



MDC Celebrates 40 Years of Working to Connect People to Opportunity

The Sixties: Addressing Poverty and Work in North Carolina

1964 – NC Governor Terry Sanford established the **North Carolina Fund** to address the systemic causes of poverty in the state. Supported by the Ford Foundation, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, among others, the Fund directly addressed issues of economic inclusion, racial discrimination, and community engagement. One of the Fund's legacies was the creation of MDC.

1967 – **MDC was founded** in collaboration with the Office of Economic Opportunity and the National Association of Manufacturers. Its original mission was to design job training programs to help poor and displaced workers in the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy and from a segregated to an integrated workforce. George B. Autry was MDC's founding executive director, Luther Hodges, Jr. founding board chair.

1967-1973 – **The Mobility Program:** was an experiment to change migration patterns that were crowding unskilled men and women in urban ghettos of the North and upper Midwest. MDC helped poor, displaced farm workers and farm families with annual cash incomes of less than \$1,000 move to jobs closer to home in small Southern cities.

1969 - present – **The Human Resources Development Program:** is a flexible pre-employment training program that serves as a springboard to jobs and educational opportunities for men and women unprepared for the primary labor market. MDC designed and demonstrated the effectiveness of the program and then spun it off to the NC Community College system where it has served more than 100,000 participants since 1972.

1969 -1974 – **The Management Awareness Program:** was designed by MDC and offered to businesses whose front-line supervisors sought help in understanding and managing a newly integrated labor force.

The Seventies: Expanding the Reach of Workforce Development

1972 – **The North Carolina Manpower Council:** was designed by MDC at the request of NC Governor Robert Scott, to enable North Carolina to coordinate federal and state training programs and relate them to strategic workforce development goals. The state council, one of the first in the nation, resulted from MDC's earlier report to Governor Scott on training needs and programs in North Carolina.

1976 – **The Conference for President Ford's National Commission for Employment Policy:** MDC convened this Atlanta conference as a starting point for intensified research and development on policies and programs for youth employment.

1977-1981 – **National Youth Program Monitoring and Analysis:** MDC monitored and evaluated President Carter's Youth Initiative, launching a long-term commitment to youth employment and training issues. Evaluation and monitoring of federal and state programs becomes a major business for MDC.

The Eighties: New Directions – Rural Development, Youth, and Education

1982 -1983 - **Analysis of Early School-to-Work Programs:** MDC evaluated early efforts to forge federal programs into school-to-work links for disadvantaged youth.

1982 -1983 - **Women in Electronics:** was a program designed by MDC in partnership with private business to prepare unemployed women with limited prior education and training to enter and advance in jobs in the electronics industry in Research Triangle Park.

1983 – **Independent Assessment of JTPA:** MDC did a systematic review and evaluation of the state systems and programs produced by the Job Training Partnership Act, the successor to the CETA program of the 1970s.

1985 – **Who's Looking Out For At-Risk Youth:** was an MDC report, commissioned by the Mott Foundation, on how the campaign for excellence in public education was affecting disadvantaged youth.

1985 – ***The Job Training Partnership Act and Women: A Survey of Early Practices:*** a report commissioned by the Ford Foundation.

1985 - **North Carolina Commission on Jobs and Growth:** MDC helped staff the commission and pressed the need for special attention to rural counties in a changing economy.

1985 - 1995 – **Learner-Teacher Initiative:** a multi-year research and development project that was designed by MDC to help state workforce development administrators spread creative programs and share information with other states. MDC produced two publications on peer-to-peer technical assistance that the US Department of Labor distributed nationally and set up an automated peer-to-peer technical assistance system for the Department of Labor's Southeast region.

1986 - ***Shadows in the Sunbelt.*** an MDC study that challenged the value of industry recruitment to rural economies and encouraged more broad-based approaches to economic development.

1986 – The Ford Foundation granted MDC's request for support to examine its mission and business model in light of declining federal support for employment training intermediaries. **MDC's board refocused the organization's agenda to address economic development and workforce development in the South,** building on the momentum generated by *Shadows in the Sunbelt.*

1987 - **North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center:** MDC participated in the design and served as early staff of the Center, a quasi-state agency created to promote and support rural development as outlined by the Commission on Jobs and Growth. Today the Center is a national model.

1987-1989 - **Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System:** MDC served as staff and advised the Commission in reshaping its vision and preparing the system for the 21st century.

1988 – ***What Ya'll Ought to Know.*** Taking advantage of the first-ever Super Tuesday presidential primary, MDC wrote this primer to educate candidates on the special economic problems facing the South.

1988 – ***Workforce Literacy in the South.*** a report for the Sunbelt Institute on the increasingly negative implications of low levels of literacy in the workforce.

1988 - ***America's Shame, America's Hope.*** A special MDC commission chaired by noted social scientist Kenneth B. Clark issued a report documenting the educational plight of at-risk youth and its damaging effects on the nation. This MDC report became the basis for a nationally televised Bill Moyers PBS TV special in 1991.

1988 - present – **Rural Futures Program:** is a program designed and delivered by MDC to help communities in the rural South reach across lines of race, class, and geography to develop leaders committed to broad-based approaches to local economic development.

The Nineties: Institutional and Community Change

1990 – **Foundation for the Mid South:** MDC helped conceive of the Foundation and served as the initial staff for the first tri-state community foundation in the country. FMS addresses the causes of poverty through long-term philanthropic investment.

1990 - **Redesigning the North Carolina Employment and Training System:** MDC consulted and provided staff support for the North Carolina Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Workforce Preparedness. The Commission report led to the creation of the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness – a single state-level council to review, monitor, and develop workforce policies and initiatives for the state.

1991 - **Rural Futures Program: A Guide for Trainers:** an MDC publication designed to broaden the program's reach. The Guide is now used as the basis for economic development in rural areas from Georgia to Oregon to New Hampshire.

1991 - **Realizing America's Hope:** a multi-video and print package based on *America's Shame, America's Hope* to assist local efforts to address problems of at-risk youth. The package was produced in cooperation with South Carolina Educational TV, Public Affairs Television, Inc., the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National School Boards Association.

1991-1996 – **Indiana School Guidance and Counseling Leadership Project:** was a major school guidance reform initiative, funded by the Lilly Endowment, and designed to raise the educational achievement and college-going rates of all students. The program drew on MDC's recognized capacity in leadership development and our success at galvanizing attention to the needs of youth through *America's Shame, America's Hope*. It became a prototype for the multi-year foundation funded demonstration projects that are the core of MDC's current business model.

1991 – **Let's Do It Our Way:** an MDC manual that uses case study examples of how local schools, parents, and community groups can include at-risk kids in the campaign for excellence. This manual was included in a multi-video and print package developed to facilitate local action on issues raised by *America's Shame, America's Hope*.

1991 – **Pew Delta Initiative:** MDC was hired by the Pew Charitable Trusts to recommend strategies to address poverty in the Mississippi Delta. MDC developed a successful plan to create the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta (a finance intermediary) and a demonstration to improve worker readiness, the

Workforce Alliance. Today the Enterprise Corporation is a national model for financing enterprises in rural areas.

1992 – ***Coming Out of the Shadows***: an MDC report on the changes in economic development policies and practices five years after the publication of MDC's *Shadows in the Sunbelt*.

1992 - **Alliance for Achievement**: was a major demonstration funded by the Pew Foundation, Bell South Foundation, and DeWitt Wallace Foundation to raise educational achievement, especially for low-income and minority students, in five Southern communities by forging partnerships among middle schools, high schools, and community colleges. Prepared for the initiative, the MDC report, *Walking the Talk*, synthesized strategies for raising student aspirations and offered case illustrations of how to help middle and high school students recognize that postsecondary education is a necessary, affordable, and accessible option.

1992 - **Greater Expectations**: an MDC report, funded by the Pew Foundation that documented the extent and nature of the gap between the skills of the current Southern workforce and the requirements of the new economy, and identified the steps necessary to close the gap.

1992 -1993 – **Private Industry Council of Jacksonville, Florida**: commissioned MDC to evaluate its Summer Academic Work Program, which MDC had helped develop. Program goals were to reduce school dropout numbers, improve achievement in school, keep students out of the judicial system, and prepare them for the workforce. Results of the study indicated that summer work/education programs for low income youth did contribute to school retention and lower crime rates.

1993 - **Building a New Workforce for a New Century**: an MDC report, commissioned by a group of Mississippi business leaders, which analyzed Mississippi's workforce training needs. The report led to passage of the Mississippi Workforce Act of 1994, which created a unique system of one-stop training centers tied to the state's community college system.

1993 - **North Carolina Competitiveness Commission**: MDC served as staff to the Commission, charged with establishing nonpartisan goals and benchmarks for addressing the long-term educational, economic, environmental, and social needs of the state.

1993 -1996 - **Partners for Educational Success**: was a school reform initiative, funded by the Metropolitan Life Foundation, that combined corporate and community efforts to raise student achievement for low-income and minority youth.

1993 - **A New Form of Philanthropy:** was a case study funded by the Lilly Endowment on the creation of the Foundation for the Mid South. The study was developed from MDC's perspective as a consultant in the creation and first years of the foundation.

1993 - **The Millennium Group Report**, funded by a group of Mississippi business people and titled *Building a New Workforce for the New Century*, spurred unanimous legislative passage of a workforce bill, including funding for the Mississippi Workforce Act of 1994, a national first.

1994 -1996 - **Workforce Alliance in Mississippi:** As part of the Pew Delta Initiative, MDC built the capacity of leaders in seven Delta communities to redesign education and training systems to connect poor people to jobs.

1994 -2001 - **Rural Community College Initiative:** was a major demonstration, managed by MDC and funded by the Ford Foundation, to show that rural community colleges in the most persistently distressed areas can help low-income people and communities move toward economic independence by increasing access to higher education and boosting local economic development.

1996 - **The State of the South:** an MDC state-level analysis of 30-year trends in population, jobs, income, poverty, and education, along with projections to the year 2010 and recommendations to the region's leadership.

1996 –1998 – **Glades Development School:** a project, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, to develop rural leadership in the western region of Palm Beach County, Florida, and a plan of action to address the area's poverty. The project resulted in a five year plan for the economic renewal of the Glades communities and several community participants running for elective office or moving into leadership positions as change agents.

1997- **Louisiana** governor's office requests MDC's help in developing a workforce system. MDC provided the basic design for the Louisiana Workforce Commission, which the legislature enacted. MDC also worked with the governor's commission to set up the Louisianan community college system.

1998 - **Building Community by Design:** an MDC resource guide for community change leaders based on MDC's 15 years working at the grassroots level in comprehensive community change efforts. The full guidebook, at more than 350 pages, includes both explanations of the theory behind MDC's approach and the tools, activities, and resources MDC uses in working directly with community groups, including MDC's *Moving from Vision to Action* strategic planning guide.

1998 - **The State of the South:** an MDC regional-level analysis of 30-year trends in population, jobs, income, poverty, and education in the South, concentrating on how various segments of the region's population are faring, with special

attention to gender, ethnicity, and education levels. The report includes recommendations for the region's policymakers.

1998 -2003 - **Vision to Action in Africa:** MDC was invited by the Ford Foundation to internationalize the Rural Community College Initiative by spreading its principles to Namibia, to help the country's national university develop a new rural campus on the Angolan border.

1999 – ***The Carolinas – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: An Exploration of Social and Economic Trends, 1924-1999.*** The Duke Endowment commissioned the report, which was published by Duke Press.

1999 - **MDC's founding president, George B. Autry, died.** David Dodson, MDC's executive vice president, became MDC's second president. MDC created the Autry Fellowship as a living memorial to George Autry.

The 21st Century: Advancing Equity and Opportunity

2000 - ***State of the South:*** an MDC regional-level analysis of the impact of globalization on the Southern economy, with an analysis of trends in business mix changes, trade, foreign direct investment, occupational mix changes, immigration, and workforce readiness.

2000 - present - **Connecting People to Jobs:** MDC and the Center for Community Change collaborated to move low-skilled Southerners into skills training and higher-wage employment. Supported by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the project has three sites: Charlottesville, VA; Charleston, WV; and Columbia, SC. At each site, partnerships of grassroots organizations, community colleges, workforce agencies, and employers collaborate to help disadvantaged adults get and keep decent jobs. In Columbia, the program focuses on occupational advancement for Latino workers.

2001- 2007 - **Program for the Rural Carolinas:** a development project in North Carolina and South Carolina, funded by The Duke Endowment. The program supported seven communities in large-scale collaborative projects to spur economic and community revitalization. It also supported 13 of The Endowment's eligible grantees in smaller-scale projects to promote economic opportunity in their communities. MDC provided technical assistance, coaching, and skills and knowledge development opportunities for the grantees.

2002 - ***State of the South:*** revisits MDC's groundbreaking 1986 report, *Shadows in the Sunbelt*, and offers recommendations to spread economic progress into the region's shadows.

2002 - **New Model for RCCI:** the Ford Foundation moved to a low-cost model for the Rural Community College Initiative. The managing partner role shifted from MDC to USDA Rural Development Centers. Along with presidents at pilot RCCI colleges, MDC created the Rural Community College Alliance to advocate for rural community colleges and provide networking opportunities for rural community college leaders.

2003 - present - **Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count:** The Lumina Foundation for Education asked MDC to become managing partner for a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed, particularly students of color and low-income students who have traditionally faced significant barriers to success. Achieving the Dream emphasizes the use of data to drive change and focuses on measurable outcomes, especially closing achievement gaps.

2003 - present - **Latino Pathways:** MDC formally launched Latino Pathways, a demonstration project designed to create career pathways for Latino immigrants, in two major North Carolina labor markets: Greensboro and Charlotte. The project is a response to the *State of the South* data on the occupational challenges facing Latino immigrants and seeks to integrate the new workforce as well as promote the growth of key industry sectors needing new labor.

2003 - 2007 - **Strategic Network for Community Philanthropy:** MDC was selected as managing partner for a Ford Foundation initiative to develop resources and community capacity in the South to promote social and racial equality.

2004 - **State of the South:** examines the state of public education 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. The report generated unprecedented demand for copies and presentations by MDC staff.

2004 - present - **EITC Carolinas:** a resource network funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, EITC Carolinas supports community volunteer groups to assist working families in reclaiming and retaining their income through the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and no-cost or low-cost tax preparation services. Asset building policy work is supported by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities.

2004 - 2007 - **Rural Leadership for Community Change:** a program to develop leadership courses for students to become leaders and change agents in their own communities. This program represented MDC's first contract with the federal Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), which supports innovative educational reform projects that can serve as national models for the improvement of postsecondary education.

2005 - present - **FEMA Emergency Preparedness Demonstration Project:** A joint initiative of MDC and the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the demonstration program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help disadvantaged communities in six states and the District of Columbia prepare for disasters. MDC is the lead partner for the two-year program, which organizes community groups to develop strategies for alerting residents to the hazards of natural, technological, and manmade disasters and communicate what they can do to be better prepared. In 2007, FEMA made an additional grant to extend the program for another year so that the program can reach into areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

2005 - 2006 - **Franklin-Southampton Community Development:** a community-building initiative for Franklin City/Southampton County, Virginia, designed to revitalize the region's economy and reduce poverty and supported by the Camp Foundation and Franklin-Southampton Charities. MDC coaches a group of residents through a strategic planning process, providing research, data analysis, and connections to technical assistance.

2005 - present - **Jessie Ball duPont Community Building Fund in Jacksonville, Florida:** a community development initiative to promote change that will benefit children, families, and neighborhoods. The (Jacksonville, FL) Community Foundation, with funding from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, is managing a community development initiative to effect community-wide, systemic change on behalf of children, families, and neighborhoods. MDC led the Community Foundation through a process of evaluating its practices and priorities, which led to a change in direction. MDC also worked with the Jacksonville Children's Commission staff and board, using the same process.

2005 - present - **Danville Regional Foundation:** MDC is taking the new Foundation, created through the sale of the local hospital, through a community assessment process that examines economic development prospects for the area as well as education, workforce, and health outcomes so that the Foundation can be strategic in its work in the region. MDC also helped the Foundation's board set the mission, vision, and values that will guide its grant making.

2007 - **Disconnected Youth:** ages 16 to 24, and neither in school nor in a job, are the subject of an MDC research project, funded by the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, to gauge the scope of the problem in the Research Triangle area of NC, catalog and assess current programs tackling the problem, and make recommendations for a comprehensive approach in future.

2007 – present - **Rural People, Rural Policy:** The Kellogg Foundation hires MDC to work with its Rural People, Rural Policy initiative, set in six rural policy networks throughout the country. Through designing and coordinating peer

learning sessions, MDC will help grantees further develop their networks and sharpen their skills in bringing about policy change that benefits rural areas.

2007 – present - **Learning from Constructive Failures:** is a project, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to learn from mistakes made in the field of community economic development. Its objective is to identify the lessons learned from mistakes made in designing and implementing economic development initiatives so that nonprofits can boost their capacity to manage complex community economic development efforts. The project will compile papers that identify mistakes and constructive failures and will present results and discuss implications in a conference of nonprofits and other interested parties.

2007 - **State of the South:** calls upon the region's philanthropic organizations to think more creatively and act more boldly to help the South address its self-limiting inequities and spur its competitiveness in a global economy. The report generates numerous requests for presentations to philanthropic organizations and their boards and great interest among those in the philanthropic and nonprofit arenas.