

LOGIC MODELS

Emerging New American Community Team

Ohio History Connection

Columbus, OH | APRIL 2019



Project Description:

ENACT connected 15 aspiring Central Ohio New American leaders with established community resources and fundamental civic education. Through its planning committee to its community partners, ENACT is rooted in the power of collective action.

Grantee Reflections:

Creating & Adapting the ENACT Logic Model

In their goal to strengthen the leadership and impact of emerging New Americans in Columbus, OH, Ibrahima Sow and Ben Anthony of the Ohio History Connection museum applied their own assets – community organizing skills, embeddedness in the community they wished to support, and cultural knowledge – to build a malleable project that partners and participants alike could actively co-create. Their recent work to revise their original logic model as part of an application for funding to lead a next iteration of the project has yielded not only an improved project design but also insights into effective community engagement practices and how a logic model can best be used to support them.

Neither team member had created a logic model before asked to do so at the beginning of the project. They found it a challenging but valuable process. Ben recalls, “We come from a background of just getting on the ground and ‘doing it.’ . . . We knew how to do [the work] but we never really sat down and explained it in that format, so that was a unique challenge for us . . . to communicate it in such a condensed way as a logic model.”

Looking back, the team has recognized the effectiveness of their intuitive methods of developing and utilizing their logic model in ways that would enable their partners and the program participants (emerging New American leaders known as “Fellows”) to co-create the project with them. Additionally, the make-up of the project team itself included a powerful level of “embedded” engagement, in the form of one staff-person leading the project, Ibrahima Sow. “When he was hired by our bosses,” explains Ben, “it

was directly from these groups [within the New American community].” Through Ibrahima, the community’s perspective was “in the room” from the project’s onset.

After holding approximately 3 internal meetings about it, the team brought the model to partners for 5 rounds of revisions – a process which Ibrahima’s role as a project representative and trusted community member made remarkably easy and natural. “There was no cold open,” says Ben. “We were going into rooms because of Ibrahima and Ibrahima’s connections. There were hugs not handshakes. So it’s not a matter of ‘Hey, will you do this?’ It’s, ‘Ibrahima’s got this great idea. Help me build it.’ And they’d go, ‘Yeah, great, cool. We know you. This is easy.’”

“It was so encouraging when we heard back from them [about the model],” Ben recalls. “That was when we started solidifying a committee planning model that was collective.” They found that bringing partners an unfinished, “half-baked” model increased co-creation. “The two of us have had enough background in community work that we knew we it had to be half-baked. It couldn’t be nothing. ‘Sure it’s a half-baked idea, and we want you to bake it with us.’”

Not only did this foster partner engagement--it also yielded key insights into the plan’s viability. “Our community partners molded it. You know, we took it to them and when we were explaining topics, for example, for what we were going to educate the cohort in. They were like, ‘OK, this is fine. I don’t know about this one. These are two you are missing.’ And it

was two [topics] that never occurred to us as far as topics to delve into that they were like, 'That's great and all and the framework of this is fine but, you know, topically you're not quite hitting the mark.'"

Finally, the team found that asking partners to help mold the logic model provided an important gauge for partners' actual investment and enthusiasm. "Based on who gave us better feedback, you could really see who the engaged partners were, and you immediately sort of felt out who was like, 'Yeah this is great, whatever.' . . . You could tell who could see it working and being really successful or if they're like, 'Alright, fine, we'll be a part of it' – like they're checking a box."

As partners responded to the model, the team learned the value of their instinctive decision to seek both larger institutions and smaller organizations as partners. "I think in the bones of this that we build early on, was a good blend of institutional, city-wide partners and grassroots partners – smaller orgs and these big, kind of 'heavy-hitter' orgs. Because some of the challenges we had were some of these partners rolling off. You need this balance, because . . . as these groups roll off, it isn't, 'Oh god, we don't have a planning committee!' You had stability from YMCA and the library but you had authenticity and you had relevance from these grassroots organizations. And

"We were looking at the thing we built and thought, 'We can do better. . . There's a lot of money in there . . . from spring to ocean, how much of it is making it to ocean?'"
Ibrahima adds, "I picture myself as having a bucket at the spring and walking to the ocean and thinking, 'This isn't enough!'"

Ben Anthony, Community Engagement Coordinator
Ibrahima Sow, ENACT Project Director
Ohio History Connection

you had accountability. [The small organizations] were very willing to come to the room and say, 'OK we all know that this sounds great on paper. It's not going to work.' So that balance has been another early-on that we built in."

Once it launched, the project benefited from the regular "pulse checks" that Ben & Ibrahima had included for gathering feedback and ideas from Fellows and partners. This flexibility of design was also supported by the structure of the grant. Ibrahima reflects, "We're really fortunate because the Catalyst grant allows us to change things midway, to really identify what's not working and change it instead of just chugging through it and making a report at the end. We were fortunate to be able to tweak things as we go and really come out at the end with a working model."

The team's new grant application process has created the opportunity to seriously reflect on and refine the project's design. "We [chose] to make a new Logic Model," Ben says, "to take our learnings and apply [them]. It was a really intensive month of regrinding the same sausage to see what we get." The team found this "forced reflection" extremely valuable. "It was a very stressful process of course, as grant writing is, but on the back side of it, it was a mechanism for us to learn NOW. . . It really condensed the timeline to make us more cognizant of what has been working and what hasn't."

Many components remained. "We changed formats and some of the logistical stuff that we learned, but all in all the core of it stayed pretty much the same, and that was a big takeaway. Because our Fellows have been so engaged."

The components which will remain are:

- **the high involvement of community partners and participants in ongoing project design and adjustment,**
- **including a balance of small grassroots and larger institutional partners from community,**
- **Fellows who are already active emerging leaders, and**
- **recruiting Fellows from the small partner organizations.**

Activities and practices the ENACT team will change in the next iteration include:

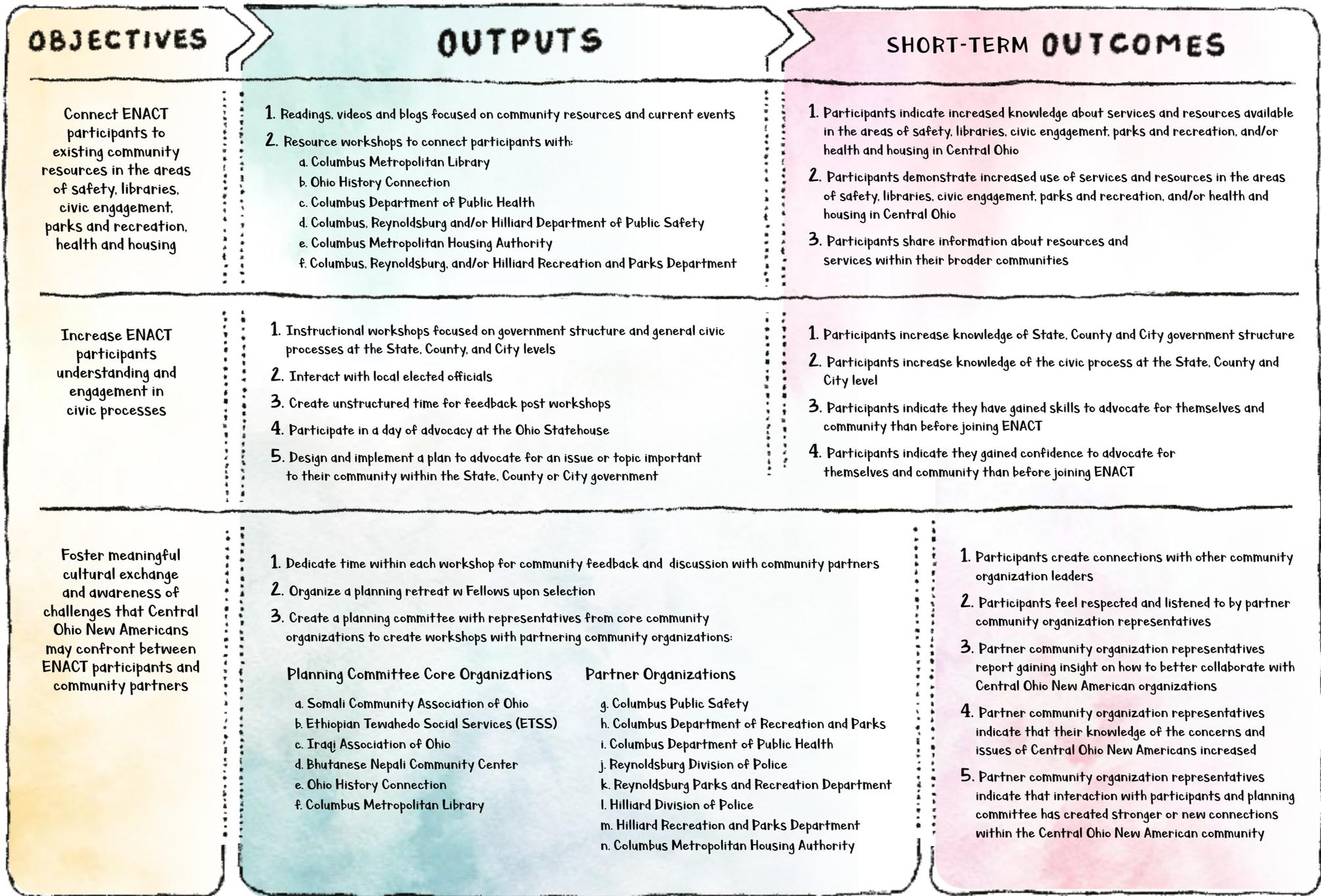
- increasing opportunities for intra-cohort learning among Fellows,
- building a more substantial budget for food, and
- including more traditional professional development components in the Fellowship experience.

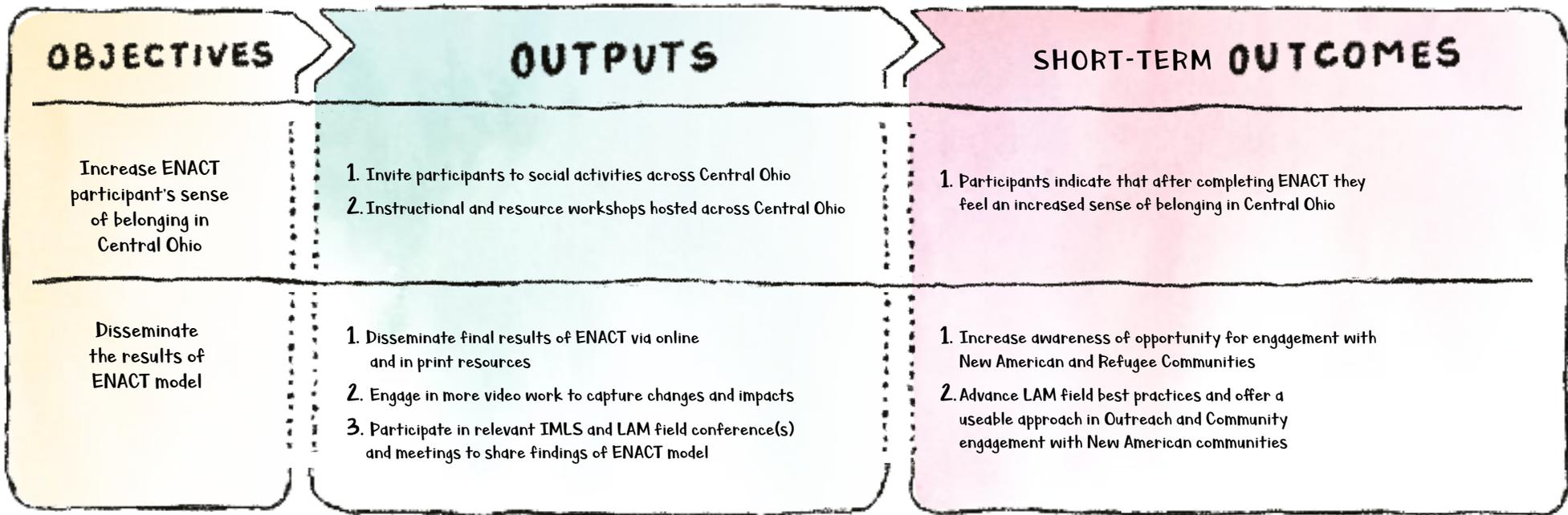
Additionally, a practice which the team plans will implement but was not able to express through the logic model is "routing as much money as humanly possible to the Fellows and their projects."

Ben recalls, "It was something that the two of us really challenged ourselves to be better at. Because the first time we were writing this, we hadn't written any grants. . . And then, we looked back and [realized that] if you are lucky enough to do this kind of thing and get funding for [it], you have a responsibility to make sure the pipeline does not stop at you and it goes all the way down. . . We were looking at the thing we built and thought, 'We can do better. . . There's a lot of money in there, and . . . from spring to ocean, how much of it is making it to ocean?'" Ibrahima adds, "I picture myself as having a bucket at the spring and walking to the ocean and thinking, 'This isn't enough!'"

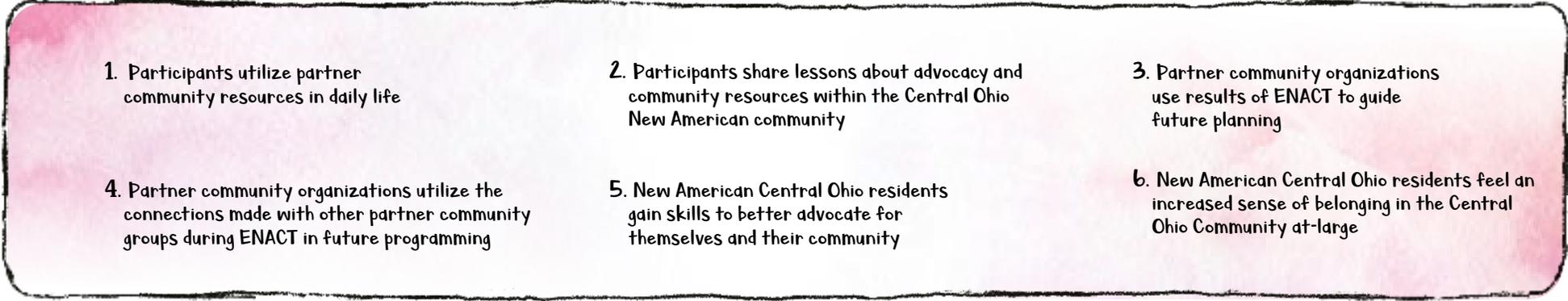
Going forward, the team plans to improve their logic model by increasing its visual accessibility through experimenting with layout and color while continuing to adapt and adjust their leadership development model to become a nationally replicable structure for many other communities to foster leadership from the grassroots level of New American communities.







LONG-TERM OUTCOMES



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