

Creating a Healthy Rural Ecosystem for Community Vitality: Developing Rural Community Business Research

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Creating a Healthy Rural Ecosystem for Community Vitality: Developing Rural Community Business Research



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INTRODUCTION

Our goal:

Support the growth and success of rural communities through long-term and sustained data collection

Scope of research:

- Community Capital Theories
- Asset Mapping

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to **create** a model of and mechanism for statewide, systematic **data collection** to support workforce development pathways in **rural communities**.

Community Capital Framework

Natural
Cultural
Human
Social
Political
Financial
Built

Asset Mapping

Associations
Institutions
Individuals
Physical Space
Local Economy

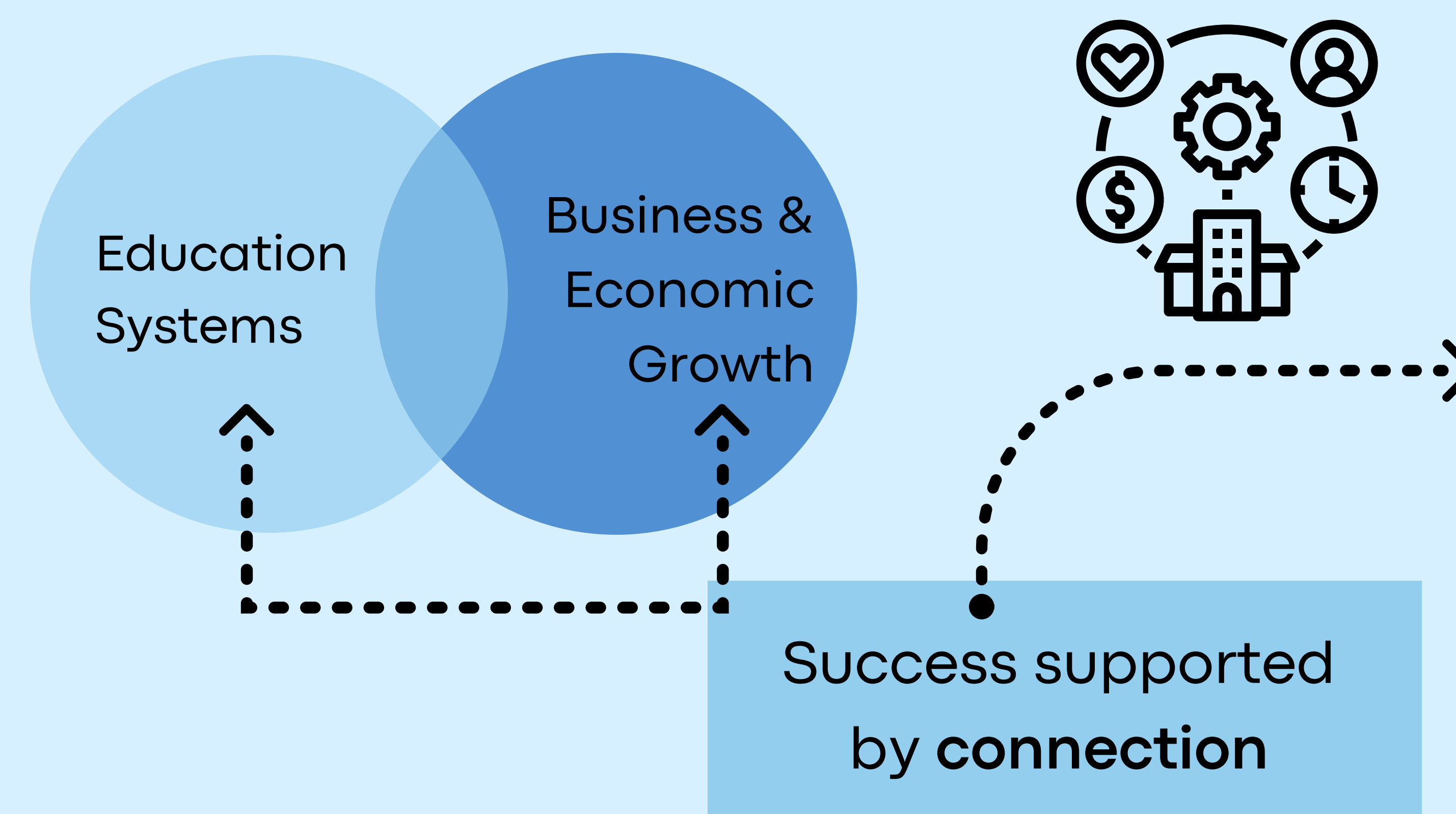
BACKGROUND

Community A

Central Maine
Population: 5,846
Unemployment: 4.5%
Poverty Rate: 5.1%
MSAD Schools

Community B

Northern Maine
Population: 2,301
Unemployment: 5.9%
Poverty Rate: 27.42%
MSAD Schools



Accessing Need-Based Capital in Rural Communities:

Education Systems Need...

Qualified Teachers
High Enrollment Rates
Community Support

...Businesses Need

Educated or Trained Employees
Economic Support (Funding)
Community Partnerships

Success supported by research and accessible data

METHODOLOGY

Community A | Community B



Interviews with key stakeholders

Business owners Management
Human Resources Employees
Economic Developers



Interview Question Examples

- What was the motivation behind the creation of your business?
- Do you find yourself having trouble finding quality workers?
 - How did you secure funding for your business?
- Do you seek employees with a college degree or education?

ANALYSIS

Disconnection between businesses and schools

Increased need for trade or vocational schooling program (9-12+)

Supports workforce and economic development long-term

RELATED LITERATURE

- Curtin, L., & Cohn, T. (2015). Overview of rural communities, context, challenges and resilience. *PsycEXTRA Dataset*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e515222015-003>
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- Lightfoot, E., McCleary, J. S., & Lum, T. (2014). Asset mapping as a research tool for community-based participatory research in Social Work. *Social Work Research*, 38(1), 59–64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svu001>