

Exploring Tensions within Academic & Community Partnerships when using Community Based System Dynamics



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Catalyzing
Communities

A ChildObesity180 Initiative

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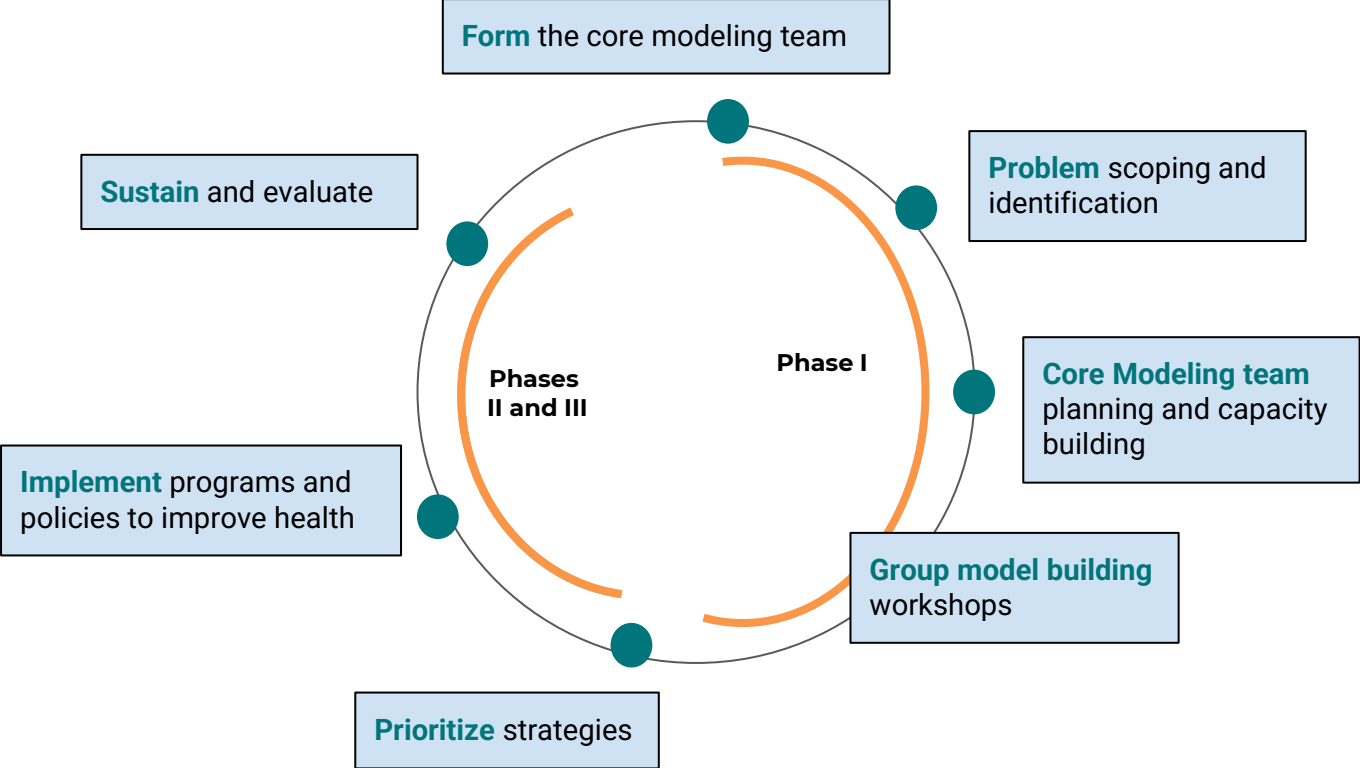
Community Based System Dynamics

1. Participatory approach
2. Shared perspective and shared understanding
3. Develop modeling capabilities
4. Meaningful points of intervention



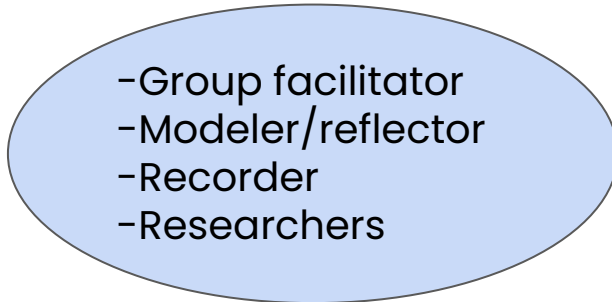
Image featuring East Aldine Stakeholder Committee

Catalyzing Communities Intervention Steps



Project Roles

CATALYZING COMMUNITIES TEAM



COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKERS



CORE MODELING TEAM

Communities of Focus

Garfield Park (Chicago), IL

- *Healthy child weight*
- *Perceived gun violence*
- *Black Culture Wellness*



Worcester, MA

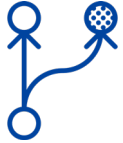
- *Nutrition Security*

East Aldine (Houston), TX

- *Access to healthy food*
- *Youth physical activity*
- *Utilization of the built environment*



Academic & Community Partner Tensions



**1. Consistency
versus adaptability**



**2. Defining the reference
mode & model boundaries**



3. Model Ownership



- Tension description
- Efforts to respond and adapt



Tension One Description

Academic partners prioritize **consistency** in multi-site interventions

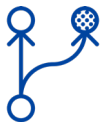


Image featuring Catalyzing Communities Learning Collaborative

Community partners prioritize **adaptability** in the intervention



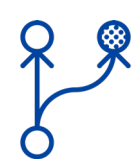
Image featuring East Aldine Stakeholder Committee



Tension One Description

Consistency of the intervention may be prioritized over **adaptability** due to:

- power dynamics
- timeline of grant-funded projects
- IRB Protocols

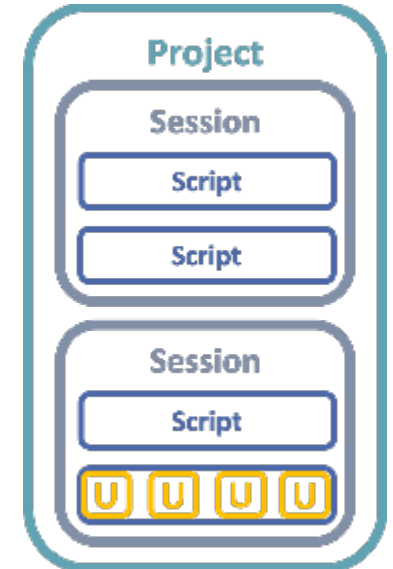


Efforts to respond and adapt

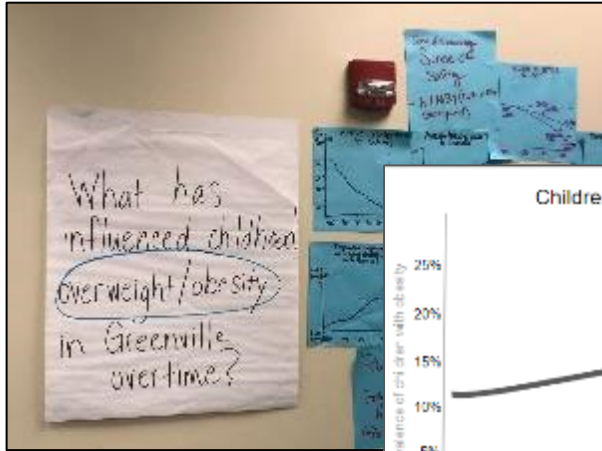
- Capacity Building
- Shared decision making to determine the sequence and structure of GMB activities
- Outline clear objectives for each meeting
- Customize GMB scripts and facilitation manuals (Hovmand et al., 2012)



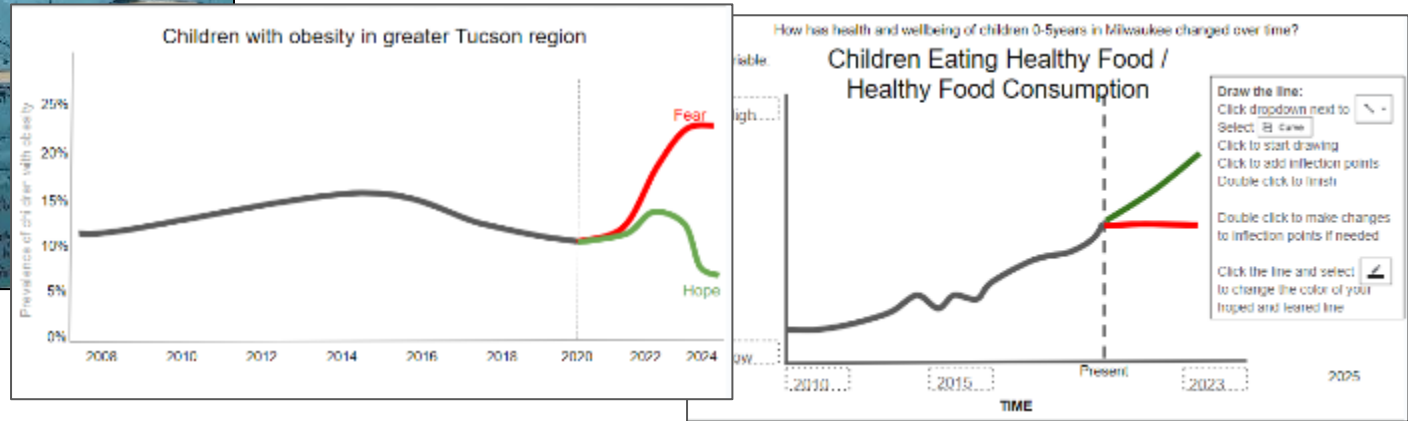
Image featuring: Worcester Stakeholder Committee



Tension Two description



- Explicit focus on childhood obesity
- Presenting the reference mode



- Seeking alignment between academic expertise / research focus and community interest
- Eliciting the reference mode and model boundaries

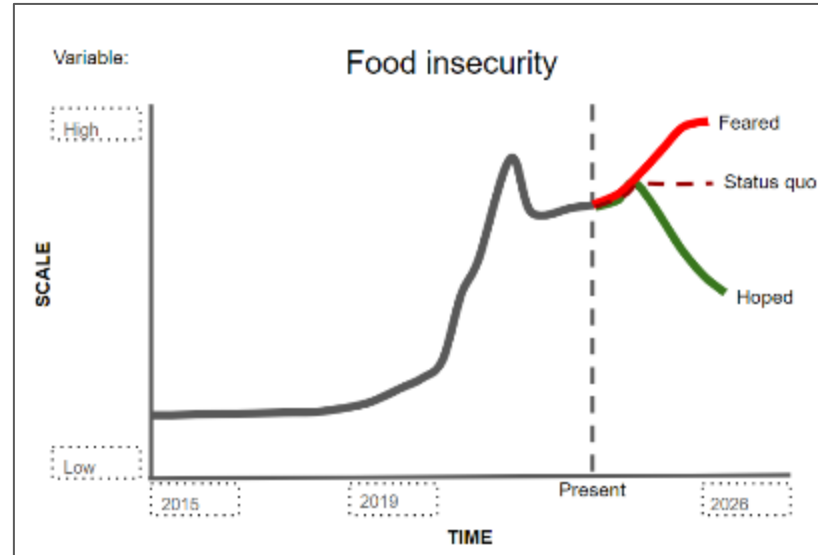


Efforts to respond and adapt

Worcester



Image featuring: Worcester Community



Co-created a reference mode for food insecurity.

Efforts to respond and adapt

Garfield Park

Adapted the activity based on trends over time to elicit variables around what has strengthened or weakened Black Culture Wellness over several decades

1990s (or before)	2000s	2010s	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">higher church participation (1906)neighbors worked togethermore self-awareness of culturelow food pricesincrease in healthy food standsbetter food chainkids actually being activefamily time, open spacesfamilies eating together"village" neighborhoodlimited technologymusic (hip hop) reflective of culture + community unitychanges in parenting styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">rise of social media/technologyincreased interest in mental health, in addition to physical healthresources coming into the communityfood pantriesfamily traditions passed down ex. Sunday dinnerlow food prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CPS Health ProgramBroader emphasis on racial equity in programs, community organizations, funding sources, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">influencers + Black advocatescommunity building organizingyouth promotion of healthy lifestyles through programming ex. sports, sports nutrition, eventssupporting family habitspandemic brought about a lot of self developmentpast elders more involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">young people raising young peoplelack of trust for police + governmentcost decrease in \$ for essential services/programsgentrification + divestment from Black + brown communitiesschools cutting P.E., arts, musicmore fast food placesmore homes where both parents had to workfewer parents helping w/ homework + cooking home cooked mealsgoing out to eat as a reward became a regular thingmusic becoming more violent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">individualismincrease in community violence (started in 2000 and continued)lack of trust for police + governmentbabies having babies (disconnect in family)reduced transportationschool closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">lack of trust for police and governmentyoung people raising young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">lack of trust for police + governmentspandemic caused isolation and lost sense of communitykids not respecting eldersno good/healthy grocery chainspandemic led to increased gun violence (can't go to park), more social media, increased cost of living, etc.Variety of programs not meeting the interest/needs of community



Tension Three description

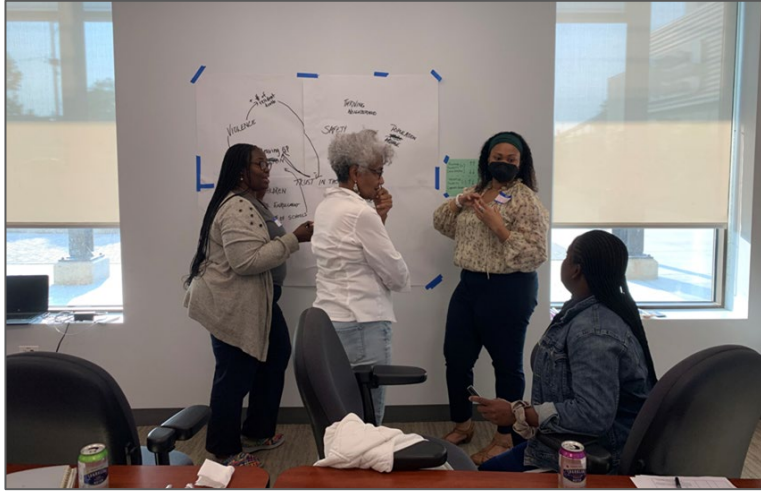
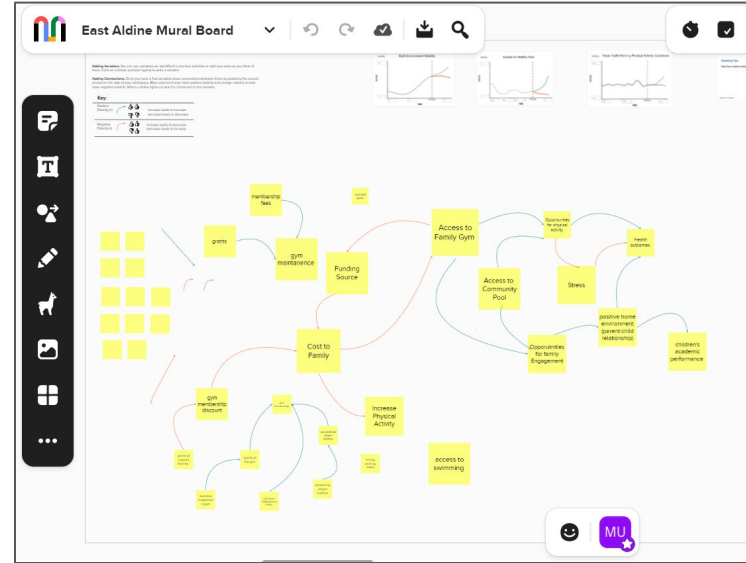
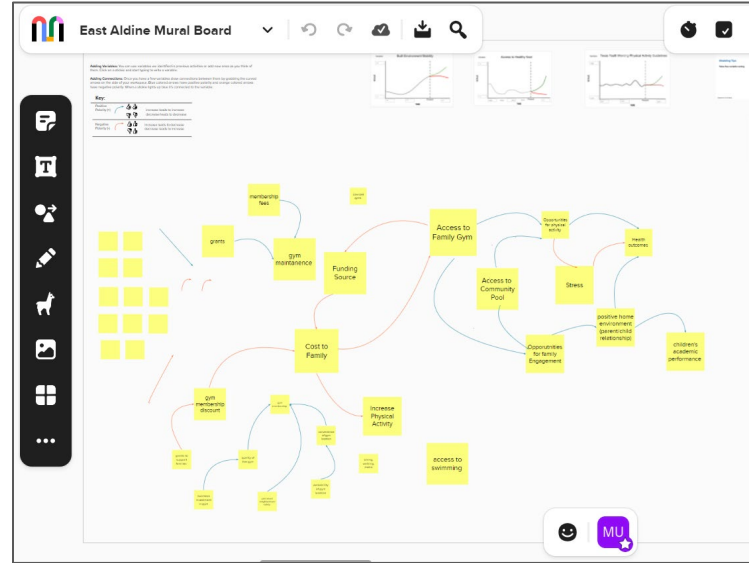
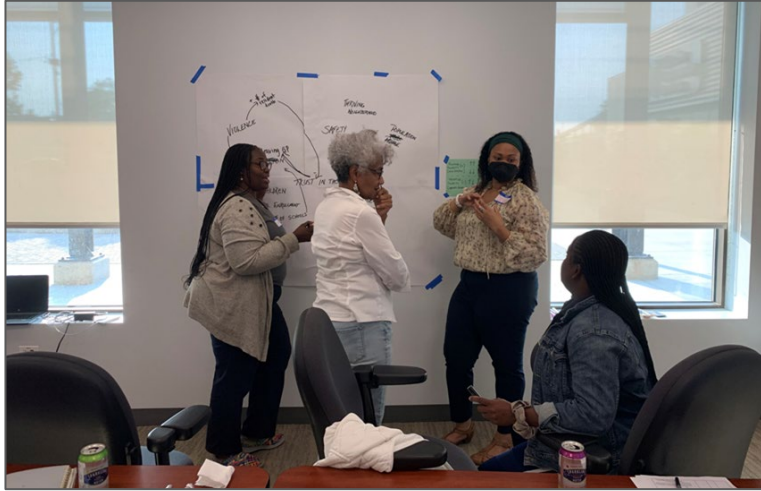


Image featuring: Garfield Park Stakeholder Committee





Tension three description

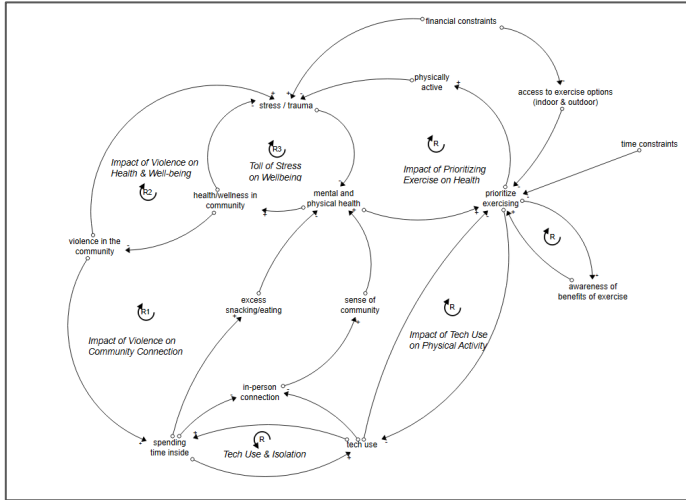


- Decreased sense of model ownership
- Decreased confidence in communicating model insights



Efforts to respond and adapt

Model refinement with changemakers



Model shareback and refinement with stakeholders

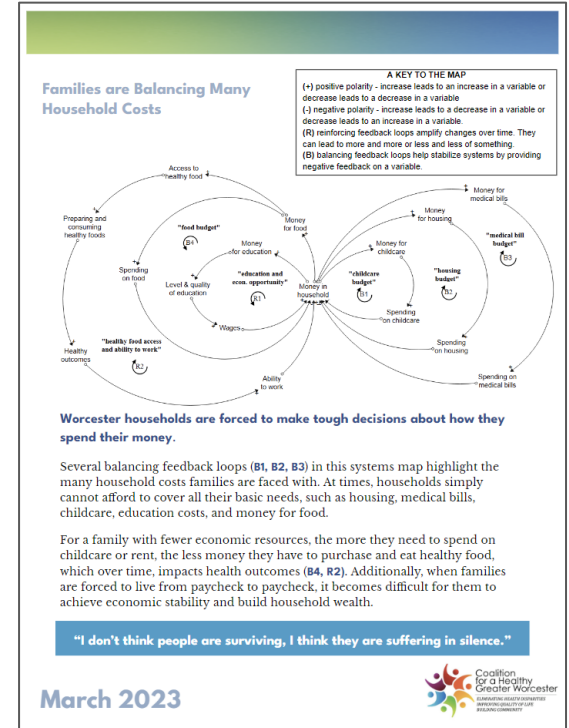
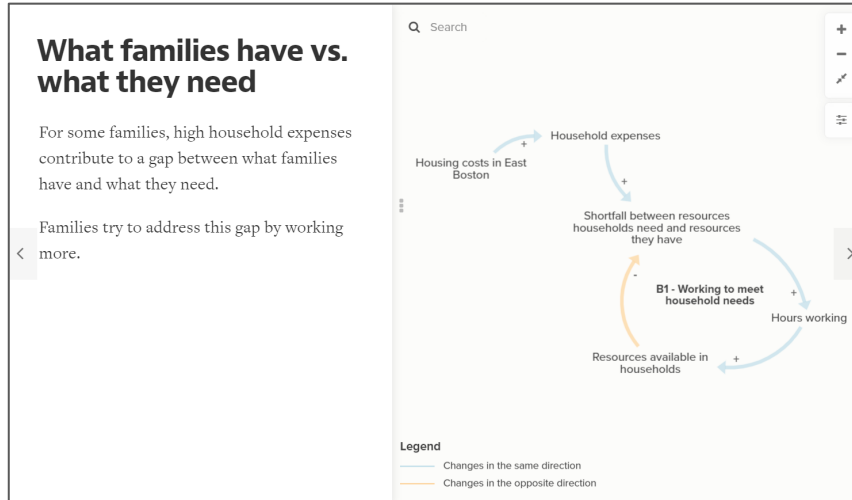


Images featuring: Worcester Stakeholder Committee



Efforts to respond and adapt

Co-creation of reports and kumu presentations to share the project's process, key insights, and action steps



Closing reflections

- **Acknowledgment:** power dynamics and tensions
- **Relationship and trust building:** core modeling team, stakeholders, community
- **Nature of research:** funding, project timelines, product oriented
- **It's worth it!**

Team and Funding

Co-authors: Mary Ulseth, Christina D. Economos, Larissa Calancie, Melanie Houston, Christina Warriner, Kelsey Werner

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