

Learning Communities

Toward Collaborative Knowledge in
Rural Development

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3 Projects, 3 Steps

- Action Research Alliance
- Learning Communities and a Learning Region
- Rural Partnerships Project, Baltic States

Core goals/building blocks

- Reflexivity and self evaluation
- Participatory / Relational Knowledge
- power and knowledge : addressing social boundaries

Project 1, Step 1

ARA

Goals were:

- Developing a community of inquiry around social exclusion
- Helping community activists record and demonstrate the rationale behind their actions and ideas
- Helping activists improve their capacity for learning and passing on experience

ARA : results

- Value placed on the scope to experiment
- Workshops and exchange of experiences welcomed
- Self evaluation tools found to be hard work
 - ‘Do-ers’ not ‘thinkers’

Project 2, Step 2: Learning Communities

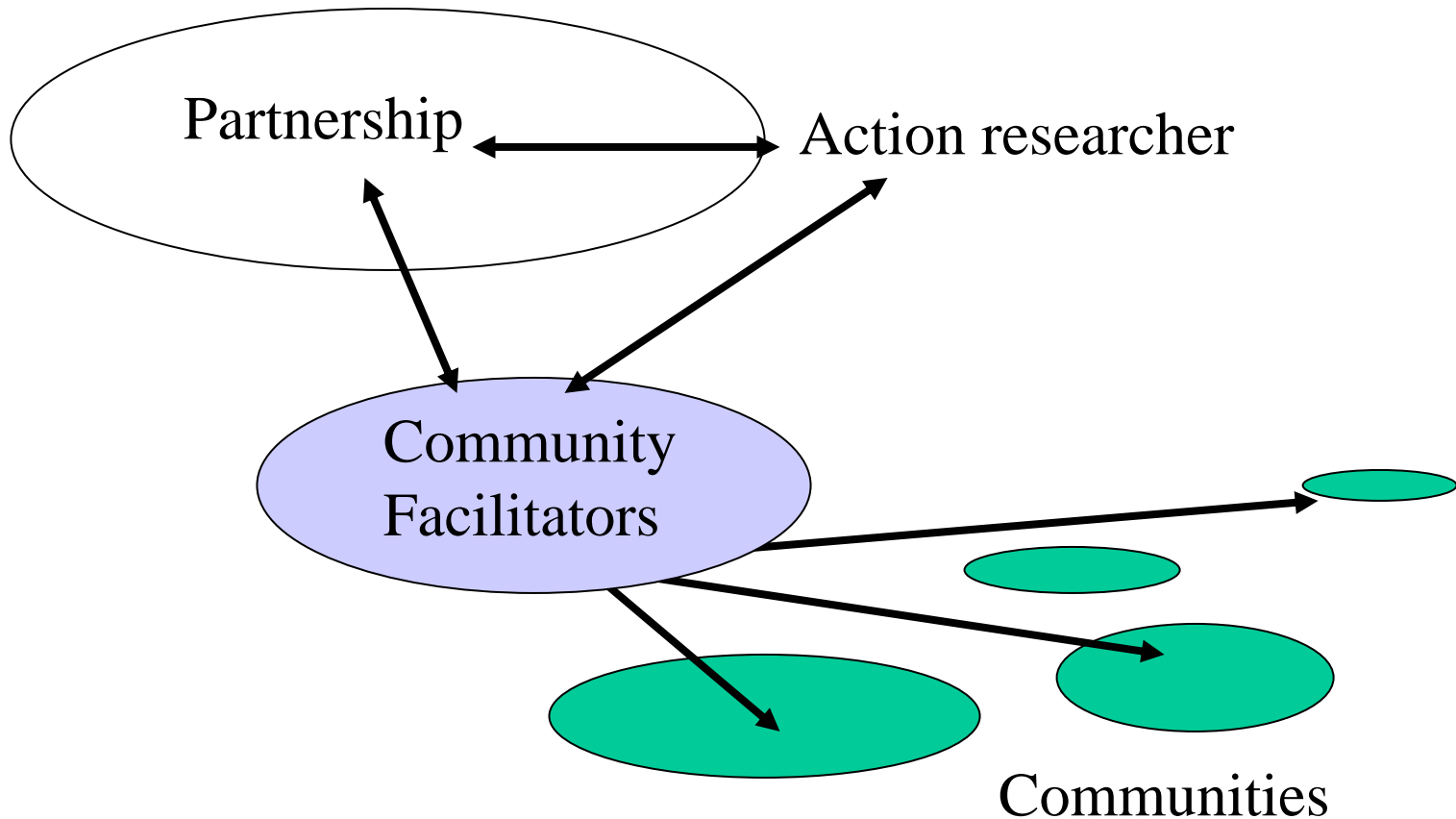
Goals were:

- Broader participation in taking stock of the community and relationships to it
- Consciousness raising about the community as a focus for action and participation
- Establishment of an action plan – a baseline picture to progress and review
- Encouraging dialogue

Learning Community Results

- Hard work – often slow to see the value of this sort of activity – too abstract
- Considerable potential as an ongoing process, however
- Good social capital builder (community and regional)

Project 3 Step 3 : RPP Baltics



Concluding Remarks

Evaluation can be used

- To reveal hidden resources and processes
- To build social and cultural capital
- To enhance system dialogue