A Community-Centric Model for Cultural Sustainability and Roles of Crafts and Cultural Organizations in the Ecosystem of Community Well-being

With a Case Study from Mae Chaem, Chiang Mai, Thailand

By
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For
Crafting Resilience
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About the author

Teng Chamchumrus is an applied strategist with more than 20 years of experience in the nonprofit and the private sectors. He has a BA in economics and an MBA from Harvard University and serves as Executive Officer, at the Smithsonian Institution, where he provides strategic thinking, leadership and management expertise in planning and implementing education and audience engagement initiatives. Prior to the Smithsonian, Teng held various management and leadership roles at the American Red Cross, including leading the financial planning and analysis function for major disaster relief operations. He serves on the board of the International Council of Museums – United States (ICOM-US) and is an active member of the ICOM International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC). Locally, he serves on the board of Montgomery History, Montgomery County, Maryland. Teng is also a Fulbright Specialist.

Teng is interested in museums' roles in serving communities and the intersection of economic development, cultural sustainability, and sustainable cities. Teng loves cities and is committed to bring his professional expertise and experience to help keep cities vibrant and diverse for generations to come.

Hello … สวัสดีครับ

Today’s three questions

Given that communities around the world change continuously and inevitably

- How can we foster sustainable change and keep communities vibrant, resilient and well?
- What role does culture, including crafts, play in community well-being?
- How can cultural organizations play an active role in this effort?

If you had $1M, what would you do?

Historically significant

In the buffer zone of a UNESCO World Heritage site in a historic city

Architecturally one of a kind in this neighborhood

The neighborhood:
- A world-famous street food stand
- A site of the hungry ghost festival
- At a threat of re-development

Given the context …

Residents have limited access to financing for home ownership

Increasing rent for residents and businesses

Limited amenities

A decline in local economic activities and employment

Migration to the suburb

Shutdown of the local school

A decline in social activities; little space for gathering

What changes?

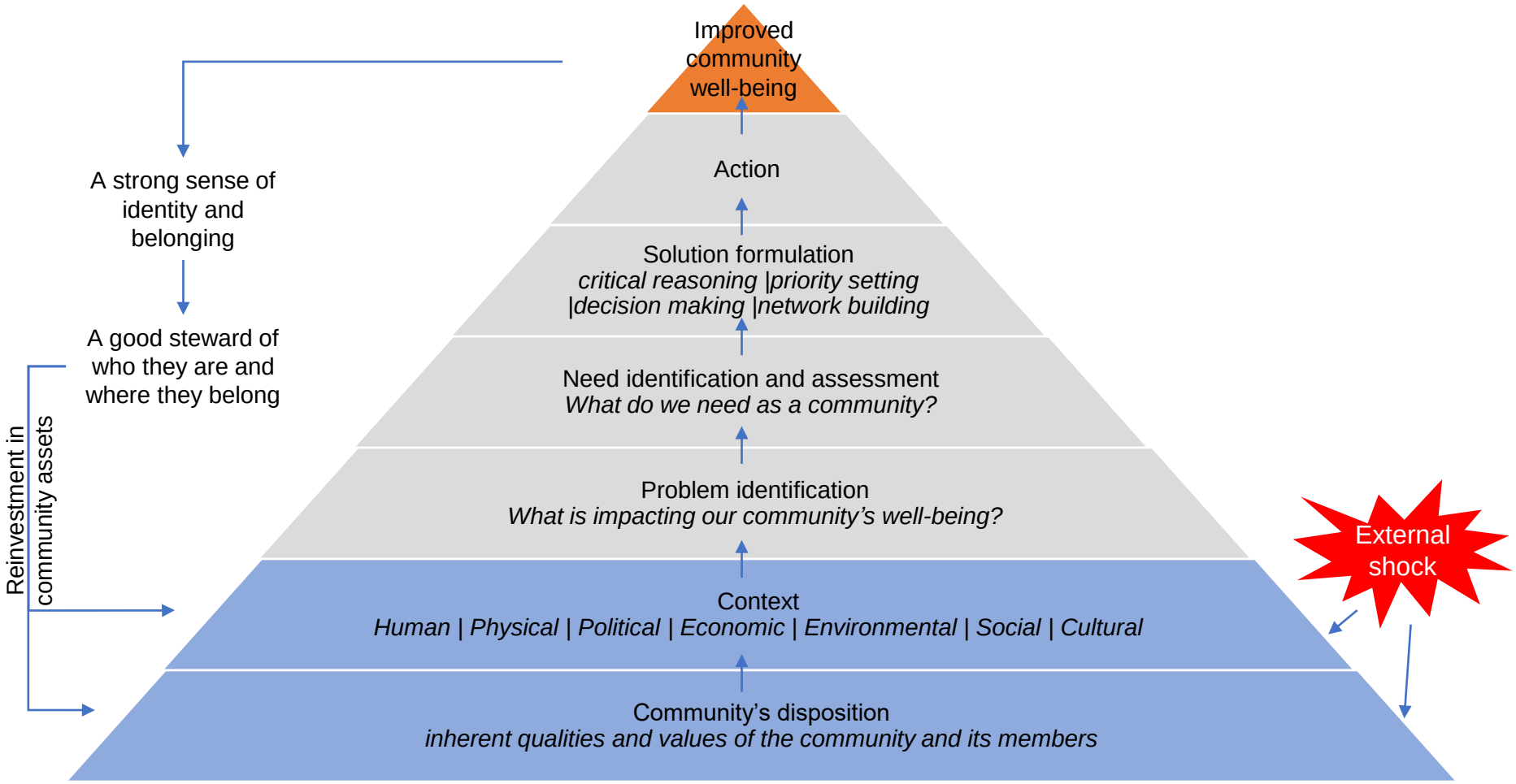
Current models
For urban heritage conservation

- Priority on built heritage, objects or intangible heritage
- Culture as an extrinsic factor, to be quantified and justified economically
- Culture as heritage, to be preserved
- Approach:
  - Traditionally, discipline-specific
  - Emerging interdisciplinary models can be difficult to implement – too conceptual or too complex
- Results and sustainability:
  - Anecdotal and mixed
  - Indication that addressing community needs is a key to success

Proposed model
For urban cultural sustainability

- Priority on communities and their needs
- Culture as a basic need, intrinsic to communities
  - Like access to food, housing or healthcare
- Culture evolves with people, at a sustainable rate
- Approach:
  - Interdisciplinary, including underrepresented fields
  - Implementation-focused
    - Guiding questions and tools
    - Learning by doing
- Paths to results and sustainability:
  - Give communities the agency to identify, prioritize and address local challenges
  - Create heritage ownership to promote impact and sustainability
  - Allow culture to evolve with people to make culture relevant and sustainable

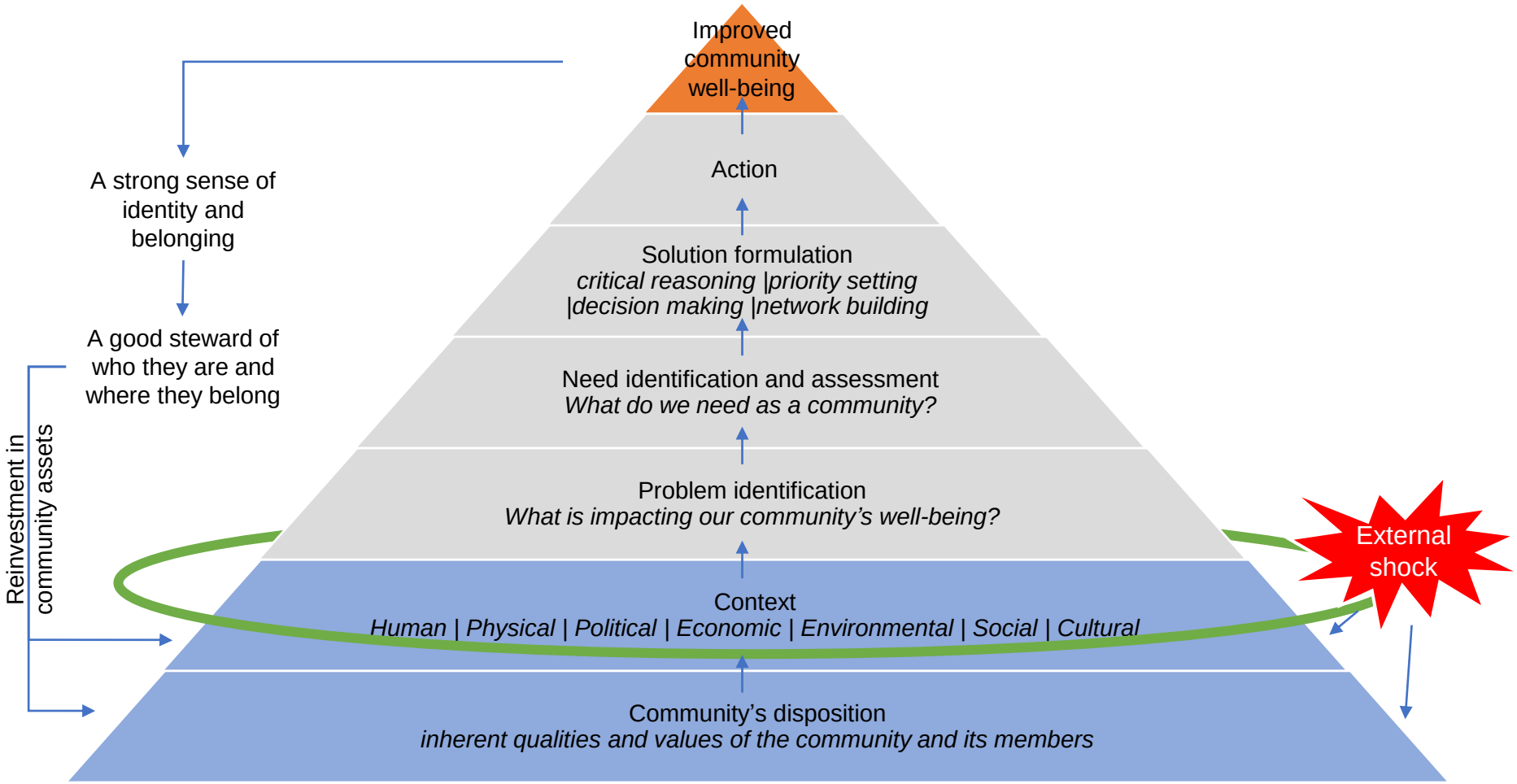
A new model


Improved community well-being
Action
Solution formulation
critical reasoning |priority setting |decision making |network building
Need identification and assessment
What do we need as a community?
Problem identification
What is impacting our community's well-being?
Context
Human | Physical | Political | Economic | Environmental | Social | Cultural
Community's disposition
inherent qualities and values of the community and its members
A strong sense of identity and belonging
A good steward of who they are and where they belong
Reinvestment in community assets
External shock

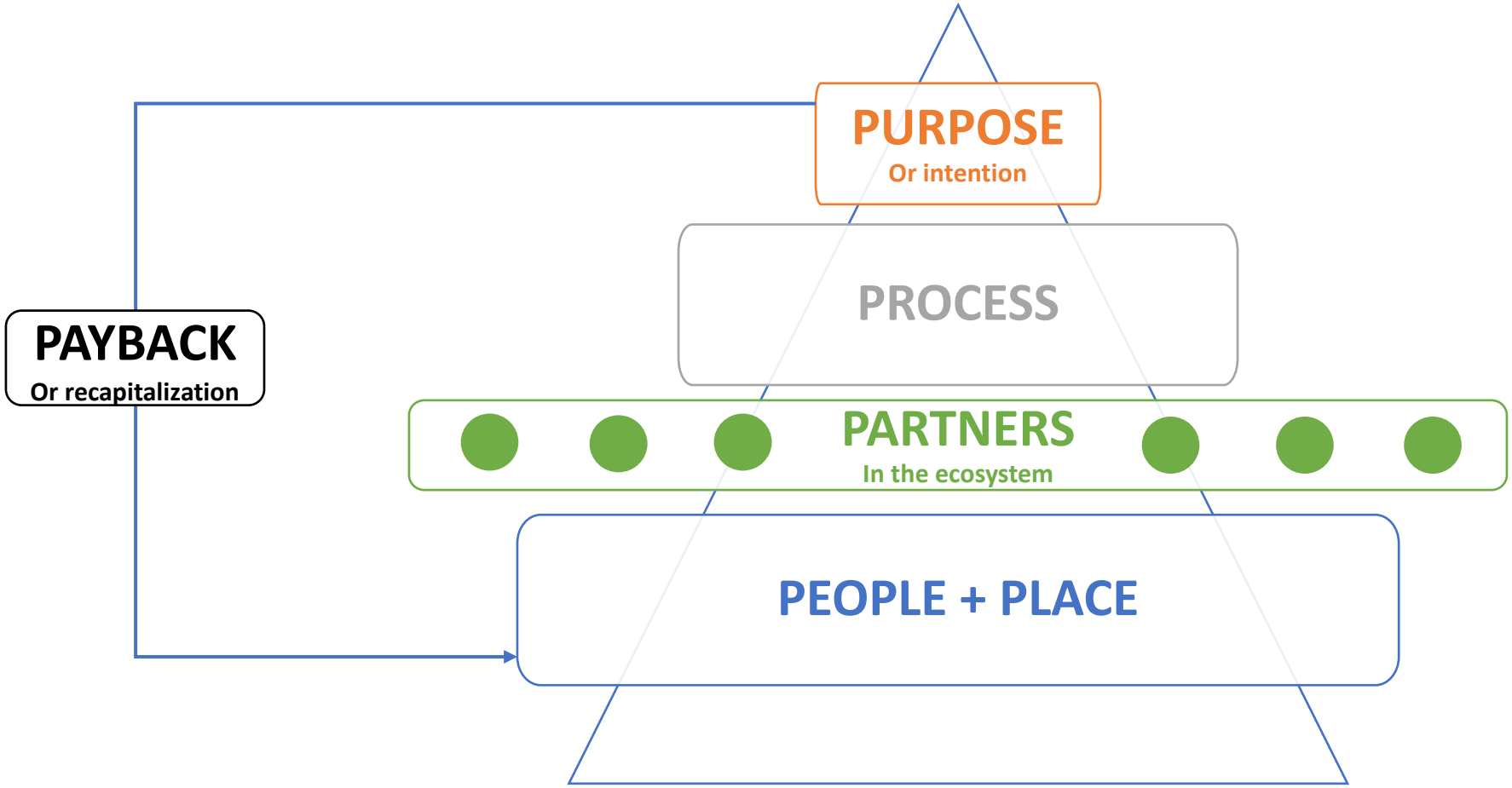
The ecosystem of community* well-being

* “Community” can neighborhood, town, city, region, country, etc.

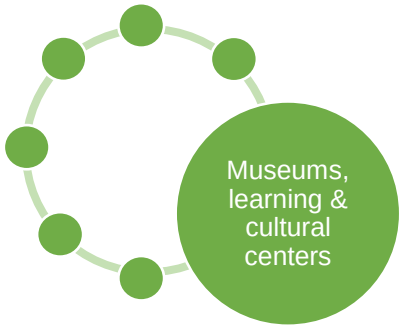
Where can *your* museum add value …
In *your* community and ecosystem?



The 6 Ps of Community-Centric Model For Cultural Sustainability

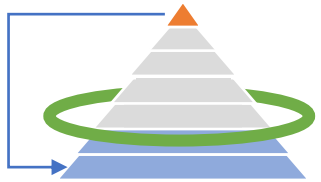


Implementation in cultural organizations
Helpful tools and guiding questions



- Is service to communities explicit in your organization's **vision, mission, guiding principles, mandate and organizational culture**?
- Does the **leadership** of your organization – both board and management – emphasize, commit to and invest in service to communities?
- **SWOT analysis** – apply effectively and purposefully
  - With service to your community as a focus and the improvement of the community well-being as an end goal
  - What can your organization uniquely contribute to help address needs and challenges of the community?
  - Where/with whom in the ecosystem can your organization work to contribute to this end goal
- **Think beyond objects**
  - Bringing balance between objects and for whom they are (people and their well-being)

Case studies



To demonstrate that:

- It can be done, and with results
- The community-centric model is adaptable to different context, format & scale
- Vision, commitment, and investment from leadership are key to success
- You can't do it alone, and it is important to know when to lead, when to follow and what to contribute … the collective power of the network
- It is messy, it is difficult, and it is all worth it

The four retrospective case studies:

I. Neighborhood
- Chinatown, Washington, DC, and local cultural civil society organizations (CSOs)

II. City
- Oakland, California, and the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA)

III. Nation/region
- Bhutan and the Royal Textile Academy of Bhutan (RTA)

IV. Without borders
- Small communities and Museums on Main Street (MoMS) by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)

A case study in the making

Mae Chaem District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand, with

KhonThai 4.0

Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Centre (CMCACC)

And many, many more partners

Mae Chaem: people & place, today

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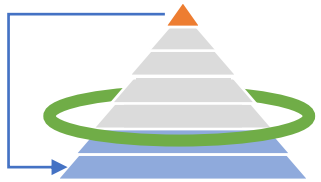
Mae Chaem: intention (micro)



What is SUCCESS and HAPPINESS to you?

Success is relative. True happiness is to be able to return home to Mae Chaem and live close to my family. That is complete happiness.
~ Chinnawat Phokaew

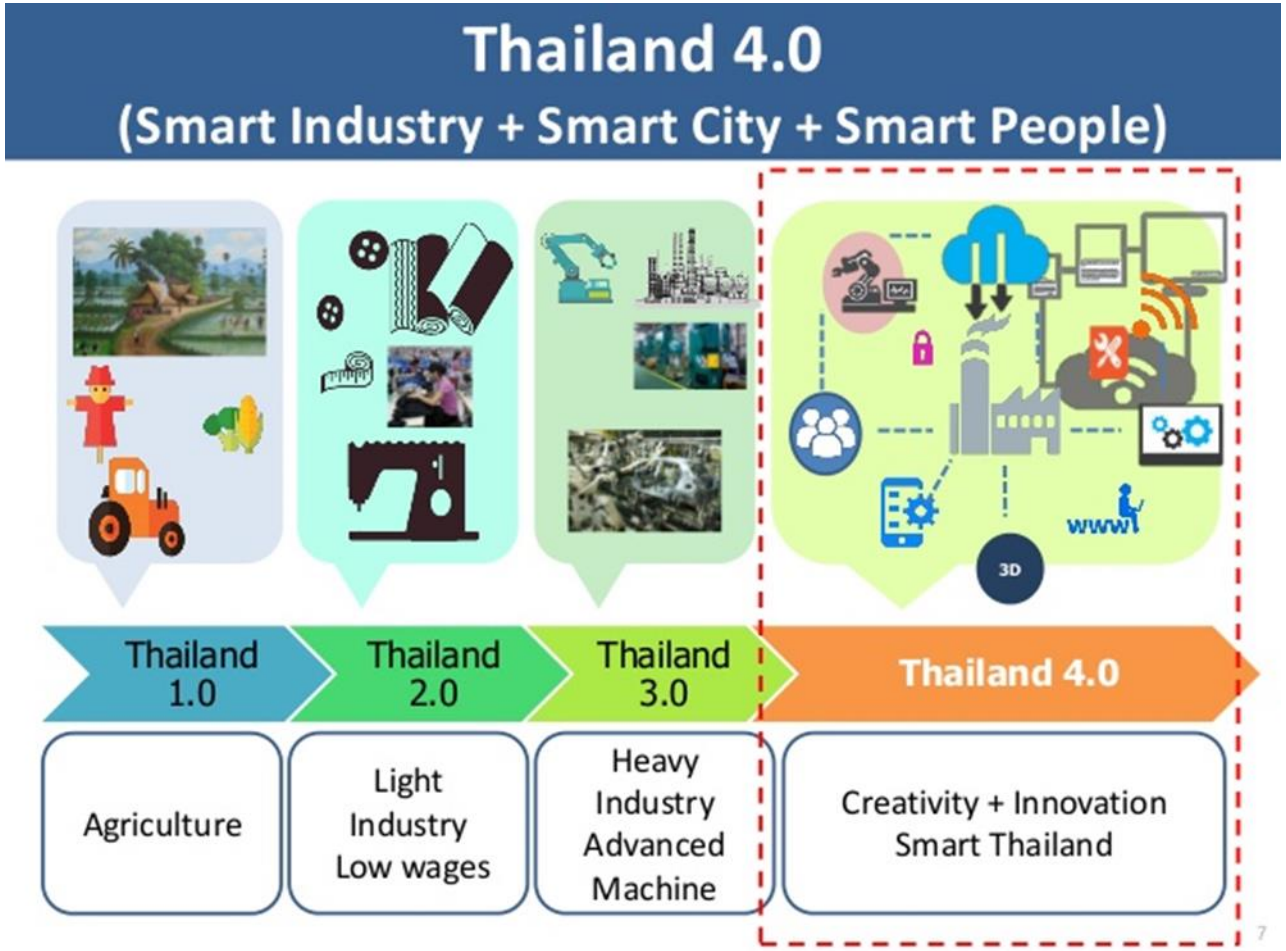
Happiness is to live near my birthplace, with my kids and my mom, and to work near home.
~ Saminee Inchum

Let me start with happiness. First, happiness is to do what I like. Second, happiness is to be with loved ones. In Mae Chaem, I do what I like, and I am with my mom.
~ Manas Charoendet

Happiness is to be able to do what I like.
~ Nat-ornrawing Prasopsook

I want to travel around the world … but happiness is to be with my friends in Mae Chaem. Our entire village know each other. I want to be here for the long run.
~ Patiwet Sripat

Mae Chaem: intention (macro)



Mae Chaem: from today to intended future

How do we engage and equip youth to explore, think, act and thrive in a changing world, impress them with a sense of commitment to and ownership of their community, and take action to reinvest in their shared future?

How can museums as civic and gathering space and museum education practices and tools help to unlock cultural assets, and contribute to whole child development?

Mae Chaem: the ecosystem

KHONTHAI4.0
แผนงานยุทธศาสตร์เป้าหมาย(Spearhead)
ด้านสังคม คนไทย 4.0 Khon Thai 4.0

เครือข่ายพิพิธภัณฑ์
กลางเวียงเชียงใหม่
CHIANG MAI CENTRE MUSEUMS

เทศบาลนครเชียงใหม่
ChiangMai Municipality

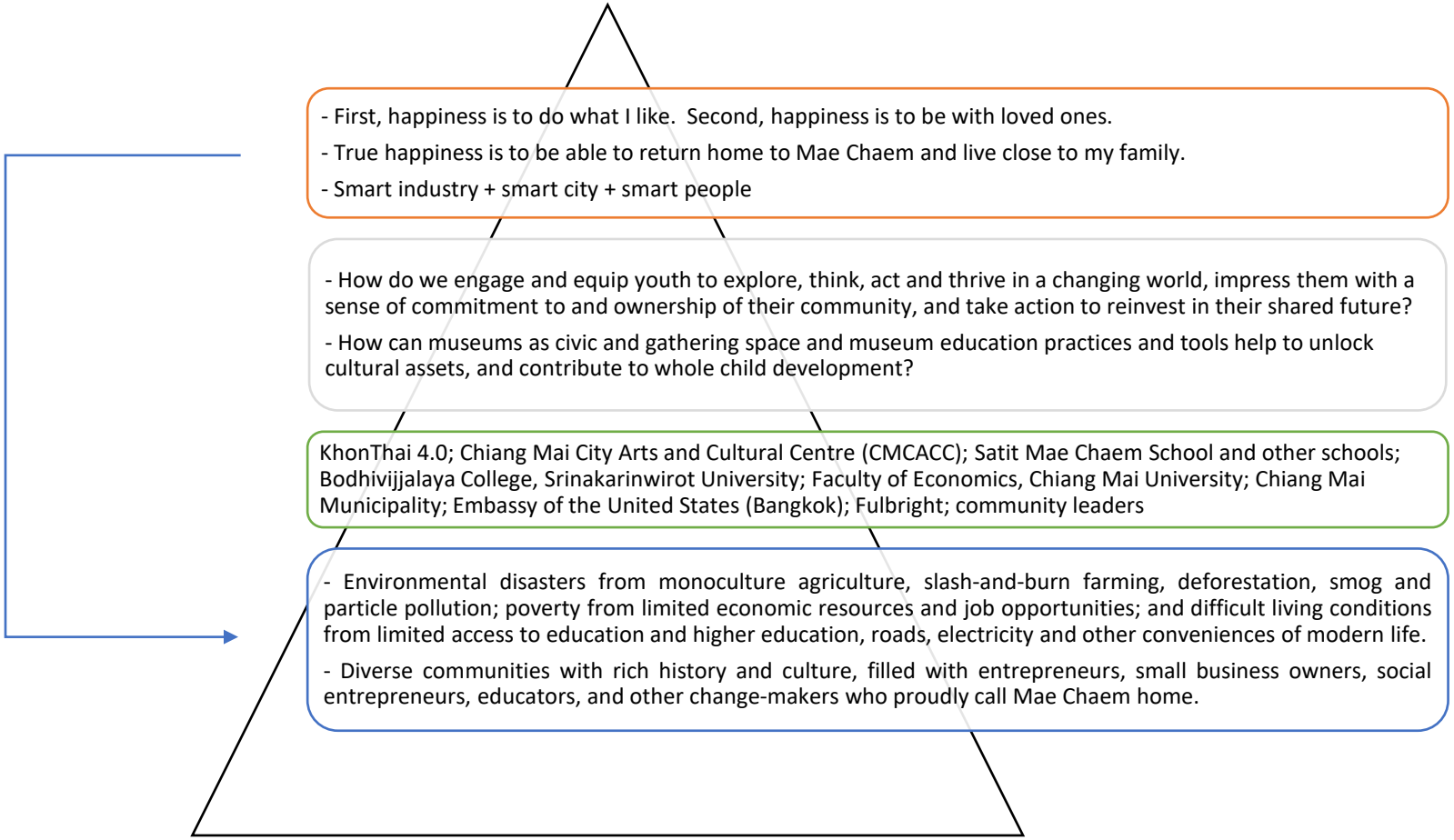
FULBRIGHT

SWU

Mae Chaem Commu-nity

Mae Chaem: recapitalization

Mae Chaem: a case study in the making



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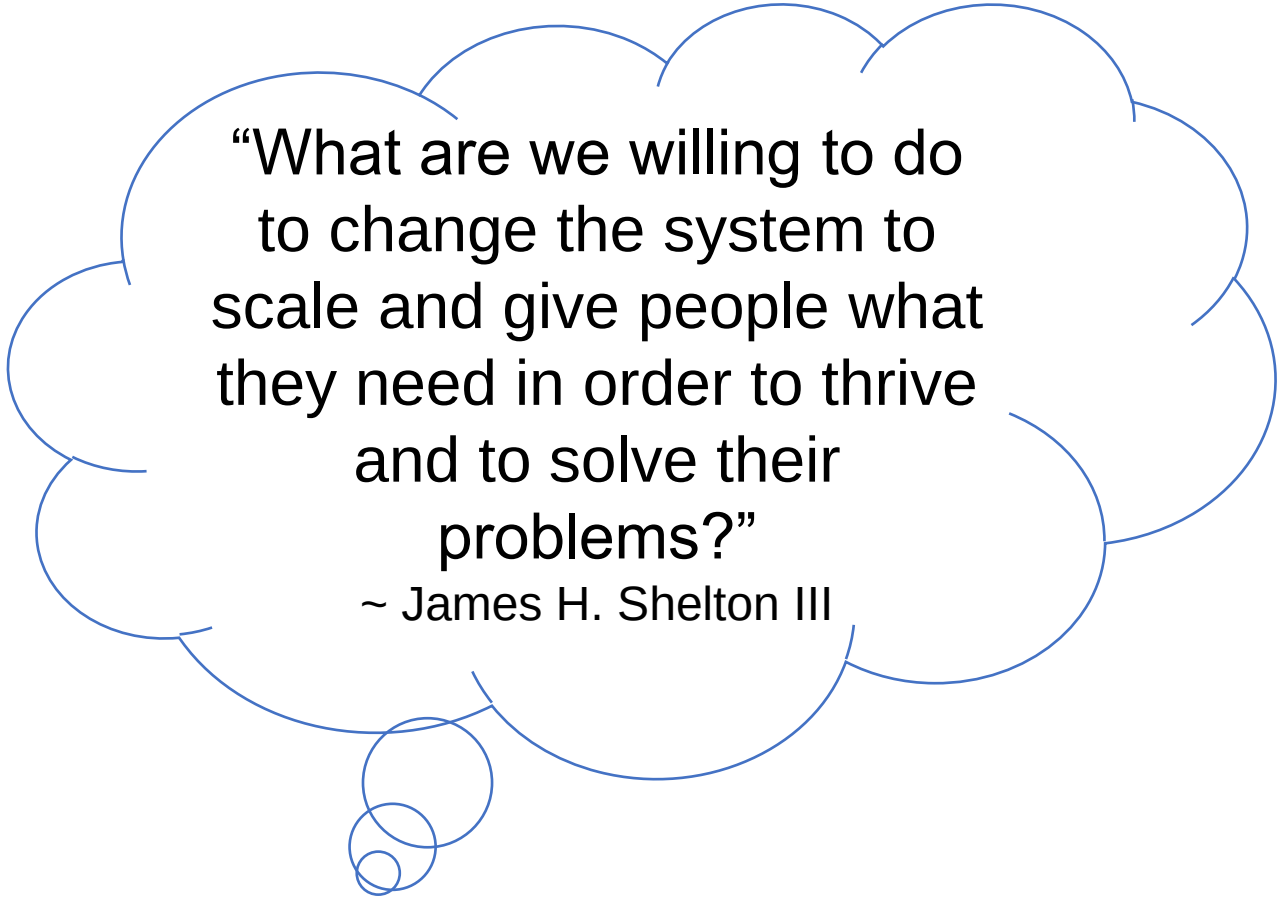
Call to action



- Dialogue
- Act and collaborate
  - Research
  - Test / Implement
  - Evaluate
  - Fund
  - Advocate
  - Support
- Share knowledge and build a community of practice
- For a published version of this presentation: http://camoc.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/09/KYOTO-CONFERENCE-BOOK-OF-PROCEEDINGS-fs0915-web.pdf
- Keep in touch

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Appendix: Retrospective Case Studies

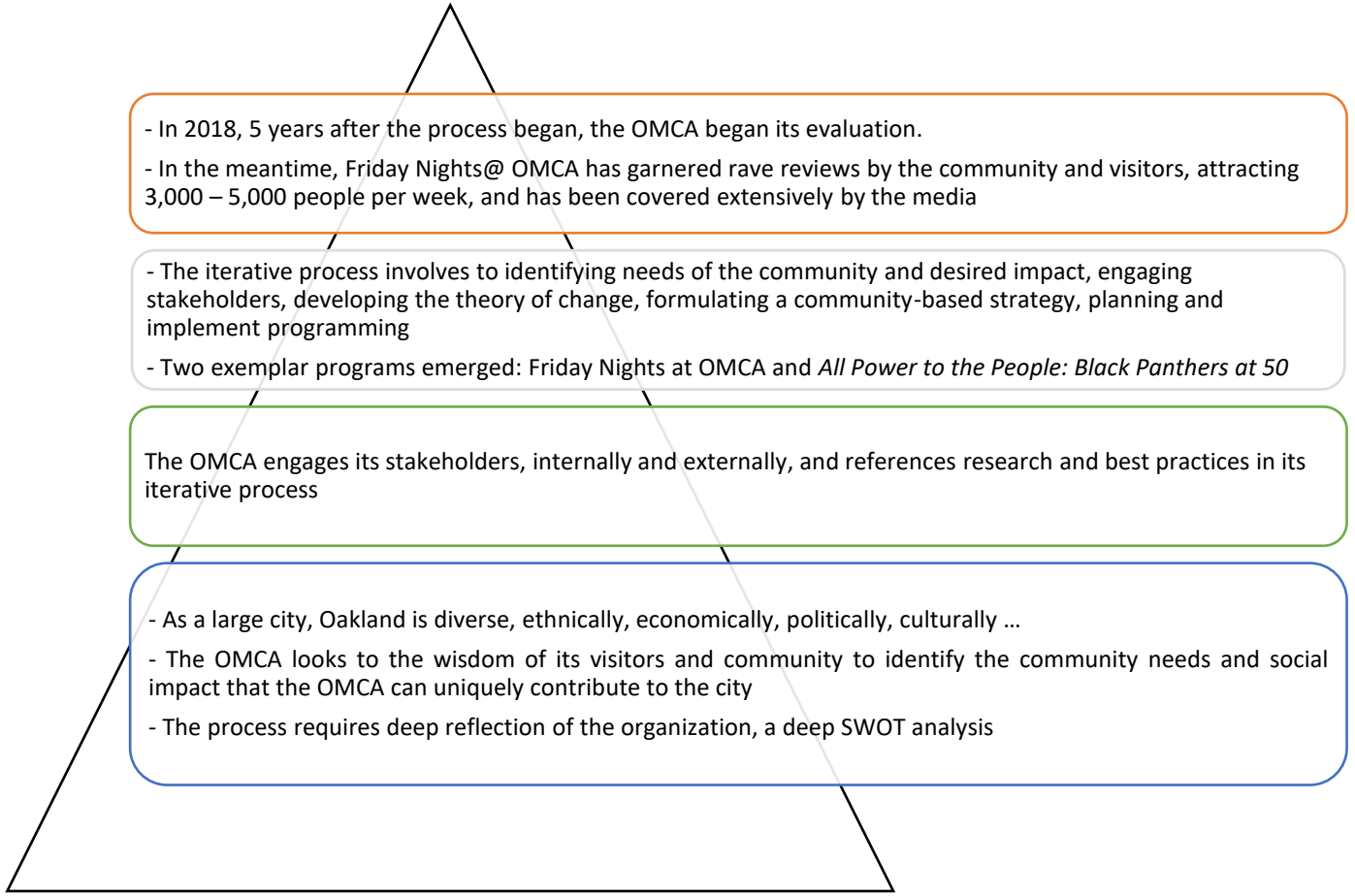
I. Neighborhood
II. City
III. Nation/region
IV. Without borders

Case study I: Neighborhood

Chinatown, Washington, DC, and local cultural civil society organizations (CSOs)

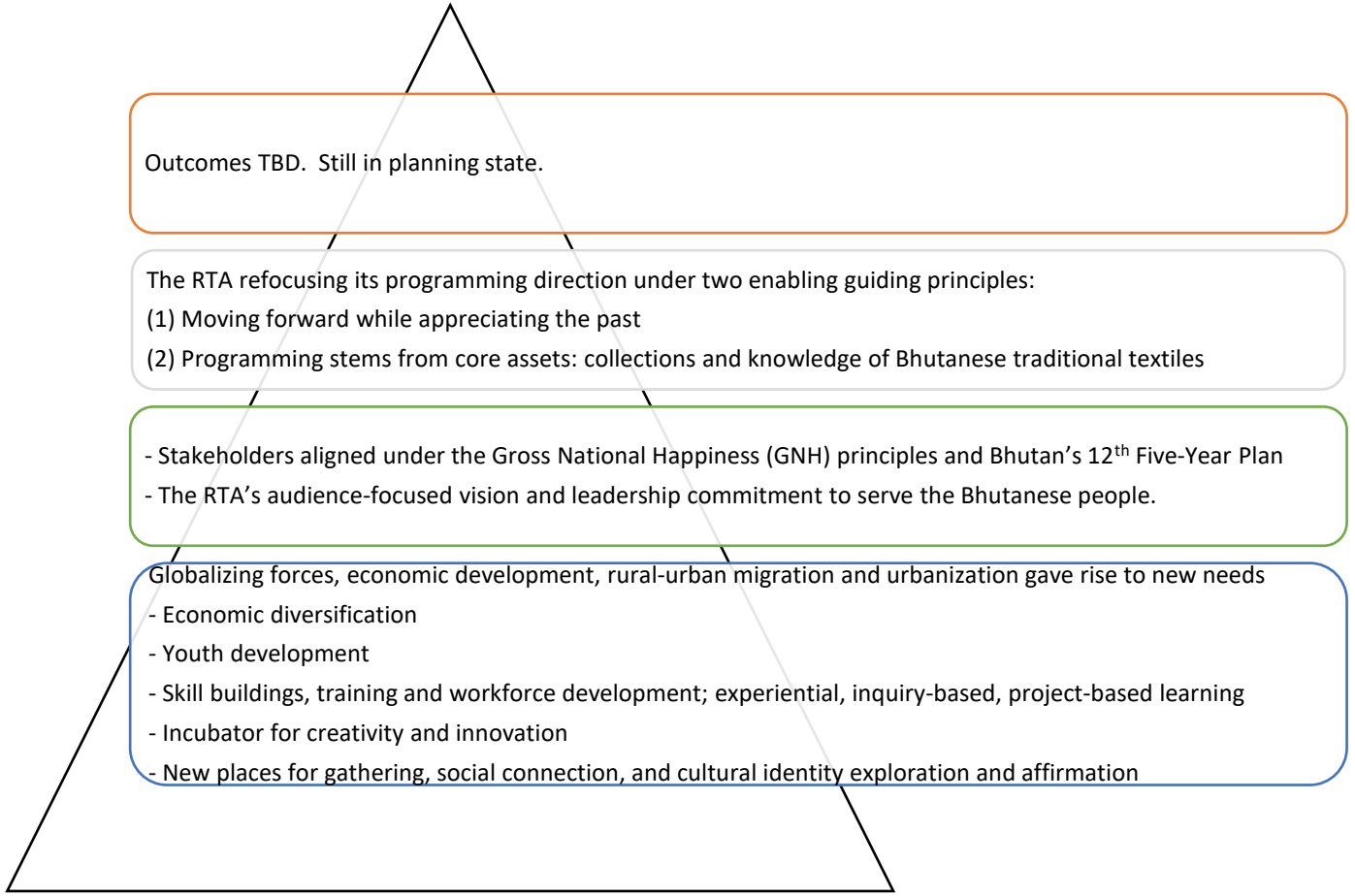
Case study II: City

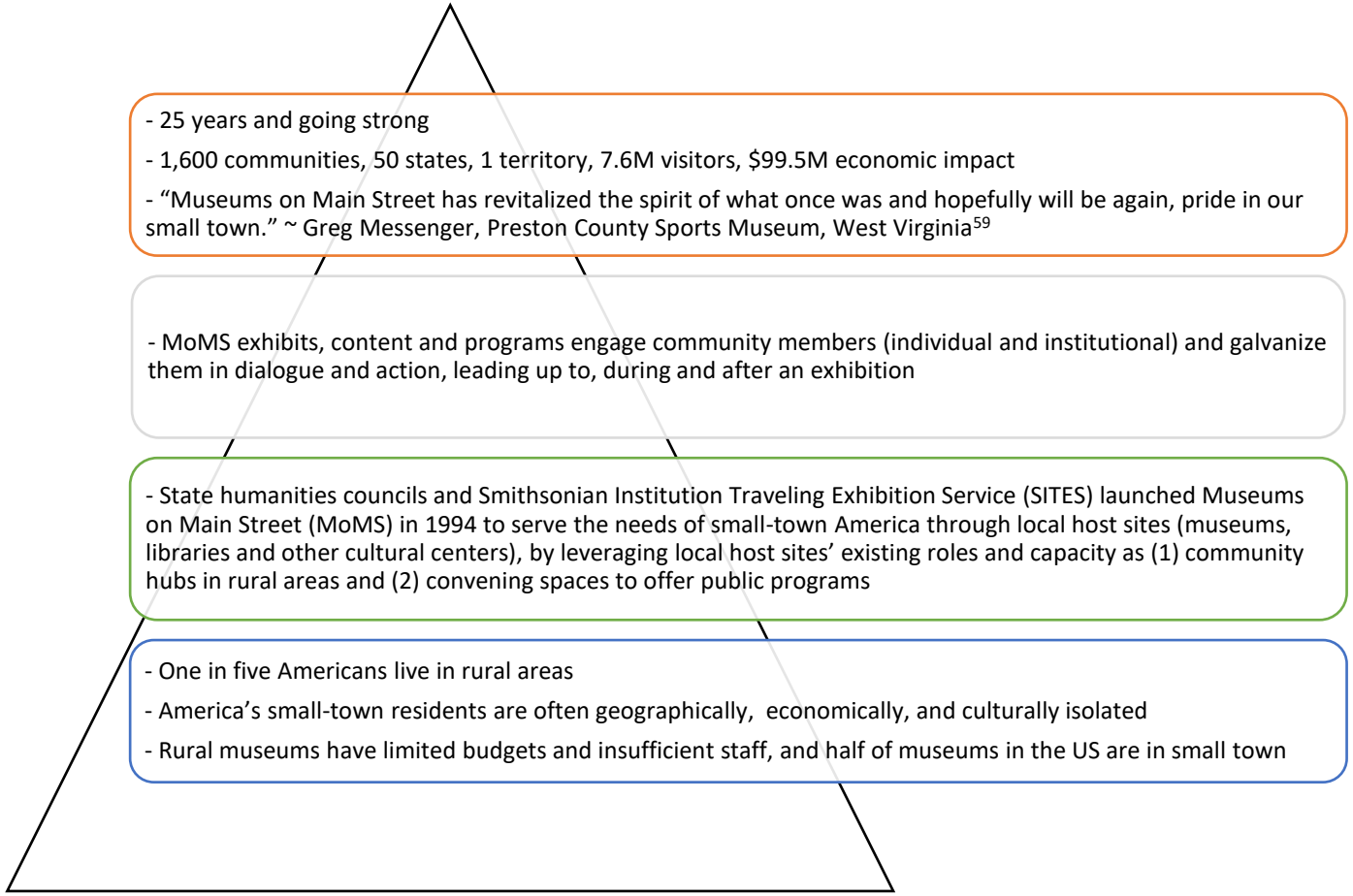
Oakland, California, and the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA)



Case study III: Nation / Region

Bhutan and the Royal Textile Academy of Bhutan (RTA)



Case study IV: Without Borders

Rural communities and Museums on Main Street (MoMS) by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)