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Cultural Heritage as Assets for Community Development

<https://www.sedulo.cz/ivod/dolweboveaktivita>

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Introduction

- This presentation is based upon, first, three Norway-Czech Bilateral projects:
 - PONAVE 1
 - PONAVE 2
 - Cesky Krumlov International Learning Centre.
- Plus it is related to two other international projects:
 - Riding Nordic Native Breeds
 - North Sea Ring
- And one Norwegian project:
 - Liv i fjosset

collaborations

- The ideas are the result of Czech collaborations with:
 - Charles University Centre for Environmental Education
 - Univ. of South Bohemia, Faculty of Agriculture
 - Univ. of South Bohemia, Faculty of Economics
 - Cesky Krumlov Castle
 - Various enterprise communities for South Bohemia who participated in PONAVE programmes.
- And informed by collaborations with:
 - Native Breed Horse Societies for: Icelandic Horse, Faroese Horse, Fjord Horse, Nordland/Lyngshest.
 - 43 Coastal Culture community organisations around the North Sea
 - 12 Norwegian entrepreneurs converting old barns into culture-based businesses

purpose

- To link and explore the possibilities for sustainable community development through the development of cultural heritage 'assets'
- 'Assets' are things that can be used for development
- Cultural heritage 'assets' are often 'collectively owned' in an informal way, especially intangible cultural heritage such as *knowledge* and *narrative*.
- The purpose of this analysis is to link these two in order to create new opportunities for smaller rural communities to employ local cultural and/or natural heritage as the fulcrum of local economic development.

Cultural Heritage?

- For our purposes, we can identify two primary types of Cultural Heritage ‘asset’.
 - Tangible cultural heritage – material objects
 - Intangible cultural heritage – knowledges about the production and use of those tangible assets, narratives of identity or history, codified ways of practice.
- And we can identify two scales of ‘asset’
 - Large scale: i.e. a Castle, a whole culture landscape, churches, townscapes, etc.
 - Small scale: i.e. local stories, local knowledges, local practices, local heritage, local socio-biology (i.e. native breed animals, local plant species, and the ways of growing and using them).

- The two scales often correspond to specific types

i.e. Large scale = tangible cultural heritage

Small scale = intangible cultural heritage

Rural Community Development?

- Rural communities face the challenge of job loss
- This often leads to rural depopulation as residents leave to find urban jobs.
- Those who stay must make a “Vocational Transition” to self-employment
 - This is a challenge because often, residents must change economic sector, which is not always easy – new skills are needed.
 - What will be the basis of these new enterprises?

Cultural Heritage assets for community development

- The use of cultural Heritage assets involves moving them from the original economic activity for which they were designed, into a new sector where their value is appreciated.
- Generally this involves a transition from the *production* sector (farming, fishing, forestry, mining, etc) to the *service* sector (health and wellbeing, tourism, education, recreation).

The “Biography” of Cultural Heritage assets

Three life-stages:

1. They were optimized to be the most effective and efficient way of *producing* commodities necessary for human life in a local environment.
i.e. food, timber, fish
2. They are replaced by a *disruptive technology* (i.e. internal combustion engine) and abandoned by the sector. Some remnants are saved in museums or by groups of enthusiasts
3. They become the basis of a range of modern *services*, such as education, well-being or tourism, delivered by both private, and community-based enterprises

The Biographies of Cultural Heritage Assets:

from:

Production

to:

Preservation

to:

The Culture and Experience Economy

Community Development

- Top down (exogenous)
 - impetus comes from outside the community
 - Control is also external and so can require performances which are not relevant to the community
 - Often, top-down controlled assets are subject to the demands of changing political fashion, plus the short time-lines of official political life
- Bottom up (endogenous)
 - Impetus comes from the community itself
 - Community develops competence to address the issues it raises
 - Local 'ownership' supports continuing development and use of the assets, after a single project has finished

Community Development

- Sustainable development
 - Environmental
 - Economic
 - Social and Cultural
- Community Development, when bottom up and performed properly, is seen as a key component of sustainable development.
- It assures that:
 - Environmental resources remain available for use by subsequent generations
 - Economic resources pass to the whole community, not just an elite, or otherwise to investors outside the community
 - Benefits accrue across all levels of society, and that investment in the community becomes investment in the capacity of individuals.

Cultural Heritage Assets & Community Development?

- Communities (local rural entrepreneurs) need *something* to develop.
- That *something* must have both a local historical relevance, and be relevant and of use in the modern service sector, particularly in terms of education or health & wellbeing
- Cultural heritage assets, at the small scale, and in particular, the coupling of material assets (*i.e. old boats*) and intangible assets (*the knowledge of making and using them*) provide a compelling asset for education, health or community based tourism.

Research on innovations in the fields of:

- traditional boats and maritime heritage;
- native breed horses and other species;
- the conversion of heritage buildings;
- and the development of culture landscapes

point the way forward for local, rural communities who need assets for development, assets which express their culture, history and contemporary identity.

By developing such assets to deliver education, social work and tourism activities, communities can build economic activities which:

- reinforce local identity,
- assure that traditions remain alive,
- deliver new economic benefits not only for the community organisation (Social Enterprise, NGO, Community company, etc) but also into the wider community as they build networks of service providers in the shape of SMEs.

- There are large opportunities for rural communities to identify and develop smaller scale cultural and natural heritage assets to produce local products, local food; outdoor recreation tourism and cultural heritage tourism; participation in the 'green economy'; education about local identity, life skills, etc.; and health and wellbeing services.
- At the same time, smaller scale cultural and natural heritage assets will be preserved and brought back into the community, who will maintain them, not necessarily with government funding, but perhaps through trading income.

challenges

- 1) Lack of respect for the capacity of rural people and communities
- 2) Perceptions held by existing communities who control 'culture'
 - i.e. museums, theatres, art, other 'high culture'
- 3) Lack of understanding of the value of these assets in the modern world
- 4) Need for education to bring new skills to communities (and to existing state bureaucracies)
- 5) Need for successful pioneering 'role models' to inspire others

possibilities

- In Norway, in Scotland, in the Faroes, we can see more and more examples of how tangible and intangible cultural heritage can be used in the delivery of 'experience' services such as education, tourism or wellbeing recreation.
- At the same time, both private and community enterprises arise to service the demand both to experience the asset, but also to manage and maintain it.

conclusion

- Cultural and Natural heritage assets, both material and intangible, can be key assets for the development of new services.
- Some of these assets are small scale and available to local or sub-communities of enthusiasts to develop.
- This development addresses the need to build sustainability, especially economic sustainability into community development because it aims at generating trading income.
- Alongside the amazing large cultural heritage assets in Czech, there are many places where there are plenty of smaller scale assets.

By identifying and supporting development of these small-scale cultural heritage assets, not only will they be preserved and, indeed, enhanced, but the local communities in which they are situated will gain an enhanced ability to make vocational transition to a sustainable rural economy.



thank you!

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