



Culturally sustainable development with futures workshops

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Culture - creativity and control

- Basically all human activities with their material and immaterial products are culture
- One central tension between many different definitions of culture exists because, culture is seen on the one hand as free and creative self-expression and on the other hand as responsible control and order
- According to current anthropological/ethnological definition, the basic quality of culture - also local culture - is seen as
 - a dynamic and creative process of interaction between different individuals and
 - changing and varying cultural elements - both material and immaterial - in this process

Creativity and control in regional development



- In regional development creativity and freedom are usually taken as qualities of art, while local culture is seen as expression of controlled order, for example as cultural heritage or distinctive local culture
- Individual art is seen to vitalise local culture with innovative elements
- Only recently, the creative and individual everyday life has got a position in local culture of regional development
- According to current anthropological definition, local culture should be seen as a basically creative process
- There is a tension between
 - the current anthropological understanding of how local culture exists and lives in the world and
 - the definition of local culture usually used in regional development
- This tension is central also when considering qualities of culturally sustainable development

What should sustain in culturally sustainable development?



- According to the current anthropological understanding of culture
 - The primary object for safeguarding in culturally sustainable development is the dynamic and creative process of interaction between different individuals and the changing and heterogenic cultural elements in this process
 - In addition different value based cultural constructions are to be safeguarded
 - These can be for example cultural heritage or distinctive local culture
 - In terms of culturally sustainable development, it is possible to relieve the tension between the dynamic process of culture and controlled cultural constructions, if in definition and selection of these constructions, transparency, active civic society and democracy are central principles

Cultural sustainability in practice



- To give people possibilities for creative solutions and for actions based on their solutions
- To give people possibilities to support their well-being
 - Organised cultural activities and possibilities for cultural self-expression are good methods to increase well-being
- Futures workshops are one method to achieve these goals

Cultural strategies with futures workshops in KULMA-project



- *Culture as a resource of the countryside* (KULMA) developed cultural strategies for networks of different public and private cultural actors in rural municipalities and cities in Southwest Finland
- KULMA developed a cultural strategy process with four futures workshops, which was used in all municipalities involved (small municipalities formed groups of three municipalities)
- KULMA was a two-year project expired in 2005
- KULMA was co-operation between 21 municipalities, the Arts Council of Southwest Finland and Finland Futures Research Centre
- KULMA produced 15 cultural strategies

The starting point and goal of KULMA



- The starting point of KULMA was
 - An observation of fragmented field of cultural work with many short projects and many different actors
 - The need to develop sustainable interaction and co-operation between these actors and activities
 - As wide definition of culture as possible
 - Art, organised activities in culture, everyday culture
- The goal of KULMA was
 - To strengthen cultural activities and co-operation networks with common cultural strategies
 - To strengthen well-being and (economical) vitality with cultural activities
 - To strengthen the role of culture as part of municipalities' strategic thinking

Futures workshops as a part of a process of empowerment



- Definition of operational principles and collecting of local knowledge
 - A meeting with local authorities and decision-makers in every municipality
 - Documentation with a record
- Extensive information in every municipality
 - About the project
 - About the futures working group, which was open to all
 - In local media (usually in local newspaper) as a story and as an announcement
 - With a local kick-off meeting, open to all
 - Documentation with a record
 - With a letter to possible actors (80-150/municipality)
- Gathering members for the futures working groups
 - Importance of a true openness
 - Requires knowledge of operational environment
 - 10-20 members with different backgrounds in local cultural activities
 - In KULMA all together 267members in 15 working groups

Futures workshops as a part of a process of empowerment



- Work in four futures workshops in every municipality/group of small municipalities
 - Importance of the equality and transparency of the working process
 - All members of futures workshops must have opportunity to express own thoughts and ideas
 - Documentation with minutes of discussions and transcriptions of notes on wall-papers by group members
 - Mailing of documented material to group members
- Information to local media on the primary contents of the work during the cultural strategy process, possibility for reactions
- Writing of strategies on the basis of material from futures workshops
 - By the project staff
 - All the members of each working group had opportunity to comment on the manuscript for the group in question
- Publication of strategies, all in one book
 - Distribution to all members of the futures working groups
 - Distribution, among others, to local and regional authorities, decision-makers and libraries

After KULMA-project

- Work in futures workshops tightened and created contacts between cultural actors
 - Some groups continue with meetings after the end of project
 - Support the realisation of cultural strategies in a network of different actors
- Cultural strategies offer ways of action to all actors in the cultural field
 - Activities alone or in groups, in one municipality or as cooperation with several municipalities
 - Possibilities also for actors, who didn't participate in the futures workshops

What was culturally sustainable in KULMA?



- Safeguarding culture as the dynamic and creative process of interaction between different individuals
 - The empowering working process with cultural strategies in four futures workshops itself
 - Plans for cultural interaction in cultural strategies
- Definition and selection of value based cultural constructions to be safeguarded
 - Definition of essential elements in local culture and selection of central cultural organised activities in the equal and transparent working process in futures workshops

More information

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