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## Reframing Project Goals in Alignment with Responsive Ecosystems

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# CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Center for Economic Development  
EDA University Center

Reframing Project Goals in Alignment  
with Responsive Ecosystems –  
Benefits and Challenges

March 26, 2023

Jack Yochum



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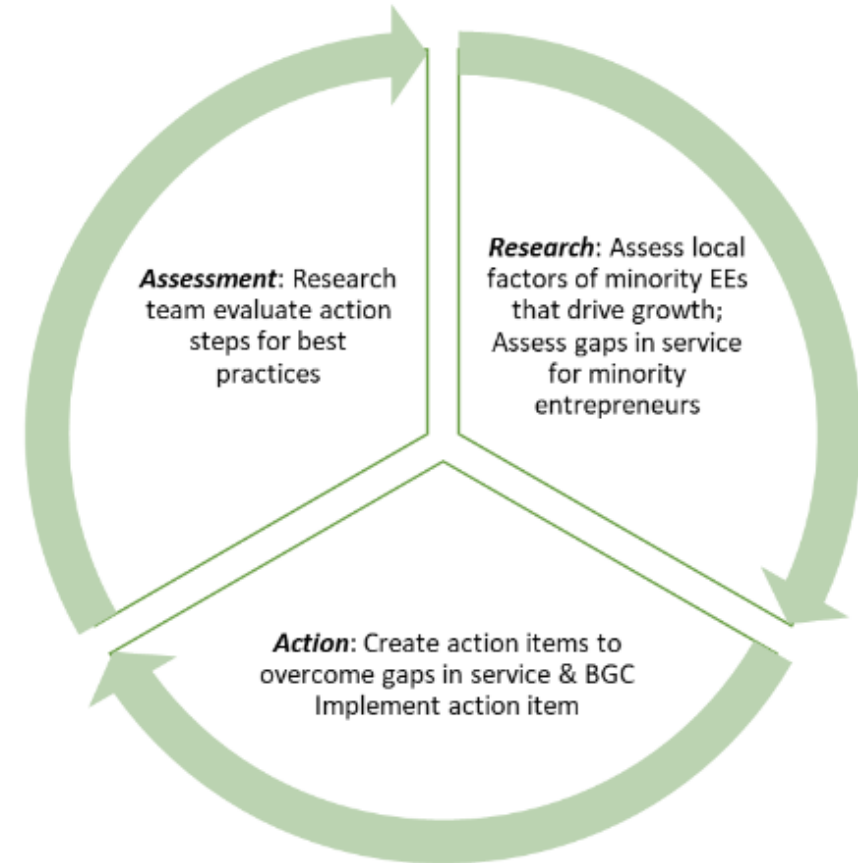
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# Project Introduction

- Resource Gaps for Minority Entrepreneurs in Ecosystems: Research to Practice
  - 4-Year grant funded by E.M. Kauffman Foundation
  - Began January 2021
  - Frontloaded work – mostly fell into Y1
- Heavily reliant on partnerships with 3 Business Growth Collaboratives (BGCs) in 3 cities:
  - Cleveland – Greater Cleveland Partnership
  - Toledo – Jumpstart Inc.
  - Dayton – Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Research-Practice: partnership where researcher and client are equal

# Project Methodology

- **Research Action Assessment Approach**
- Research separated into phases:
  1. Ecosystem Mapping
  2. Service Provider Interviews
  3. Business Survey
- From these and following discussions, the research team would collaboratively decide on an action item
  - Partially funded - \$5,000 per year
- From these, best practices could be created







# COVID-19 Interference - Challenges

- Pitfalls were immediately felt in the research phase
- Ecosystem mapping – volatility
- Service provider interviews – everyone is occupied
  - Necessities of a BGC
  - Earning trust with clients
- Business surveys – inconsistent response rate & unknown population
- Reasons? All related
  - Expansion and contraction of entrepreneurship
  - PPP, CARES Act

# COVID-19 Interference - Opportunities

- Conversely, this was one of the best times to examine EEs
  - Original project envisioned them as more static
- BGCs as a case-management approach
  - Emerging idea: growing importance of EEs for entrepreneurs in general, perhaps a new necessity for success? (Rashid and Rattan, 2021)
- Understanding how these ecosystems respond to crisis also reveals the depth of and progress in closing gaps between groups
  - Differences in how each was able to respond

# The Mutability of an Ecosystem

- This finding was ultimately something that happened to the research team, rather than asking this ourselves
  - Ecosystem leadership & composition
- Thorough revisions of the ecosystem mapping revealed something...







# The Research Practice Perspective

- Learn by doing – what were we doing?
  - Cleveland & Toledo – less prevalent at the table
  - Dayton – expansion of project, ambition
- The focus on **impact**
  - Original action grant was a drop in the bucket
  - Longstanding relationships are prioritized

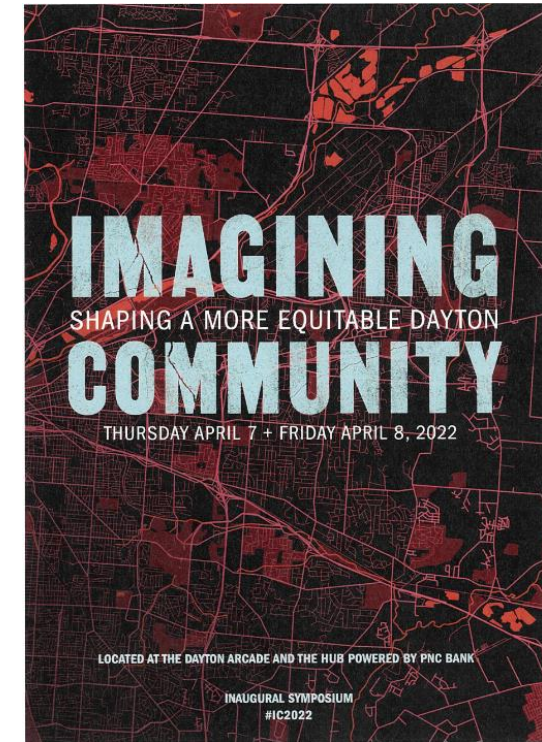
# Cutting Ties and Reframing

- Ultimately, the research team opted to focus efforts entirely on Dayton
  - Sunsetting reports with recommendations for Toledo & Cleveland
    - Round 2 of interviews with Toledo
    - Continuing their own track!
- \$15,000/year over 4 years
  - New opportunity to fully fund projects
  - Dayton can do more, we can learn more



# Progress So Far

- Year 1 activities spanned from April – August 2022
- Symposium talks
- Technical assistance
- Black Business Month Access to Capital and Resource Fair workshops



**MICROENTERPRISE**  
Loan Program



**CITY OF KETTERING**

A program for **Minority Owned Businesses, Women Owned Business, Disabled Owned Businesses and Veteran Owned Businesses** that are **MICRO-BUSINESSES\*** in the City of Kettering

Technical Assistance

Networking

FUNDING

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CLASS SERIES

Classes offered with incentives for those who attend at the City Government Center  
Classes are held from 9 – 10 a.m. , breakfast and networking 8 - 9 a.m.



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# Looking Forward

- Larger question again – How does entrepreneurship service Dayton as a Small City
- We will attempt to now understand:
  - What does the EE look like post-COVID?
  - How is engagement changing with the EE?
  - What prevents people from participating in the EE?
  - & more...



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