COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODELS – THEORY AND PRACTICE IN NEW ZEALAND

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RESEARCH FROM...

Community Development,
Insights for Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Narrative interview, bounded
- 15 respondents, 1 pulled out
- Interview transcripts edited and checked by respondents
- Themes drawn out to create a toolbox

THIS PRESENTATION WILL FOCUS ON

- a brief overview of the history of CD practice in ANZ
- Influences on the respondents including visionaries and philosophical standpoints
- a brief outline of some of the key points of the community development toolbox

INSPIRATIONS AND VISIONARIES

Political Movements/Issues:
- Structural Analysis Alan Curnow
- Anti-racism Treaty of Waitangi, Anti-racism, Springbok tour, Black Women’s movement
- Feminism Inspirational women e.g. Marilyn Waring, Sazja Davies, Irihapeti Ramsden, Lydia Bradey
- Marxism/Anti-capitalist Mushroom magazine, neo-peasantry
- Critical Theorists David Harvey (Anti-capitalist Geographer), John Sadding (Vanguard Method)

Community practice models: Neighborhood Development (Wendy Craig), Asset Based Community Development (Peter Kenyon), Holistic Global Management approach (Agnes Gannon) Victory Village, Transition Towns, Inspiring Communities, Community Led Development (Mary-Jane Rivers), ReGeneration/Social Entrepreneurship (Billy Matheson)

Social Work Academics Wendy Craig, Manford and Walsh-Tapitala; Pat Shannon
**PRAXIS**

- Theory derived from practice
  - Developed a ‘community development toolbox’ from the description of practice given by respondents
  - Tools proven in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand

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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX 1**

**Engaging your community: cultivating a shared vision and building trust**

- CD is a collective practice, if there is no shared vision it is not CD
- Tuckman’s (1965) stages of group dynamics, i.e. forming, storming, norming and performing still relevant
- This process is about a re-distribution of power
- Different levels of trust dependent on how embedded the CD worker is
- Be prepared for disappointments when communities don’t work together

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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX 2**

**Keeping things going: Communication and facilitation**

- Need a mix of task and process
- To foster engagement communicate a balance of encouragement and challenge, make sure everyone has their say
- Understand the group formation process as natural and allow people to conceive and re-conceive ideas at a pace that suits them
- Develop a feel for the delicate balance between communication, consultation and action
- Meetings are one method of building relationships but the actual doing of activities may be a better way to achieve the same ends.

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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX 3**

**Ways of getting stuff done: Activities and strategies to try**

- **Community Action**
  - Educational interventions e.g. SCEP, Kahuanga rae, Waitati Energy Project, Papatiaoūrora
  - Community Plans e.g. Central Otago
  - Establish alternatives e.g. SCEP, Kohanga reo, Waitati Energy Project, Papatiaoūrora
  - Lobbying and workshops e.g. as run by Te Whanau Matariki, CORSO & Transition Towns,
  - Umbrella groups to provide infrastructure for community activities e.g. Blueskin Community Trust, Vashall Support Trust

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*Scott Willis gives an example of going to a community public meeting to discuss the Wind Project, “…there’ll be someone who goes, ‘I think you should be investing in installation instead of building a wind cluster because we just need to reduce demand,’ and I was about to step up and give the reasons why we were going to continue with the story. But before I could do that, a community member interrupted me and said, ‘What about insulation?’ And somebody else said, ‘I want to see this story go to this project can give both our own energy and insulation, so why should we just set things out so everyone can be clear about what is happening and most importantly why it is happening.’ Our youngest respondent Lani Evan’s from Re-generation talks about the need to experience failure: If you want to get involved in community work the key things to bring are determination and passion, and then it becomes important to model failure, not just set things out so everyone can be clear about what is happening and most importantly why it is happening.”

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*Suzanne Ellison from Huirapa Marae explains the importance of articulating that shared vision: “…slight differences in motivation don’t hold back many good ideas. When things get a bit difficult that’s when you start to argue a bit, but the difference doesn’t seem to be as big as one would have articulated some fundamentals…This is part of gaining a shared vision. Sometimes it feels a bit like stating the obvious but actually it’s good to try…It’s really about becoming clear about what is happening and most importantly why it is happening.”

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*Our youngest respondent Lani Evan’s from Re-generation talks about the need to experience failure: If you want to get involved in community work the key things to bring are determination and passion, and then it becomes important to model failure, not just set things out so everyone can be clear about what is happening and most importantly why it is happening. Some of them say, “Scott, it’s too long, too wordy.” And some people say, “Scott, you don’t tell us enough. You’ve got to give us more information.” And some people say, “Oh, I love it. It’s really personal.” And I think, well I’ll just keep on doing it then.*
Liz McColl talks about taking an organic approach to working with family camps.

...It’s about creating the environment for people to get together, giving them basic information, building their relationships through having fun of some sort – physical activity or doing something that’s pleasurable – and then allowing or supporting whatever happens.

Leaving the project: succession planning

- A key part of power sharing, bringing new people up front and providing them with both the space and skills to lead.

“...communities don’t develop in a straight line, they don’t tidily complete step one and then move on to step two and three. Before you know it some key person has left, or there’s a bust-up in relationships between some key individuals or groups, and then the community is making another start, hopefully not from step one but a bit further down the line. They’ll start a re-build, or their time as a group may have passed.”

Suzanne Ellison

CONCLUSIONS

- Practitioners illustrated a range of approaches
- Influenced by methods promoted at the time
- Despite coming from different places – general principles were shared
- You need to begin by doing

The mix of task and process comes from developing a ‘feel’ for the work

- Education most useful after experience
- Funding reporting requirements can control and hinder

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX 4