

Reading Tips and Study Questions

CLASS EIGHT

Required reading

1. **Ferguson and Stoutland**, "Reconceiving the Community Development Field," in *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Brookings, 1999).
2. (Video) "[The History of Detroit LISC](#)." Approx 14 minutes.
3. **Glickman and Servon**, "More than Bricks and Sticks," in *The Community Development Reader*, chapter 6.
4. **Briggs**, "Rethinking Community Development." *Working Smarter in Community Development Brief #1*. Cambridge, MA: MIT (2007).

Session overview

In this session, we look more closely at the organizations and networks engaged in community development, how they function, and challenges they face.

Discussion questions

1. **Ferguson and Stoutland** wrote one of the lead pieces for a high-profile national effort, in the mid-1990s, to organize research on the community development field, as a way to identify gaps and suggest new directions. That effort essentially folded after producing the edited volume in which this chapter appeared. Leaving aside that particular slice of history and the question of what role researchers should play in the field—note the popularity of variations on "rethinking" as titles for today's readings—do you find their framing of the field as revolving around a "community option" productive or problematic (or a bit of both)? Do Ferguson and Stoutland make a persuasive case for focusing on the nature of alliances and how to make them more effective?
2. The **Detroit video** illustrates many of the features of a single, local community development system at work. It's promotional, to be sure, and focused on the local office of a Ford Foundation spinoff, the intermediary known as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). But the video is also instructive.
3. Why, according to **Glickman and Servon** (1998), do community development corporations (CDCs) differ in the "weight" they assign to different types of capacity, and why might that be appropriate in different local contexts? How adequate do their "five types" seem based on the challenges faced by disadvantaged neighborhoods?

4. How do the analyses and recommendations in **Xav's** "rethinking" brief complement the other two assigned readings? Which pieces of advice, if any, seem heroic or misplaced and why? This was one of three briefs prepared for the field as part of launching the MacArthur Foundation's large-scale New Communities Program, an effort to comprehensively and equitably revitalize neighborhoods in Chicago and then replicate the approach nationwide.

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