

From The Ground Up: 2003 conference in Kitchener

notes by Greg Macdougall | EquitableEducation.ca

Two important questions from which to base action:

1) What is required of an individual to make change happen?

>>> notes: level of commitment, level of participation, willingness to challenge the status quo, and utilization of critical thinking skills to evaluate every experience

2) What are the determinants of health for an individual, organization, community? >>> notes: economic, environmental, and social factors

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Leading a movement:

-> focus on an issue that is something everyone can understand

-> how to frame issues so people will respond?

policy = the translation of priorities and principles into programs and courses of action

how to evaluate achievement

be accountable -> set of criteria

community

-> equitable, engage all sectors, build representativeness, inclusivity, stop disparity / disassociation, struggle to bring people in, to acknowledge their right to be there

balance broad range of interests of the community with own individual interests

we need spaces (social, physical -> inclusive)

spaces for community

how do institutions reflect the values of the dominant society, versus how do they challenge and subvert those ways of being?

the process of change

-> as people feel a part and feel included, they take ownership and they transform the norms / framework

change can happen from either:

direct confrontation

OR

people acting together outside of dominant culture

-> create alternate realities (empowering)

it is up to us to decide what we want, and how to go about doing it

local grassroots advocacy is essential, the only way to change things -> "trickle up effect"

important that local people pass on knowledge, share the skills and how-to .. keep it going

we NEED TO FOCUS (decide on our focus), there are too many battles to take them all on

community organizations develop social capital

-> people comfortable to go and get help, etc

crisis-driven (event-driven) decision making points away from systemic, knocks our agenda off the table

the way the media frames issues (SARS, West Nile, September 11, etc) -> need to be asking different questions

historic change

-> now 2 world superpowers (US and people of world) .. "we need to start acting like a super power" overwhelming public opinion vs unreflective government policy

dealing with diversity

-> look past traditional defns of diversity, include different personality types etc

-> understand, appreciate, make room for all different contributions, things to do

we're in competition with TV for a good night out

we need to make room for people

when people ask, what can ordinary people do, they're asking, what can people not like you do

important: awareness change versus behaviour change

focus on policy change, not heavy lifting (doing all the hard work ourselves - e.g. food banks)

-> gov't needs to row, people need to steer

be positive

-> look at things not as problems, but as opportunities for solutions

-> how to do that?

the power of one, as part of a community

invisible power in society is by DESIGN

(i.e. people rewarded more for doing wrong thing)

-> how do we get to these things, how to change the design