Community Development

Rhys Evans

HGUt

2022

Community Development????

- What do we mean by this?
  - It is a field of study
  - It is a set of practices
  - It is something which matters in individual people's lives

- What is Community?

- What is Development?

Community

- What is Community?

- There is never ONE community! So we often say 'communities'

- There are two types of community:
  - Spatial or Geographic Community
  - Communities of Affect, or Communities of Feeling

Geographic community

- Located somewhere
    - Varying definitions – local, regional, national
    - Size and scale matter as to how the community works within itself, and how it holds beliefs and identity.
    - Large scale tends to require simpler definitions of identity in order to encompass diversity
    - Small scale is the level at which people *inter-act* with each other

    - Geographic communities tend to be made up of multiple smaller communities, nested within each other

Communities of Affect

- *Communities to which we belong*
- *Voluntary membership – not born there*
- *Can be across a very wide range of things – from vocation to music*
- *We can belong to multiple of these communities at once*

Kaštiel'
Ladce
MaHoLa

- The two types of communities interact with each other in multiple ways
  - One 'community' can be hegemonic within a wider spatial community
  - Others can be disenfranchised
  - Each forms the other, even in their differences (communities often employ "Othering" to create their own sense of identities
    - i.e. The City and the Countryside

- Generally, within the Rural Community Development field, community tends to mean a local identified community who lives in a certain place and who share, often, characteristics of deprivation, disenfranchisement or are otherwise discriminated against.

- This is because the emphasis is on 'development' which implies being lower and needing to go higher, as it were.

- And because 'Rural' communities are measured by the same rules as Cities.

Development??

- Development can apply to many different fields and aspects of human life

- Development can be:
  - Economic
  - Cultural
  - Personal
  - Professional
  - Lifestyle
  - Health
  - Etc, etc, etc.

- As it is applied to different aspects of life, Community Development also takes different forms, and employs different tools. These could include:

  - Education and learning
  - Economic development
  - Provision of public goods
  - Personal development
  - Development of community interactions – network building

The public and the personal

- Communities are made up of individual people
- It is the actions of individuals that create community and community actions/standards/capacities/achievements
- "The World changes one individual at a time"

Kaštieľ
Ladce
MaHoLa

Discourse and meaning

- This is where discourse and the making of meaning come in.
- We create identities and communities out of both the concrete actions of individuals and out of the messy stew of acts of representation which swirl around us.
- Thus we define ourselves and our communities – by what we are and by what we are not (or at least what we think we are and are not).

- Because this universe of meanings is constantly changing, so too do the meanings and definitions we arrive at.

- Thus, communities are constantly changing too.

- Community is, therefore, not a static category. Rather it is something we grab to understand but risk having that understanding slip through our fingers.

- Community is a *becoming*, and only if we can grasp that, can we begin to understand the ways in which communities form, mutate, grow and morph.

Community development?

- What does this mean for our understanding of community development?

- It explains the diversity of the field

- It empowers us to find our own unique solutions to unique problems

- Yet, it is always based upon people – to engage in community development involves developing people too.

At HGUt we teach and research community development because we see it as the key to empowering people, to creating vital rural communities, and to supporting "our students to pursue their own dreams"

Kaštieľ
Ladce
MaHoLa