A Community Development Approach to Prosperous Labour Force Development

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Outline

Introduction
Place / region in a global economy
Understanding change / context
Labour force development
- Goals
- Processes
Discussion
Introduction 1

• Most labour force development debate is focused on the “economic” side of ledger
  – Industry demand in short / near term future
  – Training / skills upgrades of adults to fit demand
• Useful for ‘plugging’ gaps
• Fails to support the type of workforce rural places need to be successful in the future
Introduction II

• Community development approach
  – Understand place / region in the global economy
  – Understand trajectories of change
  – Long-term view to supporting resilience as foundation for flexibility and success (prosperity)

• Goal
  – We are seeking resilient and sustainable communities, economies, and environments
While a ‘globalized’ economy is nothing new, somethings are new:

- Pace of change is accelerating
- Global ‘interconnections’ increasing / increasingly complex
- Booms come faster; busts go deeper
- Industry is global (compete for them; compete for share of jobs)
Common issues affecting OECD non-metropolitan areas:

- Population aging
  - Resource frontier aging / youth out-migration
- Limited resource economy base
- Social, political, economic restructuring
- Service closure / withdrawal
- Outdated governance structures
  - ‘Invisibility’ in national debates
- Distance / remoteness
- Aging infrastructure
The community development – economic development challenge:

– If capital can be “anywhere”.... Why would it invest in your place / region

Response:

– Place-based approaches to community and economic development

– Focus upon re-imagining & re-bundling our assets to create new competitive advantage that fits with our aspirations
Development history:

• Post war ‘resource frontier’:
  – Coordinated public policy initiatives to stimulate industrialization of remote resource opportunities
  – Create employment and robust small town economies
  – Create finance / commerce / management hubs in urban centres
  – ‘Long boom’ of 1950 to 1980
Understanding Change & Context: Economy II

- 1980s resource commodity recession
  - Focused on resource regions in the global economy
- Pressures since:
  - International trade agreements
  - Trade globalization
  - Low cost production regions
- Resource industries are concentrating
- Technology is labour shedding
Understanding Change & Context: Demographics

Quesnel - 1981

% of total pop
Understanding Change & Context: Demographics

Quesnel - 1981

Quesnel - 2016
Understanding Change & Context: Pathways Forward

• Across rural Canada, the community & economic development message is very clear:
  – Economic development that not only creates jobs, but respects people, the environment, and our quality of life

• Four bottom lines:
  – Culture
  – Community
  – Economy
  – Environment
Labour Force Development: A Community Development Approach I

Context:

• Ongoing global economic change
  – Need for flexibility of skills across labour force

• Resource frontier aging
  – In the old economy:
    • Opportunities related to older workers
    • Opportunities related to younger replacement workers
  – In the new economy:
    • Opportunities for work that we can imagine
    • Opportunities for work that we cannot yet imagine

• Goal:
  – A learning workforce
Labour Force Development: A Community Development Approach II

• Time:
  – Change time horizons from 6 month training programs to a generation long support for the next learning workforce
  – 1980 to 2018 period of economic restructuring spanned more than 1.5 generations in time

• Community development focus:
  – Invest in the economy
  – Invest in the society
  – Support an environment for innovative approaches
Labour Force Development: A Community Development Approach III

• Healthy moms with healthy pregnancies
• Support for elders
• Early childhood programming
• Success by six programming
• Investments in elementary & high schools to connect families / communities
  – Especially in developing teaching technologies so students can access full range of curriculum opportunities
• Investments in bridging, internship, apprenticeship programs
• Investments in lifelong learning structures and programs
Labour Force Development: A Community Development Approach IV

• In 20 years, rural Canada would have a learning workforce
  – Critical element to revitalize in today’s global economy
• But:
• Must be matched by infrastructure investments
  – Communication
  – Transportation
  – Social
  – Recreation
  – Cultural
• If workers can “work anywhere, live anywhere”…. Why would they live in your community
Discussion

• Current approaches are limited in scope and thinking
• Community development can broaden scope and thinking
• All community development work takes time
  – But it is critical to get started now
Our Team

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