Making Ends Meet: Women's Work, the Care Sector and Regional Informal Economies: Detroit

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INTRODUCTION

MAKING ENDS MEET: WOMEN'S WORK, THE CARE SECTOR AND REGIONAL INFORMAL ECONOMIES IN METROPOLITAN DETROIT

ABSTRACT

The project examines how women workers, employers, and community organizations navigate the informal care and personal service sectors of the Detroit metropolitan region, focusing on immigrant and adjacent neighborhoods in the Detroit Metropolitan Region. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic-based economic crisis impacted women, their families, and businesses, given layoffs in service sector jobs or exiting the workforce to meet family care needs. Women engage the labor market both formally and informally through social networks and "brokerage institutions" including neighborhood or other civic institutions, e.g. temples, mosques, churches, schools, and non-profit organizations, to find employment and household services. The research design employs mixed methodologies - archival data analysis and in-depth interviews - to map connective networks between formal and informal work that sustains an integrated economy in greater Detroit.

OVERVIEW AND SIGNIFICANCE

The research inquiry asks, how do women find work in an economic crisis that especially targets women's employment and household social reproduction concerns? The study extends prior research on uneven regional economic development through informal economic institutions and social networks in the Greater Lansing area (Jezierski, Das Gupta, et al. 2022).

This current study is an extension of an earlier pilot study we completed from January 2021-August 2022, completing 34 interviews. The aim of this previous study was to find mechanisms of adaptation and resiliency and to develop a model of how people connect to jobs and services in a small case study: Lansing-East Lansing metropolitan statistical area (MSA). The final report of the Lansing-East Lansing Making Ends Meet: Women's Social Capital Development in Regional Informal Economies (2022) is available online: https://reicenter.org/projects/completed-projects/workforce-and-education and searchable on Google Scholar.

In this primary study, we found that differences in accessing financial and social capital have made a difference in how people were able to access family care services in both the formal and informal sectors. The community ecology of childcare and elder care social networks and institutions revealed regional inequality in how services were supplied. However, our study also revealed how much we rely on community institutions such as schools, government safety nets like unemployment insurance, civic associations, and social networks to help us to navigate accessing the help we need in sustaining family and household care. (See figure 1). This

summary of our respondents found that social capital was grounded in long-time residency in the area and provided resiliency for both families and job opportunities. Despite financial precarity, these households could rely on people they knew and local institutions to find help. Newcomers to the area had more stable incomes and opportunities to hold jobs despite the pandemic, especially with access to technology and remote workspaces. However, their lack of long-term, local relationships put them at a disadvantage in finding household help without financial costs. However, when local schools and businesses closed, everyone had to turn to local institutions and organizations to find new resources and to navigate the informal economy for the supply of jobs and services.

Figure 1. Interview Sample by Financial and Social Capital Assets: Making Ends Meet 2021-2022: Resiliency Depends on Availability of Financial and Social Capital

Figure 1: Family Assets by Financial and Social Capital

Group 1: Financial capital stability (++) **& Social capital stability**	**Group 2: Financial capital precarity** (0 +) **& Social capital stability**
Formal Sector Employment White and Asian Married	Informal Economy Black and Latina women Local Residents
Group 3: Financial capital stability (+ 0) **& Social capital precarity**	**Group 4: Financial capital precarity** (0 0) **& Social capital precarity**
Formal Sector Employment LGBTQ Migrant/ Immigrant	Informal Economy Women of Color Single Mothers

This second study reported was conducted from January to August of 2023 and focuses on immigrant enclaves in urban and suburban spaces in the regional economies of metropolitan Detroit. The study aims to model social reproduction's role in circular economies with a multifactor analysis focusing on gender, neighborhood, social class, race, and immigration status, to highlight the critical role of women in the economy, family care and community stability. The limited time frame only allowed us to engage in some community asset mapping and to complete five in-depth interviews before the grant ended. It took another six months before transcriptions of our interviews could be completed. In August, we sought additional grant money to continue the project and were awarded funding from James Madison College at Michigan State University. This grant has allowed us to continue our work from September

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2023 to August 2024. Also, the October 7, 2023, events in Israel and Gaza have also interrupted our work, overtaking the issues of the pandemic, as Arab-Americans in Detroit - just one of the communities of our focus – have been gravely affected by this ensuing war.

Given the short length of this study, we have only scratched the surface of our exploration into community institutions and social networks. However, in our focus on immigrant communities and their social institutions in the first instance, we have uncovered some surprising findings in understanding how these communities have worked through addressing the "structural holes" that cratered the community social safety net as the pandemic closed services and people lost jobs and resources. New innovations adapted by community organizations appeared in the months following the pandemic, such as the unexpected means of community institutions' outreach, governmental responses, and technological applications such as social media and Zoom for creating social interactions and new discussions of family and community wellness and connectedness.

More about our findings is provided in the discussion below. However, we start first by reporting our research questions, our research design and methodologies, and some initial findings gained through research that was completed in the summer of 2023.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

- Mapping a community ecology connected to the regional economy.
- Specifying the role of brokerage institutions in economic and community development.
- Assessing the local, state and federal policy infrastructure during and after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.
- Assessing community development assets available to immigrant communities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can we understand the integration of families and gendered workforce participation/economic development?
2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the integration of the workforce, families, and the care economy?
3. How can we understand the role of immigration in the local economy?
4. How does the social and civic infrastructure in a local economy contribute to economic growth and community stability?

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Effects of COVID-19 on family stability, work, and service needs and opportunities.

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- We are interested in the many ways in which COVID-19 has affected families and individuals as their work and family life balance was interrupted.
- We are interested in how local community-based anchorage and brokerage networks and institutions were challenged by COVID-19.
- In our interviews, we are asking respondents how organizations have organized resiliency and managed work, family, and community needs in Greater Detroit during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

Our focus communities in Greater Detroit include recent immigrant and/or ethnic communities and their institutions and organizations that provide social service or employment needs. Our study focuses on the cities of Troy, Hamtramck, Sterling Heights, Dearborn, and North End Detroit's Banglatown, and includes residents of Central European, South Asian, Black, Latina/o, Arab American, and MENA (Middle Eastern and North African) backgrounds.

- In this Making Ends Meet: Detroit Study, February-August 2023, our aim was to explore how local institutions, organizations, and government officials met the challenges of COVID for their communities and constituents. The research, however, is continuing after the August 2023 end date for the grant.
- We explore organizational challenges and changing capacities to meet the needs of their community missions.
- We are particularly focused on immigrant, Black, Central European, Latina/o, Arab, and MENA community organizations, representing small businesses and community service providers.

OUR RESEARCH TEAM

Our team of scholars are trained in different disciplines: one in community sociology and political economy, one in community health and immigrant communities, and one in development studies with a focus on the informal economy. We created a conceptual framework that was interdisciplinary and asked questions centered on family services and economic job development, especially as linked to both community institutions and employment. The paper aims to contribute to an interdisciplinary understanding of what families endured and experienced during COVID-19 and the community ecology of changing resources available during and post-pandemic years.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGIES

Our qualitative research study employed mixed-methods and an inductive strategy to understand the metropolitan ecology of care work in the Greater Detroit metropolitan area, with

focus on some key cities and neighborhoods of immigrant, Black and Hispanic residents. An induction approach seemed most appropriate since at the start of our research in 2020-21, not much was known about the impact of COVID-19 on communities. The goal of this project was to construct an explanatory theory rather than to test theory. For us the primary data would lead to generating a theory about how community residents and organizations adapted employing care work and business development during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, to see how the crisis impacted care work needs and delivery. We recruited a geographically and demographically diverse sample in metropolitan Detroit Michigan due to the unique economic and political challenges faced in Michigan during the early stages of the pandemic (Robinson, 2014). A mixed-method of creating community profiles and mapping community assets and challenges using archival data such as the census and other organizational reports and in-dept interviews, ultimately allowed for an augmented depth of understanding within the networks of the metropolitan communities (Palinkas et al., 2015; Neal, et al., 2021). A process of triangulation was then followed to consider any information worthy of informing patterns, themes and trends (Saldana, 2020).

Designing the study, securing funding and getting Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification was completed by May 2023: MSU IRB STUDY00009179: Informal Care Sector in Regional Detroit.

Setting and Sample. Beginning with existing contacts, the researchers invited the first three participants to the study by phone or email. The researchers intended to use snowball sampling to understand how participants navigated the local care economy and to identify key brokerage institutions, such as daycare centers, to map their use of community anchor institutions and understand their role in community ecology. However, interview participants demonstrated a sense of isolation in that they were often unaware of other individuals in their same line of work, especially if they were located in the informal economy. The researchers then responded to this by shifting the sampling strategy to also include purposive stratified sampling. Purposive stratified sampling is used when there is a coherent, theoretical rationale (Robinson, 2014). We elected to stratify by neighborhood, race/ethnicity, immigration, and occupation to ensure adequate comparisons for theme generation. Thus, we utilized a combination of both snowball and purposive stratified sampling.

This stratified sample was developed to assure some inclusion of the variation of respondents by age, gender, occupation, and citizenship status as represented in the local area, with awareness of the uneven institutional ecology and opportunity structures, such as access to school districts, jobs, daycare, and other institutional services. The sample of respondents included respondents who variously lived and worked in ethnic communities in both the City of Detroit and suburban communities or were connected to jobs and services in both formal and informal economy. The study was conducted in the three-county area of Detroit-Warren-Livonia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of Michigan, which includes Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties in Michigan. We looked explicitly at metropolitan wide religious and ethno-racial community institutions that served local groups.

Community profiles and visits. We began our work with community profiles for Troy, MI, Hamtramck, MI, and Banglatown/ North End Detroit, MI accessing archival data such as census reports, organizational reports, journalistic summaries, and mapping tools, and other public record sources in order to construct a summary of demographic populations and economic opportunity structures, including local businesses, social service organizations, community institutions, and governmental resources.

Figure 2. Community Profiles: US Census American Community Survey data and Quick Facts.

Population Ethno-racial Composition	Michigan	Hamtramck city	Troy city	Dearborn city	Detroit city
Population Estimates, July 1, 2022, (V2022)	10,034,113	27,834	87,201	107,710	620,376
Population, percent change – April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2022, (V2022)	-0.40%	-2.10%	-0.10%	-2.00%	-2.90%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	9,883,640	22,423	80,980	98,153	713,777
Persons under 18 years, percent	21.00%	33.70%	21.20%	29.00%	24.90%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	18.70%	7.40%	17.40%	12.50%	14.10%
Female persons, percent	50.30%	48.50%	48.50%	50.20%	52.50%
White alone, percent	78.80%	54.90%	65.90%	88.50%	12.90%

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Black or African American alone, percent	14.10%	9.90%	3.60%	3.20%	77.90%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.70%	0.60%	0.20%	0.10%	0.40%
Asian alone, percent	3.50%	24.10%	25.80%	2.30%	1.60%
Two or More Races, percent	2.80%	6.80%	3.60%	5.00%	3.30%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	5.70%	1.00%	2.20%	3.10%	7.80%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	74.00%	54.80%	64.60%	86.70%	10.10%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2017-2021	6.90%	41.90%	29.00%	28.50%	5.70%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons aged 5 years+, 2017-2021	9.90%	71.10%	33.40%	51.50%	10.80%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year data 2017-2021, accessed August 12, 2023.

The growth of our case cities shows the importance of immigrants to the vitality of the Detroit metropolitan area; especially notable is the higher population of children under 18 years of age. Half of Dearborn residents and seventy percent of Hamtramck residents speak a language other than English at home. While the census does not ask questions about religion, both Detroit and Hamtramck have sizeable Muslim populations and institutions while Hindu temples are important for South Asian immigrants in both Hamtramck, North Detroit and Troy (Mallach and Tobocman, 2021). Global Detroit has provided an outstanding survey of the importance of immigrant communities' contributions in Detroit city and metropolitan area, to economic

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growth, home ownership, and business development (Mallach and Tobocman, 2021). The US Census also shows that adult residents of Troy and Dearborn have a higher rate of higher educational attainment that also contributes to the talent pool for economic growth in Southeast Michigan. However, there are also challenges in some of these communities as well, such as lack of health insurance, high school degree completion, and commuter and broadband access, along with higher poverty rates in Hamtramck, Dearborn, and Detroit. The role of community assets such as the Bharatiya Temple in Troy and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) headquartered in Dearborn have been key anchor institutions for community development, social service provision, and business development support.

Figure 3: Community Profiles: Household Assets for Residents of Michigan and the cities of Hamtramck, Troy, Dearborn, and Detroit

Household Assets	Michigan	Hamtramck city	Troy city	Dearborn city	Detroit city
Population Estimates, July 1, 2022, (V2022)	10,034,113	27,834	87,201	107,710	620,376
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2017-2021	72.20%	57.50%	75.10%	68.00%	48.30%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2017-2021	$172,100.00	$81,100.00	$335,000.00	$162,900.00	$57,700.00
Median selected monthly owner costs - with a mortgage, 2017-2021	$1,374.00	$923.00	$1,961.00	$1,467.00	$1,125.00
Median selected monthly owner costs - without a mortgage, 2017-2021	$520.00	$491.00	$722.00	$638.00	$465.00
Median gross rent, 2017-2021	$946.00	$794.00	$1,347.00	$1,098.00	$899.00

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Households, 2017-2021	3,976,729	7,035	32,749	34,949	250,096
Persons per household, 2017-2021	2.48	3.83	2.64	3.08	2.53
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2017-2021	87.30%	93.10%	90.30%	87.90%	87.40%
Households with a computer, percent, 2017-2021	92.40%	89.40%	97.50%	93.40%	87.60%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2017-2021	86.40%	77.40%	95.20%	88.20%	76.00%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	91.60%	70.20%	96.30%	83.70%	82.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	30.60%	15.60%	62.40%	34.20%	16.20%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2017-2021	10.10%	8.30%	4.40%	7.50%	15.70%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	6.00%	9.80%	3.10%	5.90%	9.00%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year data 2017-2021, accessed August 12, 2023.

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Figure 4: Community Profiles: Labor Force, Employment, and Business Facts for Residents of Michigan and the cities of Hamtramck, Troy, Dearborn, and Detroit.

Labor Force, Employment and Business Facts	Michigan	Hamtramck city	Troy city	Dearborn city	Detroit city
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2017-2021	61.50%	44.30%	63.90%	55.80%	54.30%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2017-2021	57.40%	30.50%	55.10%	45.90%	53.20%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	91.60%	70.20%	96.30%	83.70%	82.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	30.60%	15.60%	62.40%	34.20%	16.20%
Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	$63,202.00	$33,570.00	$107,550.00	$60,184.00	$34,762.00
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	$34,768.00	$12,781.00	$51,031.00	$26,733.00	$20,780.00
Persons in poverty, percent	13.10%	43.10%	5.30%	24.70%	31.80%
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	165,460	297	4,105	2,944	6,869
Men-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	106,137	198	2,475	1,903	4,153

Women-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	29,706	N/A	668	484	1,094
Minority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	13,091	72	502	229	1,205
Nonminority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	141,153	203	2,919	2,428	4,516
Veteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	8,714	N/A	132	N/A	232
Nonveteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	142,782	272	3,271	2,537	5,419

Source: American Community Survey 5-year data 2017-2021, accessed August 12, 2023

Community Visits. Our team of five made the first exploratory field visit on Saturday, February 5, 2023, to Troy, MI, including mapping some key commercial businesses that support the immigrant communities in the area. We also had an extended visit with outreach leadership of the Bharatiya Temple of Troy, who gave us a tour of the temple and provided us with an overview of their community and outreach services. We also took a driving tour of Banglatown, Detroit and Hamtramck, Michigan to map commercial enterprises and community support services. We went for dinner to a Bangladeshi restaurant and engaged in some informal conversation to have some understanding of the local business community. A second field visit was conducted by principal investigators, Dr. Louise Jezierski and Dr. Linda Sayed. They visited a neighborhood-based community arts organization called Women of Banglatown on July 5th, 2023, to complete an interview there.

Interview Procedures. Interviews and Research Instruments. We constructed our interview questionnaire, introduction and consent form documents in English and translated them to Bangla/Bengali and Arabic. All translations were completed in mid-April 2023 for inclusion in the IRB Human Subjects review. Before obtaining informed consent for conducting and recording the interviews, the interviewers explained the purpose of the study, answered the participants' questions, and asked permission to video-record the interview using Zoom software. Almost all interviews were conducted by two researchers together, and each lasted

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about an hour. At the end of the interview, participants received a $25.00 Amazon gift card. Interviews were automatically transcribed by the Zoom software and checked for accuracy, confirmability, and dependability. The Zoom-generated transcripts were then corrected, and all referent names were redacted. These edited transcripts were then coded first by inductively generated thematic keywords and secondly by reflexive conceptual keywords (Saldana, 2020).

Each interview began with questions about family, work, and organizational strategies to manage community capacity as it related to how organizations addressed work and family life before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. Subsequent questions included the impact of the pandemic on work and domestic life, such as business delivery services and governmental support. We also asked respondents about the community and family care organizations that they relied upon before and after the pandemic to understand how their family care support systems were lost or reorganized due to the pandemic. This inquiry relies upon respondents' participation in constructing community asset mapping, an approach that originated by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) as well as by social network mapping (Luo et al., 2023; Neal et al., 2021).

Data Analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a commonly used qualitative methodology to identify, organize, analyze, and report patterns within data. Themes represent a pattern of important responses and provide a rich description of participants' experiences. Thematic analysis involves familiarization with the data, the generation of initial codes, searching, and then reviewing themes. The flexibility of thematic analysis provides an opportunity to generate unanticipated insights, psychological interpretation, and policy development (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Floersch et al., 2010).

Data Analytic Strategy. The researchers independently analyzed the interviews using open and focused coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Each transcript was reviewed multiple times to identify initial thematic codes. Two researchers initially conducted the interview. During analysis, one of the interviewers consistently coded each transcript. Once initial codes were identified, the researchers developed conceptual categories. Memos were written for each interview and for each identified thematic code. Consistency was achieved by the researchers' transparent approach to analysis, discussion of steps taken to analyze the data, member checking, and researcher collaboration (Armstrong et al., 1997). Trustworthiness and credibility were achieved using triangulation (multiple coders, peer scrutiny, thick descriptions etc.) (Armstrong et al., 1997; Saldana, 2020).

B. Grounded Theory. We have employed Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as an inductive approach that uses interview data to develop, rather than test, theory: we are looking for patterns of how people engage in adaptive social and economic behaviors to find household help and to find work. In this present study, we are using these prior findings constructed from

grounded theory to explore how immigrant communities might look different, including a different configuration of brokerage networks pre-pandemic and post-pandemic. This conceptual work is not yet completed and is on-going.

Key Findings and Insights from our Detroit Study So Far:

Brokerage Institutions. We were especially interested in exploring how community organizations served as brokerage institutions to help amass and distribute resources.

Key community brokerage institutions include childcare centers, private and nonprofits businesses and community services, refugee and immigration organizations, local and state government agencies and representatives, religious institutions such as churches, temples and mosques, and economic and entrepreneurial development organizations (Kwon, et al. 2020; Neal, 2015; Neal et al., 2021). Brokerage organizations provide multiple functions as places that provide a myriad of resources. Individuals involved in these organizations move across spheres of the local community ecology. Crises usually require capacity adaptation and reorganization and during the COVID pandemic, new technologies and social media helped to expand network-based outreach efforts, resulting in new programs and services and increasing ties among metropolitan organizations to more regional efforts.

In the findings that follow, we focus on three key findings on changing brokerage networks: A) Expanding Metropolitan Networks; B) New Technologies and New Means of Investment and C) Pivoting to Work-Life Balance.

Figure 5: Conceptual Map of Brokerage Institutions.

• Brokerage organizations provide multiple functions as places that provide myriad resources as places of social networks.

Childcare centers: private, nonprofit, government
Economic Development Organizations for Entrepreneurs of Color
Refugee and Immigration Organizations
Religious Institutions: Hindu Temples, Churches, and Mosques
Local and State Government Service Agencies

• Individuals involved in these organizations move across spheres of the local community ecology.
• Crisis requires capacity adaptation through technology for network outreach, but new technologies can expand programs and services.

A. MEETING NEEDS REGIONALLY AND CROSS-CULTURALLY: THE EXPANDING

ROLES OF METROPOLITAN OUTREACH AND BRIDGING CAPITAL

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Three community organizations we talked with were focused on serving their local constituents, but found that during the COVID crisis, they needed to change their outreach efforts to include different partnerships and activities. Activities which included crucial fundraising efforts were shut down during COVID and forced organizations to move to technologies such as Zoom to engage in outreach. In three important cases, this change in method led to increases in outreach, and changes in agendas. Many organizations found that their outreach and constituency services moved from local efforts to greater metropolitan areas by bridging social capital networks. Partnerships also expanded.

Women of Bangladesh: Hamtramck has always been an immigrant enclave. I think, German, Polish, Bosnian, Ukrainian, Yemeni, Bangladeshi, now Afghani. So, it's starting to change and then, you know, within those populations, there's other folks from different parts of the world as well. But it's always been this place of putting down new roots and becoming new Americans, which is interesting. And also, I think a big part of why the neighborhood is so vibrant and multicultural and just taken care of because American communities are folks that live with communities that are similar to their upbringing or their homelands. I feel like they're more like family. They look out for each other and yeah so, it's amazing to see how now you know over 150 years Banglatown in Detroit where we are sitting is also kind of trickling into becoming another immigrant enclave.

You know we're a neighborhood-based organization. Most of our members live here. Internally we're talking about can we let people that don't live in 48212 join the workshops. What does that look like? We want to do that. We had a public workshop a few weeks ago that we rented or room project downtown let us use their indoor space and an artist came in from Chicago and it was really great to see the team members interacting with different ages of women who were from different cultures and communities but because of our mission it was like everyone kind of had a common theme to their identity and it was just beautiful to see that and the members said they loved like meeting new people.

: I think a lot of folks initially thought COVID-19 was not a serious thing and then all of a sudden someone dies as a result of it. I think it really was a shocker. The most difficult part, I think, in the community was navigating the community spaces, namely the mosques for people to be able to attend. That was a big thing. We have 13 mosques in Hamtramck, and they're not all sitting empty to see those mosques, have to find a makeshift. One of the things we helped do is facilitate with USDA's program. The local group that we were working with got funding for food distribution. We actually made all of the mosques food distribution centers, fresh produce and dairy products. That was something that we did I think almost every single week throughout the entire pandemic. That was a big step. My team and I, outside of the direct campaigning, use an opportunity to help with the food distribution. And we helped set it up with MMCC, the Michigan Muslim Community Council, across I think over 25 different mosques and sites in the metro area. And some even in Grand Rapids and in Lansing, where we did a lot of the food distribution. The trucks were rented on

our part and then we were responsible for getting the food picked up and then we did the food distribution. That was something that happened for a long while.

Community Outreach at Bharatiya Temple: I would define it (community) in three layers. Okay. One is the immediate Hindi community that comes to the temple and relies on the temple for its devotional and spiritual needs. Religious and spiritual needs. So that is the primary purpose of the temple. The second layer is the community that is not necessarily Hindu, but the temple does not exist in a vacuum. Temple exists on a specific geological ground. It is located in a specific geological makeup, a social makeup. We are surrounded by subdivisions. We are surrounded by residents. We are part of the city community. So, Troy City, in fact, I don't know if you realized this when you came there. That particular street corner is the junction point of four townships. So, the duties themselves come from near and far. But the temple is in close proximity to four townships by its physical location. The temple is in Troy City and as such, the temple is responsive to the community needs of Troy City. But apart from that, the temple is open to dialogue and discussion with other residential communities that surround us. Okay, we frequently host open houses with the officials of the various townships. We invite them into the temple, have a conversation, show them around, show them the things that we are doing, and similar duties extended to the residents as well.

The third layer of community the temple attends to are the general Metro Detroit area in which people slightly disadvantaged means, economic means, and other needs that are there. The temple volunteer committees, like I'm the head of the outreach committee. Similarly, there is a committee called a Seva committee, Seva in Sanskrit means service. The committee provides a variety of services to the disadvantaged and underprivileged communities that surround us, including all the way up to downtown Detroit. These include things like providing school supplies to disadvantaged school children every year. At the beginning of the school year, they select one particular school that is identified as an economically disadvantaged zone, and the temple members collect the donations and purchase school supplies for the school children of that particular school. Similarly, at least twice a year, our volunteers go to either Gleaners Food bank or Forgotten Harvest and participate in food service to the underprivileged. They're doing two to three programs every month if you take the whole car. The temple would have served literally thousands of individuals and families of economic disadvantage in all of the Metro Detroit area.

B. NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND NEW MEANS OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT.

As community organizations shut down in-person activities, such as in-person programming and events, organizers moved to Zoom and social media. This turned out to be a positive pivot for expanding outreach, but it also required providing technological advice to clients and constituencies, as well as organizational resources. Connecting clients and constituencies to government programs like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Small Business Association (SBA)-backed loans that helped businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis or to state unemployment insurance, became a new mission. Other non-profit-based programs had to find additional funding to transfer program supplies from their offices and construct home-based kits that were distributed to clients at their residences. They

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also had to do additional outreach to help people connect online. These efforts increased programmatic material costs, but also enabled the expansion for their services.

Arab American Women's Business Council: We do like a lot of fun things post-COVID. We still wanted to be able to give those resources out, but we had to clearly shift very quickly, pivoted to social media lives. We did Zoom events, then we quickly realized that people were just not in the mood to sign in, log into a Zoom. So we wanted to make it as simple and quick and easy and get the information out to them in the best most digestible form. And we found that to be social media lives specifically on Instagram.

Because we are a nonprofit, we don't have any money. All of our funding stopped. We didn't get any funding in 2020. So, we couldn't physically help people get money by giving them money and staying them afloat. So, we were trying to do whatever else we could. Then I personally, I did a lot on my personal page and AAWBC's Instagram, because they had different followers. So, I was trying to like make sure we got it on both. And so, I got messages in both people saying that they felt left behind…people with less than five employees, both brick and mortar and were doing it out of their home. They felt like they were left behind. They were terrified. They felt like they weren't going to survive. And for some of them, this was their livelihood. They were taking care of their families with this. So, they didn't understand the PPP loans that were coming out. They didn't know if they qualified.

So, we helped figure out if they qualified or not. And then even the ones that did qualify felt so overwhelmed with everything that they didn't even know where to start. Then we switched our lives. We started, we brought in people from doing the PPP loans and from the banks and from SBA. And we brought in as many people as we could to talk us through that and help us in the lives and basically say, here's what you need if you qualify, here's how you have to apply, here's the things you need to do. We tried to do that and then in parallel as well, I went on a hunt personally for type of funds, loans, grants, anything that other organizations or companies or business to anyone that was doing it. And we just started raising awareness of it. Put it out into the world. Just making sure that our community knew what else was out there. We were trying to do the leg work for them because we understood they were already overwhelmed. We put that out there.

And then the other option we did is we focused on pivoting businesses as well. Pivoting, we recognize that a lot of the businesses didn't know how to operate in the new world with the pandemic. Either were contact- based or they had a brick and mortar, and they had no idea. I know I personally did a lot of informal conversations with people like through AAWBC. But we did a lot of informal conversations of like brainstorming with people that had businesses. These women that were basically destitute, they had no other option talking them. Brainstorming, how can we take the skills that you have, the business you have, how can we pivot slightly so that you can stay in business, change what you do, how can we help you

raise awareness of that on social media? Because they didn't know how to utilize social media like in the, in the sales sense.

So that was one of the things that I had actually was starting to do as a business right before the pandemic. I was going to create a business around helping businesses for blogging and how to utilize it. So, I actually pivoted and canceled my own business really. I ended up not like my whole priorities shifted. That's not something I changed what I wanted to do, but I still utilize those skills in order to work one on one with as many women as I could. Anyone that wanted, anyone that asked me questions, spent a lot of time working with them, brainstorming, thinking through these things. We did a live on it as well. For AWBCI, think that one was like an actual like Zoom event, like how to pivot, how to thrive. And then we also opened up our social media channels as well and said typically we're not the type where we don't want our channel to be like a sales channel if you have a sale or give us your business or give us your product or give us your service. We don't typically put those out there. We like to keep resources and not make it seem like we're an influencer and we're trying to sell people stuff. Again, we pivoted, and we said listen, the way we can help you is by raising awareness of what you're doing. If you are having a sale, if you're pivoting, if you're changing things, or you have a service, or you have a product that you want to raise awareness of, let us know and we'll start to share it across our platforms. I did it personally. We really just tried anything and everything we could to help find ways to keep the women afloat. To keep them motivated, to keep them inspired, and to just keep them feel like they weren't alone.

Because we were so used to doing events, we were able to pivot as well, (by using technology). So, it kept us in our community connected. It did also expand a bit of our reach with the people. Especially because in social media, when you do a live event with someone, it pops up so all of their people can now see. It's our people get notified. Their people get notified. So, we were seeing more and more people coming from them. Honestly, some of the best conversations we had were the ones that were not even structured. We would come in and have a chat. It's great. When we talked about work life balance, we talked about childcare, we talked about school. And the conversations we had were very formal but informal at the same time, right? Like we were actually asking questions. But it was a very good conversation. It was like a coffee side chat, right? Like we're having coffee with each other. So, we got a lot of positive response to that. And then post pandemic, it translated into we kept them, we still do lives. Now actually we utilize them. Where we have, each committee is responsible to doing different lives, so they can do in percent events throughout the year. They're still supposed to be working on specifically the small business mentorship and workforce development. And the committees don't always get to them every single month. But the fact that we try to keep it consistent is pretty good and we still get people. Our community loves the live events. They think they're really good. They're organized through committees now, and it generally happens like once a month. And can you say how many people join, on average or it depends.

Women of Bangladesh: It (Remote technology, Zoom) made the access wider. And I think, you know, some of the girls that come and some of the members that come, their parents don't allow

them to come to in-person programming, especially because we have an open space like this. So, it became more accessible. And that's why like we'll always have both (versions of programming) because that's what works for our population. And there's also I think something really special about being in the comfort of your home to do art.

C. ADDRESSING WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING CRISIS AND ADDRESSING MENTAL

HEALTH CONCERNS.

Practically every respondent we spoke with had reason to discuss the precarity of social isolation and fiscal stability with the onset of the pandemic. Invariably, the financial and emotional panic of the pandemic that shut down the community institutions upon which people depended, as well as the trauma of family members getting sick or dying, prompted concerns over how to address the trauma experienced in communities. Mental health and work-life balance issues came to the forefront whether the community organization's mission was spiritual needs, youth program mentoring, or business-development. Constituencies changed from individuals to families and households. These community organizations expanded to provide online programming or external outreach to households rather than holding meetings and programs in-house. Work-Life balance became critical and the community organizations we talked with moved to include wellness programs and activities, such as supplying yoga classes, art classes, food delivery services, and connections to mental health professionals. Nonprofits, foundations, and government grants and loans became lifelines to these community organizations. In turn, these community institutions moved into new roles as brokerage institutions that distributed funding, advice, and organizational expertise to connect in partnership with other community institutions, as well as to their clients and community members. The organizational capacity that they held before COVID helped them pivot to find additional or different kinds of funding and expertise. While grounded in their own communities with their central place in people's lives, they also had connections to funding sources and social networks that allowed them to pivot programming and expand outreach to new constituencies and evolving to become more diverse organizations overall.

Arab-American Women's Business Council: We did a stay-at-home series, Stay Home, Stay Safe. Stay Home, Stay Sane. Different things. We went in, stay home, stay healthy. And each one we did, we brought in different experts to talk and have conversations. To say, well, how can you stay sane in this was a mental health one, stay healthy. We had someone come in about food prep and meal prep and how to still take care of ourselves while we're dealing with all this stress. I believe we did something around kids as well. I think we brought in an educator to help talk about how to continue your kids' education. We really listened to our community and that was the biggest issue, besides the point of the small business isn't owning. Another piece was everything else that they were stressed about. What we tried to do is really connected individuals to bring them in and just help be there.

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Then I was like, listen, these women need normalcy. They need something in their life, they still want to work out, They still want to do all of these classes, but they clearly can't do it. Is there some way where you can do it through Zoom through something where you could give a class on your own and you could stream it live. You could have people buy tickets to it, right? It was that kind of thinking to say how can you do what you're doing but in a safe way and still make a positive impact. That's like one example of what we did is working through that thought process to say, okay, here's what you need to do. Set it up in your basement and get the camera. You use your phone. And, and it was taking away a lot of the pressures of it because people would assume that if you do something like this, you need production, you need a camera and you need to set it up. And it was about easing their concerns. That listen, nobody's looking for a Peloton level class right now. They're not looking for these big important productions. What they want is they want to feel like they're normal. They want to feel like something is normal. Set it up on the iPod, put a tripod, put your phone, put it in your basement, and just do it. She did, she was able to do that and she got some pretty good feedback.

Women of Banglatown: Yeah, so I can specifically talk about our (online) focus groups because I think that was really special. That was in 2021. It was like February. So we hired a consultant and also brought on a, oh my gosh, what was she studying at that time? Now she's becoming a doctor, but someone who was trauma informed for sure. And J…and F… worked together to really make it engaging. And we also tailored it specifically to the age. So like we did young members, teens. Then we did moms and daughters or sisters that would come to one. Then we did a selectee speaking focus group where we had youth advisory council members at the time that were a little bit older college students facilitate the focus group. We would drop off a package for them before the session with like feel good items in it that they could use during the session. So, it like was like, the engagement was great. And it was intimate. Like I remember one of the, it's been two years, so it's been hard to remember, but one of the sessions, it was like teen girls. There was like maybe a third of the girls were members. And you know, we had dropped them off some stuff and it just was like, you know, one of the girls was like, you know, I'm just so happy to get this cozy blanket so I can hold it. You know what I mean? Just like, it was so vulnerable, and we have everything transcribed and we had social workers taking notes. So, we have really good records of everything. But I think it was just like making that comfortable space online and picking the right facilitators and also representation is important to us. So, and also cultural sensitivity and cultural understanding. We're not going to bring someone in who, you know, might have certain biases or stereotypes against populations that we work with because that makes our members feel unsafe eventually. And that's the first thing is making them feel safe, right? So, most of the time the people that I work with I know, or I start to like, you know, there's a screening process, you know, and now N….and I are doing it together and soon she will just start to like touch base with artists but you know the art community is small….. Just say different people bring different things…but yeah now it's just like you know they can be quiet sometimes. So, the Zoom sessions are still happening because that's a safe space for a lot of girls and a lot of families....

And they're still going two to three times a week or just once a week?

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In the summer we'll have programming like two to three times a week, so you have Zoom sessions once a week and then in person once a week. This summer will be, again, it's because we don't have the space.

CONCLUSION

The interruptions in community social networks and organizational programs due to the pandemic required pivoting of organizational missions, means of communication, and innovation in outreach efforts. This often required a substantial redirection of funding resources, especially with Zoom-related or social media technology, but also in physical forms of outreach. For example, art kits, personal wellness-kits, or programming were delivered to constituent households. The community networks widened their outreach with this technology as more two-way communication, where community members requested advice and support that changed organizational programming, was enabled. It appears that while organizational missions were initially local, more expansive connections were built during the pandemic and ties across the metropolitan area (and even outside it) forged through bridging capital.

As we interviewed people's experiences both before and after COVID interruptions, most recalled the scramble to adjust once lockdowns and organizational support systems faltered. But in the two years after the pandemic onset, adjustments to create hybridized programming, expanded missions, and increased government and non-profit funding helped these organizations to move forward in new, innovative ways. This perhaps created a more prosperous, stable social system of services that reached across the metropolitan area, with a deeper understanding of the connections between work life, business development, community development, and family life. Multi-generational and cross-community relations were deepened as well. However, trauma was clearly evident in many of the households and clientele that these community organizations served. A form of resiliency was evident in the ways that these organizations took on new challenges, saw opportunities for deepening their original missions, and investing in their community work in new ways. While lives and livelihoods were lost during the pandemic, the extant social organizational ecology held up the civic fabric to some extent. Of course, it is difficult to connect with organizations that closed down permanently as a result of COVID. However, the experience also created greater awareness of the needs and new demands for community investment and programs. COVID relief programs supported by the state and federal governments helped these community programs continue and even expand. New funding commitments helped some of these organizations deepen and expand their delivery of services. New leadership positions have been developed as well.

Our research is ongoing through 2024, with many more interviews to come. This preliminary report allows a window into some of the key organizational responses that community development and civic institutions were able to forge in the face of crisis. Additional information will allow us to see further effects of COVID on work and household challenges and opportunities, with greater specification of social investment processes, especially the foundations for informal economies and their development in household, neighborhoods, cities, and regional political economies.

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