WORKING WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES, AND WITH BUREAUCRACIES

The Arkleton Trust Seminar

October 26-28, 2001

Tarland, Scotland

Summary Report

by

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Contents

1: Introduction

This document is a recollection, through notes and my own somewhat imperfect memory, of the issues, ideas, and examples of community development and empowerment that were discussed at the seminar. It is hard to convey the sense of cohesion and excitement that the topic generated within such a diverse group of people! However, we hope this will emerge at a later stage as we add to this report (on this website) the stories of local communities 'taking charge' of their health, education and development and as the plans for a follow-up conference in June 2003 take shape.

As the seminar was conducted under 'Chatham House' rules, which protect the anonymity of the contributions, this is, appropriately, a record of my recollection of the event, rather than a 'true' record of what was said. As the opinions of the participants are not necessarily representative of the Arkleton Trust, or always in agreement with each other, and as the participants' individual contributions cannot be accurately represented, this document therefore should be seen as an *aide memoire* to the terrain we traversed through our three days of discussion. However, I have benefited from helpful responses of participants to an earlier draft, and I hope that this report has improved as a result.

The first day's requirement was to produce an outline of where we wanted the seminar to go, and what we could bring to that project. Although a subject area, and background notes, had been prepared beforehand, the precise agenda-setting was a participatory exercise. Notes of points made during the introductory session and round-table were taken on several White Boards (*see Appendix 3: White Boards notes*) from which the following framework for the seminar was derived:

I   Context
II Power
IIA disempowerment
IIB empowerment
III Theory and practise

This became the structure of the various sessions throughout the three days and was used to set general guidelines for the discussions. I will first report our visits to the major themes and, at the end of the document, mention a number of points which I feel are best viewed outside of the sections as they cross-cut both the themes and our collective project of facilitating empowered communities.

I would like to thank the Arkleton Trust for organising and hosting the seminar, and, especially, Agnes Rennie for being such an excellent, facilitative, chairman. We also thank John Crawford and Tom McKean for providing the core music and song for the seminar Ceilidh. Speaking personally, I have never been to such an enjoyable and productive 'round-table' before, and my conversations with other participants assure me that I was not alone!

We need to come to common understandings of context – across contexts – and we need 'models' that can help one community learn from the experiences of others. In a world of 'distinction', where the specificity (or identity) of the local is what distinguishes one place, one product, one idea from the undifferentiated mass, the role of context in local development cannot be overemphasised. And this applies to contexts across scales – internal contexts *and* external contexts. The reliance of our models in their multiplicity upon the details of context is what makes them so powerful in terms of their intended outcome, despite the difficulties they raise when we seek to generalize or replicate them. The following subsections address contexts that the group felt important.

a: post-industrial rural conditions

The older alliances in richer countries between rural and urban actors – for example, between small farmers and industrial labour unions – have collapsed as rural demographic pressures vanished and the presence of the latter diminished on the national stage. Instead, new alliances are being formed, including those with urban-based environmental movements and NGOs and/or human rights movements. However, these can be problematic since what happens on rural land still remains subject to urban power and dreams.

As systems of taxation change from direct to indirect (consumption-based) taxes, so different people and social groups now pay for resource- transfers from urban to rural places. This fact has to be seen alongside the changing composition of the urban populations, and the latter's weakening family links with rural people and land.

National and global economies have become more centralised, more urban, not less.

People in their own communities have their own contexts and own contextual understandings of the issues facing them. If we come in with *our* understandings, we risk patronising them. In this context, 'empowerment' comes when the different understandings of context are combined – they can strengthen each other. Contextual understandings can help us simplify and warn of dangers.

In terms of context, just as there is 'differential economic policy' which is context-dependent, so too we need 'differential social policy' which acknowledges the diversity of local identities and contexts, and incorporates them as the bases of it's fundamental strength.

b: governance

The current situation is much more complex and subtle than the discourses of the decline of governments/rise of the markets would initially indicate. For example, European multi-functionality and subsidiarity show how governments and regulation co-exists with the open markets and how joint *regulation* between different levels of governance can function. Indeed, the EU has issued a recent 'white paper' on governance in which it calls the new model "**co-**

regulation". Scholars researching these trends like Hajer and Wagenaar[1] suggest that these emerging forms of governance are responding to such things as increased awareness of citizens, over-regulation by the State in certain areas, increasing uncertainty, distrust of politicians and hierarchy, and pluralistic values and the need to find new ways of managing conflict at a time of increasingly mutual dependency.

The ways in which EU rural and regional development policies (European Structural Funds, LEADER programmes etc) are implemented reflects these tendencies to greater or lesser degree. They have a regional or local focus for planning and implementation, and a structure of partnerships that involve a wider set of actors than government at both local, national and EU levels. Different partners contribute financially to the enterprise as well – including the local actors. This may, however, limit some communities who are too poor, or fiscally dependent, to raise their contribution. Thus 'equality' remains an empty aspiration when there is cash or power asymmetry between places. Where local governments and other actors lack fiscal autonomy or other means of providing a local contribution, they may lack the negotiating power to assure the local interest in the face of more powerful (and fiscally able) bodies.

One way of capturing the value of local contributions is to value them as 'in-kind' or 'pro-bono' activities. In England, a national cash input can be matched by local 'time' inputs. Similar things can be done in Canada with 'volunteer hours'. The use of in-kind valuation makes the value which rural areas offer visible and appreciated.

To be most effective in delivering appropriate outcomes in peoples' lives, any multi-stakeholder process must be managed at a local level, whatever the coalition, even if it's original impetus comes from central government. Examples of good practise can be found in Canada around the management of the environment and forests.

c: principles of community development

It was suggested that any community development should deal with three fundamental principals. These are: democracy, human rights, and equal opportunities. All practice and therefore, policy, is open to interrogation from these three perspectives.

Often, when we deal with problems in isolated rural places, what we actually deal with are problems of scale, which are not necessarily unique to rural places. A small school in an urban place faces similar problems and characteristics to one in a rural place.

Very often, in the rural development field, the emphasis is on the wrong side – the Big. Bigger is not necessarily better, and often not at all better. In these terms, this often means a focus on the policy context, and not on the context of rural communities themselves. It is important to see rural communities as being the *subject* of development activity, not the *object* of it. Development policy should help communities *empower themselves*, make their own initiatives and aid them in forming common objectives, between themselves and within a wider network of communities and other development actors. In this sense, *empowerment* may be a dangerously misleading word, implying that it is something that is *given to* people and communities by others who are ceding power that they hold.

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[1] Hajer, M and Wagenaar, H (Eds) (2002f) Deliberative Policy Analysis. Understanding Governance in the Network Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

A problem is that professional practitioners often bring their own personal world-view to the project and very often, their world-view is quite different from that of those who are the subjects of development.

And interesting question is whether the terms 'community development' and 'local development' describe the same or different things. Opinions varied from one pole to the other, but the process of attempting to open up the definitions provided a useful way of addressing the issues of the conference. One definition specified that 'community development' involves increased internal capacity in an individual or community whilst 'local development' involves increased resources and ability to act within a local area. In the context of new forms of governance, discussed above, it may be that the two are coming closer together in practise.

It was pointed out that there is no difference between the words in terms of action – in both, the action is always [or should always be] local. What matters is the scale from which it is approached.   Another definition posited that community development is development where the community sets the agenda. Local development would be, by contrast, agendas instigated, initiated, and managed by the government or outsiders. However, participants agreed that what was of interest to them were the ways in which locally controlled and democratically conceived institutions, organisations, as well as people, were able to 'take charge' of their own futures by acquiring their own resources (e.g. land, fish, banks, knowledge and 'data') and developing these.

Definitions of 'development' have changed, as well. In the end we are left with an agreement that development can be either top-down or bottom-up, and that success was more likely with the latter rather than the former. This, in relation to issues of scale, lies at the foundation of one of the most fundamental aspects of community or local development – that it must produce benefits to members of the local community, and must do it in ways which they define as success – including growing respect and self-respect, increased impact on decisions which affect the local area, and the opportunity to capitalise on their resources and networks to improve their lives. Thus it was agreed that the two terms could be used almost interchangeably so long as the emphasis was on material improvement in rural people's lives as a result of it, and on their participation in the processes involved.

One of the needs identified is for a set of best practice models of communities taking the initiative to engage with their own future, as a short or long term strategy. Equally, it is important to learn about what did not work.

a: disempowerment/empowerment

When looking at power in terms of community development, we need to be aware of structures of power, positions of power, and mechanisms of power – all of which have an impact on the constitution of development initiatives and which constrain or channel the ways in which they help a community move from disempowerment to empowerment. In a way, this could be seen as yet another context to be considered.

Structures of Power   – e.g. institutions & related policies and regulation
Positions of Power   – e.g. parliaments
Mechanisms of Power   – e.g. recruitment to positions of power, social processes

Power can be defined as the ability to influence decisions. It is expressed across multiple levels of society and needs to be countered the same way. Often, the models and visions of powerful politicians have disempowered rural people, whether these are models of big-scale rural development or more basic industrial values such as 'bigger is better'. Post-war planning for North Norway, which sought and failed to develop 'growth-poles' as an alternative to scattered settlement patterns which people wanted, was one example among many[2] (see Brox, 1982). In this way, the intellectual and cognitive models of powerful people or powerful external communities exert an undue influence on the lives of rural people. One approach is to try to build viable models which are attractive to policy makers whilst still assuring, as much as is possible, positive outcomes for the communities with which we are actual concerned.

In the discussions of 'disempowerment' we moved very quickly to means of empowerment. It seemed there was a consensus that the former is well studied but the latter much less so, and should therefore be an important focus for our work and for the 2003 conference.   It is salutary that our concerns were with how to facilitate empowerment, rather than stalled at the barriers to it.

b: homogenisation

The global homogenisation of cultures also effaces differences between urban and rural cultures. Urban, industrial values, for example, can be pathological when taken on by rural communities. Just as all rural communities are diverse, so too are 'urban' ones. It is important to avoid the tyranny of homogenisation on both sides when attempting to help rural communities develop.

The dominant 'system of governance' (i.e. centralised state governance) privileges national associations and lobbies over local ones. They can mobilize across a broad political front and therefore have access to state legislatures in a way which local interests do not – e.g. the National Farmer's Union in the UK, and the National Rifle Association in the US. By standing between local places and the seats of power, they in fact homogenize the various constituencies they purport to represent. Nevertheless, the tendency towards new forms of governance that involve

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[2] See Ottar Brox's 1982 paper on 'Five Attempts at Planning the Development of North Norway'. Forthcoming in Brox (2002) Essays and Papers on the Political Economy of Development in the North Atlantic Periphery.

actors other than the state, build partnerships, encourage participation, validate local knowledge, and devolve power in both urban and rural settings is opening up new space.

Rural interests can align themselves with broader urban interests to mount joint single-issue campaigns but do need to be careful that the specificities of their local concerns do not get swept away by the power of the larger project. Some examples were found from the difficult area of rural-environmental, and environmental-indigenous people's coalitions. Conversely, however, it is important that rural interests are represented on the boards of national or international interest groups, as very often the policies of these groups directly impinge on rural people and places. For example, the World Wildlife Fund influences EU regulation but has no direct legitimacy in the rural arena. Yet, through its influence on Brussels, its policy orientations are applied to rural places.

c: raising voice

Charisma – one or two charismatic individuals lead most activist movements. Can charisma be learned? Taught? Certainly some skills can be learned and perhaps these should be disseminated to rural activists and communities more widely. Other means of raising voice include an active and critical local media (radio, newspapers etc), and gaining ownership of data, analysis and research about people in the local community, and about the community as a whole.

d: people using the tools for themselves

One way in which communities can 'empower' themselves is to take charge of the data and knowledge that is collected about them by other agencies, with other agendas, and to use it to support their own projects. Data can be interrogated, dis-aggregated or re-aggregated (through the use of community resources or hired 'expert' assistance) to draw attention to local issues and to support local activities. This way 'our data' can lead to 'our model'. A similar approach is possible through the development of 'decision-support' tools that can be used by local communities[3].

e: partnership

Partnership is *doing* not *talking*.

The formation of associations by rural communities forces them to clarify issues, and to learn how to access power at the appropriate level. Rural communities are often isolated and in competition with each other, which mitigates against effective association between them.

Pan-community alliances can help gain external funding; build new models; take greater political action; help retain ownership of an association or issue, and enable larger-scale collective action.

Schools often make good places to initiate partnership, having a permanent presence in the community; being very aware that they operate within a local context of governance, families and society; and being future-outcome oriented.

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[3] For example, tools of this kind relating to investment decisions, transportation corridors, etc are being developed for communities by the Community Policy Analysis Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia, USA.

Partnerships can be inside a community – between various factions of a community, or can be made with outside institutions or actors.

Some issues about partnership that came up are:
- partners are colleagues, not clients
- partnerships are horizontal processes – people work with each other across a community. There are structural constraints on this.
- partnerships usually also involve vertical processes – integrating institutions within a sector [and beyond the local]
- all partners must invest something in the process, including the local community which initiated it
- formal institutions can be tasked with making formal (financial) contributions
- partnerships contribute critical mass to programmes
- partnerships involve changing cultures, culture shifts

f: culture & development, and heritage

At its broadest, culture could be defined as everything a people have created or modified. One implication of this is that culture is not static, but continually evolving. All communities have cultures that are uniquely constituted by them and of which they are the subjects as well as objects. It is this unique-ness that marks the meanings and value of culture in terms of rural and community development. The operation of culture as a constituent of unique identity lies at the heart of its value to community development. This is expressed by the levels of self-respect and pride expressed by its members as a result of belonging to the culture. Culture is increasingly being seen as one source of local development but before this can go ahead, a number of problems must be surmounted.

The first is the question of measurement. How can we 'measure the immeasurable'? Policy outcomes are usually measured by material or financial indicators and indicators of culture are notoriously resistant to this. The EU LEADER programme found this and the first evaluation of LEADER I the European Commission backed away from the problem and asked evaluators to use the conventional model of programme evaluation assessing more 'measurable' outcomes, especially job-creation which was not one of the original objectives of the programme. Although the evaluation did go beyond this remit, the Commission has now adopted a new methodology for LEADER evaluation which explicitly sets out to assess the 'less measurable' objectives of partnership & participation, integration, innovation, etc. One possible way around the problem can be found when dealing with partnerships and funders. In such a situation it may be possible to negotiate outcomes and include ways of evaluating non-material success. Generally though, there is a tension between fiscal responsibility and the slippery non-material aspects of culture, cultural development, and more generally the development of the capacities of people and local organisations from within.

It was suggested that it is best not to try to define culture in this way and instead to look for locally constructed operational definitions, agreeing with the community as to what constitutes 'success'.

Another problem is that development institutions tend to look at *culture* and *heritage* as synonymous. Heritage objects such as national or local built landscapes and traditional products

such as foods or music tend to be simplistically substituted for 'culture'. Heritage in this sense is asset-based, whilst culture includes such material constructs but also represents interactions, meanings and ways of life which leave little direct trace on landscapes or ledger books. We must be careful to distinguish between *culture* and *cultural artefacts*. Community development must show respect for culture as well as for cultural artefacts, offering opportunities for *local development of culture*. For example, the Irish themed Pub is a cultural artefact, invented out of a culture and exported around the world. To develop pubs is not necessarily to be developing culture.

Often the confusion between culture and cultural artefacts is expressed in 'cargo-cult' developments. In this situation, the idea is that a museum/cultural centre/heritage centre will help develop community strength when, in fact, the object is directed towards tourism or other outside interests. A community must resist external funding for tourist consumption only, and support such projects only if a direct benefit to the whole local community can be demonstrated. Thus a facility that services a short summer tourist season is only viable if it provides a year-round service to local residents as well.

Rural people do not want to be *museums*. Rather, they want to develop their own cultures out of all the resources – past and present, local and extra-local – which are present in their worlds.

g: culture, confidence and pride

The litmus test of cultural development is confidence building -- the disappearance of the self-deprecating descriptor, "I am just a…" from common conversation. The job of cultural development is to take the distinctiveness of local culture and make it a feature of pride.

Models of community development must have at their foundation a respect for local values, beliefs and needs, expressed in terms of those things, materially.

The development of cultural resources must be based upon 'empowerment' of the local community by culturally appropriate means. This is especially so when the community is differentiated from the national mean by isolation, exclusion or interest.

Another useful definition of culture is how people see themselves in terms of the broader dominant structures of society. Do they wish to keep their local or group cultures distinct and alive? Do they actively practice this? An example was given of an indigenous people who decided to promote their own distinct heritage cuisine with a cook training programme, cook books, and up-scale marketing of catering and restaurant services. Here food, a symbol of their culture and cultural identity, which was devalued as their overall cultural identities had become devalued, was re-invested with value and offered to a wider public as special, unique, healthful and flavourful. Ultimately, the assertion of value is associated as much with the values of the culture in general as with the specific cultural products which are the subject of the project. Although others will appropriate such projects, they still create value because they help instil pride in the local culture. Robustness in the face of this appropriation is a sign of a strong local culture.

This leads to the question of 'who owns local culture?' which is one of the key questions regarding community development. Ownership can be shared with the outside world – as long as

the local communities themselves can still engage in enterprise in the cultural product, then its appropriation by, say, large food enterprises, will enhance the added cultural value. Sometimes specific aspects of local culture, such as stories or songs in oral tradition, will be 'owned' by families or persons. Within the local culture then, intellectual property rights, as it were, are already established.

The above does raise the question of the relationship between individual benefit and collective benefit. It seems that collective benefit can only accrue when a critical mass of individuals benefit, but development processes must avoid stopping at the level of a few individuals. In order to pass the tests of democracy, human rights and equal opportunities, community development must continue until the benefits accrue to the whole community.

h: professionalisation

The issue of the professionalization of community activists and animateurs arose in these discussions. On the one hand, especially in situations where grant-writing is important, the professionalization of the applicants helps produce success. In order to compete, a local community needs to engage in the process with at least an equivalent level of professionalism as the other communities who are also competing for funding. At the same time, there is always the risk that the professionalization of activists will lead them away from the original community and even lead to their co-option by the larger-scale communities (regional or national) that they are engaged with. Simply, professionalization could be seen as increasing the wherewithal of a community to do what it wants, as the ability to access the resources and information it needs to achieve its goals.

This term is very caught up in current debates about 'capacity building'. One of the issues germane to the debate is whether community capacity can be equated to the capacity of individuals within that community (*see above*). To what extent does it depend upon one or two people, charismatic or not, especially in their use of development tools. It can be argued that increasing the necessary skills and knowledge increases individuals' abilities to carry out tasks that give positive outcomes to themselves, their local communities, and the extra-local communities who are providing some of the support for the project. In this sense, professionalization can be seen to be a process that enables members *within* a community not only to contribute towards the internal development of that community, but also to successfully work with external communities to direct development towards the local.

It was pointed out that most approaches, even to bottom-up development are *reactive* not *proactive*. It was suggested that a programme of proactive investment in skills, through the inculcation of skills in individuals, would be a very effective way to invest in community development. This would satisfy the need to help communities help themselves. However, it is equally important that administrations, bureaucracies, agencies seek to increase their capacities to act through better knowledge and understanding of people and communities. The notion that it is only communities who need 'capacity building' was not only misleading, it actually misunderstands the issues that increasingly divide the 'governed' (people, communities) from the 'governors'.

i: participation

In a situation of apathy, mass participation can be difficult to effect. People have many competing demands on their time and energy and will set limits on what they will dedicate time towards. Of course if the focus is an issue that directly affects them in a negative way, then the likelihood of a high participation level goes up. The key to ensuring broad participation by individuals and communities is to hold a *multidimensional* approach to participation, providing encouragements and *easing* the way at as many different levels as possible.

On the other hand, it was also pointed out that in some cases, making it difficult to participate can enhance reputation and ensure that participants have a sincere need and wish to participate.

Other considerations that can affect participation include:
- the need to involve respected members of the community – their endorsement of the process matters
- respect for privacy and for their unique desired outcomes makes it easy for bureaucrats to participate
- looking for undiscovered and untapped leaders from within the community
- the identification of the actual issue as important to the individuals in the community – nothing increases participation like outrage. It is therefore easier to organise the participation of a community with a problem, than one where there is no identified shared problem

Members of the group shared a series of further ideas and tips on facilitating participation. A selection of these is listed below.

-get the time right (6-8:00 pm ideal)
-offer food/day care etc.
-get the location right – culturally specific
- accessible
- safe
- unusual venues can increase attractiveness
-go to them; don't make them come to you
-share the chair
-get the date right
-conflicts
-end-of-week
-distance interferes with participation
-use Phone Trees
-spread the word multi-modally
-use a buddy system (where each existing participant invites one person)

4: Theory and practise

One important place where theory and practise link is in the education of professionals. They are the ones who have to turn intellectual and theoretical resources into practice.

Some interesting comments I heard at the seminar were:-

*"Communities should be the **subject**, not the **object** of development"*

"There's nothing so practical as good theory"

"There is no integrated theory of community development"

Theory helps by providing confidence and broader understanding of processes, plus it can help to expose the implicit as well as the explicit theories of the relevant actors in any situation in ways that allow evaluation and self-learning processes. One problem, however, is that social science has become abstracted from local particulars, and can be 'imposed', becoming itself a structure of power. Imposed theory blunts the ability to listen, in order to hear meaning and to honour the people who provide the information that supports theory building.

Indeed, there are inherent contradictions within the theory-practise bundle. The over-reliance on abstractions, objectivity and scientism mitigate against practicing true *bottom-up* research and actively divides theory – with its neat logics - from practise, with its messy contexts and the need to see human subjects as independent actors rather than ciphers for the hypothesis.

When studying policy, theory is often tacit and unarticulated, and this can lead to difficult situations. There is a need to be conscious of theory for ethical and practical reasons, and because theory needs to be tempered by context. Policy theory, in particular, needs to be tempered by context. Without this, the local subjects become mere objects and social justice concerns go out the window.

Another ethical concern about the role of theory in local development studies is that the research is often driven by the priorities of funding bodies – which generally are political or practical, not theoretical. This is acceptable if the project provides things the community itself needs and wants. However, the danger is that overarching theory is applied to the work like a cloak, disintegrating or disguising both the practise and the theory. Whilst the institution may get what it wants from the experience in the end, the local community or the community of scholars may not.

5: Random Thoughts

The following is a compendium of points that I felt are worth noting, but which did not fit into any of the above categories. They are presented here in random order. They are suggestive in that they offer new directions for our thoughts, almost like interesting pathways glimpsed but regretfully not fully explored due to the need to keep to the path at our feet.

Building of community *spirit* is missing from much work on community development. There is a need to acknowledge the importance and value of ritual, symbolic enactment, etc.

By honouring capitalism/entrepreneurialism, *codified* knowledge & profit, we risk dishonouring the spirit, social strengths and *local* knowledge of communities.

It is important to distinguish between Features, Advantages and Benefits when speaking of community development. People subscribe to things that bring them benefit – not necessarily features or advantages. The design of policy is the design of a set of features that it is hoped will produce the desired future outcomes. It is important to remember that the features exist because they deliver advantages over the features of other systems, and what these advantages deliver is what people want. I.e. benefits they feel in their own lives.

To be effective, development policies need to support "Power From Within".

Geographic contexts cannot be ignored.

Individualism = hoarding – of knowledge, of enterprise, of networks, and is ultimately anti-community. The power of communities' lies in their diversity and size – many small interventions can effect a large change without any individual needing to exhaust themselves. This is why sharing knowledge is so important.

Universities use an "urban" paradigm in accrediting professionals, including those who will live and work in rural areas and with rural peoples. A change in academic culture is needed to acknowledge that professionals who work in rural spaces are specialists, not 'jacks of all trade'. This respects the different contexts within which rural people live and work. It also clashes with the culture of academic 'professionalism' itself – which originally was based upon the cultures of an urban elite. Having had to do so much to become 'professionals', it can be difficult for university practitioners to let go of their professional cultural values and expectations.

6: Concluding discussion

These are most of the results of the small group break-out which attempted to sum up our experience and learning at the seminar. They are grouped thematically, rather than by group.

In community development:
- there is a need for communities to share what works
- there is a need to get policy makers to listen/hear/think beyond the box
- there are substantive issues with defining and using the terms *association* and *rurality*;
- there must be association between peers

For academics, community development provides a good opportunity to revisit theory.

Community development methods provide a multiplicity of approaches, which is very appropriate given that each community is unique.

It is essential that actual community representatives participate in The Arkleton Centre's 2003 Conference so that they can share what they've done with others and also how they have overcome their skills and knowledge deficits.

All reported taking comfort from the discomfort of the participants in the seminar with their dual roles as academics and people who care about particular communities.

We found we had more similarities than differences, despite our wide geographical and professional spread – but both the differences and the similarities were important and useful learning tools.

We discovered and shared a wealth of practical examples and approaches.

We encountered increased possibilities for international exchange and working together.

All voices were honoured – here and in the community.

Participation must pervade throughout the whole community development process, it must never stop.

Structures of power within and out with the local community must be acknowledged.

There is a tension between animation and organisation that needs to be balanced.

Outcomes should be directed towards overcoming oppression and encouraging accountability and legitimacy.

We cannot overstress the importance of local context in community development.

Funding, practice, etc., happens best at a local community level

Warning! — practitioners and academics may romanticise the ideal of bottom-up development and the idea of communities.

Appendix 1: Participants at the 2001 Seminar

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Appendix 2: The Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research
2003 Conference

The 2003 Conference will involve five days in total. The middle day will divide two two-day sessions and will be devoted to a series of extended field trips to cater for different interests. We are aiming to attract between 300 and 400 participants.

The emphasis on communities empowering themselves means that encouragement must be given to actual community actors to attend so that they can share their specifics, their ideas and their lessons with each other and us. To this end, we would like to find ways of encouraging each agency and each academic to bring actual participants/subjects/community development workers to the conference.

As a consequence, there is a need for sponsorship to encourage those who would not normally be able to attend conferences to be able to participate: this would include support for travel costs or other financial support, and given the size of the conference, this is a big task. As a result, a funding sub-committee was set up in order to canvas for financial support from governments, agencies and even the private sector. The amount of support we gather will, to a large extent, affect our ability to assure a broad range of participation and learning.

Concerns were particularly acute regarding the participation of communities from Eastern Europe, Africa and South America, which were not represented at this Arkleton Trust Seminar, yet many of whom are undergoing precisely the kind of changes which inform our research and who can contribute a wealth of experience to the discussions. It was felt that it was important to target funders to help support the inclusion of these networks in the conference.

It is envisaged that the format of the conference sessions will range from academic scholarship to storytelling, with an emphasis on issues-based and tool-development workshops which will provide the opportunity for all to learn something new to take away with them which might make a practical difference in their own communities. Workshops could facilitate the sharing of good practice models, gather common threads from different experiences with development aid, or perhaps point to dangers and pitfalls in the process.

Further details of the conference are to be found on the Conference Website:
http://workforce.cup.edu/wyman/irn.htm

Appendix 3: White Board notes

Main Themes

I   Context
II   Power
IIA disempowerment
IIB empowerment
III Theory and practice

(numbers indicate which of the main themes these represent)

Development, Modernisation
IIB   Integration of Social Science
Patch work
I   Rhetoric? - politicians
II/IIIc   Power Balance
-Communities – Professionals/bureaucracies
IIA   Vertical/Sectoral Funding Streams
I   Human rights Optic
IIA   National …..
IIA   Performance Indicators
IIB   Social Capital – Capacity Building
IIB   Participation
IIB   Creating Power From Within
IIA/IIB   "Our" "Their" projects/Power -- £'s
Phases in Rural Dev.
IIB   Evaluation – Learning Process
IIB   Exchange
IIB   Non pathological approach
IB   Symbolic Commons
Access to Information
IIA/IIB   Performance indicators – accountability
IIA/IIB   Resources
IIA/IIB   Professional Training
IIB   Devolution, community currency
IIB   "Productive Partnership – RGAs, e.g.
IIB   Community learning practitioners/ strategies
IIA/IIB   Governance, local
IIA   Centralisation – disempowerment
IIA/IIB   Inclusion – do initiatives work?
IIB   Role and integration of the Arts?
IIA/B   Tackling causes or symptoms?
IIA/B   Cultural and Linguistic issues, networking
IIA/B   Policy delivery mechanisms.