

Community Engagement

An Introduction to Community Development
Theory & Social Capital

Discussion points for today

- Social capital within society
- Diverse meanings of community development
- Knowledge base of community development
- Core approaches to community development
- Policies and key individuals
- International community development

What is social capital?

- Community as meaningful interconnectedness represents a resource that can be used to increase value (Somerville 2011)
- Therefore it can function as capital
- Which leads to the question – how can we mobilise such capital and thereby create a ‘developed’ community

Some other definitions

- ...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1986)
- ...a variety of entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors...within that structure...(Coleman 1988)
- Features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives...Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust (Putnam 1993)

What constitutes social capital?

- Economic
- Social
- Cultural
- Symbolic

(Bourdieu 1986)

- All suggest that social capital has something to do with networks of social relations that enable or facilitate action of some kind
- If we consider social capital as a self-expanding value then it has clear links to sociability

Functions of social capital (Putnam 2000, Woolcock 1988)

Function	Type of social tie	Effect	Metaphor
Bonding	Strong, horizontal	'Getting by' (survival)	Social glue
Bridging	Weak, horizontal	'Getting on' (cohesion)	Social oil
Linking	On-off, vertical	'Getting up' (empowerment)	Social grease

Where does engagement and/or development fit in?

- The development of bonding social capital within the community
- The development of bridging social capital across communities or across groups
- The development of linking social capital

Community Development...a matter of definition

- Community as a contested term
- What do we mean by development?
- Modernization, urbanization, industrialisation, social or political transformation, technological improvement, economic growth
- All point to a change directed towards a particular social or economic goal

Shaw (2008)

How community is constructed politically provides the discourses and practices which frame the parameters of community development at any given time; its possibilities and its limitations. Politics expresses the totality of interrelationships, involving power, authority and influence. Clearly community does not exist within a political vacuum, but reflects and reinforces the dynamics of power within particular contexts and times. The same is true for community development.

Christenson, Fendley and Robinson (1989)

A group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e. a planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural and/or environmental situation.

Summers (1986)

Rural community development is planned intervention to stimulate social change for the explicit purpose of the 'betterment of the people' and so development is ultimately a normative activity based on someone's 'vision of what might be or ought to be'

Community Development is...

- A process such as technical assistance, self-help or conflict approaches
- A program of specified activities such as housing construction, adoption or agricultural innovations, or implementation of recreational programs
- An outcome such as more employment, housing, access to health care, or civic engagement
- An ideology of action 'to restructure the social, normative and economic order for desired ends.'

Robinson & Green (2011)

Knowledge Base of Community Development

- Research as a factor in understanding community development
- What we discover through the practice of community development can shape how we conceptualize and understand the nature of community
- Community studies provide knowledge on community dynamics that influence when if and how development may occur

Core Approaches to Community Development

- In groups research and feedback on one of the following examples of community development. Consider the pros and cons as well as examples of where this approach may be best suited in respect of community development.
- Technical assistance
- Self-help
- Conflict

Core Approaches to Community Development

- *Technical assistance* – usually a professional needs analysis is conducted to design and implement a change
- *Self-help* – normally through businesses or professionals within a community becoming more active in a community to encourage active engagement. Usually facilitation is required to provide skills to community members
- *Conflict* – local people working together to identify their own needs. Role of professional there is to enable community groups to identify their strengths and power

Policies & Key Individuals

- Government
- Local government
- National intermediaries
- Community development financial institutions - e.g. Credit unions, banks etc
- Community development corporations
- Community based development organisations
- Non-profit organisations
- Private foundations
- For-profit firms
- Professional associations
- Universities

- Emphasis in the UK on specialist community work by service agencies rather than a generic approach.
- Implications of this?

International Community Development

- Diversity of community development practices arising from different ideologies and social justice movements etc
- EU countries tend to work on a modified self-help style process
- Development intertwined with human rights and political freedoms and economic opportunities

Geoghegan and Powell (2008)

A neoliberal version where civil society is subservient to the needs of economic development; a corporatist version that advocates a partnership between the state, market and civil society; and an activist version, where community development is envisaged as local, nodal and global resistance to neoliberalism.

Technical Assistance

- Helps communities define their problems, needs and potential solutions
- 'programs, activities and services...to strengthen the capacity of recipients to improve their performance with respect to an inherent or assigned function' (Wright, 1978)

Types of Technical Assistance

- Technical assistance and power actors

- Can be categorised as follows:

- Legislation
- Administration
- Education
- Collaborators
- Consultants

Non-developmental and Developmental Technical Assistance

- Rationale for resource exchange and relationship between provider and recipient are critical

- Key points

1. Possession of knowledge about an issue not held by another
2. Decision that recipient needs assistance
3. Provider-recipient relationship can be established
4. Provider provides and recipient receives

Key questions for consideration (Kelman and Warwick 1978)

1. Whose values are to be served by the intervention?
2. To what extent do the recipients have an opportunity to participate in the choice of the goals?
3. To what extent does the process enhance the power of the target population to solve problems?
4. Whose problem(s) is (are) being primarily addressed in the technical assistance episode: the provider's or the recipient's?
5. To what extent is the provider engaging in a self-serving activity?

Should a technical assistance model be used as an approach?

- Should ideally be a service delivery role only by providers
- Can it be used with other approaches?
- In terms of developmental technical assistance the process by which the assistance is being carried out is as important as the content
- Not inherently developmental in nature and has been used inappropriately in some instances in the name of engagement

A V-I-C-T-O-R-Y Davis and Salasin (1975)

- Ability
- Values
- Information
- Circumstances
- Timing
- Obligation
- Resistance
- Yield

Self-help approach

- Key concept – working together to help improve quality of life
- Not about immediate outcomes
- Assumes the potential for improving quality of life within the residents in a community

Asset based development

- Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) '*Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*'
- Better than technical assistance...why?
- Start with a mapping process of what already exists – allows for mobilization of resources

Perkins (1993)

- The motto of community development in the 1960s could have been this: '*Give people a fish and they'll eat for a day.*' The 1970s motto could have been: '*Teach people to fish and they'll eat for a lifetime*'. The 1990s (and beyond) approach to development needs to ask the question: '*Who owns the pond?*'

- Facilitation is key
- Basic task is to promote participatory decision making
- Free flow exchange of ideas also needed
- Key areas are –getting started, action planning, maintaining momentum, monitoring and evaluation

Conflict

- Conflict is an expression of incompatible actions between two or more people (Deutsch 1973)
- Territory – physical, social and psychological

Conflict Arenas

- Interpersonal
- Intergroup
- Interorganisational
- Intercultural
- International

- Conflict management may be a necessary part of engagement
- Number of frameworks available to work through issues

Task

- In groups select an area of the UK to research.
- Over the last 30 years what have been the main community development activities that have taken place?
- Where has the rationale come from for the activities?
- How successful have these activities been? How do you know?
- Can you make suggestions for further development work within that area?
