ASSET ACCUMULATION STRATEGIES IN 3 NEW SETTLEMENT COMMUNITIES

This new orientation shifts us away from a deficit model for thinking about how individuals at different cultural levels gain and lose in the process of integration to recognizing the multiple ways that individuals can adapt to new and ever-changing environments without suffering loss of identity in the process.

This approach shifts our attention to looking at what the newcomers offer and leads us to wonder how we can engage them in the future development and prosperity of the new settlement communities. (Asset Accumulation Strategies, 2009)

THE COMMUNITIES

MILAN: Milliken County is a community with large corporate agriculture and plant-processing Latino families with a high proportion of employment opportunities.

PERSIA: Peru County has a diverse economy with manufacturing plants, services, and a retail sector that attracts labor from surrounding communities. Peru has been selected as a DREAM initiative community. They will receive support to engage in downstate redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

THE METHOD

The asset accumulation strategies model is based on the sustainable livelihoods framework, and examines how newcomer families use their capitals—economic, human, social, and cultural—in income earning strategies, and the role that community climate plays in the process of economic integration.

Components of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework:

- Livelihoods: Capital, and the Context of Reception
- Livelihood Strategies
- Livelihood Outcomes

Brunnbaum's (1979) Ecological Model: The Context of Receptivity

Economic Capital: Income, assets, etc.
Human Capital: Skills, knowledge, health
Social Capital: Networks, identity

Focus: Economic growth, social cohesion, environmental sustainability

Case Studies: Economic success stories of communities successfully integrating newcomers.

RISKS/CHALLENGES

Weak Manufacturing, Agro-business, Construction, Services, and Tourism are major pull factors in migration and result in significant demographic changes in rural communities where these businesses operate.

Growth in non-agricultural regions of the Midwest creates both challenges and opportunities for many small communities, as newcomers can help to revitalize rural areas, and questions on how local institutions and businesses can best adapt to facilitate integration of newcomers, as consumers, entrepreneurs, and community participants.

Failure to achieve integration in other parts of the country has resulted in an increase in labor force or a segment of the local population who remains marginalized, resulting in a reduction in the quality of life for the entire community.

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