More than Microcosms:

The Transformative Impact of Intentional Communities

What is an intentional community?

Definitions

A group of people who live together or share common facilities and regularly associate on the basis of explicit common values.

The social and economic relationships of a group of people who share space, resources, and values.

Residence
Rationale
Responsibilities
Resources
Respect

Residence
People living in the same house or in different houses on the same piece of property, with some kind of process for determining who can be a resident.

Rationale
A collectively understood intention or purpose of the community.

Responsibilities
A governance or organizational structure, including decision-making processes and membership agreements.

Resources
Some amount of economic or material exchange or mutual support.

Respect
Autonomous individuals in voluntary association without coercion or violence to themselves, each other, or the land they inhabit.

What are some indicators of health ?

Residence

In intentional community, the relationships and agreements between people living together, and between those people and the land, are based on an acknowledgement of belonging and interdependence as fundamental to life.

- How well do the residences and other facilities accommodate people of different ages, stages of life, and abilities?
- To what extent is the community welcoming to visitors?
- How familiar is the community with the ecosystem of the land it inhabits?

Residence
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Rationale

Having a shared purpose or intention brings an awareness to choices and actions, individually and collectively that help direct structure and culture and satisfy the need for meaning.

- To what extent are new members oriented and integrated?
- Do all members of the community feel a sense of belonging?
- Do people who leave the community maintain relationships and a connection with the community?

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Responsibilities

Members of the community collectively participate in managing their own affairs, and share power, responsibilities, and decision-making.

- How much transparency and access exists around governance and finances?
- Do people feel like the distribution of work and responsibilities is fair?
- How well do short-term and long-term members listen to each other and share ideas?

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Resources

Intentional communities are experiments in how humans can equitably share resources within built habitats that are sustainably integrated into the natural world.

- Are there resource sharing systems that reduce consumption, make things cheaper for individuals, and increase access to resources?
- How much waste does the community produce?
- How much free time do community members have to pursue their passions and interests?

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Respect

Intentional communities are attempts to acknowledge the problems of the world, address the harm they have caused and continue to cause, and create health moving forward

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- To what extent is the community connected to local economic, social, and political systems?
- To what extent does the community support personal growth and trauma healing?
- To what extent does the community try to increase capacity and create space and resources that can help support vulnerable populations, local community organizing, and the formation of new communities?

Keep in touch!

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