Workcamps: Context for Community Development Issues

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Outline

- Background
- Issues
- Workcamps:
  - Issues of General Interest
  - Differences in Worker Accommodation
  - Phases
  - Getting Ready
- Discussion
Background
Background I

- Always been labour mobility
- Increasingly mobile/global capital
- Is labour “catching up”?
Background II

• Resource development and mobile workers
  ▪ “Rushes”
  ▪ Boomtowns
  ▪ Instant towns
  ▪ Fly-in, fly-out (FIFO), long distance labour commuting (LDLC)

• Historical trade off between new towns and LDLC
  ▪ Remoteness
  ▪ Length of production run
    o LDLC cheaper in short run, costly over long-term

• Shift cycle norms were different for new towns and LDLC
Questions of scale:

- Geographical
  - Regional
  - National
  - International

- Temporal
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - “Long shifts”
  - Monthly
  - Seasonal
  - Longer
Background IV

- Contemporary tradeoffs between new towns and LDLC
  - LDLC costs are decreasing
  - More sophisticated/comfortable camps
  - New town costs increasing dramatically
    - New environmental standards
    - Land claims issues
    - Access routes

- Transition in work expectations
  - ‘Golden handcuffs’ of salary replaced by quality of life desires for whole family & multiple employment opportunities
Background V

- LDLC dominates new developments
- Hybrid models:
  - Fort McMurray (town; with significant worker mobility)
Issues

- Workers
- Home Communities
- Host Communities
Worker Issues

• Benefits
  ▪ Financial
  ▪ Skills, Training
  ▪ Networks
  ▪ Experiences from other sectors
  ▪ Access to a wider range of services/amenities

• Concerns
  ▪ Financial
  ▪ Safety
  ▪ Mental health, fatigue, isolation
  ▪ Household impacts
Host Communities

• Increased service demands
• Not “counted” in fiscal transfer data
• Varies by work camp “type”

• Increased local spending
  ▪ Discretionary areas
• Loss of wages to the home community

• No investment in volunteer/civic groups
• Social disruption
Home Communities

- Fiscal transfers
- Emotional toll in households
  - Roles
  - Disrupted routines
- Challenges for voluntary/civic groups
  - People
  - Activities
  - Facilities
- Need to increase investment in supportive services
  - House, property
  - Families
  - Individuals
- Social disruption
- Danger of out-migration
Workcamps
Workcamps – Issues of Context

• Context 1
  ▪ Cusp of most significant transformation of northern BC in 50 years

• Context 2
  ▪ Readiness
    ◦ If projects go – communities must be ready
    ◦ If projects don’t go – communities must be ready

• Context 3
  ▪ Attention to our community development foundations
  ▪ 4 key infrastructure

• Context 4
  ▪ Imperative of industry
    ◦ They need workers
### Differences in Worker Accommodation

- **Remote camps**
  - Less community impact
  - Typically highly professional
- **Proximate camp**
  - Typically highly professional – managed
  - Can have significant community impact
- **In town “camps”**
  - Use existing housing, services
  - Unregulated
Project Phases

1. Construction phase (5-8 years)
2. Operations phase
3. Next generation workforce (+10-15 years)
   - What will attract and hold them in your community?
Getting Ready

Level One
- Sunk infrastructure investments of camps
- Service infrastructure ("accordion" model)
- Potential to donate

Level Two
- Local business opportunity
- Retail business for lower volume activity later

What will your community look like when the last construction vehicle drives out of town?
- Must have retooled services, infrastructure, amenities
- Must be debt free (or close to)
- Must be "set" for next 30+ years
Discussion
Discussion I

• Geography and Place Matter
  ▪ Context matters
  ▪ Distance from community impacts potential for embedding local benefit/costs
  ▪ Stage of project development/operation matters
  ▪ Need to know where we wish to be in the future:
    o Our communities, economies, environments
Discussion II

• Connections
  - Building understanding through communication
  - Foundation for planning and coordination
  - Ongoing communication
  - Facilitating connections
Discussion III

• Continuing points of focus:
  - Ongoing relationships between community, industry, and businesses
  - Benefit flows
  - Tracking responses:
    - Community
    - Labour
    - Industry
  - Tracking impacts of policy change
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Community Development Institute - UNBC

- NEW BOOK - "Investing in Place"
- NEW - NEV2 Final Report
- Partners in Community Development: Board Voice
- Spring 2013 • Speakers Series - Housing in a Changing Community: Opportunity for Innovation

The Community Development Institute at UNBC is interested in two fundamental issues for communities in northern BC: community capacity and community development. By undertaking research, sharing information, and supporting education outreach, the Institute is becoming a vital partner to communities interested in making informed decisions about their own futures.

The institute emphasizes the importance of capacity-building, collaboration, learning, and complementarity between UNBC research centres. Research that is undertaken balances academic credibility with practical relevance. Beyond research, the Institute is involved in outreach activities and serves as a conduit to expand and enhance local educational opportunities related to community development.

Major: Public Administration and Community Development

Network: National Network for Urban Aboriginal Economic Development

Conferences and Workshops Hosted by the CDI
The Community Development Institute
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For further information please visit our website at:
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