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3-8-2013

Photo Essay

Sections 1-4, Learning Outcomes:

1. Summarize the historical roots of community development and organizing, advocacy, and social movements.



(Courtesy of Google Images)

Social movements have been happening for years. Saul Alinski is known as the father of community organizing and spent much of his life understanding methods of community organizing; all the while promoting these ideas for individuals to be able to face influential local and federal power structures and seek out a common cause for change.



(Courtesy of Google Images)

Feminism is one topic we discussed this quarter. Even today this is an issue around the world. It is a well established ideology and there is often a common goal to replace or diminish male dominance and patriarchy around the world. It focuses on women's position in societies and argue for increased position of women in the world. The most common understanding is of extreme feminism which is usually displayed as sexism where women are thought of as inferior to men.



(Courtesy of Google Images)

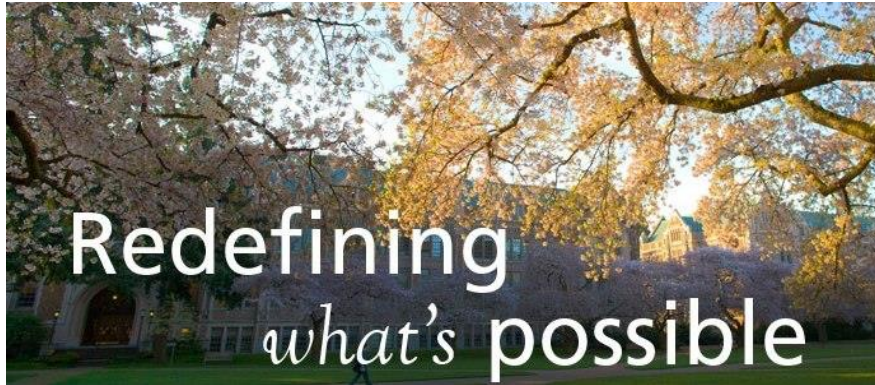
This quarter I learned about four approaches to community organizing. These include Saul Alinsky and conflict organizing (“using anger and blaming a selected, targeted individual by putting pressure on the target to create a concession and cause change”(Eichler, M. (2007). p.5)), women centered organizing (“emphasizing that relationships should not be built on self-interest but rather on understanding and responsibility. It puts a high priority on personal development as well as community development.” (Eichler, M. (2007). p.6)), community building approach (“forming collaborative partnerships among a neighborhood’s stakeholders to strengthen their internal capacity to solve their problems.”(Eichler, M. (2007). p.6)), and consensus organizing (“Tying the self-interest of the community to the self-interest of others to achieve a common goal.” (Eichler, M. (2007). p.7)).



(Courtesy of Google Images)

Dorothy Day was big on advocating for change throughout her life. She is known for saying “don’t call me a saint... I don’t want to be dismissed so easily” (Martin, James. 2012.) and “Nobody has the right to feel hopeless, there’s too much work to do.” (Quotegeek. 2013) She is co-founder to the Catholic Worker movement and though she faced many hardships and difficult moments in her life, she always persevered toward community change.

2. Analyze community systems and structures, and design and evaluate processes to initiate and sustain change through specific strategies, tactics, activities and social policy advocacy.



(Courtesy of Google Images)

Through a variation of methods, you can analyze current issues within communities and how to work through them. These include a needs assessment (allowing you to see all the concerns within the community) and a resource assessment (allowing you to understand all of the community's current assets). By utilizing these methods, and others, you can redefine what's possible within communities.



(Photo by Amber French)

This picture of a bunny expresses one community's structure, or system. A community most people know little to nothing about, but all bunnies know extremely well. This is exactly the same idea as when there is a difference in cultures, religion, or other varying system. This quarter I learned that when you go into a new community, this is the mentality you need to take. No matter how similar the community seems to your own, when promoting community change, you need to make sure to look at it with an open mind, just as if you knew nothing about them in the beginning.



(Photo by Amber French)

This photo is an example of how community change can happen. During the course of this quarter I learned that despite all the methods of promoting community change, sometimes change can happen unexpectedly. This is a picture of Students For Social Change Club at Western discussing new ways of creating change within our own community. As a professional, we sometimes forget that we aren't the only ones who are trying to create change. Sometimes, it happens from a number of community members acting on their own.

3. Record, assess, and reflect on experiences with community and the influence of human services values, attitudes, and ethics in relationship to community change.



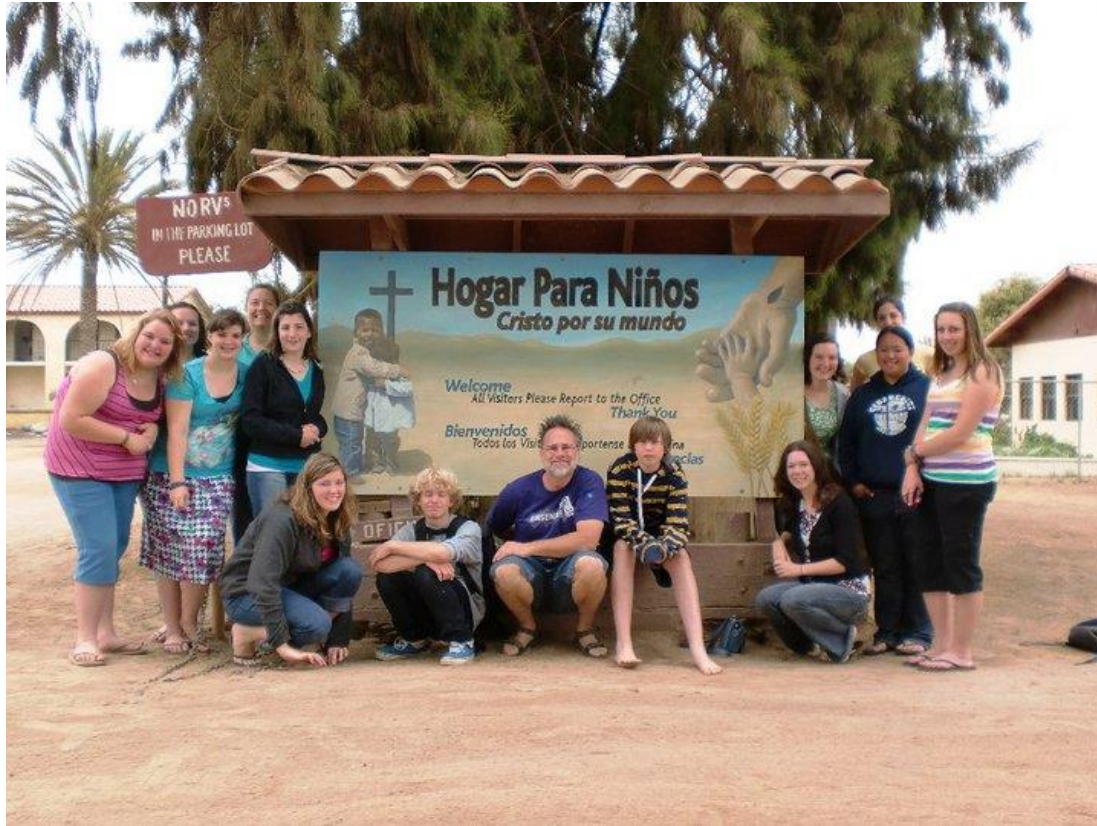
(Photo by Amber French)

Working with these children in Mexico was one of the greatest experiences of my life. In this image I was handing out cups of milk and spoons of peanut butter to children from poverish communities. I had never before been to this community and the children and families had no idea who we were, but they all knew they needed help and they all trusted the organization that was providing them with it. This is a big part of community change and something that stood out to me this quarter. It is important as a human service professional to remember the human services code of ethics and to live by them every day, it will help communities put their trust in your skills and your resources, and in turn will allow you to help promote community change.



(Photo by Amber French)

Junior Core with Nancy Mullane was an incredible experience. She was able to teach me so much about how I can personally relate to a variety of systems, how to understand my own ethics and how they combine and work within the human services profession. This quarter, while learning about promoting change within a community and different techniques in doing so, I also learned about how my personal values can get in the way. There are a number of methods in analyzing community change including needs assessments or simple questioning. I also learned how to analyze the different results and compare them to current resources, assets, and skills within the community.



(Photo by Amber French)

Traveling to Foundation For His Ministries was an experience I will never forget. It brought out my passion and showed me what I wanted to do with my life. Reflecting back on this experience I see more clearly my values and why I chose to follow the Human Services Code of Ethics. Throughout this quarter human services ethics haven't been brought up much; but I have learned that they are important to live by if you truly want to create change. They are trustworthy and well known.



(Photo by Amber French)

This photo was taken after an incredibly long day at a summer event with the Jump Around Fun Zone crew. The bouncer you see rolled up in this picture was one of the biggest ones we had. It was our goal to work as a team and as a community of employees to get it put together without any help from the men. This concept was seen throughout this quarter as well. I learned that in order to accomplish change within a community and reach a common goal it is important to gather a team of individuals with a common idea in mind. From here you can work to understand what assets you have available and can collaborate ideas on how to solve common struggles. Working as a team through collaboration and open communication are skills human services professionals find important when working in the field and are a good representation of a common community centered attitude.

4. Analyze the systemic issues related to culture, diversity, and social class in the context of community systems.



(Courtesy of Google Images)

While learning about community change this quarter I learned the importance of asking questions. This is an incredibly important factor in effectively creating community change as it allows you to gather as much data as you need in as many variations as you want. Asking questions is an especially useful tool when you are going into a community that is new to you, be it a new religion, culture, tradition, or even geographic location. It helps show you what the community expects and would like to see happening while providing you with a general idea of how to respectfully serve them as well.



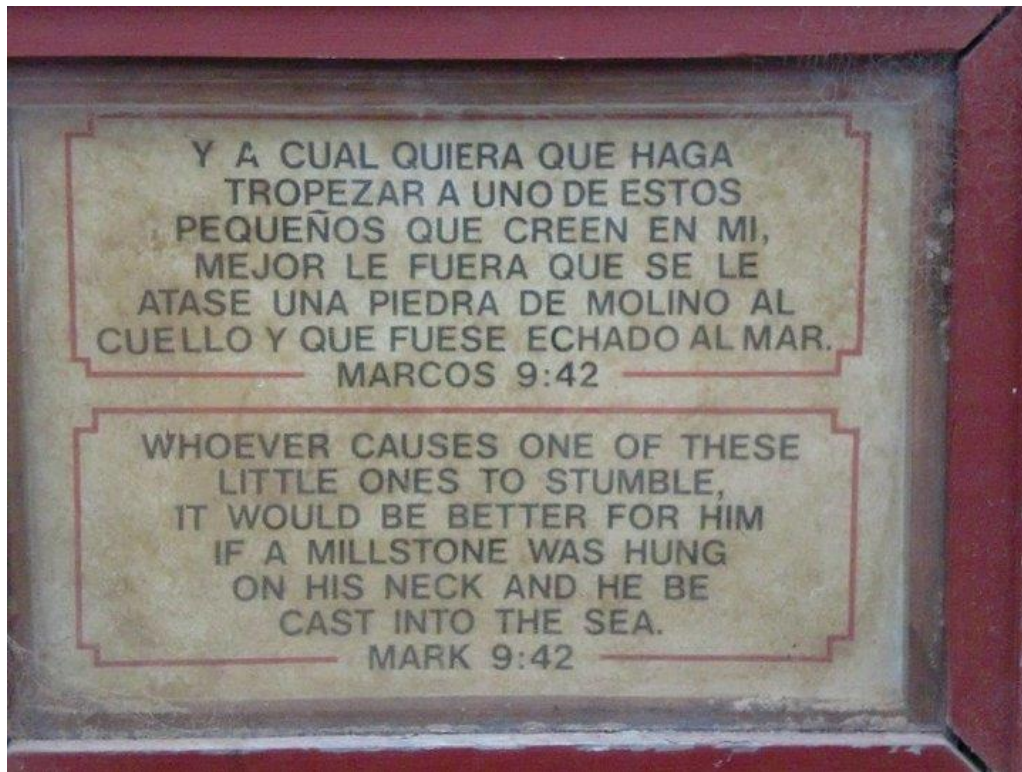
One big issue today is awareness on all the problems within our communities. When Students for Social Change Club began the academic year, we decided we wanted to frame our work around multiple current issues, so the awareness campaign began. In October our focus was pregnancy and infant loss awareness, so we set up in Red Square on Western's campus for a pregnancy and infant loss awareness vigil to honor all of those families who have experience pregnancy loss or infant loss. This quarter taught me that knowing and being aware of your communities concerns is a big step in promoting community change and spreading the word any way possible is an excellent start to diminishing this barrier.



(Photo by Amber French)

This is a photo of a community I visited in Mexico a couple years back. Still when I look at it, it inspires me; it reminds me of everything I have and it shows an excellent example of a community that may be in distress. Looking at just this picture it is easy to assume this community is in desperate need of a change.

However, one thing I learned about communities this quarter is that we don't know anything about them unless we start asking questions. Although they have a different appearance than we are used to, we need to assess what the community members are interested in seeing before we jump to conclusions; maybe our changes don't match up with what the community has in mind.



(Photo taken by Amber French)

This quote really stood out to me on my trip to Mexico a couple years back. It is an excellent example of the type of community Foundation For His Ministry has set for itself. I love that this picture doesn't show any of the buildings or faces of any people or children. It shows you their values without opening up your personal biases.

Sometimes we forget that we have biases; social class, variation in culture or diversity can often trigger them without us even knowing. In promoting community change, this quarter has taught me to always keep your biases in check and only work with the expectations the community comes up with among themselves.

Section 5, Two Choices:

Two Wolves

An old Cherokee chief was teaching his grandson about life...

"A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves.

"One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt, and ego.

The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

This same fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather,

"Which wolf will win?"

The old chief simply replied,

"The one you feed."

Cherokee Parable



The poem in this picture resembles my learning throughout this quarter. The tale of the two wolves is originally about an individual's faith in God and understanding that the constant battle between God's will and sin is going on within you at every moment. However, I also think it is up to interpretation. Another view point that I can see in this poem is the constant battle between a world beneficial for everyone and a world full of self-righteousness. This quarter we discussed human services relative to local systems. I think this poem really pulls together my new understanding that community change must be something we all have to choose to work toward. Our lives can all go down two paths, either the path of self-righteousness or the path of love, hope, and compassion. The path we choose to walk down is what's going to make change happen and make the world a better place. I think this is an incredibly important understanding for promoting community change because it also provides us an idea of what we need to look for within a community, a willingness to feed the second wolf and to move toward community change.

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