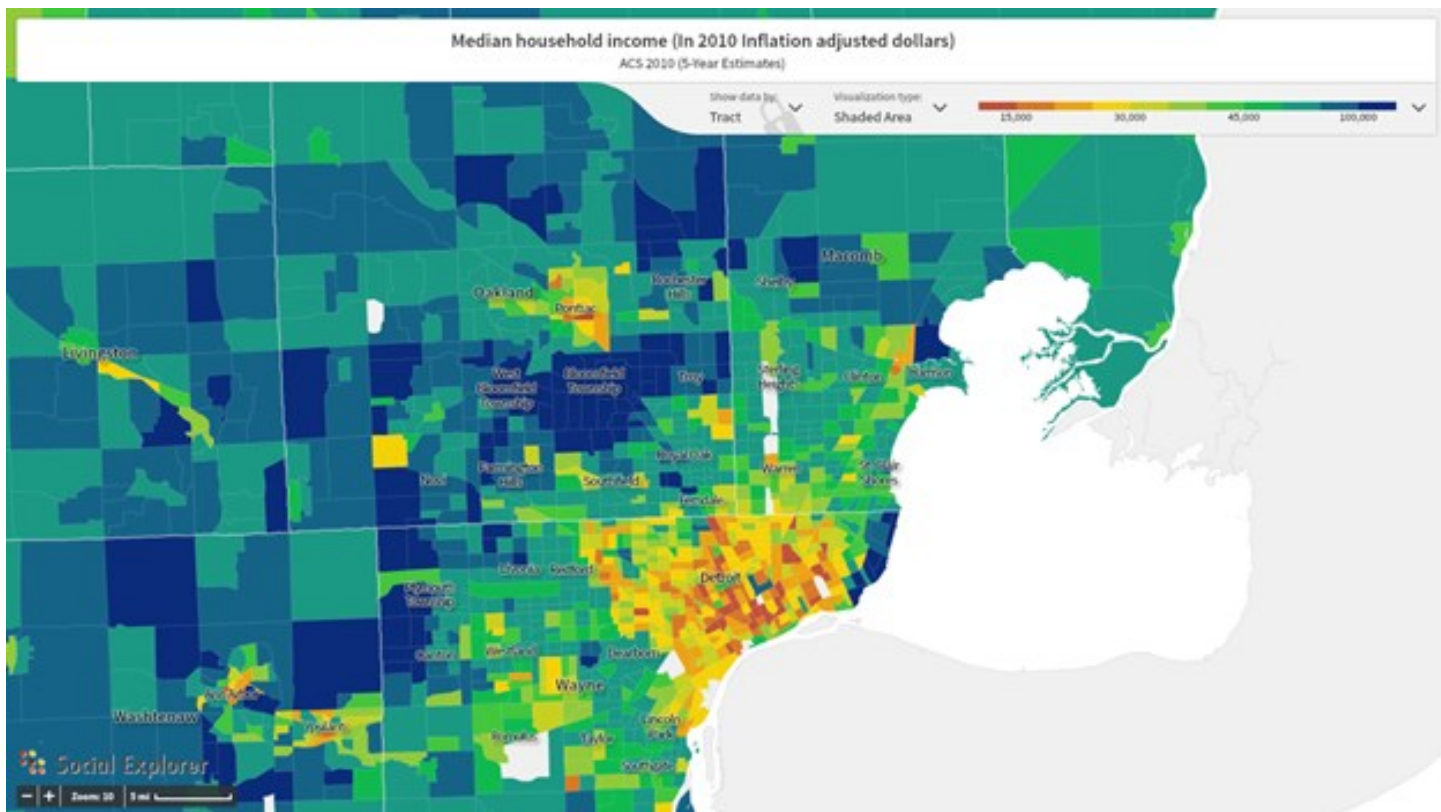


Figure 2. Median household income by census tract in Metro Detroit in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.

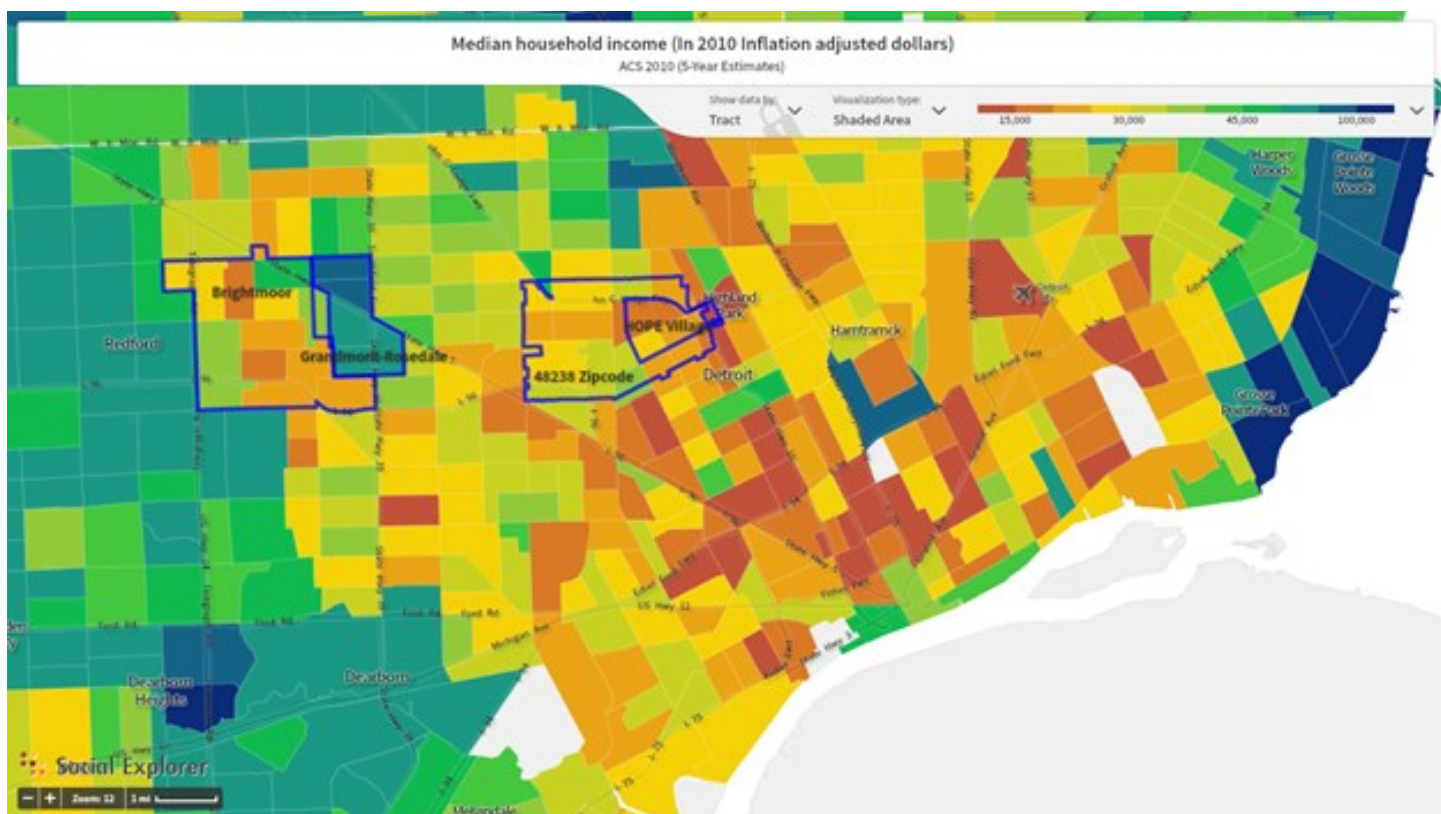


Figure 3. Median household income by census tract in the City of Detroit in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.

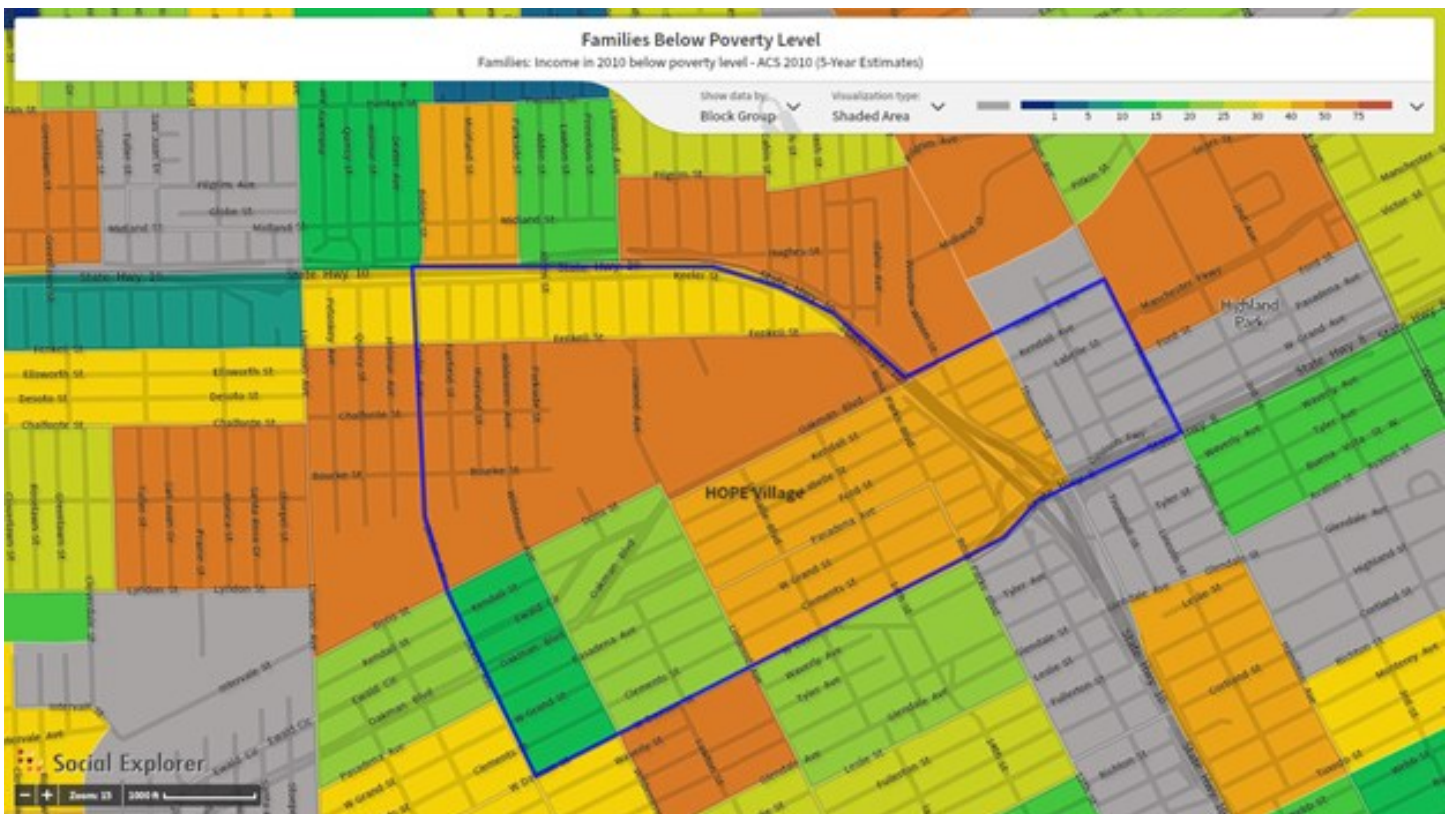


Figure 4. Families below poverty in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.

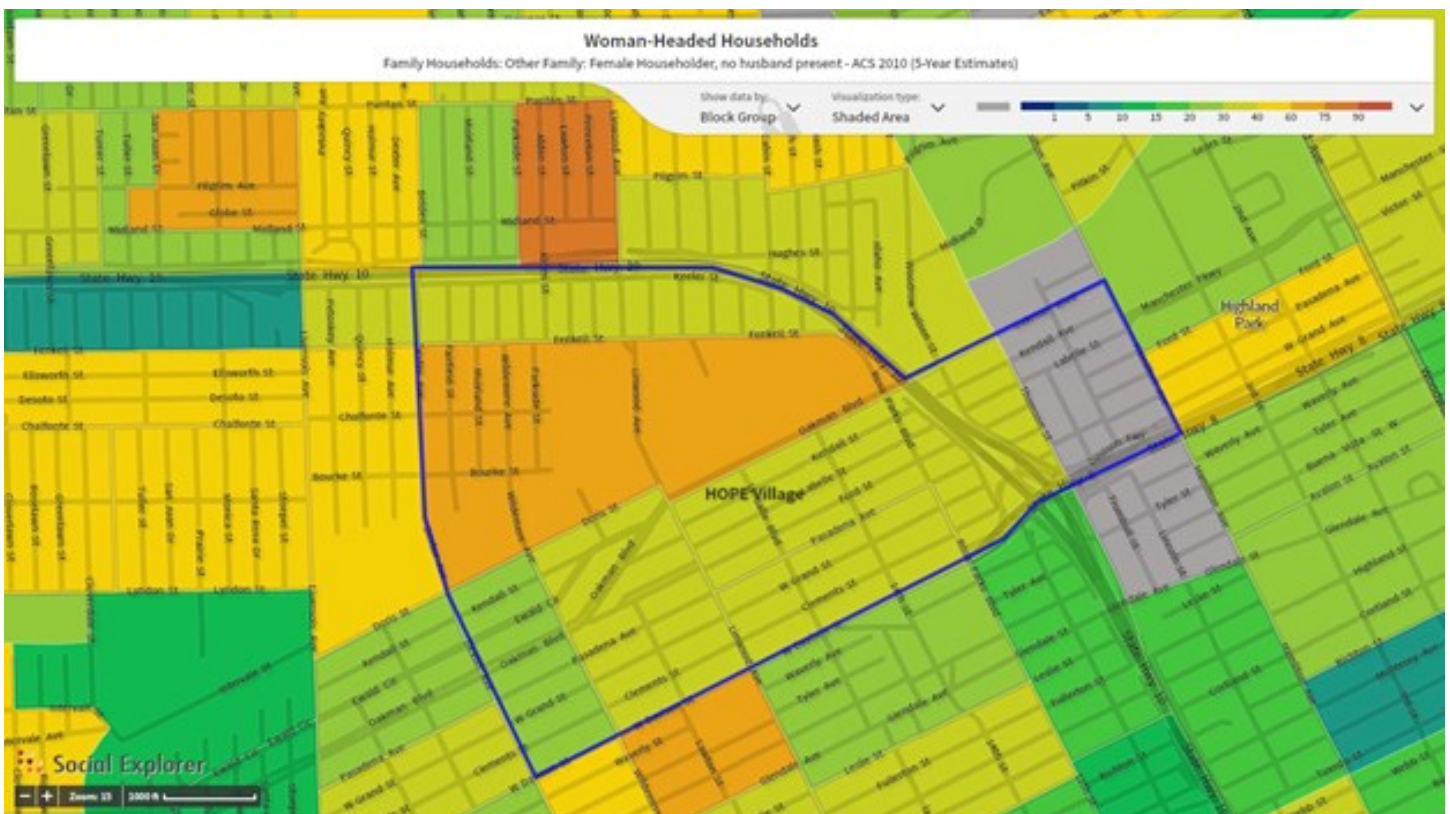


Figure 5. Woman-headed households in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.



Figure 6. Households receiving Supplemental Security Income in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.



Figure 7. Elderly population (65+) in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.



Figure 8. Owner-occupied housing units in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.



Figure 9. Households with one or more children under 18 in the HOPE Village in 2010.  
Source: Social Explorer.





Figure 10. Population over 25 with less than high school education in the HOPE Village in 2010.

Source: Social Explorer.

strength of the GRDC must also play at least a minor role. In contrast, Brightmoor is more comparable to the HOPE Village, with only slightly worse numbers in most parameters. Both show similar percentages of families below poverty (40.3% and 40.5% in 2010, respectively) and woman-headed households (33.8% and 32.3% in 2010). Brightmoor, however, has a higher median household income, at \$28,534 in 2010, than does the HOPE Village, at \$19,384 in 2010.

To summarize, based on these social indicators of vulnerability, Detroit has faced greater struggles in the past 15 years than Metro Detroit. The HOPE Village has faced even greater struggles than Detroit, with more families below poverty and more woman-headed households than the city. The HOPE Village is also home to more families below poverty and shows less homeownership than its zip code. Finally, though the comparisons are imperfect, the HOPE Village is also facing greater poverty, lower rates of homeownership, and greater losses in population than the Grandmont-Rosedale neighborhood, but is doing slightly better than Brightmoor. These demographics starting points contribute greatly to the challenges faced by Focus: HOPE in its community development.

## Focus: HOPE's Current Community Development Efforts

The HOPE Village Initiative (HVI) approach is divided into the three Es of Education, Economy, and Environment. Some of the programs now under the HVI were established before the initiative and were reorganized under it upon its establishment. In this section, I introduce and quantify these programs. I then introduce Glickman and Servon's five components of community development capacity and situate Focus: HOPE's capacity within

this framework.

The HVI Education programs include the Center for Children, the Youth Leadership programs, and the Family Learning Center. The Center for Children was established in 1987 and offers Early Head Start and Early Childhood preschool education for children of Focus: HOPE employees, students and community residents. It served 320 children in 2013 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2). There are two Youth Leadership programs: the Community Arts Department and Generation of Promise. The Community Arts Department, established in 1995, provided arts and media-based youth development programs and cultural diversity workshops to 98 students in 2013. Generation of Promise was established in 1990 and became a subsidiary of Focus: HOPE in 2010. It is an urban-suburban diversity and leadership development program that enrolled 61 high school juniors in 2013. Finally, the Family Learning Center, established in 2010, is a community education and resource center that served 7,471 visitors and/or participants in 728 workshops in 2013 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2).

The Economic initiatives include the Center for Working Families and four different small business workshops: ProsperUs, the Center of Empowerment and Economic Development, the Neighborhood Jobs Pipeline, and Connect Your Family. The first of these two components, the Center for Working Families (CWF) opened in 2008, CWF provides no-cost services to help local residents and students attain family stability and achieve their financial and career goals. In 2013, CWF enrolled 571 people in its financial literacy classes; provided income support assistance to 217 people; and provided employment services to 165 people to help them enter, or re-enter, the workforce. CWF is also a part of the Neighborhood Network, a powerful "success network" that combines the services of seven Detroit non-profit organizations to create success opportunities for Network members. Network membership is open to families and individuals who live or go to school in the HVI neighborhood. The different and complementary services provided by these organizations form a collective impact model that (1) provides seamless access to

the services of all organizations through multiple points of entry, (2) allows for real time sharing of data about the impact of the Network on the self-sufficiency of individual Network members, and (3) is changing the odds of success and economic self-sufficiency for neighborhood residents (Focus: HOPE 2015: "Neighborhood Network").

The second component of the economic initiatives is made up of four different small business workshops. First, ProsperUs enrolled 17 aspiring entrepreneurs in two sets of 11-week workshops in 2013 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2). Second, the Center of Empowerment and Economic Development (CEED) is a statewide organization that partners with Focus: HOPE to provide business tools and remove barriers that hinder development of successful and sustainable businesses. Its programs assisted 122 participants in 2013. Third, the Neighborhood Jobs Pipeline is a place-based initiative started in 2011 to help residents its target area find jobs. 97 people attended the ten 2013 Job Seekers Bootcamps, four-week full-time sessions that assist individuals with resume preparation, interview skills, job search skills (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2). Finally, Connect Your Community, a federally-funded broadband initiative, provided computer training and assistance with internet connections to 5,436 Detroit residents. The program launched in 2010 and exceeded its enrollment goals by the time funding expired in 2013 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2).

Finally, in the area of Environment and revitalization, Focus: HOPE attracted over \$68.3 million of investment to the neighborhood between 2006 and 2013 (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2). The organization launched a comprehensive neighborhood cleanup effort called Keep It 100! in the summer of 2014. It will culminate in a three-day anti-blight event in July of 2015, when volunteers will board up houses, clean up vacant lots and begin beautification efforts (Wasacz 2015). In 2013, prior to this concentrated effort, Focus: HOPE cleaned and boarded up 78 vacant lots and abandoned homes, and removed 205 illegally dumped tires. The organization also engaged over one thousand neighborhood resi-

dents in neighborhood forums, workshops, and celebrations, including over 500 participants that attended its town hall meetings and a block party (Focus: HOPE 2014: 2).

Further, more innovative work is planned for the neighborhood's environmental revitalization:

“One of [Focus: HOPE's] major projects is redeveloping an old house on LaSalle Boulevard just south of the Focus: HOPE campus into Detroit's first certified LEED Platinum residence. When completed this summer, the home will feature a residential second floor and a demonstration area on the ground floor. A partner for this project is the New Orleans-based Make It Right Foundation, which was founded by Brad Pitt in 2007 to develop sustainable housing in neighborhoods that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina,” (Wasacz 2015).

The redevelopment of the LaSalle house shows Focus: HOPE's commitment to reaching beyond remediating blight and creating a livable environment to innovating and providing positive examples for the residents of its neighborhood.

In summary, Focus: HOPE has developed a variety of place-based programs for its HOPE Village Initiative under the areas of Education, Economy, and Environment. These programs all target the HOPE Village Initiative Area made up of 100 blocks surrounding Focus: HOPE's campus, and have achieved varying levels of success in the years since their launch. In the next section, I delve further into the five theoretical components underlying the assessment of Focus: HOPE's CDC capacity.

### **The Five Components of Focus: HOPE's Community Development Capacity**

To situate Focus: HOPE's transition to place-based strategies, I use Glickman and Servon's five component framework. They define capacity as the extent to which tasks are performed successfully. They identify five major components of capacity for Community Develop-

ment Corporations (CDCs): resource capacity, organizational capacity, network capacity, programmatic capacity, and political capacity. Though there is significant overlap between these capacities, “it is useful to understand the trade-offs between different kinds of capacity. All efforts involve the cost in lost opportunity of not pursuing some other kind of capacity,” (Glickman & Servon 2012: 68). In this section, I discuss the definition of each and how Focus: HOPE's capacities fit into this framework. I will use these five categories to organize my analysis in subsequent sections.

First, Glickman and Servon define resource capacity as “the ability to increase, manage, and sustain funding,” (2012: 55). Resource capacity includes fundraising as well as managing and deploying funds appropriately, and is clearly a central element to a CDC's ability to build other capacities. Though Focus: HOPE is able to leverage a significant amount of resources from gifts and in-kind donations, the majority of their resources come from government funding. The most crucial are the consistent federal, state, and local grants they receive on a yearly basis, including USDA funding for its Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The organization also receives support from the City of Detroit for its community cleanup and demolition efforts and from the State of Michigan's Workforce Development Agency for its Center for Advanced Technologies (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). Focus: HOPE's total public support and revenues amounted to \$34,273,870 in FY 2014. Of this, \$10,626,388 (31%) was directly from the USDA; \$4,548,669 (13.27%) were other federal funds; and \$2,188,968 (6.39%) were state and local funds. Meanwhile, \$4,844,432 (14.13%) was from foundation, trust, and corporate contributions; and \$1,955,214 (5.7%) were contributed goods and services (Alan C. Young & Associates, P.C. 2015). In addition, Focus: HOPE is able to seek different grants at different levels of government for specific projects, such as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)'s grants for green infrastructure, housing, and economic development (Personal Communication, 8/21/14). With budget cuts rampant throughout the public sector, dwindling funding is an ongoing challenge, but Focus: HOPE

seems to have sufficient resource capacity to manage and adapt appropriately while still working toward their mission.

Second, organizational capacity “comprises the depth, skills, and expertise of board and staff members” and is crucial to a CDC’s ability to coordinate and strategically work through problems, as well as to get the most out of its resources (Glickman & Servon 2012: 58). Focus: HOPE’s personnel expenses were approximately 57.5% of its total public support and revenue in FY 2014 (not including USDA Commodities support) (Alan C. Young & Associates, P.C. 2015). The HOPE Village Initiative (HVI) team organize themselves primarily around the three E’s of Education, Economics, and the Environment. Some overlap and cross-cutting certainly occurs, particularly in community involvement and safety. It is also important to note that relative to the food program and the education and workforce development programs, the HVI is the most recent focus area for the organization. As such, there are significant and longer-standing organizational resources devoted to these other areas.

Third, network capacity is essentially the ability to effectively work and interact with other organizations and institutions. It shapes the CDC’s capacity and effectiveness as a whole, as even the best CDC cannot exist in a bubble (Glickman & Servon 2012: 63). Focus: HOPE, especially within the HVI, has placed a particularly strong focus on its network. The Neighborhood Network program alone involves collaboration with six other organizations in the neighborhood. Further, Focus: HOPE’s general emphasis on being a gathering point and catalyst for the neighborhood has led it to become involved in nearly every outside program affecting the area, from the Inner Circle Greenway to the Detroit Future City plan to the various development projects discussed previously (Personal Communication, 8/21/15). Focus: HOPE’s strong reputation as an anchor in the area makes this a natural role. In addition, Focus: HOPE has partnered with other CDCs through CDAD for skill sharing and capacity building efforts (Personal Communication, 8/21/15). It even functions as a

boundary-spanning organization, reaching to different levels and sectors of government for its diverse initiatives. This is demonstrated by the variety of government sources from which the organization receives its funding.

Fourth, programmatic capacity for the typical CDC comes in three program areas: “(1) housing; (2) real estate development or business enterprise development; and (3) one noneconomic development program area, typically some type of social service or advocacy work,” (Glickman & Servon 2012: 60). Program areas are first expanded by emerging CDCs as needs arise and funding becomes available, but then new needs are recognized in the community by mature CDCs. Due to the responsive nature of programmatic capacity, wide-ranging community participation and strategic planning are crucial to “help ensure that a CDC continues to serve its constituents in a way that responds to changes in the community without compromising the stability of the organization” (Glickman & Servon 2012: 63). This is something that was clearly exemplified by Focus: HOPE in the strategizing and visioning that led to the HOPE Village Initiative. However, it is interesting to note that Focus: HOPE does not exemplify the programmatic focus of a typical CDC. The organization has not yet taken on a housing developer role beyond acquisition and assembling of financing. Instead, Focus: HOPE has built a set of quasi-development functions from the social service side, and has developed almost a million square feet of real estate (Personal Communication, 4/16/15). Nevertheless, the organization still remains strongly focused on its food and workforce development functions in conjunction with their community development work.

Fifth, political capacity manifests itself in many ways, but primarily refers to the CDC’s influence with government officials at all levels as well as to the CDC’s legitimacy within the community it serves (Glickman & Servon 2012: 65). This requires active community participation and educated constituents and partners. Focus: HOPE is undoubtedly regarded as legitimate within its community as well as in the city and beyond. Though

not everyone is completely aware of the broad range of their programs, nearly everyone in the city knows that Focus: HOPE is there. The organization has a significant degree of influence at the city, state, and federal levels of government as well. Focus: HOPE constantly works on building awareness and raising consciousness about their work and the needs of the neighborhood.

In summary, Focus: HOPE has developed strong capacity in all five of these areas over their many years of operation. Among the organization's strongest capacities are their network capacity and political capacity: Focus: HOPE's role as a gathering point for other organizations working in the HOPE Village area is clear, as is its legitimacy within and outside of its community. Similarly, Focus: HOPE's resource and organizational capacities are very strong, especially with regards to the most established programs. The organization's capacities within its newer development programs are still developing, particularly its programmatic and organizational capacities. However, given Focus: HOPE's overall strength as an organization, the organization should be able to be able to bring lessons, especially administratively and in funding, to any new venture such as this.

## Analysis

In this section, I analyze Focus: HOPE's expansion from people-based to place-based strategies based on the five components of its community development capacity. I also speculate on the organization's future direction and provide recommendations. I base this analysis on interviews with 11 staff and leaders of the HOPE Village Initiative team, as well as interviews with 7 allies representing CDAD, Oakman Place, the Accounting Aid Society, NSO, the Parkman Branch of the Detroit Public Library, the Community Enrichment Coalition, New Paradigm Glazer Elementary, and Joy Preparatory Academy. In these interviews, I asked individuals to identify accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities in the HOPE Village Initiative. I conducted in-person interviews in Detroit between July 30th and August 22nd, 2014. I took notes during the interviews, which were also recorded and transcribed.

## Accomplishments

In general, the HOPE Village Initiative has shown a moderate amount of success. Some programs have been more successful than others, but the structural issues faced by the neighborhood cannot easily be fixed in the short term. Instead, the HVI, in its first four years, has been building small successes on the path to greater change. As one staff member stated, "When it works, it really works, but it's hard to get it to work," (Personal Communication, 7/30/14). In the viewpoint of another, the fact that positive change is taking place in the neighborhood is already a success. Greater results will come further down the line; now, the organization is beginning to build to a positive tipping point.

Within the HVI, the Community Arts Department is seen as particularly successful thanks to its director's strong relationships with principals at local schools. These relationships have allowed her to recruit students directly from classrooms. These strong relationships further allow Focus: HOPE to also build relationships with parents and children through their schools. The entrepreneurship programs have also been very effective, especially given the perceived lack of jobs in the neighborhood. Focus: HOPE took first place as a community ambassador for recruiting the most applicants for the NEIdeas Challenge Grant Program, which awarded a total of \$500,000 to more than 30 existing businesses in Detroit. However, it is also true that more residents from outside the HOPE Village are involved. In 2014, only eight of the 38 ProsperUS graduates were residents of the HOPE Village (Focus: HOPE 2015: "2014 Annual Report", 8).

One strength in Focus: HOPE's transition has been its legitimacy in the community due to its political capacity. The organization has assumed a lot of city government-like responsibilities. As such, some community members come to Focus: HOPE with their suggestions and concerns, knowing the organization will be attentive and get things done. In practical terms, Focus: HOPE is more effective working with people on the ground in the neighborhood than is the city government. Furthermore,

some staff noted the importance of showing people in the neighborhood why their community matters to building further political capacity within the neighborhood. Specifically, one noted the importance of material symbols of change for demonstrating the success of HVI programs. Residents of the neighborhood saw hope in construction occurring for the first time in a long time (for example, at Oakman Manor). As other new developments follow, such as cleaning up vacant lots, planting trees, rebuilding playgrounds, etc., residents can begin to change their mindset about their community.

Seeing innovative developments taking root in their own neighborhood can build even more positive perception shifts for the community. A perfect example of this is the LaSalle House described previously. Focus: HOPE is redeveloping the LaSalle House into Detroit's first LEED Platinum residence. According to one staff member, "just because I'm low-income doesn't mean I don't deserve things like a LEED Platinum house," (Personal Communication, 8/18/14). While not everyone can reach LEED Platinum standards, the rehab is designed to ensure that there are several components and strategies most can still afford to adopt in their own homes. As Detroit redevelops, this staff member argued, we need to recognize that even those without resources still deserve access new innovations.

In summary, the HOPE Village Initiative has been showing moderate success, especially in its Community Arts Department and entrepreneurship programs. Further success will follow in the long term, given that the programs in question are addressing deep-rooted problems that require time to solve. However, showing gradual improvement in the physical conditions of the neighborhood is also important to building political capacity in the community. These small wins will build and allow Focus: HOPE to achieve greater success in its place-based initiatives.

## Challenges

In this section, I describe the challenges Focus: HOPE faces in its transition to place-based strategies. These challenges include structural problems, engaging its tar-

get populations, poor city services, diminishing resources, and staff burnout. Overcoming them through the opportunities I identify in the next section will be the key to continuing success in the HVI.

Structural problems present a formidable challenge to Focus: HOPE's success. According to Glickman and Servon, "CDCs wrestle with systemic, structural problems in the economies of cities. Quite clearly, most long-term economic trends are beyond the control of neighborhood groups. This makes their jobs especially daunting," (Glickman & Servon 2012: 55). It is definitely clear to Focus: HOPE that many of the neighborhood's problems are beyond the control of the organization or the city. These structural challenges were described by a member of the leadership as wicked problems. These wicked problems must be attacked thoughtfully and strategically, as mistakes can be difficult to overcome. Another staff member described poverty as the trunk of a tree from which crime, drug dealing, low income, low educational attainment, and addiction branch. Though these challenges place limits on their programmatic, organizational, and resource capacities, it is clear to Focus: HOPE that their organization must affect higher change to achieve their mission. It is for this very reason that they are building their network and expanding political capacities in a holistic manner.

Various problems described in the neighborhood further complicate things by making it difficult for Focus: HOPE to use its political capacity to engage neighborhood residents. Unlike people-based approaches, place-based approaches require the engagement of communities tied to a certain place. As a result, additional challenges must be overcome if these particular communities are difficult to engage.

"CDCs are different from other kinds of non-profits in that they must maintain their ties to their neighborhoods. This elevates the importance of the capacity relating to the training of local citizens and the participation of residents," (Glickman & Servon 2012: 68).

In my interviews, nearly all staff members identified engaging and motivating community members as a chal-

lenge. Several different factors contribute to this. First, the transient nature of much of the population in the area makes it difficult for Focus: HOPE to engage and connect with people who may not be interested in forming ties to their community. Second, it can also be difficult to spread the word about the newer neighborhood revitalization programs to those who know Focus: HOPE primarily for its food center and workforce development efforts. Third, many neighborhood residents perceive Focus: HOPE as caring only about these program areas and are skeptical about why the organization is focusing on engagement now. Though Focus: HOPE has not consciously focused on their neighborhood ties until recently, their long history and heavy investment in the area demonstrates that they will remain committed to the neighborhood for the foreseeable future.

These perceptions are complicated by the residents' feelings of apathy and worthlessness, which add an additional barrier to engagement and political capacity. Many residents have become disillusioned and lost hope when previous efforts by other organizations in the neighborhood were unsuccessful. One staff member stated that the organization needs to convince people that change is possible and that they can be a part of it. Another staff member argued that working with adults who have had negative outcomes before Focus: HOPE's recent efforts is a significant challenge. Many neighborhood residents are illiterate, have prison records, or are otherwise viewed as being obsolete. She argued that these people have conformed to these expectations to a certain extent, which makes it extremely difficult to engage with them. The challenges in engagement that are faced by Focus: HOPE are thus deeper than connecting people to resources through programmatic capacity, but extend to the political capacity to motivate people to invest in themselves and their community.

In addition, basic city services and resources available in the area are lacking for community members. This contributes to high transiency in the neighborhood and further challenges political capacity. Most staff members cited subpar schools in the area as significant challenges. There are also insufficient jobs in the neighborhood,

meaning that most residents must go elsewhere to find work. There is even a lack of health facilities such as hospitals and clinics in the neighborhood. Access to both jobs and health care is further complicated by inconsistent bus service and transportation accessibility. These things must be improved in order to increase quality of life and to draw people to the neighborhood. Some staff members also noted that blight and low safety negatively impacts residents' outlook, quality of life, and residents' desire to stay in the neighborhood. This contributes to the high transiency. However, there are long-term residents in the neighborhood that are very passionate and engaged in their community.

Focus: HOPE's political and resource capacities are also challenged by the lack of definition of an identity for the neighborhood. One staff member I interviewed described the HOPE Village as a forgotten place. In her view, no one knows where Focus: HOPE works or thinks of it as a destination. As a result, the neighborhood is overlooked for funding, transportation, and other resources. This staff member further described the neighborhood as undefined, which definitely rings true through throughout my research. Though Focus: HOPE has called its initiative "The HOPE Village Initiative," the area does not formally have a name. Since Focus: HOPE specifically did not set out to rename the area, the "HOPE Village" name is not known throughout most of Detroit, or even throughout all of the neighborhood. When I asked people what the area was called, answers ranged from "Oakman Boulevard", to "Linwood" or "Linwood Dexter", or even just "North-Central Detroit". Building an identity and a sense of community, like building engagement, is a significant challenge to Focus: HOPE's political capacity as well as its resource capacity.

Finally, diminishing resources and staff burnout are significant challenges to Focus: HOPE's organizational capacity. Most staff I interviewed cited the lack of funding as a significant challenge to their success. Government funding for Focus: HOPE is either decreasing, or failing to expand to suit Focus: HOPE's needs. Many HVI staff see programs for community engagement,

<b>CAPACITY</b>	<b>People-based</b>	<b>Place-based</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Resource	Federal, state, and local grants; USDA commodities; foundation, trust, and corporate contributions	Federal Community Development Block Grant; foundation, trust, and corporate contributions	Securing adequate funding from different sources in post-recession climate
Organizational	Requires people-based expertise in staff (food program staff, workforce development / education staff)	Requires place-based expertise (community engagement, planning, place-making, retail, housing, etc.; hiring local residents)	Finding people with both appropriate expertise and commitment to neighborhood and vision; avoiding burnout
Network	Leveraging connections to bring people throughout the city into existing programs	Bringing allies onboard to add to programmatic capacity for defined set of residents	Spreading awareness of shift in strategy, role as CDC throughout network
Programmatic	Commodity Supplemental Food Program, variety of workforce development programs targeting all Detroiters	Variety of programs within areas of Education, Employment, and Environment; focus on neighborhood residents	Expanding & tailoring new programs to suit community's needs; achieving long-term goals for change
Political	Drawing attention and resources to problems of racism, inequity, poverty, etc.	Drawing attention and resources to specific focus area; engaging neighborhood residents	Working towards long-term change in structural issues; engaging disillusioned, transient population

Table 4. Summary of differences between people-based and place-based capacities, and the challenges in Focus: HOPE's expansion from people to place.

food, and workforce development as competing for the same resources, such as grant money. Staff also saw their programs as restricted not by a lack of opportunities or by staff capacity, but rather by funding availability. One member of the leadership also identified burnout within the organization as a significant challenge to organizational capacity, along with attracting "long-haul people" both internally and from the community.

Though the staff of Focus: HOPE and its partners are genuinely interested in working arm in arm with residents, these kinds of people are not easy to find.

In summary, many of the most significant challenges faced by Focus: HOPE are external to their control. These include structural issues that challenge programmatic, organizational, and resource capacities; engagement, which poses a significant challenge to political capacity within the community; faltering city services

and resources, which limit resource capacity; and burnout, which threatens organizational capacity. Similar challenges are surely faced by anyone working in impoverished neighborhoods within the CDC system. Focus: HOPE's approach to these challenges over the next years will determine their success.

## Opportunities

In addition to the accomplishments and challenges already described, several opportunities exist for Focus: HOPE to improve its place-based strategies through the HOPE Village Initiative. These include attracting external investments, continuing physical redevelopment, engaging youth, better understanding the population, hiring more community members, and incorporating technology.



First, some staff suggested that it is necessary for other entities besides Focus: HOPE and its allies to invest in the neighborhood, especially locally powerful players such as philanthropy and the city government. This will require work within the organization's resource and network capacities to take form.

Next, many staff members cited the importance of physical change for demonstrating progress, especially to help people feel safe, as an initial step for revitalization. However, efforts cannot stop at physical change. There must be an ongoing commitment from Focus: HOPE to develop community capacity so residents take ownership of these changes and maintain the improved physical conditions. This will require engaging the community through the organization's political capacity. Focus: HOPE already has a department devoted to building community capacity and engagement, and has initiated several community leadership training tracks, including a community organizing course at Marygrove College for neighborhood residents, and a leadership training through NeighborWorks (Personal Communication, 04/16/15). However, an additional strategy for this might be through expanding its strategies for engaging youth. Some staff members would like to see Focus: HOPE focusing significantly on connecting with youth in different ways with the end goals of empowering them to be community stewards and developing their skills and confidence. This will require an expansion of political and programmatic capacities to better engage youth.

In addition to this, Focus: HOPE needs to work to develop its political and programmatic capacities to better engage with the transient population in understanding their needs. One staff member close to the community described that the paradigm of life in the neighborhood is very diverse and hard to be understood by outsiders. This can be a challenge for staff working to form programs for the community. A suggested solution was to bring community members from a range of backgrounds to the table, though the staff member acknowledged that this was not currently feasible due to the very issues of engagement the organization seeks to combat.

Another suggestion was to engage residents in revitalization work to empower them and revitalize the neighborhood simultaneously. Yet another staff member suggested integrating community members within Focus: HOPE's organizational capacity by hiring more people who are deeply connected to the community. This would also increase community ownership of the programs. This staff member cited an unspoken fear or uneasiness with the community on the part of some non-HOPE Village Initiative staff members. He argued that rather than constantly staying in the building, all staff members should make more of an effort to spend time outside the Focus: HOPE campus and connect with residents. Focus: HOPE has already started to incorporate this strategy by hiring community residents as staff members, though more could be done to continue these efforts.

Finally, significant progress might be made by providing residents with better access to technology and the internet in order to better access useful information. Focus: HOPE has already made a significant investment in this strategy, training several hundred neighborhood residents and connecting them to the internet through its Connect Your Community program. The organization also established a WiMax system which is available to 200 graduates free through a modem in their homes. Focus: HOPE worked to bring \$1 million in funding and resources to turn the Parkman Library branch in the neighborhood into a Technology, Literacy and Career center, with 80 open access computers. There is also a fledgling Wi-Fi system, Detroit Enabled, which is available in the blocks surrounding Focus: HOPE's buildings (Personal Communication, 4/16/15). Expanding access to these tools could lead to significant improvements in engagement via modern technological methods.

In summary, though Focus: HOPE faces plenty of challenges to their new place-based approaches, they also face several different opportunities to overcome them. If the organization continues to show the responsiveness and resilience they have demonstrated in the past, I am confident in their ability to adapt to these challenges.

## Ally Viewpoint

In this section, I highlight the perspective of Focus: HOPE's allies on the organization. I discuss their perceptions of Focus: HOPE's role in the neighborhood, the organization's coordination of efforts, and ownership issues in the community. These external observations add a unique and valuable perspective to the observations of Focus: HOPE's staff.

First, it was clear in my interviews that Focus: HOPE is widely regarded as *the* institution to engage with in order to make change in this area. This is due to their strong network and political capacities. Despite the challenges described above, Focus: HOPE is seen as well-connected to residents of the neighborhood overall and representing their voices. In the words of one ally, "people that want to be a part of change come to Focus: HOPE and provide opportunities," (Personal Communication, 8/22/14). Another ally explained that if the goal of an organization is to help people in the HOPE Village area, then partnering with Focus: HOPE will be beneficial to both organizations. Allies do not see themselves as competing with Focus: HOPE when it comes to serving this neighborhood, but rather as working together for greater success. Another ally also argued that many of these partnerships would not happen were they not initiated by Focus: HOPE. She described the organization's role as organizing foot soldiers that do ground-work and outreach that then enable her organization to connect people to resources without having to staff the programs all themselves.

Several allies described the role of partnerships as crucial for the wellbeing of the community. If different organizations are better connected and have better understandings of each other, then things like accessing resources will be easier for the community. One ally argued that organizations working in this area need to coordinate like a basketball team with solidified connections and defined roles. They must see their success as part of the same whole, as cumulative rather than zero sum.

Finally, one ally was more critical of Focus: HOPE's

active role in the neighborhood. She argued that community members are not taking ownership of the community anymore and that Focus: HOPE is not responding to this as they should. The organization should be engaging and empowering the community to "cultivate the village" (Personal Communication, 8/20/14), but instead, she sees Focus: HOPE as doing too much itself. In her view, and the organization should instead identify community leaders to do certain things.

These insights from allies supplement those provided by staff members. The ally perspective highlights the importance of network capacity to the success of the HOPE Village Initiative. Allies are happy to collaborate with Focus: HOPE, often by connecting those they serve to the organization's existing resources. Allies also point to Focus: HOPE as the go-to organization in the neighborhood, which provides evidence for their legitimacy in the area. They see the organization as well-connected and as a good representative for the community due to their strong network and political capacities. Some allies even go as far as to see Focus: HOPE as doing too much themselves, when they could be better engaging and empowering community leaders in their efforts. Though their emphasis on the strength of Focus: HOPE's network capacity was unique, these ally insights are complementary to those provided by Focus: HOPE staff.

## Recommendations

Improving the quality of life in impoverished neighborhoods is a difficult mission for any CDC due to the range of scales at play, from the local to the federal, and many structural problems. As a result, Focus: HOPE has to fight for small wins and gradual progress, as they are unlikely to be able to achieve dramatic progress in the short term.

Investing in both people *and* place is important in this process, given that each of these approaches addresses a different problem. Focus: HOPE has been working to reduce individual poverty since its founding by investing in people through its food and workforce development programs. Now, it has shifted to addressing spatial ex-

ternalities and the lack of community goods by investing in place. Showing physical change in the neighborhood will especially be key to building back community morale to build engagement. Different community assets are also targeted by these different programs. Investment in people builds the community's human capital, while the HVI's revitalization programs rebuild the neighborhood's physical structure. Political capital still needs to be further built up in the area, and this is something Focus: HOPE is consistently working to expand through its political capacity.

Other organizations can learn lessons from Focus: HOPE regarding its demonstration of responsiveness, resilience, and flexibility in pursuing their mission by expanding its programs to investment in place. Through the HOPE Village Initiative, Focus: HOPE has expanded its services to take a holistic approach to the complicated challenges it faces. Particularly impressive in this shift is the organization's utilization of its network capacity in this expansion. Instead of trying to offer all the services it desired itself, Focus: HOPE partnered with other organization already offering various services and built a network of connections for residents. This approach has been broadly successful not just for Focus: HOPE's mission, but also for the missions of its partners and for the well-being of its community.

In summary, despite the challenges the organization faces in these new efforts, Focus: HOPE is committed to improving quality of life in the HOPE Village through their existing people-based programs and their new place-based efforts alike. Though Focus: HOPE has only ventured into the area of community development recently, their devotion to the people of Detroit, their mission, and their neighborhood are clear. In the words of one staff member, "things that make sense may not always make the most money, but that doesn't mean they're not worth it," (Personal Communication, 8/18/14). Although engaging in community development makes sense based on Focus: HOPE's missions and focus, the organization faces significant challenges both internally and externally, to its capacity. These include structural problems, challenges in engaging its tar-

get populations, poor city services, diminishing resources, and staff burnout. The organization faces several opportunities in confronting these challenges including drawing in external investment, continuing physical redevelopment, engaging youth, better understanding the population by hiring more community members, and incorporating technology. However, the strength of Focus: HOPE's capacities in other program areas will allow them to bring lessons administratively, in fundraising, and the like, to any new venture such as the HOPE Village Initiative. Though Focus: HOPE faces significant challenges in their place-based strategies, their long history and heavy investment in the area demonstrates that they will remain committed to the neighborhood for the foreseeable future. Further structural change is still needed in order to stop the forces working against impoverished communities. Focus: HOPE is actively building its political capacity to approach this challenge; these changes will be crucial for the long-term wellbeing of the HOPE Village.

## Conclusion

Focus: HOPE's work is set in a community development landscape that is complicated by several challenges. These include redefining community development in the post-recession financial climate, quantitatively measuring non-quantitative progress, and addressing the broader structural problems confronting impoverished communities. In addition, Detroit CDCs face challenges in city politics and democracy in the aftermath of the city's bankruptcy. In this context, Focus: HOPE has decided to continue its mission to overcome racism, poverty and injustice by expanding its investments in people through additional investments in place. This evolution, in combination with previous accomplishments, has firmly established Focus: HOPE as a Community Development Corporation in Detroit.

Focus: HOPE faces a variety of demographic challenges in the HOPE Village neighborhood, from high levels of poverty and low median household incomes and homeownership, to high proportions of vulnerable populations such as SSI recipients, elderly residents, families

with children, woman-headed households, and residents with less than high school education. Their place-based HOPE Village Initiative aims to tackle these issues by ensuring that by 2031, all residents will be Educationally well-prepared, Economically self-sufficient, and living in a safe and supportive Environment.

The challenges Focus: HOPE faces in these new place-based efforts differ from those faced in their people-based programs. They include structural problems, challenges in engaging its target populations, poor city services, diminishing resources, and staff burnout. The organization faces several opportunities to overcome these challenges, including drawing in external investment, continuing physical redevelopment, engaging youth, better understanding the population, hiring more community members, and incorporating technology. The strength of Focus: HOPE's capacities in its other well-established program areas will allow them to successfully adapt to face these problems. Any CDC would benefit from considering Focus: HOPE's unique catalytic approach to development, especially in light of the challenges presented since the 2008 recession. Other CDCs working in contexts of concentrated urban poverty particularly can also learn from Focus: HOPE's responsiveness, resilience, and flexibility in pursuing their mission; their utilization of both place-based and people-based approaches to address the different problems in their impoverished neighborhood; and the organization's utilization of its strong network capacity to provide a broader range of services to residents.

As a result of this investigation, my view of the HOPE Village Initiative has been challenged and refined. I have discovered that what first seemed to be problems with awareness and communication in engagement are actually intertwined with plenty of structural and otherwise daunting challenges. However, the resilience and strength of the many people I was able to engage with in this community never failed to surprise and inspire me. Though broader structural change is needed for the long-term wellbeing of the neighborhood, I am certain that Focus: HOPE will continue to serve as a strong advocate for the HOPE Village and work tirelessly to reduce

the poverty and injustices faced by its residents.

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