

APPRAISAL FORM - MASTER'S THESIS

Elizabeth Pellecer Rivera

Analysis of Youth Leadership and Empowerment towards Sustainable Community Livelihoods: A case study in Guatemala and El Salvador

Content

The paper has a logical structure and the goal of the thesis is clearly stated. The author has done well to accomplish the thesis' s objectives. The paper analyzes the dynamics of youth as agents of change, building sustainable initiatives in their communities with the support of "SERES Association", in Guatemala and El Salvador. The author used qualitative research based on a field visit. The research comprised of 14 interviews and 4 focus groups. She applied different methodologies such as triangulation, member checking and peer reviews to increase the validity of the research. The author concluded that though SERES has brought positive changes to the communities, the issue of sustainability is much more complex to be achieved in such a short time (SERES has been functioning only for a few years). Furthermore, there are other factors that influence the lives of these communities such as the role of state or different economic and social issues. Her research is detailed and well organized. The main weakness is the short length of time that was spent in the communities. The findings would have been even more credible if she could witness the participants' daily lives. In terms of the content and the formal requirements, the paper is very good. Though in her analysis she could have gone into a greater depth by comparing similar work of other NGOs. She also tries to reflect her research against development theories, mainly modernization and post-development. Overall, the thesis is of a very good quality.

Form

The sources used are adequate and overall consistent. The work would benefit from a more detailed comparison of similar work of other NGOs on the subject.

In terms of the written style and the formal requirements the paper is very good. It is easy to read. The author used photos to facillitate the results of the research. The paper would benefit from graphs and charts.

Discussion questions

1. What was the greatest challenge of your research? And what could you do to further increase its validity?
2. How did the research participants understand the concept of sustainability? What are some of the obstacles the communities face to achieve sustainability?
3. Many NGOs have been assisting Guatemala or El Salvador with various development issues for decades. Yet the region is still one of the most impoverished in the world. Currently, how do people in the region view the work of NGOs?

Summary and grade

The thesis is very good. The author has done well to accomplish the thesis' s objectives. I recommend the overall grade B.

Olomouc, 1. 8. 2016

B.A. MSc. Radovan Dluhý-Smith