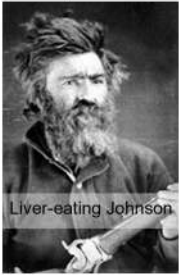


Some Guiding Principles of International Sustainable Community Development Practice

Richard White, PhD. Achieving the SDGs Conference
November 17, 2017- Portland State University



Rocky Mountain Rendezvous



Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen
- Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves
- Enter with an Exit Plan
- Everything is connected to everything else
- Contexts matter
- Pick your issues carefully

Guiding Principles of ISCD

First we must listen

- We don't know what we don't know,
- Give preference to the poor & marginalized,
- People are more important than your research, organization, program, or project,
- Find the 'generative themes' that motivate people to act,
- Listening requires reflective silence

"We must be silent before we can listen.
We must listen before we can learn.
We must learn before we can prepare.
We must prepare before we can serve.
We must serve before we can lead."

Wm Arthur Ward

Guiding Principles of ISCD

First we must listen

- We don't know what we don't know ... and neither do "they"
 - Those closest to the problem or issue have a unique perspective that must be taken into consideration when making decisions that affect their lives.
 - But.., they don't know everything and may be blinded by personal and cultural perspectives
 - *Johari Window* (Luft & Ingham 1955 cf NASA, D. Rumsfeld), "known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns"

Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen
- Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves

Guiding Principles of ISCD

Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves; *and* never promise anything you can't deliver

- Doing it all is a sure way to burnout,
- Making big promises that go unmet is a sure way to defeat the community,
- Little steps in one direction by the community lead to confidence and help build capacity

Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen – people matter more than projects
- Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves
- Enter with an Exit Plan

Guiding Principles of ISCD

Enter with an exit plan

Work like you will be run out of town tomorrow

- What are you leaving behind?
- Capacity-building trumps more technology,
- Leave behind a community able to
 - Act as community not just individuals
 - Identify, diagnose, and address community issues
 - Use local resources to address local issues & problems
 - Seek and secure additional resources from outside the community when necessary

Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen
- Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves
- Enter with an Exit Plan
- Everything is connected to everything else

Guiding Principles of ISCD

Everything is connected to everything else

- Issues are dynamically linked to one another in a complex network (think: mobile),
- Requires relational thought,
- Full understanding leads to better decisions,
- Complex issue chains require holistic approaches (e.g., ABCD, Sustainable Development, Community Capitals)
- Complex problems do not have simplex solutions

Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen
- Never do anything for anyone else that they can do for themselves
- Enter with an Exit Plan
- Everything is connected to everything else
- Contexts matter

Guiding Principles of ISCD

Contexts matter

- Pay attention to both internal and external operating environments
- Culture, values, beliefs, norms, organizational culture
- Relationships, people groups, information systems,
- Resources, knowledge, abilities
- Governance, local, national
- History, disputes,
- Environment, natural, built

Some Guiding Principles of ISCD

- First we must listen
- Never do anything for anyone that they can do for themselves
- Enter with an Exit Plan
- Everything is connected to everything else
- Contexts matter
- Pick your issues carefully.

Guiding Principles of ISCD

Pick your issues carefully

- Refer to “First we must listen”
- Prioritize felt needs (*‘generative themes’*)
- Identify the issue-chain
- Choose a “winable” issue as a first priority
- Stick with your area of expertise
- Develop strategic alliances

Bonus Guiding Principles

Ordinary people are capable of extraordinary actions

- Never under-estimate the power of individuals or communities to accomplish great things

Change is possible

- If you don’t believe this, choose another profession

More Guiding Principles

- What we (and “they”) believe about the situation will limit what we do and how we do it.
- Work from strengths not weaknesses (ABCD)
- Whenever possible link short-term and long-term goals
- Relief and development are done simultaneously
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary
- Accountability to the local community first and all others second
