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SCWK 4312

December 6, 2021

Introduction

This community-service learning project provided us with an opportunity to learn about the social justice co-op and the work they are doing within our community. We met with organization members to discuss goals of the co-op, and how we could help progress the work they are doing from a research perspective that they will hopefully be able to incorporate in their future work. After giving a description of the history of the organization, research areas include how to build community development, how organizations can reach local communities including through the work of art (i.e., poetry, photo methods), and how social workers can use their professional platforms to promote social justice when working with community organizations. Our research highlights both strengths and weaknesses of previous community work, to bring light to the many factors for community organizers to be mindful of when working with specific communities. Lastly, we provide recommendations for the social justice co-op (i.e., including resources for potential collaborators), and reflect on our experiences while working with the organization and conducting our literature reviews.

The Social Justice Co-op of Newfoundland and Labrador

According to their website, The Social Justice Co-op of Newfoundland and Labrador (SJC) is a grassroots community organization dedicated to addressing inequality in Newfoundland and Labrador. The SJC formed in 2013 in the wake of funding cuts for Oxfam Canada, which caused them to shut down a regional office in St. John's that had become a space for activism within the community ("Our Roots", para. 2). The SJC took over the Oxfam office and continued their community-oriented activism. Since 2019, the SJC has focused on climate change and its local, societal impacts ("Our Roots", para.7). They have worked to highlight the connections between climate change and social justice. Through these connections the SJC has

been able to take on a variety of environmental and social justice issues including zero waste and food sovereignty initiatives, challenging car culture, and forming the Coalition for a Green New Deal for Newfoundland and Labrador ("Our Work"). The SJC uses a strategy wherein members are able to lead initiatives, with support from SJC staff ("Our Roots", para. 9). The SJC encourages volunteers to engage with their passions and form initiatives that they care about. This creates an environment in which citizens can become volunteers and have control of the initiatives within their community. The SJC is a true grassroots organization with a bottom-up initiative strategy.

Coalition for a Green New Deal

The Coalition for a Green New Deal for Newfoundland and Labrador (CGND) is based on a resolution brought to the United States congress in 2019 called The Green New Deal. The resolution proposed an overhaul of the United States economy in an effort to address climate change and social injustices (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019, sect. 4). The resolution proposed many economic and societal changes that must be made to achieve the goal of producing global net-zero emissions by the year 2050. It also made clear connections between environmental and social justice by pointing out how environmental destruction disproportionately affects already marginalized populations (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019, sect. 4). This sentiment is echoed by the SJC in their commitment to focus on both environmental and social justice. The Green New Deal also includes an explicit commitment to the use of participatory processes that are led by the individuals affected (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019, sect. 8, sub. sect. 4, para. F). This position is also shared by the SJC and as such the CGND emphasizes the involvement of citizens within the volunteer-led coalition. The CGND has demonstrated this citizen involvement through their encouragement for the public to attend their monthly meeting, a letter writing campaign started

in August 2020, and a petition to the house of assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador to declare a climate emergency. These are all initiatives that require the participation of community members for success.

Research and Literature Review

Our research focused on several different areas of how the organization can make community development relevant to target communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. First, research highlighted the importance of bringing communities together, and the power a communal bond can be in creating real change. Research by Manzo (2017) suggested that in order to create this bond, organizations should talk to local community members, learn about their hopes and desires for change in their community, and work with community members in order to build a sense of community. When working with community members, organizations must aid in the development of a realistic and achievable path, and discuss ways in which they can collaboratively working with individuals to reach their goals (Manzo, 2017). Getting involved with communities through a participatory lens would help reassure community members that they know their community best, and with the help of the organization, they have a good chance at creating the change they would like to see. This collaborative and participatory approach would also likely diminish feelings of a power relationship, such as the idea that the organization holds greater value than the community members they are working with in promoting social justice for that community.

Moving forward, we also felt it was important to focus on specific ways organizations can reach local communities to become involved in social justice. With this idea in mind, we explored qualitative research which focused on recommendations for promoting social justice in

communities, and reaching different age groups in the process. Rosner-Salazar (2003) suggested two ways to promote social justice in communities. First, they suggested to determine community needs by gathering qualitative feedback with a needs assessment or focus-group data. An example that our group constructed based off this recommendation was to construct a survey that can be sent to schools in local communities, to get an idea of what their community needs are from a student perspective, and to what extent they wish to be involved with the organization if they show interest. Getting students involved in the research process can be very beneficial for both parties, in that students are given the tools to effect change and empower communities.

Second, Rosner-Salazar (2003) explained the importance of fostering relationships with community leaders and promoting capacity building of communities and organizations. For example, getting in contact with community leaders and suggest a collaborative approach to work together around a particular topic. The idea here is that community members may be more likely to get involved with the organization and develop an interest in creating change and social justice if they know other members of the community were involved. An example our group came up with based off this recommendation, specifically for the Green New Deal project, was for the organization to get in contact with a member in a target community and work with them to host a virtual event and explain the goals of the coalition in simple terms. The event could include games that incorporates knowledge on the coalition (e.g., Green New Deal Bingo, others games to include children), as well as examples of how societal and environmental factors (financial/economic reform, energy production, etc.) has a legitimate impact on our lives. In addition, rewarding children with prizes would be a good way to keep them involved and find some interest in the organization. Hosting an event like this would expose the goals and motives of the Green New Deal at a simple level, and does not put pressure on community members to

get involved right away, rather it focuses on bringing awareness of the coalition to local

communities. In order to get young people involved in the coalition, they have to be educated on

the topic and feel like they could serve a purpose for their community. Some young people may

not know the actual meaning behind environmental jargon, which is why they may need to be

told in a different way. This is why it is important to explain the information in an effective way

that does not sound overwhelming to the younger generation, and other members in the

community.

While working with the organization, we collectively decided on a specific area of

research that would benefit them moving forward. Our main research topic focuses on how to

make a consultative process more adaptable and theatrical/expressive. Please refer to the

literature table on the following pages which shows some research we found with regards to how

different forms of art can be incorporated into a consultative process when working with

communities. We focused our main findings on both the limitations and benefits of these

projects, so the organization can be mindful of what has worked in the research and what has not

with regards to community work.

Citation	Summary	Main findings
Carey, P. & Sutton, S. (2004). Community development through participatory arts: Lessons learned from a community arts and regeneration project in South Liverpool. *Community Development Journal, 39*(2), 123-134. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/39.2.123	Explored how art can encourage community engagement and participation to improve community development among all age groups. Projects included (but are not limited to) the following: 1. Two environmental arts projects focused on the development of children's play areas. In both cases, artists worked closely with residents to assess their needs, vision and ideas. 2. A video documentary following the redevelopment of different areas in the community. Residents were actively involved in the production and content. 3. An internet radio station which grew from an acknowledgement that many older people in the area were feeling isolated. It worked with residents from local sheltered accommodation to set up the station. The project transformed into the development of more extensive computer and Internet skills among residents in the community.	Residents in the community who were experiencing long-term poverty had distrust with authority (due to "empty promises") and resulted in them feeling discouraged to engage in community projects, and questioned the relevance of local people's involvement in these projects. Residents were asked at the end of the projects to provide feedback; however, they expressed it would be more beneficial to have ongoing feedback throughout the project to keep them engaged and to keep their concerns as a top priority, as well as to ensure the project is working for them (issue with evaluation procedure). There was conflict between artists in the community and project managers as there was a major lack of clarification regarding their roles and responsibilities during the project. For example, "The management team argued that contracts clearly identified responsibilities from the outset, whilst the artists complained that their role changed constantly once the project started". (p. 129)

	4. Developing a display space for local, national and international artists. 5. Developing a showcase for art work which included a celebration of the community and community members. They had a song and dance piece staged and performed by residents within the community.	
Foster, V. (2012). What If? The Use of Poetry to Promote Social Justice. *Social Work Education, 31*(6), 742-755, https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2012.695936	Explored the use of poetry as a research method when working with communities to examine individuals' experiences of parenting in poverty. The goal among researchers was to change oppressive views by a means of using art to expand perspectives and develop a better understanding of societal issues from an individual and community lens. In addition to poetry, researchers also used other methods of art such as visual art, short film-making and drama. Through using art, local parents in the community were able to be actively involved in the research process, and they were able to explore new hobbies, develop skills (e.g., reading and writing skills) and tell their own personal stories through their poems (and other forms of	Results revealed many significant themes through the poems that were written by community members. For example, one major theme was the isolation experienced by mothers of young children. This approach (i.e., using poetry) exposed and brought to light the legitimate experiences of parenting in poverty, and participants felt they were emotionally connected to their poems. Poems provided an opportunity to break down individuals' narratives to understand discrimination and the hardships faced by people and their communities. A significant issue found in the research through using this approach was worth noting. Literacy levels from this particular area in the community

	art). To ensure all community members had a fair opportunity to participate, the organization provided funding for transport of all community members wanting to be involved and share their story.	was considerably low, so this was problematic for members' involvement as the method was not suitable for all members. This is an important factor to keep in mind when working with other local communities.
Purcell, R. (2007). Images for change: community development, community arts and photography. *Community Development Journal, 44*(1), 111-122. doi:10.1093/cdj/bsm031	Examined the effectiveness of using photo-methods as an approach for community development. Methods explored: 1. Photo-elicitation method. This method examines the use of photos in community development by showing community members pictures in order to trigger a community-based discussion. This involves asking community members how certain pictures make them feel, and encourages community engagement through a more emotional process rather than just simply asking questions. 2. Photo-novella or picture stories method. With this method, community members take pictures of something significant	There were clear benefits found with regards to the photo-elicitation method, in that no technological knowledge was required by community members, and photos would be easily produced (i.e., as opposed to a questionnaire or other forms of research). In addition, this method has been found to reach all age groups. With regards to the photo-novella or picture stories method, there was a significant issue to take note of. With this method, researchers found that there was conflict of photo ownership between community members who took the pictures and the sponsored organizations who funded the project. This is important to keep in mind, as organizations must find a way to ensure credit is given to photographers (i.e., local artists in the community), and continue to reassure community

	to them and have the opportunity to share their pictures with other community members. Members talk about the significance and importance of their own pictures and share thoughts about others' pictures as well. With this approach, community members get to talk about their real experiences and thus makes the process more beneficial since it is not created by other people (i.e., authority figures - project/organization management) 3. Photovoice. This method allows community members to record and reflect on their lives from their own perspectives. Photovoice encourages a discussion of community strengths and weaknesses through photographs and dialogue between community members.	members they know their community best, and through using a collaborative approach, the organization can assist them in reaching their goals.

Social workers play a significant role when working with communities and promoting social justice. Research suggests specific ways that social workers can contribute to building community development and working alongside local organizations and community members to promote change. For example, research by Lombard and Twikirize (2014) explain how social workers must acknowledge their role with regards to human rights from a more general perspective of 'justice' and 'sustainable development'. Doing this would help provide social workers with a foundation to use their knowledge and incorporate social, economic and environmental development in their work to promote social justice. Researchers also discussed how social workers have a special platform compared to other professionals, as they have the continuous goal of using the need and importance of social justice as a main motivator for advocacy. This motivation within social work practice is also embedded in organizations who are striving for change and equality. Lastly, they suggest that social workers should help organizations give more effective social services by focusing on roles in the organization (e.g., management, volunteer work, etc.) and organizational development to suggest ways to improve. By doing this, it would ensure that the organization is growing at the same pace that societal issues are growing, and would help organizations adapt to the continuous changes in society from a managerial perspective.

In addition to the previous discussion regarding how social workers can contribute to their work, a member of the organization suggested that exploring research on consultation fatigue would be useful to them as consultation plays a role in their participation model. Consultation fatigue occurs when people develop an aversion to formal consultation methods after participating in multiple waves of community engagement initiatives (Attree et al., 2011; Skelcher, 1996). Skelcher (1996) describes consultation fatigue more specifically as "people's

aversion to clip-boards, telephone interviews and public meetings to 'discuss your area'" (p. 68). Citizens are less likely to participate in consultation initiatives under these conditions. It is also worth noting that collecting data in an environment of consultation fatigue has the potential to harm research efforts (Skelcher, 1996). With all of this in mind, it is logical that the organization would be weary of the development of consultation fatigue given their affinity for citizen participation.

Research suggests that participants are more likely to find community engagement worthwhile when consultation is not the main method used and when legitimate power for change is ceded to them (Attree et al., 1996, Conclusions section, para. 3). This suggests that participants want to see results from their engagement. Furthermore, participants' experiences with community engagement is dependent on whether the benefits are outweighed by the stresses associated with participating (Attree et al., 1996, The Health Impacts of Engagement section). Things such as transportation and time spent on the initiative can be considered stressors for participants. The organization should be mindful to create a balance between the benefits and the demands of participation. Other factors that make individuals more likely to withdraw from participation include the limitation of their participation to consultation exercises and a failure to act on their suggestions (Attree et al., 1996, Conclusions section, para. 2). Consistent with the main findings previously reported in our literature review table, it seems that repetitive, formal consultations wherein participants do not see the impacts of their participation can lead to an environment of consultation fatigue.

Recommendations to Agency

Based on the research provided throughout this paper, it is important for organization members to consider all aspects of what has been previously beneficial and harmful when it

comes to community work. When working with community members, there is always going to be processes that do not best suit everyone's 'needs' and 'wants'. Being mindful of how participatory approaches reach individuals from different populations and cultures is especially important, which is something that was not often considered in the research. When working with local communities in Newfoundland and Labrador specifically, it may be of benefit to incorporate some provincial traditions discussed by that specific community. For example, providing a space for community members to share their art and including some form of Newfoundland music, dances, food, and more. This may also be helpful when collaborating with Indigenous communities, by talking to community members about their cultural traditions and asking if they would like to structure their own social gathering based on these traditions to get community members involved and build community development.

With regards to other recommendations for the organization from a student perspective, we would suggest reaching out to people within the university for a potential collaboration. For example, getting in contact with English professors at Memorial University would be beneficial, specifically in relation to using art (i.e., poetry) in their consultative processes. Getting educated professors who specialize in this area involved with the co-op would provide an opportunity for different perspectives and options of using forms of art with local communities. Aside from English professors, other academics working at the university would also be good resources when exploring ways to use art in the consultative process. For example, Kathleen Sitter, who used to be a professor with a major focus on photo-voice, and Julia Janes (a professor with the School of Social Work) who also has experience with photovoice. Furthermore, Lisa Moore is another professor at Memorial whose focus is on creative writing and Canadian literature.

Contacting these sources would be worthwhile to gain more knowledge on the topic, particularly from personal experience as well as from a research perspective.

Finally, the organization should continue to privilege the voices of community members themselves in their initiatives. This can have a positive impact on whether community members continue to participate in said initiatives. Participants should feel that they have some power to enact tangible change rather than simply providing data. Privileging these voices and creating an environment wherein they feel heard is essential for continued participation.

Critiques/Limitations in Research

In general, it seems that formal consultation with very little innovation is still the method of choice for many organizations. Organizations continue to use this method in spite of research findings that this is not the best practice and in fact can cause participants to withdraw or provide unhelpful information. Continuing with this method results in the reinforcement and continuation of the status quo. Organizations can use formal consultations to appear as though they have provided an opportunity for community engagement and citizen participation without creating an environment of effective communication and impact. If organizations truly wish to engage with the community, they must be mindful of their methods for participation and the impact of consultation fatigue. In addition to this, there were many limitations in the research that we took note of. For example, there was very little Canadian-based research, which is important to keep in mind when reviewing the research, we have provided, and when working with local communities in the province. In addition, we did not focus our research on areas such as the importance of practicing cultural sensitivity in community work, as well as specific cultural traditions among populations; however, these factors are essential for any organization to consider when working with communities. Lastly and arguably most importantly, it is crucial to

continuously engage in self-reflection, in order to acknowledge our own privileges in society when working with diverse populations in the province. This is important from both an organizational and social work viewpoint.

Through this project we were able to learn about the differences between innovative and effective methods of participation as well as ineffective, habitual methods of participation. This information, along with practice in critically examining research will be valuable in our education as well as our careers. Creating connections with the Social Justice Co-op of Newfoundland and Labrador and working to help them in their pursuit of community engagement has also been incredibly rewarding. While conducting our own independent research, we learned how to critically examine the existing literature in a way that is both beneficial and harmful when working with communities, and applied these factors in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. In addition, we got to learn an immense amount of information about the organization and the ongoing projects they are working on. While we didn't get to attend a volunteer meeting with the Green New Deal due to our busy schedules as students, we feel encouraged to actively participate with the organization in the future.

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