The role of education in rural communities

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November 6, 2014
Researcher Positionality

- Immigrant and daughter of a Minister
- Student of Business, Public Policy and Education
- Worldview: Subjectivism
- Previous Careers:
  - Voter education and training (State of Iowa)
  - State economic developer
  - Telecommunications local union president
- Passion: Community & Political Activist
  assisting communities not only to survive but thrive
Trelawny School District

- Governance: Public consolidated system
- Board of Education: Five members serving four-year terms
- Personnel Structure: 127 persons; including 57 teachers and 70 staff persons
- Salary & Contract information: $32,000-$64,000 Union
- Student enrollment: 864 students
- School organizations: Future Farmers of America (FFA), and Students against Destructive Decisions (SADD).
- Athletics: football, volleyball basketball, wrestling, tennis, soccer, golf, track and field, softball, cross country, and baseball.
What are the functions of education in rural community development?
Theoretical Framework

Community Capitals

- Natural
- Human
- Social
- Cultural
- Financial
- Political
- Built

Meanings

- The Environment
- Skills and abilities
- Connectivity and networking
- Attitudes and values
- Invest in projects
- Residents’ contributions
- Infrastructure – roads & buildings
Research Design

- Reviewed board of education meeting notes
- Conducted semi-formal Interviews:
  - Superintendent
  - Curriculum Director & Principal
  - Special Projects Director
The Findings - The role of education

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<th>Community Development</th>
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<td>□ Large employer</td>
<td>□ Salaries, residents</td>
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<td>□ Train workforce</td>
<td>□ Workers-skills, opportunities</td>
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<td>□ Public use of facilities</td>
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Community Capitals & Findings

**Cultural**
Developing character

**Human**
Trained workforce
Jobs for citizens

**Built**
Public use of facilities
Performing arts center

**Political**
Financial resources
Recognition and goodwill
Citizen participation

**Social**
Performing arts
Sports activities
Diverse ideas

**Financial**
Fitness center
Shared resources
School levy tax

School District

Hexagons represent different capitals:
- Cultural
- Social
- Financial
- Built
- Political
- Natural
Discussion

- How do we use CCF to improve and strengthen our investment in education?
What comes to mind when the word “rural” is heard? Some envision the natural beauty of the landscape, while others visualize dying fields and empty towns. I believe that the word ‘rural’ in this globalized era should make us think ‘opportunities.’ There are opportunities for researchers in the field to discuss how the challenges could turn into opportunities. A regional school partnership inspired by Carr and Kefalas (2009) is making a difference in the lives of many young people and their families. A collaborative effort is now viewed as an opportunity for new energy and creativity in workplaces. A small investment of time is now seen as an economic engine. As researchers, we have an ethical responsibility to improve upon what was given to us. This is a fine opportunity to ‘pay it forward.’