
Overview

This standard concerns the tensions that arise in community development practice. Community development is a value driven activity which may bring practitioners into conflict with other's values eg people in communities; other professionals; the goals and priorities of other organisations, community groups, and leaders; and that of the cultures surrounding procurement and contracts.

Community development practitioners may also feel that their own values might clash in some contexts with those of community development.

This standard is relevant to all community development practitioners.

The community development standards are arranged in six key areas:

1. Understand and practise community development
2. Understand and engage with communities
3. Group work and collective action
4. Collaboration and cross-sectoral working
5. Community learning for social change
6. Governance and organisational development

This standard is within Key Area One.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. evaluate the tensions between own, others and community development approaches and values
2. resolve contradictions between community development values and day-to-day practice in your area of responsibility
3. explore ways to resolve conflicts between own community development role and the requirements of employers or organisational policies; or funders or the law
4. promote the right of communities and groups to set their own agendas in own organisations and with partners in your area of responsibility
5. plan and take action without undermining the rights of communities
6. promote different ways to resolve community conflicts to community groups
7. plan how to respond to potential opportunities for and obstacles to collective action
8. involve community members to examine the impact of decision-making on their communities
9. provide information and support on influencing and challenging political decisions
10. support communities to make use of their legal rights

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. key purpose, values and process of community development,
2. how to explain community development concepts in different contexts, to different audiences and for different purposes
3. value based, solution focussed techniques for reflection and problem solving
4. methods for community engagement and empowerment
5. methods for community led action and change
6. how to work with community conflicts between groups and between communities
7. perspectives used to explain structural factors and their interconnections
8. how structural factors affect communities
9. ways to challenge inequality, social injustice and discrimination
10. different perspectives on the workings of power
11. techniques for recognising and using power
12. rights to set own agendas and remain independent
13. how to use participatory and democratic decision-making processes for community action and change
14. how to engage and influence local policies, politics and decisions
15. how to support communities and community groups to challenge decision making
16. how to support communities to develop their knowledge of relevant law and legal remedies

Values

Community development is underpinned by a set of values which distinguish it from other, sometimes related, activities in the community. These values are at the core of community development and underpin each of the standards. The values are:

1. Social justice and equality
2. Anti-discrimination
3. Community empowerment
4. Collective action
5. Working and learning together

The following examples illustrate how each of the community development values might inform practice in this standard. These statements are not part of assessment requirements.

1. power imbalances in decision making are acknowledged and addressed
2. differences and diversity between communities are explored and valued
3. there is recognition that different communities are both independent and interdependent
4. in the process of agreeing collective action, tensions and contradictions are acknowledged and dealt with
5. the challenges of balancing different accountabilities are regularly discussed and acknowledged

Glossary

Collective action

Working together with others to achieve a common aim.

Community

The web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that can develop among those who share a geographic area or identity or interest.

Community action

Community-based campaigns and networks concentrating on issues of concern to that community, eg a campaign to develop a safe and creative play space for children, a campaign against the planned closure of a library, a campaign for empty houses to be made available at affordable rents, the public demonstrations against deportations.

Community conflict

Refers to those differences, competitions, arguments, outbursts and violence that may erupt in community groups, between community groups, in communities and between communities.

Community development practitioner

A person doing community development work as a paid worker, unpaid worker, group member, community activist or volunteer.

Community Engagement

A way to build and sustain relationships within and between communities, community groups or organisations, public sector, third sector and other agencies. It provides a foundation for collaboration helping them to understand and collectively take action

Community groups and organisations

Located within communities of geography, identity or interest. These groups are controlled by their users and are usually small and informal with no paid staff. They are often referred to collectively as the community sector.

Empowerment

A process where people gain control (eg confidence, knowledge, skills, resources) to affect decisions impacting on their communities.

Organisation

Any collection of people in the community, voluntary, public and private sectors and any hybrid configuration across these sectors. It refers to community groups, charities, community and social enterprises, statutory agencies, businesses.

Resources

This covers any physical or human resource that supports the community development process and could include technical equipment, IT-based resources, buildings, sources of specialist knowledge, local assets

Structural factors

Powerful social processes that impact on people's lives, even before birth, and include: cultural, economic, ecological, social, political and demographic factors that manifest at community, national, international levels; and which are often inter-connected to affect the poorest and most vulnerable in society.

Support

The work a community development practitioner may undertake to ensure the group can pursue its aims. The types of activities may include: providing information, moral and motivational encouragement, researching particular topics, identifying sources of help, listening to group members' ideas and thought processes and reflecting them back, facilitating decision-making, acting as an advocate, coach, mentor, critical friend.

Technology

This refers to both hardware and online tools/apps which can be used in practice and communication (including social media).

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