

Workshop/symposium for the ESREA conference in Torino 1.-4. March 2018

Laboratories for social change (Jan-Kåre Breivik, Berit Bareksten, Tobba Sudmann – from Western Norway University of Applied Sciences)

The symposium will start with the screening of a documentary film (10 Minutes); *The fall of the bamboo- and the rise of a community*, and be followed up with three contributions.

The film is a short documentary around action learning and creation of a laboratory for social change based on two experimental University workshops (2014 and 2016) for master students from diverse fields (social science, community work, theatre/music) in Bergen, Norway. Key topics have been - physical ensemble work, dumpster diving, community music/drumming, photo voice, Facebook-activism, ritual sharing, baking bread, creative community writing, and the art of making socially relevant parades. The result so far is a raw documentary that has triggered deep dialogues around social change for different and diverse audiences (artists and students). The film is a co-production between director Raúl Capote Braña from La Manigua Cooperativa Audiovisual (Havana), artistic director Solvei Stoutland from Apropos Theatre (Bergen), and professor in community work Jan-Kåre Breivik from Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Bergen). The film has been invited to Socially Relevant Film Festival in New York in late March 2018.

<https://vimeo.com/204538333>

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1 Jan-Kåre Breivik will present the documentary, and topics in the film will be elaborated upon considering the theme of the conference. Breivik will focus upon action learning as strategy for meeting the needs of contemporary societies/communities for democratic processes of place making and connectivity and togetherness among people. The aim is to discuss how we can create new ways of action/learning through the arts; by focusing on different ways of using theatre (ensemble work, and ritual sharing) in the tradition of Augusto Boal and Eugenio Barba, community music and creative writing and photo voice. All strategies work together in creating committed community actions with the people involved (parades, community actions inclusive celebrations and critical space-time awareness) that may enhance collective narratives of hope.

2. The conductor of the second section, Berit Bareksten, contributed with an interesting creative writing exercises within the 2016 workshop. Berit will elaborate upon experiences from this, on how creative writing can be important and effective in creating narrative connections between participants in doing a common performance/action in public. Community work is here about coming together, sharing and listening to the stories and life fragments presented through poems and short stories (among other things). Through fiction, and sharing dreams and hopes, the participants in the group, learn to find productive perspectives in life – and possibly develop collective narratives with others.

3. Tobba Sudmann will conduct the third section. She will discuss experimental learning in a broader context, and refer to how different versions of Living Labs can enhance embodied collective learning and action.

The documentary film is here accompanied by an extract from a text, which Breivik have submitted to Community Development Journal, to be published in late 2018.

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Contact jkb@hvl.no for questions.

The key questions we want to promote in this symposium/workshop are:

What kind of learning emerges from experiences of connectedness? (Including separation processes)

Is togetherness a motivator towards adult learning, and does education enhance togetherness?

What are, on the contrary, the potential manifestations of dis-connection, and with what implications?

Can togetherness become a delusion, a mystification, a prison of mind, or an obstacle in a world that celebrates individualism?

These questions will guide or symposium. And we will facilitate the dialogue by introducing some exercises that involves physical actions (movements and writing).