

# Community Innovation Lab as a 21st Century Social Science Experiment Station

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# Historic Overview

- 1862 - The *Morrill Land-Grant College Act* provided each state with funding for a land-grant university.
  - These institutions were established to be the “working man’s” university, educating students in agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts and other professions particularly relevant during the time (Simon, 1963).
- 1887 - The *Hatch Act* allocated federal funds to state land-grant universities to create a series of agricultural experiment stations .
  - Their purpose, to conduct research and then utilize the Cooperative Extension Service to educate agricultural producers about the latest research and innovation regarding agricultural production, food safety and health and well being.

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# Historic Overview

- 1914 - Smith-Lever Act initiated the Cooperative Extension Service “to aid in diffusing among people of the U.S. useful and practical information on subjects related to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage application of the same.” (Rasmussen, 1989, p. vii).

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# Cooperative Extension Service

- Diffuse food and agricultural science and technology, developed from agricultural experiment stations, into rural America.
- Develop successful family, home and agricultural education programs.

While a majority of these programs are robust and do a great job serving their audiences, they are heavily focused on contextual content.

This begs the question....

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# What role does the agricultural experiment station play regarding innovative/fundamental social science research?

Should there be an experiment station focusing solely on social innovation and social processes?

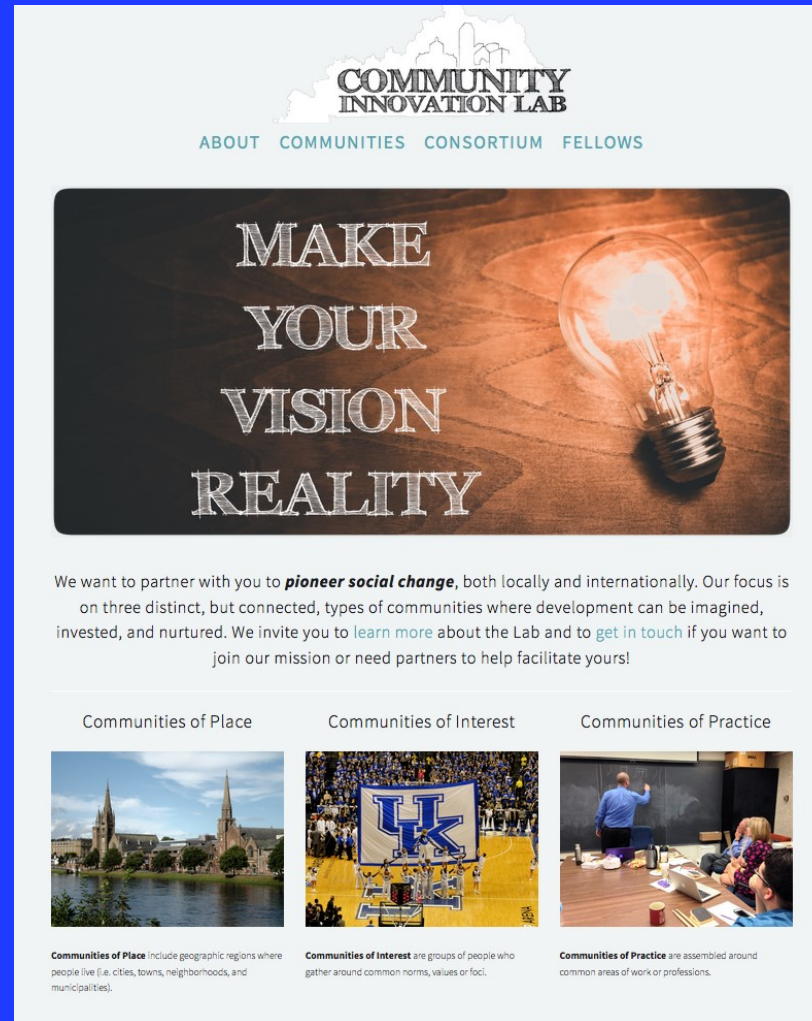
- Group dynamics
- Leadership
- Education
- Communication
- Community development

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# Community Innovation Lab @ The University of Kentucky



The screenshot shows the Community Innovation Lab website. At the top is the logo, which consists of a white outline of the state of Kentucky with a city skyline inside, and the text 'COMMUNITY INNOVATION LAB' below it. Below the logo are navigation links: 'ABOUT', 'COMMUNITIES', 'CONSORTIUM', and 'FELLOWS'. The main content area features a large image of a glowing lightbulb on a wooden surface. To the left of the lightbulb, the text 'MAKE YOUR VISION REALITY' is written in a serif font. Below this image is a paragraph of text: 'We want to partner with you to pioneer social change, both locally and internationally. Our focus is on three distinct, but connected, types of communities where development can be imagined, invested, and nurtured. We invite you to learn more about the Lab and to get in touch if you want to join our mission or need partners to help facilitate yours!'. Below the paragraph are three columns, each with a title and a small image: 'Communities of Place' with an image of a church and a river, 'Communities of Interest' with an image of a crowd holding a UK flag, and 'Communities of Practice' with an image of a person presenting to a group. Below each image is a short description of the community type.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION LAB

ABOUT COMMUNITIES CONSORTIUM FELLOWS

MAKE YOUR VISION REALITY

We want to partner with you to **pioneer social change**, both locally and internationally. Our focus is on three distinct, but connected, types of communities where development can be imagined, invested, and nurtured. We invite you to [learn more](#) about the Lab and to [get in touch](#) if you want to join our mission or need partners to help facilitate yours!

Communities of Place      Communities of Interest      Communities of Practice

**Communities of Place** include geographic regions where people live (i.e. cities, towns, neighborhoods, and municipalities).

**Communities of Interest** are groups of people who gather around common norms, values or foci.

**Communities of Practice** are assembled around common areas of work or professions.

**UK**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
KENTUCKY

College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Community Innovation Lab

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[www.communityinnovationlab.org](http://www.communityinnovationlab.org)

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## Community Defined

- Communities of Place – the geographic area in which people live.
- Communities of Interest – people who gather around common norms, values or foci.
- Communities of Practice – individual who participate within a shared career or vocation.

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## Innovation Defined

“The act or process of developing and applying new ideas, concepts, or methods associated with community learning and development.”

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# Community Innovation Lab @ The University of Kentucky

## Who We Are:

The Community Innovation Lab (CIL) explores, applies and examines innovations associated with local, national, and international communities. It is part of an emerging multidisciplinary national and international consortium - The Community Innovation Consortium - comprised of public and private academic institutions, community members and community-based organizations.

## What We Do:

Members of the lab seek to cultivate, apply and reflect on scholarly innovations associated with community learning and development within communities of place, interest and practice using empirical action and participatory research.

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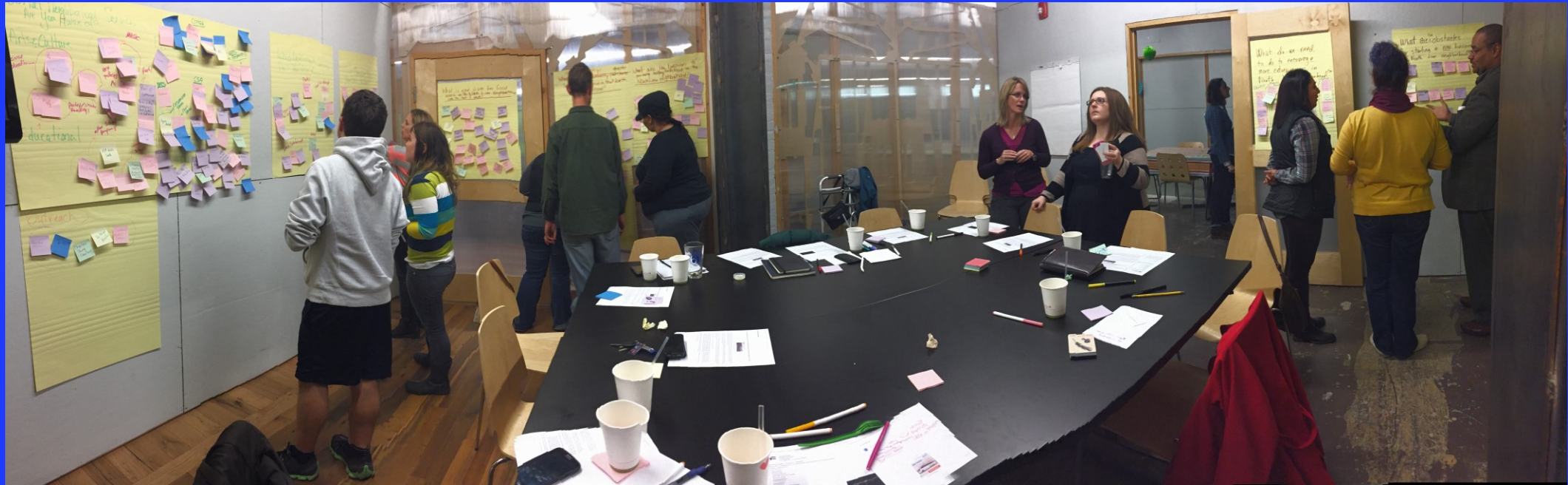
# Communities of Place

East End Glasgow, Scotland: North Side Lexington, KY



# Communities of Place

## North Limestone Common Market Project



# Communities of Interest



## Gridiron Challenge



# Communities of Practice

## Drumming Away Drugs



# Potential Questions to Consider

- Which social processes/innovations should be studied within a social science experiment station?
- Could there be a network of experiment stations/labs focusing on varied social processes/innovations?
- What audiences are served by such research?
- How do these audiences inform and/or collaborate in such research/innovation?
- Who and what are the proper outlets to diffuse and relay such research/innovation?
- What opportunities are there for Cooperative Extension?

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Thank you!

[www.communityinnovationlab.org](http://www.communityinnovationlab.org)

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