

## Entrepreneurial Environments Contextual Leadership

### Urban Community and University Extension Organization Perspectives

#### What

##### Contextual Leadership

Leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but rather exists in a context where leaders function (Oc, 2018). Contexts considered in the Leadership in the City course begin with multidimensional individual contexts and blend dynamic environmental contexts of urban communities and university Extension perspectives. With Extension, the internal environment of the university and the external environment of the community are enmeshed with intermingled resources, norms, policies, and stakeholder accountabilities. This course includes rich content, but the value is in the collaborative learning and application in your context that can really make a difference for you as an entrepreneurial leader.

#### Entrepreneurial Environments Contextual Leadership

*Understanding our context  
 makes us more aware of situational factors  
 as we make decisions and take actions.*

*Bamberger, 2008*

##### Entrepreneurial Environments

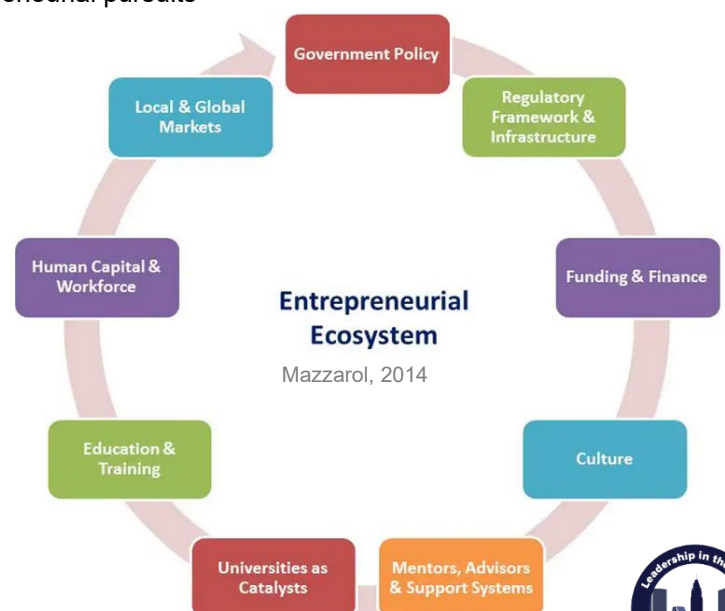
The list of variables that constrict or make it conducive for proactive entrepreneurial action is long, but some of the factors the foster entrepreneurial communities and organizations include

- Connectivity
- Resource accessibility
- Openness to innovation and respecting entrepreneurial pursuits
- Eagerness to exploit opportunities
- Supportive policies
- Appreciation for diversity and human capital
- Valuing quality of life

(Albulescu, Litra, & Neagu, 2014; Merkel, Lanitz, & Filipenkov, 2019; Stam & Spigel, 2016).

Entrepreneurial ecosystems nurture the relationships between opportunity-oriented entrepreneurs and their interrelated social and economic contexts (Autio Kenney, Mustar, Siegel, & Wright, 2014).

The hospitality and complexity of an ecosystem are routed in the Greek words “οιχος” – “eco,” which means “home” – and “συστημα” – “system,” which means “complex” (Cavallo, Ghezzi, & Balocco, 2019).

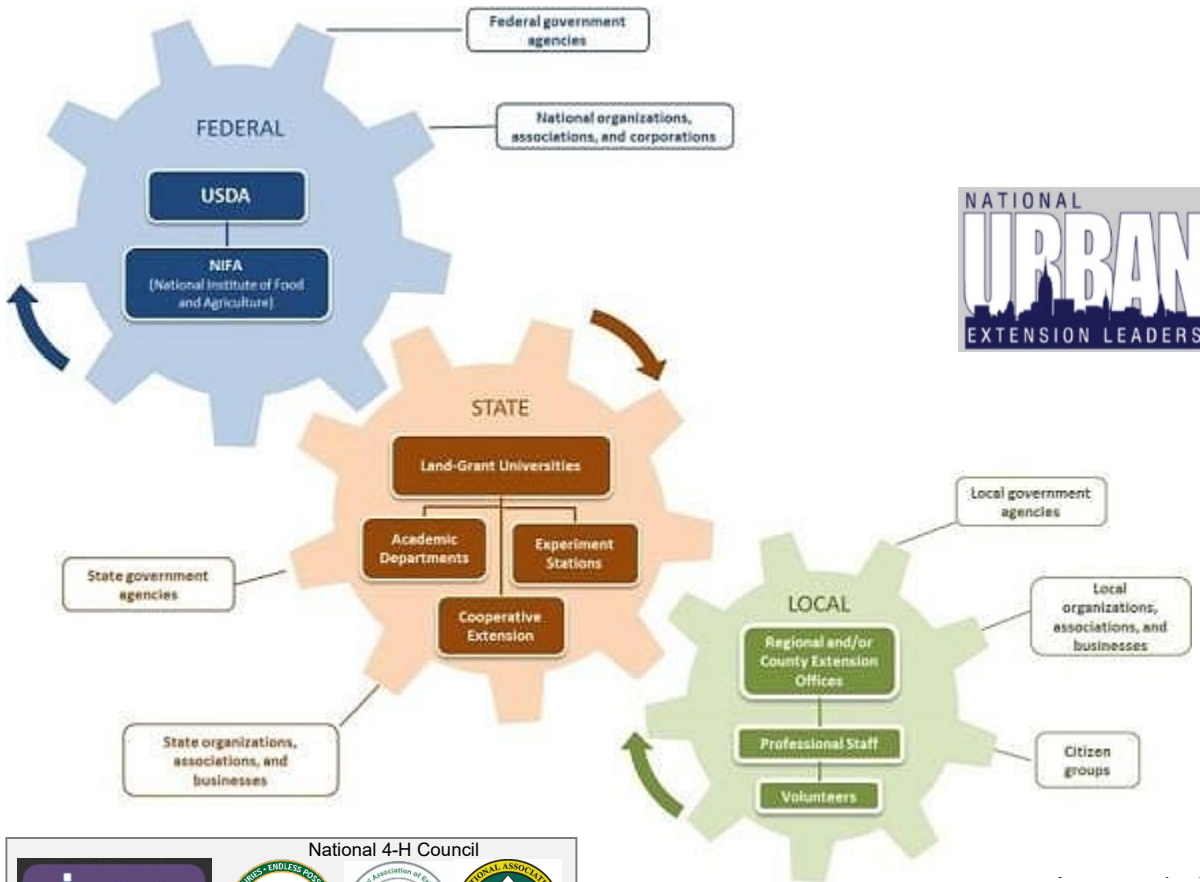


**University Extension Context**

Extension is part of the Land-Grant University (LGU) national network. [Extension](#) is the LGU's community-based catalyst for co-discovery and community engagement. Extension engages in work that is sometimes similar to agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector, however, the focus is unique because of the triple mission of [Land-Grant Universities](#).

- Teaching and learning
- Research and innovation
- Extension and other community engagement

With federal, state, and local support, Extension professionals work collaboratively with university colleagues and local partners on community priorities – leveraging the resources of vast networks to support Extension professionals in being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally.



National 4-H Council



How entrepreneurial is Extension?

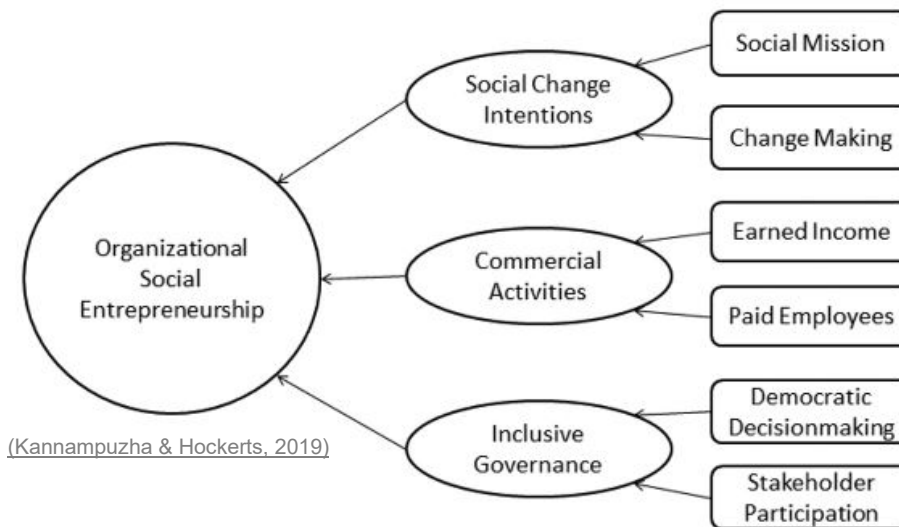
University and community cooperation contributes to entrepreneurial environments (Okruhlica & Holienka, 2018; White 2009). Universities contribute to entrepreneurial environments by advancing knowledge application in communities (Spigel, 2017), which links with the [Land-Grant University](#) mission. University Extension demonstrates elements of entrepreneurial organizations as described through entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial management (Fox, 2005).



Extension displays characteristics of *entrepreneurial public organizations* that:

- Focus on vision and opportunity (Catford, 1998)
- Forge new, powerfully productive linkages at the intersection of business, government, education, and community (Henton, Melville, & Walsh., 1997)
- Recognize profit as a means, and not as an end (Schuyler, 1998)

This *organizational social entrepreneurship* model also reflects elements common to university Extension.



It is more important now, than ever, to operate as entrepreneurial venture that is stable across situation and time (Scase, 2000).



## Urban Community Context

To define Extension's work in densely populated areas, terms like urban, metro, and city have been used almost synonymously. City is one term used by the Census Bureau to refer to a concentration of population. The Census Bureau's [urban-rural classification](#) delineates geographical areas. [Metropolitan Statistical Areas \(MSA\)](#) are geographic areas used by many federal statistical agencies. But it is not just about geography. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) uses [urban influence codes](#) and assesses economic and social diversity of non-metro America through classifications such as [rural-urban continuum codes](#). Additional related terms include suburban, exurban, periurban, and megapolitan. Regardless of the term and implied meanings, Extension personnel and partners continue to explore best practices for Extension to implement as a catalyst for co-discovery and community change in metropolitan areas. Knowing what makes metropolitan areas unique helps Extension be more deliberate.

- **Scale:** In metropolitan areas, the population size and density create challenges for Extension to have a strong presence and reach a large group of people. The ratio of Extension personnel to community members and partners is much higher in urban counties compared with other counties.
- **Diversity:** Large cities are rich in diversity, broadly illustrated through the presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective.
- **Complexity:** Addressing multifaceted issues with extensive data sources and diverse community partners in multiple jurisdictions creates layers of complexity that urban Extension professionals navigate.
- **Urban-Rural Interface:** Various indicators demonstrate a dynamic flow of people and other resources throughout all geographic areas along the urban and rural continuum. Extension recognizes that many people live in one county, work in another, and enjoy recreation and tourism in other counties. Increased awareness and connections strengthens cities and urban-rural relationships.

## So What

Understanding our context makes us more aware of situational factors as we make decisions and take actions (Bamberger, 2008). Blending the contexts of entrepreneurial environments of our university Extension and our urban communities with our personal contexts provides a foundation for leadership endeavors.

## Now What

1. **View** the brief [Urban Extension Orientation](#), glance through [Urban Extension Library](#), and check out the resources at the end of this document, including videos, tools, research, and references. To learn more about urban Extension's history, contemporary context, and network of resources, visit the many [resources available through Extension Foundation](#).

**2. Create** your own Story Map to tell the story of the people, geography, history, complexity, and other factors that make your "city" unique. Other Story Map options include using it to share urban Extension highlights. The outline could flow with the following information that influences your work in the city.

- Demographics: population density (scale) and diversity
- Geography
- Expressed needs/priorities, trends, forecasts
- Complexity (multiple jurisdictions, nonprofits, other colleges/universities, etc.)
- What makes this city unique?
- Urban-suburban-rural influence?
- Extension history in this city, Investments and Impacts (Positioning, Personnel, Program, Partners)
- Looking Ahead/Opportunity Identification

Explore and tell the story of your "city" using [ArcGIS StoryMaps](#) or another application of your choosing. Look at your city from your point of view, as well as the views of your key stakeholders.

[ArcGIS StoryMaps Quick Guide](#)

Storytelling: [The Extension Storyteller: Using Stories to Enhance Meaning and Catalyze Change](#)

Here is an example of a story map created to share the [Ohio State University Extension in the City Highlights](#)

**3. Reflect** on your university Extension context.

- How can you learn more about the network of support available to you?
- Learn more about [what makes Extension unique](#).
- How does the proximity of the university campus to your local community help or hinder Extension impact?

**4. Explore and discuss** indicators of organizational entrepreneurship with your team. Discuss specific examples of how your organization supports or discourages organizational entrepreneurship.

- The existing [Organizational Entrepreneurship questionnaire](#) 

**5. Share** this with colleagues and discuss how you interact with your city and your university – individually and as a team. How can you be more intentional? How can you share insights with one another on a regular basis?

***Community-university partnerships have taken many forms and have been recognized as a valuable contribution to both the academic community and our cities.***

- Kotval, 2003



## Resources

[Link to Collection of Urban Extension Leadership Entrepreneurial Resources – Urban & University Contexts](#)

## References

- Albulescu, V. L., Litra, M., & Neagu, C. (2014). The “third mission” of universities and some implications. *UPB Science Bulletin, Series D*, 76(2), 301–312.
- Autio, E., Kenney, M., Mustar, P., Siegel, D., & Wright, M. (2014). Entrepreneurial innovation: The importance of context. *Research Policy*, 43(7), 1097–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2014.01.015>
- Bamberger, P. (2008). From the editors beyond contextualization: Using context theories to narrow the micro-macro gap in management research. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2008.34789630>
- Catford, J. (1998). Social entrepreneurs are vital for health promotion, but they need supportive environments too. *Health Promotion International*, 13(2), 95–97. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/13.2.95>
- Cavallo, A., Ghezzi, A., & Balocco, R. (2019). Entrepreneurial ecosystem research: Present debates and future directions. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 15(4), 1291–1321. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-018-0526-3>
- Henton, D., Melville, J., & Walsh, K. (1997). *Grassroots leaders for a new economy: How civic entrepreneurs are building prosperous communities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kannampuzha, M., & Hockerts, K. (2019). Organizational social entrepreneurship: Scale development and validation. *Social Enterprise Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-06-2018-0047>
- Kotval, Z. (2003). University Extension and urban planning programs: An efficient partnership. *Journal of Extension*, 41(1), n1.
- Mazzarol, T. (2014). Growing and sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystems: What they are and the role of government policy.
- Merkel, L. M., Lanitz, N., & Filipenkov, D. (2019). Analyzing universities entrepreneurial environment and examining the respective key success factors.
- Oc, B. (2018). Contextual leadership: A systematic review of how contextual factors shape leadership and its outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(1), 218–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2017.12.004>
- Okruhlica, F., & Holienska, M. (2018). Institutions and entrepreneurial environment in Visegrad four countries and Finland. In *Efficiency in Business and Economics* (pp. 159–174). Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68285-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68285-3_13)
- Schuyler, G. (1998): Social entrepreneurship: Profit as a means, not an end. *DIGEST Number 98-7*. CELCEE.
- Spigel, B. (2017). The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(1), 49–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12167>
- Stam, F. C., & Spigel, B. (2016). Entrepreneurial ecosystems. *USE Discussion paper series*, 16(13).
- White, B. P. (2009). *Navigating the Power Dynamics between Institutions and Their Communities*. Kettering Foundation.

*This resource was developed for Leadership in the City participants. If it has been shared with you outside the course, you may not have access to all the linked material.*

*Leadership in the City Bulletin Series, 2022*

*Julie Fox, Ph.D., [fox.264@osu.edu](mailto:fox.264@osu.edu)*

*Ohio State University Extension*

