

StFX Extension Department

Case Study: Rural Leadership Program

October, 2011

Our roots

- The early years: Mass meetings, schools and conferences
- The Antigonish Movement
- Extension Department formed in 1928
- Changing with the context: social and economic pursuits

Our present

- Revised departmental mission statement:

To promote and advance, according to the principles of the Antigonish Movement, the economic self-reliance and social well-being of the people of Atlantic Canada through economic cooperation and education

Our approach

- We continue to approach development using a participatory model of learning and collective action, comprised of four parts:
 - Analysis
 - Planning
 - Action
 - Evaluation and reflection

Case study: Rural leadership program



Rural leadership program

- Rural Communities Leading
- 2 year pilot (Northeastern NS and South Shore) – more than 50 participants
- Local advisory committee
- 30 hours plus comparable outside work
- Two aspects: Individual (Leadership Portfolio) and Collective (Asset Recognition)

Leadership Portfolio elements

- Includes:
 - Leadership experiences
 - Personal leadership philosophy
 - Poetics, passion and politics of leadership: scenarios and case studies
 - Leadership goals
 - Skill analysis
 - Documentation

Asset identification and action plans

- Includes:
 - Understanding Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)
 - Exploring community assets
 - Identifying local and regional asset leaks
 - Developing local and regional action plans
 - Presenting community assets and plans to community members

Rural leadership program: Participants from five counties



Program tenets

Primacy of the individual

*Effective social reform involves fundamental
change in social and economic institutions*

Education must begin with the economic

Program tenets

Education must be through group action

Social reform must come through education

A full and abundant life for all

Learning from our work: what we've realized

- Begin acting at the local level but imagine what is possible (and do it) at the regional level
- Change the rural narrative of “have not” to “have much”
- Recognize that everyone has leadership abilities and strengths
- Emphasize that leadership is more about character and substance than knowledge and skill
- Underscore that personal power carries leaders further than positional authority

Living a full and abundant life

- Realize the importance of conversation and hospitality
- Foster and explore new ways to associate around what we have and can do rather than on what we do not possess and cannot accomplish
- Acknowledge that trust is the only currency that matters
- Remember that we all have leadership gifts