

Engaging communities in environmental and social justice

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What is community?

Friends of the Earth Scotland's Community Action team identified two 'types' of community with respect to sustainability:

Communities facing *chronic* unsustainability: eg poverty, social exclusion, poor air quality, carbon emissions;

and

Communities facing *acute* unsustainability: in a crisis - opposing development, facing extractive industries, fighting pollution incidents.

and a dialectical relationship between the two.

Why engage the community?

Purposes

Participation, inclusion, legitimacy, social license, efficiency, empowerment, incorporation, dispossession.

How to engage community?

Techniques

Door knocking; public meetings; local media; 'fun' events; publicity stunts; 'off the shelf' methods (planning for real, participatory mapping, citizens' jury, charrette, participatory appraisal); '*talk to ten people*'; creativity.

How effective are the techniques at meeting the purposes?

How much effort (given resources)?

Some examples: Teesside; Falkirk; Leitrim; Louisiana

How do people learn to address a range of issues of social and environmental justice?

How do people learn to change the world?

1. Community council concerned about new housing development on green field
2. Extinction rebellion wanting wider support for direct actions on climate change
3. School teacher encouraging inter-generational learning and action on waste
4. Environmental project officer looking to diversify users of nature reserve
5. Faith community wanting to engage worshippers in community sustainable development
6. Local trade union rep in teaching union building an institutional sustainability strategy

What techniques might you use?

What can contribute to social and environmental justice?