

Learning from mistakes

The Barrowfield Project in Glasgow, Scotland

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A fool learns from their own mistakes; a wise person learns from the mistakes of others.

Hungarian proverb

Preamble

Clearly there is more to education than school. Not only can education be lifelong, it can spread widely as well, and community education is one such manner of spreading. In the present case, we are not considering education *in* a community but rather education *of* a community.

In 2008 we were invited by MDC Jobs Partners to attend a writers' gathering in Baltimore, MD (kindly funded by the Ann E Casey Foundation) in order to present our work on the Barrowfield Project in Glasgow, a topic we had published on earlier that year in the journal *Development in Practice*. In the abstract to that article, we described the Barrowfield Project as *one of the better-known failures in UK community development* (Matheson and Matheson 2008: 30). What follows is the essay we produced for the Baltimore gathering and our grateful thanks are due to Colin Austen of MDC Jobs Partners for the kind permission to reproduce it here.

Failures can be as educational as successes. Indeed, sometimes we can learn much more from failure than from success. Failure can tell us what not to do. Success may only tell us what worked once. However, not all failure is unalloyed and, as we argue in the essay below, apparent failure may sometime mask real success.

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to examine one of the better-known failures in UK community development, the Barrowfield Project in Glasgow, Scotland. The specific strategies employed by the community developers included:

1. improving the physical infrastructure of the area with the creation of a Credit Union and the Barrowfield Community Business, where:

- a. as much of the work as possible was done by the inhabitants, in order to
 - b. increase the skills base in the area (in construction and finance), and
 - c. foster a sense of ownership of the area in order to
 - d. engender social pressure, especially on the young and chronically unemployed, to apply themselves (few were ever fired and those few that were usually came looking for their jobs back and promising to do their best).
2. creating and integrating into the community a home for deaf-blind people, run by various religious groups;
 3. creating outreach projects to increase school attendance and adult literacy.

And this was all in the stated aim of creating an area where people would want to come to live and which would have a genuine sense of community spirit.

However, to the casual observer, the Barrowfield Project was replete with mistakes. For example:

1. There was no real attempt at finding out anything about the culture of the inhabitants of the area (e.g. pigeon-keeping) before vast amounts of money were poured into redevelopment.
2. The area's drug problems were ignored in the apparent hope that they would vanish (or at least not be too bothersome).
3. A convicted robber was trusted to become treasurer of a substantial part of the Project.
4. It was assumed that community immediately follows from simply having people share a geographical space.
5. It was assumed that the local education providers would want to set up shop in the free accommodation that was offered to them.
6. It was assumed that people living in deprivation need continued sustenance and that the Project had to continue until it reached an externally pre-defined endpoint before the inhabitants might be able stand on their own feet.

This paper, in which for reasons of confidentiality pseudonyms have been used, is based on the writers' direct experience of interacting with the Barrowfield Project and the area concerned over a ten-year period (1986 to 1996) during the greater part of which they attended a wide range of meetings of community organisations, conducted interviews with a wide spectrum of individuals associated with the Project, while one of them was teaching in a secondary school very close by and was instrumental in the creation of an amenity for planned inhabitants of Barrowfield. This last took the shape of a scented garden for a community of deaf-blind persons who were to live in Barrowfield under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity. In the end the deaf-blind community opened as an ecumenical venture under the Catholic and Episcopalian Franciscans and the Church of Scotland. Ironically, just as it was getting to its feet, most of Barrowfield was demolished in the early 2000s with the tenements being largely replaced by small terraced houses. However, community action has continued

in the new area – now named *Camlachie* – with a variety of social and community initiatives, driven from the ground up (see, for example, www.thebambury.org/page.asp?PageID=101 for details).

Background and culture of Barrowfield

Barrowfield was one of the most deprived areas in the industrialised world. In the league tables of deprivation in the UK, it came in at number 7 – the other six being also in Glasgow (*Daily Record* 1998). It was an area whose principal reasons for appearing in the news were crime and football: football since Glasgow Celtic FC's Parkhead stadium overlooked the area and the club had its training ground within the area; crime since Barrowfield had one of the highest rates of violent crime in Europe.

Barrowfield sat a few miles to the east of Glasgow city centre. It was a small (by Glasgow standards) housing scheme with a population which never exceeded 2,500 persons. The original housing stock dated from the 1950s and was flat-roofed – an odd folly given the fact that Glasgow has one of the highest rates of rainfall in the world. It goes almost without saying that within a very few years of construction the houses all suffered from severe dampness which was only eventually and partially rectified by the construction of peaked roofs.

Pigeons, peaked roofs and understanding the people

Peaked roofs would have completely rectified many of the problems of damp had it not been for the local passion for keeping pigeons, which meant that holes were knocked into brand-new roofs so that the pigeons could enter and exit the roof cavity. This was to the complete despair of the civil engineers on the Project, who could not convince the pigeon-fanciers that large holes in the roof and dampness in the houses were somehow connected. Bizarrely enough, no one – whether from local government, the community social work department or the building company – had actually thought of asking the inhabitants about their pastimes before the works started. One can perhaps understand the builders in this respect. However, much was made in the rhetoric surrounding Barrowfield of how the Project embodied community empowerment, and so it is little short of astonishing that the community developers had never wondered what would happen to the dovecots that the Barrowfielders built on the flat roofs of their blocks once peaks were put in place. In the event, when we discussed the matter with the civil engineer in charge of the works and heard his despair, we suggested that there was realistically no way to dissuade the inhabitants from keeping pigeons, that pigeons represented a serious level of financial investment as well as carrying social kudos, and that perhaps a way forward might be to discuss with the inhabitants how to accommodate both pigeons and intact roofs. In the end, our suggestion of incorporating into the roofs tunnel-like entrances for the pigeons was accepted by all parts.

A fundamental point of Paulo Freire's pedagogy is to ask the people what their problems are and to try to get the people to generate their own solutions (Freire 1972), an approach deemed essential in order to avoid any suspicion of a patronising

imposition of external values. Had this been applied in Barrowfield's housing redevelopment, it would have saved a small fortune in repairs and reduced immensely the stress on the civil engineers.

One problem which the peaking of the roofs did cure was that of certain of the inhabitants showering police patrols with rocks and bottles, though one may wonder why such behaviour was allowed to go unchecked if not to supply a reason for the police not to patrol the area.

Poverty is certainly a relative term and the inhabitants of Barrowfield enjoyed as a matter of course material goods of which the poor in less industrialised countries might only dream. This was illustrated to us quite forcibly during a tenants' association meeting when a woman complained that the damp running down her walls would ruin her videos. We naively assumed that she was referring to videotapes. Only later did she reveal to us that she had five VCRs stacked atop each other and it was these that the damp risked attacking. We were told she needed these in order to make copies of videos to sell to friends and neighbours.

Unfettered drug-dealing and community self-help

In Barrowfield, for those not willing to remain at the bottom of the social and economic heap, there were really only two directions available: crime or the Armed Forces. Until the Project came along and began offering jobs to the inhabitants, it was well-nigh impossible for any to get paid employment as the common experience of those who tried to do so was that as soon as they gave their address, any chance of a job was lost. Indeed, it was far from unknown for job-seekers to give the address of a relative.

So it was that a Barrowfielder on leave from the Army gave a grieving mother a present which literally shook the district.

Barrowfield was a centre in the Glasgow Ice-Cream Wars of the early 1980s. These had nothing to do with ice cream, despite Bill Forsyth's 1984 film *Comfort and Joy* showing the events as a comedy, albeit violent, around ice-cream van routes. In contrast, the reality entailed rival gangs of drug dealers doing battle over where they might peddle their non-medicinal wares. Barrowfield had its own ice-cream van that did not sell ice-cream and which arrived every morning to set up shop in the centre of the scheme. This lasted for several years until wee Agnes, a very unlikely hero, acquired a modest amount of high explosive and a detonator from a soldier on leave and blew the van up. She apparently asked the fellow inside if he loved life and then told him he had two seconds to get out before it would all go up. Agnes' son had died of a heroin overdose and she was determined to do her bit to stop this happening to someone else's child. Agnes became a local hero and, surprisingly, did not become subject to any reprisals by the dealers. Instead she was viewed as an icon of self-help and an inspiration to those who were fed up with their lowly lot in life.

The trail of misery which resulted from the van immediately calls into question the lack of response to its presence from the local police. Indeed when we interviewed a senior police officer concerned with Barrowfield, our interview went swimmingly until we asked about the ice-cream that did not sell ice-cream. 'A terrible thing', said the

officer. 'How long was it there for?' we asked. 'Years and years', came the reply. 'So', we asked, 'why was nothing done about it?' At that point our interviewee suddenly remembered an urgent appointment, thanked us for coming to see him and abruptly ended the interview.

While we can speculate as to why the van was allowed to continue trading, from the perspective of community development (and by this we can mean actually developing Barrowfield into a community), was it a mistake to allow it to go on? It is perhaps reprehensible that such an ostentatious flouting of the drug laws went unchallenged by the forces of law and order, but suppose the police had intervened and closed down the operations; might this not have just been seen as yet another external imposition? Would the dealers not just have gone elsewhere? Would the neighbourhood have felt able to stand up for itself any more than it did previously? The reality is that wee Agnes' action made people realise that they did not have to be victims all the time, and that sometimes they could take arms against a sea of troubles and, by opposing them, end them or at least strike a blow against them.

Putting a convicted robber in charge of a large budget

In the course of a tenants' association meeting we were introduced to 'Jimmy', described as treasurer of a major part of the Project. Jimmy was a fearsome-looking character who had served time in prison for armed robbery but who had learned bookkeeping while there and had hence 'graduated' to the treasurership of a major part of the Project. We asked him how he had got to be treasurer and were asked in turn in a gravelly voice that seemed to originate in the crypt: 'Listen, would youse steal money frae me?' According to one version of how the Project went bust, Jimmy doctored the accounts and then disappeared with £1,000,000 (approx. US\$1,950,000 at the time).

At first glance, it seems little short of insane to put a convicted criminal in charge of any budget, still less one with the track record that Jimmy was said to have. However, there is a bit of a quandary here:

1. Few people in Barrowfield had any sort of education that could equip them for any kind of bookkeeping role. However if outsiders had done all the bookkeeping for the Project, this would have delivered a strong message that none of the inhabitants could be trusted.
2. Had some non-criminal been found to do some bookkeeping, what are the chances that s/he would not have been pressured into embezzling funds for the criminals who abounded in the area? What are the chances that s/he could have resisted such pressure?
3. Jimmy was probably right in his estimation that no-one would steal money from him. He was undoubtedly dishonest and fairly bereft of any scruples. However, despite his doctoring of the accounts, he actually defrauded the Project of a relatively small part of its turnover and showed to the inhabitants of the area that one of

them could do such a job as bookkeeping while his disappearance was viewed by the inhabitants as shameful and as having brought disgrace on the area just as it was improving.

In the end, trusting Jimmy was a dangerous tactic and one which cost the Project dearly. However, his dishonesty created a sense of opprobrium among the inhabitants and shame that they had been defrauded by one of their own. The sense of hurt and humiliation was almost palpable and it is all the more remarkable in an area where theft in general and defrauding the Social Security in particular were virtually a way of life. Perhaps the difference with Jimmy's theft was that he neither stole from the anonymity of the State (as in Social Security fraud) nor from specific individuals, but rather he stole from the collectivity. His action seemed to help shift the inhabitants from a sense of *Gessellschaft* into an emergent sense of *Gemeinschaft*, to use Tonnies' (1887) terms. In other words, Jimmy's betrayal helped to move them further along from being just a bunch of people who shared a geographical space to having an emergent sense of community and, with it, a sense of community responsibility.

Reaching out from nowhere: schools, colleges and closed doors

As a teacher in a high school situated a few hundred metres from Barrowfield, DM was acutely aware of very low rates of school attendance among pupils from the area. That their peers despised them for where they lived did nothing to increase any sense of worth they might have had. It was also clear that their basic levels of literacy and numeracy were very low and it came as no surprise to learn that these deficits were shared with their parents.

At the time of our involvement in the Project, there was a flourishing of educational outreach programmes in Glasgow, largely funded through the European Union Social Fund, and schools were increasingly welcoming adults to join pupils in following classes together. We wondered therefore why there was no sign of any such outreach in Barrowfield and we learned that each of the local colleges and high schools had been invited to set up an outreach unit in free accommodation (with all heating, lighting and security paid for), if only to promote awareness of their activities. Every offer had been either ignored or simply rejected out of hand, sometimes quite rudely. Monies were even offered to schools and colleges to pay for the teachers' services to staff such outreach but to no avail. Being involved in creating the scented garden for the planned deaf-blind community, DM was invited to do some outreach work in the daytime and then tried to coax his principal into allowing him time out of school to do it. Despite the offer not only of the totally free accommodation plus computer terminals and money to pay for DM's time, despite the chronic absenteeism by many Barrowfield kids and their chronically low level of attainment, this was refused by the principal who stated that it was fine for DM to do work which would benefit the school and the Church (as it was a Catholic school) – as the scented garden was bringing positive publicity to both – but he was forbidden to teach or do other outreach work in Barrowfield during any part of the school day, even in his free periods. Unfortunately the Project

was almost as intransigent in its insistence that outreach work could not be done in the evening or at weekends when DM was free. As for the colleges, they were happy to set up outreach activities outside Barrowfield but would not venture in at any price, their staff apparently fearing attack (as did all the school teachers whom DM tried to coax into supporting some outreach by his school). Ironically, not only was there never any threat of attack to any teacher venturing into the area, teachers' 'street cred' rocketed in the eyes of the Barrowfield kids for their having gone in at all. Indeed, we learned that our car (which was not in the best of condition) had been watched over and protected by kids from the area when they saw us going in at night to attend meetings.

The Barrowfield Project and assumptions of community

Although Jimmy's departure was a step on the road to creating a sense of community in Barrowfield, other steps had been taken earlier. Unfortunately the architects of the Project had assumed from the outset that community in a sense that Freire or Yunus might recognise was already present. This led to assumptions that there were community leaders, and that there was some sense of community responsibility, while in reality none of these existed. Rather, the area was more akin to Dante's vision of Hell where the architect had saved space by getting the damned to torture each other. Despite this, the community development team claimed to us that the Project was based on the ideas of Freire and, once Yunus' work became known, on those of the Grameen Bank.

An assumption common to both Yunus and Freire is that a community already exists in the areas where their respective ideas might be applied. Neither Yunus nor Freire, however, actually delve into what they mean by the term *community*. Rather they both seem to assume that there is neither dispute nor discussion over the term. This leads immediately to some problems since the ideas of both Yunus and Freire depend in very large measure on particular social structures.

For Freire (1972), there is the notion that it is through community empowerment that individual empowerment occurs while for Yunus (1998) community enables peer pressure to be exerted in order to maintain payments on loans. Grameen goes explicitly further than Freire and discusses the role of family – implied to be more or less stable – in its ventures (Wahid and Hsu 2000).

Perez (1993, 1996) describes the matriarchal nature of the Ecuadorian communities where she observed Freirean principles in action; Yunus' experience in Bangladesh – as his critics have made very clear (Schuler *et al.* 1998; Mallick 2002) – concerns distinctly patriarchal communities. In both cases, there is a sense of organisation built into the community.

In Barrowfield, by contrast, life was brief and all too frequently brutal, families were frequently totally unstable so that the very basis for community – the family – was lacking, with nothing there to take its place.

The problems go further. In all of Freire's work and in that of Yunus, their admirers, and indeed their critics, work forms an essential basis for the existence of the community. Barrowfield, by contrast, suffered inter-generational unemployment, with all the mind-numbing despair and then apathy that this engenders.

Taken together, the absence of sense of community and the absence of any sort of work ethic and hence the absence of what Freire and Yunus describe as 'community' call into question more or less any notion of applying Freire or Grameen to such a situation. However, one aspect of the Barrowfield Project in common with Freire, and to a large extent with Grameen, is that of utopianism.

Freire, conscientisation, empowerment

An over-riding aim of the Project was to raise the consciousness of the people, to get them to stand aside and have an objective look at what they were doing and question why they were doing it (and to effect change through shared, informed experience (Freire 1972)) The Project described itself as an enabling agency whose function was to, at first directly and then indirectly, draw the people of Barrowfield out of their circumstances and set the community up as a self-sustaining entity which would spiral up from the 'cycle of deprivation' however defined. In this way, the fatalism apparently endemic in the Barrowfield people – the magical consciousness of Freire – might be overcome and hope engendered (Freire 1972). What seemed to be lacking however was a genuine sense of facilitation as required by Freire whereby educators enabled 'the learners to reflect on the codified versions of their "reality" in a process of praxis' (Mayo 1999, p. 63). Instead many of the educational aspects of the Project seemed to be lost in the midst of endless meetings which appeared to act as nothing more than talking shops in which the tenants of Barrowfield expressed all sorts of demands that they expected someone else to satisfy. Perhaps, such talking shops were a necessary precursor in an area where apathy had so long dominated. Arguably, the inhabitants' identification *at all* of the problems they faced, rather than just accepting them as inevitable, was a first step towards taking at least some control of their destiny. Indeed, the recognition that problems had roots, and as importantly had at least the potential to be solved, could be argued as being a development of what Freire (1972) terms 'naïve consciousness' as people begin to perceive their circumstances a bit more as something they can influence, rather than something they have to accept and endure, but their discourse is marked by polemic rather than dialogue and by gross simplifications and generalisations of problems, exactly as we observed in Barrowfield tenants' meetings. And this is a necessary step towards developing a critical consciousness of the environment – or conscientisation – and gaining the power to take charge of one's destiny and hence transform it, instead of remaining at the whim of circumstances.

At least as important as the philosophical stance was the political aspect. The Project drew praise from just about all points on the political spectrum. All parties from the Left to the Right found in it echoes of their own political ideologies. For the Left there was the notion of applied socialism and the community working with the agencies of officialdom to overcome its problems. For the Right the thriving small business enterprises were neo-liberal economics come true. Each of course could carefully ignore any aspect not to its liking. For its part the Project accepted funds from all quarters.

Throughout the Project's writings and much of the literature on community work it is accepted and explicitly stated that the major role of community work is that of

facilitation. However, if 'facilitation' means attempting to deliberately change perspectives as was the case in the Barrowfield Project, influencing the community to make the right decision and to take the right steps, then 'facilitation' really means 'manipulation', a word that is rarely alluded to, still less explicitly stated, in the literature and in the Barrowfield Project since it has very negative connotations. So it must be asked whether it is right to deliberately tamper with those who are on the fringe of society in order to manipulate them into empowering themselves for their own good. In the Barrowfield Project empowerment was expected to take place among those situated within an urban deprived, and hence socially excluded, community in the 1980s. While the expected empowerment was in their interest, it also aimed to make them identify with and work for mainstream society instead of feeling alienated from it. In both cases, however, it must be asked how the choice to empower oneself can ever be authentic since it emerged as a consequence of 'facilitation'. The community that the Barrowfield Project aimed to empower was drowning in a sea of apathy. Concomitant to this problem is that of whether society should support *at all* those who exist on its fringes. For most people the answer would probably be in the affirmative (though perhaps under certain conditions) but for what reasons? Humanitarian concern and fear of eventual violent outburst by the oppressed are vastly different motivations, though the latter may very well be rationalised as the former.

Grameen and microcredit

The literature is replete with studies of the Grameen Bank and its founder, Mohammad Yunus. Politicians of every hue have sung the praises of this institution and its granting of small loans to the very poor (Wahid and Hsu 2000) and how its ideas can be transferred from an industrialising country into the industrialised (Painter 2001). The Right has heralded it as a positive alternative to welfare. The Left has seen it as a means of getting people to empower themselves in order to throw off the shackles of capitalism by using capitalism itself as a means of empowerment.

The criticisms have however appeared and showed a less than perfect picture of the Grameen's activities. Its much-vaunted lending principally to women has been blamed for leading to, or at least encouraging, domestic violence (Schuler *et al.* 1998) and the very structure of the Bank's lending operations blamed for keeping its borrowers firmly locked in poverty (Mallick 2002).

Nonetheless, it is difficult, even with the nuanced picture, to dispute the claim by Yunus (1998) that Grameen is cheaper than the moneylenders and it is this aspect which is pertinent to Barrowfield.

Just as Freire was never openly mentioned in literature from the Project, neither was Yunus. Instead much was made of the cheapness of borrowing from the Credit Union, created under the auspices of the Project and which relied on peer pressure to maintain payments, rather than the threat of violence – and actual violence – as used by the illegal moneylenders.

Keeping going after death and being reborn

The assumption, widely articulated among those working on the Project, was that as soon as external funding was withdrawn then the area would sink rapidly and possibly end up even worse than it had been before the Project started. Indeed, meetings of the various steering groups which we attended were often marked by a sense of deep-seated fear akin to what one might feel while walking along the edge of a sheer cliff. The Project had been set up in an area which was used as a dumping ground for 'problem families'. Apathy was rife. Unemployment ran at 42.6 per cent of those available for work (compared with less than 17 per cent for the city as a whole). 70 per cent of the inhabitants depended on social security for their income. Housing stock was increasingly hard to let and there was high instability of tenancy – a fact not helped by the neighbourhood reception committee whose habit it was to kick down the door of new arrivals and borrow their television on a permanent basis.

The high level of local violence, crime and drug taking did nothing to improve the area. Local gangs, the *Torch* and the *Spur*, waged war on one another from opposite ends of Barrowfield's main street, Stamford Street, an impressively wide dual carriageway that had large mounds of earth at either end. There was the ice-cream van which sold only drugs for non-medical use. Attacks on the police were commonplace. As a result, on those very rare occasions they did venture into the area they went around in patrol cars.

However, within a very few years of the Project starting, there seemed to be a dramatic change of attitude in Barrowfield. The crime rate, although still immensely high, dropped. The police began to mount foot patrols, a fact previously unheard of for many years. As a teacher in a nearby high school, DM witnessed the visible changes in many of the Barrowfielders whose confidence grew in the face of the frequent hostility their neighbourhood engendered in their peers. As frequent visitors to Barrowfield, we saw the sudden arrival of respect for the environment. Streets were no longer littered as before. Walls were not daubed with graffiti or simply knocked down immediately upon construction. Some older inhabitants had even chanced their luck and put gnomes and 'decorative' donkeys in their front gardens and these had been left untouched. The future looked bright, even if one might have cynically questioned the motivation behind all the expenditure.

In 1990 the Project came to a grinding halt when Barrowfield Community Business was forced into liquidation. Pearce (1999) recounts the official story whereby BCB overstretched itself, got confused over its priorities, got its accounts muddled and so on. The end result in this version is that £100,000 (c.US\$195,000) was needed to keep BCB afloat and neither Glasgow District Council nor Strathclyde Regional Council (the next tier of government) was willing to do this, preferring to judge that BCB and hence the Project fail on business grounds.

The alternative version, given to us by a source closely connected to one of the banks connected to the Project, is somewhat less prosaic, with Jimmy the treasurer absconding with £1,000,000 (c.\$1,950,000).

Clearly both versions cannot be true and there is nothing like rumour to inflate and aggrandise the sums involved. What was undisputed was that sufficient money was

lacking that Glasgow District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council decided not to keep the Project afloat. Realistically however, given the millions of pounds that had been poured into Barrowfield over the years, it is difficult to imagine that a shortfall of as little as £100,000 (c.\$195,000) would have sufficed to bring about the end of the Project.

In any event, the community businesses stopped. However the people did not. To the amazement of many observers, the area did not immediately succumb to apathy and violence and eventually the Project was relaunched under the auspices of *Communities Scotland*, a Scottish government agency for community development, and its momentum has even survived the demolition of most of the old housing stock and its replacement with small terraces.

Conclusion

The Barrowfield Project gives a good illustration of how the people can succeed despite the manifest errors of action and of assumption on the part of those funding and/or organising the Project. Without being too cynical one might wonder whether failure had been the real intention all along as failure after hope can further entrench despair and apathy and the truly apathetic commit less crime. Success in its stated aims would have transformed Barrowfield from a 'sink' district to one where people actually wanted to live, less social security would have been paid out, more taxes would have been paid, violence would have dropped and so would have the costs of crime.

The Project certainly failed but the people, if we can judge from the environment of Barrowfield, succeeded. They succeeded sufficiently in not returning to their previous condition that a joint effort by the Scottish Episcopalian Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland went ahead and opened a care home for deaf-blind people. These Churches continue to seek, and get, volunteers not only from around the world but also from the successor district to Barrowfield itself. Barrowfield itself did not fall apart as most of those we spoke to in the original Project thought it would. Not only did the garden gnomes and 'decorative' donkeys remain, but people began to request houses in the area (Glasgow City Council 2002). One might even say that a real community began to emerge where previously there had been none.

Brookfield (2000, p. 133) suggests that 'it is quite possible to believe that one is working in a liberatory vein, only to discover that one's efforts have bolstered the hegemony one was supposed to be opposing'. Perhaps the opposite is also true: that one can work to bolster the hegemony and end up by liberating if only in the sense of giving people a more secure and seemingly happier environment. Perhaps it is possible that all but the most gross mistakes have the potential to be redrawn as silver-lined clouds.

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