

Application of SWOT Analysis in Operations Strategies of Community Development – Using Communities Participating in Rural Regeneration Projects as an example

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Abstract

Community development has been advocated in the past twenty years. Many resources have been invested into communities to improve the standard of living in the neighborhood. However, the development of some communities remains stagnant due to stiff competition for resources. Owing to limited resources, decrease in departmental subsidies and difficulties in getting private sponsorships, it is crucial for communities to re-evaluate their own operation conditions and to brainstorm innovative directions as well as to explore new strategies. SWOT analysis is a simple-to-use and effective tool that can help achieve such goals.

With survival in the highly competitive environment being the focus of community organizations, the importance of strategic planning is often overlooked. Over the years, the researcher has taken on roles of lecturers and counsellors in different incubation schemes, and has observed that there is yet no strong connection between the conclusion made in the community and the future vision as well as actions in the communities. Therefore, the purposes of the present study are: 1. To analyze and clarify the blind spots and connotation of the SWOT analysis applied in community organizations in order to propose specific ideas for the communities to achieve cohesion and consensus. 2. To investigate and analyze the way of thinking of the community organizations adopting SWOT analysis as so to provide reference

to residents in the community in achieving cohesion and consensus. 3. To construct a speculative and analytical SWOT framework which community workers can refer to and use as a basis to lead community development decision-making.

Starting with a cognitive analysis of the SWOT content, followed by literature review of the factors that communities should consider from different perspectives, this study clarified and developed a thinking framework based on 51 discussion topics related to the communities which the author has engaged in and led over the past five years. In regard to the application of the SWOT analysis in the communities, this study puts forward the following conclusions: first, for the construction of a complete SWOT analysis framework, weaknesses should be added: "the lack of necessity of hardware and software within the community" and "sustainable development of the community misconduct"; secondly, the SWOT analysis of strategic planning for community development its necessity, include: 1. Evaluation of the strengths of the communities. 2. Handling and control of social resources and trends. 3. The basis for formulating social action plans. It is hoped that strategic planning knowledge will be put to use in promoting community work and by making good use of comprehensive strategies and strengths with the right opportunities we can overcome obstacles and realize the community's vision in a gradual and pragmatic manner.

Keywords: Rural regeneration, Community empowerment, SWOT analysis, Strategic planning