



## **Call for Papers Mistakes, Learning, and Adaptation – Round 2**

You are invited to submit a proposal for a paper on constructive mistakes in the field of community economic development (CED), investments to expand economic opportunities for disadvantaged populations and places. Accepted papers will be compiled and published. The objective of the “Mistakes, Learning, and Adaptation” project is to enhance the capacity to design and implement complex CED projects by making explicit what can be learned from important mistakes.

Paper deadlines:	Proposed abstract:	April 1, 2008
	Manuscript outline:	May 1, 2008
	Initial manuscript draft:	June 15, 2008
	Final manuscript submission:	August 1, 2008

### **Project Framework**

Constructive mistakes occur in spite of thoughtful design and implementation. These failures somehow defy the best theories, past experience, and sound advice, in contrast to non-constructive failures that frequently result from a lack of comprehensive design and effort. Constructive mistakes call into question key design assumptions about problems, strategic interventions, implementation, partners, and even methods of documentation and evaluation. Most importantly, constructive mistakes provide invaluable insights into problems and solutions, and could lay the groundwork for the next generation of investments.

Many of our failures grow out of our inability to anticipate, learn, and adapt. These capacities involve understanding the dynamics of complex environments and trends, fully grasping the lessons embodied in experience, and changing course and redesigning interventions in real time. Building these capacities, however, requires flexible resources which are frequently the most difficult to obtain.

In 2007, an initial round of submissions produced a set of interesting and provocative papers that covered the following topics:

- Creating a public marketplace
- Childcare assistance as a social enterprise
- CDC management lessons
- Over-extending program activity
- The limits of partnership approaches
- Sustaining a collaborative
- The dangers of outcome measures
- The value of looking to best practices
- Replication and workforce system change
- Pursuing scale for nonprofits

The second round of this project will compile 10-12 additional stories about CED constructive mistakes. We will gather a diverse set of papers that will reflect the broad practice of CED. Stories may include, but are not limited to, constructive mistakes in:

- Policy advocacy/change
- Community organizing
- Affordable housing
- Comprehensive community building
- Appropriate technology
- Micro-enterprise lending
- Asset-building
- Commercial development
- Arts and culture initiatives
- Business incubators

## **Submissions**

Manuscript submission and review will be done electronically. Papers should be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages. Additional manuscript guidelines will follow receipt and acceptance of proposed abstracts. MDC, Inc. will manage the process of communicating with authors and administering project activities.

Submit abstracts to:

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## **Publication and Honoraria**

Papers will be compiled and published in report or book form. Each author will receive a \$1,500 honorarium upon completion of the final manuscript. MDC will also organize a convening to consider and discuss implications. MDC will provide logistical support for authors attending the convening and reimburse travel and lodging costs.

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