Overview

The definition of Community Development is expressed in the following key purpose:
Community Development is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The process enables people to organise and work together to:

1. identify their own needs and aspirations
2. take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives
3. improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part

The Community Development process is underpinned by a set of five key values on which all practice is based. Community Development practitioners need to relate these values to their roles and actions. There are many tensions inherent in putting the ideals and values into practice within the realities and complexities of communities. Community Development practitioners need to become competent in the necessary skills and knowledge and to work with integrity to support communities who may have few recognised resources and limited access to decision-makers.

Key Area One (Core) has been designed as the core or underpinning Key Area and applies to all Community Development practice in all roles and settings and at all levels. People who describe themselves as Community Development practitioners and/or manage Community Development practitioners need to be able to articulate their understanding of Community Development as a process and an activity which ‘aims to bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion’.

Key Area One (Core) applies to all practitioners who undertake and/or manage Community Development – whether as unpaid activity within their community, paid Community Development workers/officers, or other professionals who adopt a Community Development approach.

Key Area One (Core) contains the definition of Community Development practice (as above), five Key Values and five standards. Together these constituent parts form an integral whole that underpins all Community Development practice. It is not appropriate to use any part in isolation as they are all interdependent on each other.

This standard is concerned with the values and process of Community Development and how these inform the role of a Community Development practitioner within a variety of settings. It is about the Community Development practitioner’s role to interpret and explain the process and values of Community Development.
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Development to others, set out what is distinctive about the nature of Community Development and encourage people, groups and agencies to recognise the contribution Community Development makes in the process of change.

This standard is relevant to all those involved in Community Development.
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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

P1 explain confidently the values and process of Community Development and demonstrate how they inform good Community Development practice

P2 understand and apply the process of Community Development to their role and areas of responsibility

P3 promote the values of Community Development to individuals, communities and organisations

P4 explain the contribution that Community Development can make to current local and national government policies and initiatives

P5 educate and support people in the organisation(s) they work with/within and other partners to acknowledge and value the perspectives, aims and autonomy of communities, community groups and networks

P6 promote the value of collective working in deciding on the changes needed in communities, and in working towards achieving them

P7 work with/within communities to identify and explain the potential for collective action that is inclusive and empowering

P8 ensure that all collaborative work is based on the values of Community Development

P9 support communities to make the links between social justice and environmental justice, and to consider the environmental impact of all activities

P10 promote and encourage the educative and developmental aspect of Community Development

P11 enable community groups and communities to evaluate the impact of Community Development practice (including both the role of community groups and the community development practitioner) on changes in the area

P12 understand, and enable others to understand, the links between national and regional policies and other factors, and their impact on local communities
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Knowledge and understanding
You need to know and understand:

The following knowledge and understanding statements relate to the four standards within Key Area One. It is not necessarily the case that every Key Area One knowledge statement relates to every standard, but it is likely that a knowledge statement relates to more than one standard.

Community Development values and processes
K1 the values on which Community Development is based
K2 historical and contextual knowledge of national and local Community Development and the aspects and approaches of Community Development
K3 how the process of Community Development facilitates people and groups to come together around common issues and supports them in the actions they decide to take
K4 the role of Community Development in widening people’s horizons, promoting their participation, and encouraging critical and creative responses to their collective situation
K5 the importance and value of the autonomy and independence of community groups and communities of interest
K6 the Community Development National Occupational Standards
K7 the range of and existing links between contacts in an area or neighbourhood.

Communities as a concept
K8 the range of definitions of the concept ‘community’
K9 the different kinds of communities that exist – based on place or neighbourhood, communities of interest and identity
K10 the historical and changing context of the communities the Community Development practitioner works with or relates to (e.g. social, political, environmental, cultural and economic)
K11 the factors which can affect the dynamics of diverse and cohesive communities
K12 what motivates people becoming involved in their communities and the barriers that can prevent people becoming involved.

Power, inequality and justice issues
K13 theoretical approaches to forms of injustice, discrimination and social exclusion which operate globally, nationally and locally
K14 how inequality and injustice impact on the lives of individuals and communities
K15 theoretical approaches to power and powerlessness within society
K16 how structures and organisations create and maintain their power and
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the impact of this on individuals, communities and Community Development practitioners
K17  the concepts of community empowerment and community engagement and how Community Development contributes to their successful implementation
K18  how the history and impact of oppression and discrimination affect working relationships
K19  how beliefs, values and prejudices towards different cultures, traditions and backgrounds can affect working relationships
K20  how the links between environmental, economic and social inequalities can affect people at local, national and international levels

Decision making
K21  democratic decision-making processes and participatory practices/techniques

Community Development's relevance to organisations
K22  how to monitor and evaluate Community Development's contribution to government and organisational policies and relevant targets
K23  the importance of, and methods for, raising the profile, relevance and effectiveness of Community Development within organisations and public bodies
K24  the range of policies that may impact on communities

Reflective practice
K25  the concept of reflective practice based on the values of Community Development
K26  the significance of divided or conflicting loyalties and how this can affect working relationships
K27  the implications for communities of different forms of interventions made by voluntary organisations and statutory bodies
K28  how individual reflections contribute to collective processes of reflection and analysis
K29  understanding how one’s own values and beliefs can affect practice and relationships
Additional Information

Values

The five key values which underpin all Community Development practice are below.

**Equality and anti-discrimination**
Community Development practice challenges structural inequalities and discriminatory practices. Community Development recognises that people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore entitled to the same degree of respect and acknowledgement. Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it
2. supports and develops anti-oppressive policies and practices
3. respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity
4. promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests
5. acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities

**Social justice**
The aim of increasing social justice is an essential element of Community development practice. It involves identifying and seeking to alleviate structural disadvantage and advocating strategies for overcoming exclusion, discrimination and inequality.

Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to achieve change and the long-term goal of a more equal, non-sectarian society. This will be undertaken in way which:

1. recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice
2. recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences
3. values diversity of experience
4. promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities
5. promotes a sustainable environment
6. challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances
7. makes the link between local, societal and global contexts
Collective Action
Community Development practice is essentially about working with and supporting groups of people, to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence so they can develop an analysis and identify issues which can be addressed through collective action. Community Development practitioners will work with communities to organise, influence and take action. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. promotes the active participation of people within communities
2. supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action
3. respects the rights of others when planning collective action
4. empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals
5. uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action
6. recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities

Community Empowerment
Community Development practice aims to empower individuals and communities, through using the strengths of the community to bring about desired changes. It involves supporting people to become critical, creative, liberated and active participants, enabling them to take more control over their lives, their communities and their environment. This process is based on mutual respect and equal and genuine partnerships between all those involved. Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations and encourage them to work together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action
2. encourages an understanding and commitment to the long term nature of Community Development practice
3. promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives
4. promotes accountability and transparency
5. promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities
6. uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing

Working and Learning Together
Community Development practice promotes a collective process which enables participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences: for example, evaluating how well they had identified the needs, to what extent particular activities helped them to achieve their aims, and what they could have done
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differently. Community Development learning is based on participatory and
experiential processes with the aim of improving future Community
Development practice. Community Development learning and Community
Development practice are inseparable. The practice informs the learning in an
ongoing cycle. Community Development practitioners will support individuals
and communities working and learning together. This will be undertaken in a
way which:

1. recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience
2. promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and
   skills
3. creates opportunities for collective learning through shared reflection
   on action
4. encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs
5. uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action
6. promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally,
   nationally and globally

The following examples correspond to each of the key values:

1. practices that contribute to inequalities are identified and challenged
   whenever and wherever they arise
2. the role of Community Development in contributing to a more equal
   society, and civil and human rights, is recognised
3. collective action and participation are actively promoted as effective
   ways to bring about change, and undertaken on the basis of equality
4. all planned interventions and activities within communities address the
   issues identified by community members and aim to realise their
   aspirations
5. reflection on experiences is an integral part of all activity and informs
   future actions
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