

Supporting people who support communities

STRATEGIC



FRAMEWORK

FOR



COMMUNITY



DEVELOPMENT

STANDING CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A Strategic Framework for Community Development

Introduction

THE AIM OF THIS FRAMEWORK is to provide a basis for working with people, not only on issues of local concern but also when developing wider programmes and policies. All too often external experts seem to have more influence over change in communities and the development of policies and priorities. The result is a development process that is unsustainable, unfair, of little relevance to those directly affected and which fails to make the best use of available resources, experience and skills. This framework is about a different approach. It is about working with communities first and recognising their interests, expertise and experience as the basis for development. It is this approach that will result in equitable, relevant and sustainable change.

Today, many government and other initiatives recognise that, if they are to succeed, the involvement of communities is necessary. However, the starting point for action is often the initiative and not communities themselves. This can result in disjointed development with people being overwhelmed by the demand to respond to initiatives and take part in increasingly complex organisational arrangements. Community development is a process which

joins up environmental, economic, social, demographic, technological, political and other issues by empowering communities to work on their own agendas to improve the quality of life. It has clear values and commitments as its starting point rather than predetermined structures and solutions.

This framework outlines the main elements for effective community development. It provides a tool to analyse current contexts and practice. It can be used with people to develop strategic options and make strategic choices about future direction.

The framework has been produced with members of the Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD). There have been workshops at conferences organised by SCCD and by our members to produce and comment on material for the Framework. There has been feedback on the draft that was circulated through SCCD News and placed on relevant web sites. Members of SCCD have provided case studies. A small group including staff from SCCD, the Community Development Foundation, the Federation for Community Work Training Groups and COGS worked with the material from members to produce sections of the Framework.

The Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD) is a membership organisation bringing together those involved in community development practice, policy and research. SCCD has members in the community, voluntary, public and private sectors. We receive financial support from the Active Community Unit at the Home Office. For further information please contact:

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What is ... ?

Community is the web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that exist amongst those who share physical neighbourhoods, socio-economic conditions or common understandings and interests.

Community workers undertake community development as their main role. They work in accordance with recognised occupational standards. They may focus on specific issues with communities, e.g. health, or have a generic brief.

Community activists are people who are active on a voluntary basis in the development of their communities.

Community groups and organisations are located within communities of geography or interest. They 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.

Community capacity building supports individuals, groups and organisations to enable them to play a part in the regeneration of communities. It is about building skills and competencies and is increasingly being used amongst policy makers and managers to increase their understanding of communities.

Community involvement is about involvement in community activities in a variety of different ways. Community involvement often starts with agendas and programmes that originate outside the community.

Community participation is about enabling people to become active partners in the regeneration of communities by contributing and sharing in the decisions that affect their lives. Participation should enable people to have a degree of power and control in the processes with which they are involved.



Community enterprise combines community-led action with business activities aimed at economic development and social gain. Community enterprises have explicit social aims and are accountable to their communities. They are independent but work in partnership with others.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who initiate ideas and activities in communities but not necessarily with reference to existing traditions, activities and relationships.

Partnerships are structures that exist to deliver programmes. They bring together a number of formal organisations, for example statutory authorities, private companies and voluntary organisations. It has been unusual for community sector groups and organisations to be represented, although there are now attempts to include community interests.

Stakeholders are groups and organisations with an interest (stake) in what happens with a project, programme or development.

What is community development?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Community workers support individuals, groups and organisations in this process on the basis of the following values and commitments.

Values

Social Justice – enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives.

Participation – facilitating democratic involvement by people in the issues which affect their lives based on full citizenship, autonomy, and shared power, skills, knowledge and experience.

Equality – challenging the attitudes of individuals, and the practices of institutions and society, which discriminate against and marginalise people.

Learning – recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that people contribute and develop by taking action to tackle social, economic, political and environmental problems.

Co-operation – working together to identify and implement action, based on mutual respect of diverse cultures and contributions.

Commitments

Challenging discrimination and oppressive practices within organisations, institutions and communities.

Developing practice and policy that protects the environment.

Encouraging networking and connections between communities and organisations.

Ensuring access and choice for all groups and individuals within society.

Influencing policy and programmes from the perspective of communities.

Prioritising the issues of concern to people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Promoting social change that is long-term and sustainable.

Reversing inequality and the imbalance of power relationships in society.

Supporting community-led collective action.



Understanding and Recognition of community development and its role

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT is undertaken with communities of place, identity and common interest. This includes communities based on faith, those with a shared culture or heritage, users of public and other services, those with common interests arising from their work, and people working together to promote the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Community development takes place in a context of social, demographic, technological, economic, environmental, political and other change. These changes have global, European, national, regional and local dimensions. Communities initiate changes and through networking have wider influence. There are also changes which are not initiated by communities that present both threats and opportunities. The community development process works with communities to analyse, initiate and influence social change.

If community development is to fulfil its potential it is important that its role in achieving equal opportunities, accessibility, participation in democratic processes and sustainable economic, social and environmental change is recognised. These themes are important across government and within the private and

voluntary sectors.

Organisations in all sectors can provide crucial support to community development, for example by adopting this framework and ensuring that it applies in all the work of their organisation.

A community development approach starts with people in communities coming together to address these themes. It supports the connections that exist between them and the fact that individuals, groups and organisations need to learn from each other and co-operate if consistent and sustainable change is to be achieved. Community development spans the traditional boundaries of organisations in a way which is flexible and responsive to the priorities and concerns of communities.

This does not mean that communities can do everything or that the resources of statutory, private and voluntary organisations are no longer required to achieve change. A community development approach does mean that government and organisations in the private and voluntary sectors will:

- Act on the basis of the values and commitments of community development.
- Support action by community groups and organisations, community businesses and

neighbourhood councils.

- Have clear processes which enable communities to influence their policies, programmes and priorities.
- Recognise the right of communities to propose alternative courses of action.
- Value different types and levels of participation.
- Build local, regional and national strategy through dialogue with people and organisations active in communities.
- Recognise the function of community development and allocate resources to it in their strategies.
- Recognise the resources, information and support required by community representatives and organisations when working in partnerships.
- Change working practices and time scales to enable participation by communities.

In addition, government should take account of the above factors in the development of legislation, regulations and guidance.

Rural transport initiative

People living in villages around a market town were having difficulties gaining access to local services and employment opportunities because of poor transport links and the expense of running a car. The field officer for the local rural community council recognised the problem from conversations and a recent series of consultation meetings about the regeneration of the area.

She worked with individuals in each of the villages to assess the travelling needs of local residents, and advised them on how to set up a voluntary group. She helped them to draw up a proposal to run a flexible transport service.

They simultaneously attempted to persuade the bus company to reinstate the route which would enable people to get into town at least once a day. When this failed the residents decided to form a limited company with charitable status to purchase their own minibus. They attracted funding to train and employ a local woman as a driver, and the minibus is also made available for private hire.

A car share scheme is also being developed.

Regeneration in the Amman and Swansea Valleys

Amman Valley Enterprise acts as a catalyst to assist people to think in enterprising terms and with a community perspective. Accessible adult education and training opportunities support personal development, participation and employment resulting in social, economic and environmental regeneration. For example Artworks involves some of the most marginalised individuals and groups and offers an opportunity to develop skills in music, photography and video including editing and recording. Staff employed by the project, and a trainee, go to groups, clubs and schools to provide music workshops.

Community Child Protection Training

Child protection training for community activists was identified as a priority need during a series of public workshops. As a result a member of staff assisted in establishing a Childcare Training partnership involving community, voluntary and statutory agencies.

Potential trainers were then identified from both the community and statutory sectors and appropriately trained. Child protection awareness sessions were then delivered jointly by community and statutory sector trainers in accessible venues.

Large numbers of community groups (70) and community representatives (400) were targeted and took part in this initiative. The community and statutory sectors learned from each other throughout the process and ensured best use of their limited resources.

From Policy to Practice published by Community Development and Health Network, Northern Ireland.

Community Development and asylum seekers

Many asylum seekers form refugee community organisations to offer advice and support to others seeking asylum. Community Workers have provided information on services available to asylum seekers translated into relevant languages, have assisted with the development of organisations including funding applications, networking with relevant agencies and with the development of services such as English classes. Local Authority wide meetings have been organised to take up issues affecting a number of groups with the local statutory agencies.

Processes

Community development processes enable people to work together around common issues and aspirations. This includes people coming together to pursue an activity for its own sake, developing organisations which provide services, participation in partnerships including management responsibilities, and involvement in broader movements to achieve social change.

Community workers employed by statutory agencies, voluntary associations and occasionally by community groups themselves support community development. They work with individuals, groups and institutions in ways which enhance learning, participation, and democratic decision-making. They enable communities to establish and develop networks and more formal types of collective organisation.

Empowerment

Community development does not seek to impose solutions or structures, or to provide services or events for people. Rather it is about working with people to define and deal with problems, and assert their interests in decision-making. This requires empathy and an ability to engage with individuals, working to develop and maintain appropriate forms of organisation. It may also

involve changing existing organisations so that their practices and culture embrace the empowerment of communities. In this process the role of the community worker requires expertise, diplomacy and courage. By helping communities to develop informal networks and formal organisations, the worker will inevitably challenge and re-negotiate existing power relations, seeking to create alliances which are to the advantage of disadvantaged groups.

Learning

Informal education and mutual learning are important aspects of community development. Through their involvement in community groups and activities, people acquire and re-discover talents, skills, knowledge and understanding which enable them to take on new roles and responsibilities. This contributes to life-long learning by creating opportunities for reflection and evaluation of experience, allowing knowledge to be shared through critical dialogue and building confidence amongst people who have neglected or abandoned their formal education at an earlier age. Community development encourages people to overcome those fears, prejudices and attitudes which restrict their participation and limit their self-esteem.

Democracy

Community development strengthens democratic processes, opening up political debates and procedures to disadvantaged communities. People become more aware of issues which affect their lives, and more determined to take action to address these.

This might involve acting as a community representative on local partnerships, or taking on leadership positions in voluntary organisations. It will entail dealing with tensions, tackling stereotypes and assumptions and helping people to identify the things that they have in common, as well as respecting their differences.

Community workers are concerned with building consensus amongst diverse partners, and empowering and enabling those who are marginalised and excluded when there are conflicts of interest.

Outcomes

The process of community development is complex and demanding. Many of the outcomes seem intangible and cannot always be predicted. The Scottish Community Development Centre has developed the ABCD (Achieving Better Community Development) framework for evaluating community

development. This framework suggests the following as the outcomes of community development.

Community empowerment	
Process	Outcome
Personal empowerment	A learning community
Positive action	A fair and just community
Community organising and volunteer support	An active and organised community
Participation and involvement	An influential community

Quality of life	
Process	Outcome
Community economic development	A shared wealth
Social and service development	A caring community
Community environmental action	A safe and healthy community
Community arts and cultural development	A creative community
Governance and development	A citizens' community

Source Achieving Better Community Development



The Process in Hull Developing our Communities

HULL DOC community workers initially take time getting to know people and their communities, meeting up with people and listening to their own stories about their hopes, aspirations and needs. Each community has different identities and cultures and many factors have an impact on the quality of life and opportunities to influence decision making.

This initial work builds trust, confidence and a sense of value and self worth within communities. It includes outreach to marginalised people so that confidence and learning increase, community networks are strengthened and people feel more able to have a collective voice in decision-making processes. Examples of this work include:

- Community celebrations – bringing people together to facilitate a community event such as parties, community plays, lunches, poetry workshops.
- Carrying out a participatory appraisal – involving communities in looking at what is going on in an area and finding ways to collectively improve community life.
- Creative training – Away days to local colleges, universities and community centres – helping to break down barriers.
- Community information – developing an interactive web-site with communities.
- Meeting people in their locality – office bases located in communities providing access, facilities and resources. Workers attend community group meetings.

- Creating an informal local reference group – so that residents, groups and organisations can network, raise issues and develop priorities for Hull DOCs work and influence it's decision making. This includes nominating people to sit on a Community Chest panel which awards grants to community groups.

*“Don't put yourself down, they said,
Until you've really tried it.
We organised our tenants groups
Sat on committees too
Then we applied for funding
For the things we had to do.
We took our tenants out on trips
What a difference in the block!
Who made all this possible?
It was, of course, Hull DOC”*

*Part of a poem from Gatwick House,
supported by Hull DOC.*

Resources

Resources are crucial to effective community development. While the involvement of community activists and volunteers is unpaid, the process of community development has to be supported by funding, staffing, information and a range of other resources. It is important that these resources are accessible and allocated on a basis that is secure, equitable and transparent.

Funding

Community development requires several types of funding. Generic community development should be funded on a long-term basis from mainstream sources. Ideally community work posts should be placed on an agency's establishment rather than being funded through short term contracts. Funding of specialist posts related to social care, health, education, regeneration, planning, the environment, culture and recreation should be co-ordinated and relate to overall community development strategies.

For many community groups and organisations long term core funding is required. Easy access to smaller sums of money for specific projects is often useful too. The Local Authority can play a key part in helping groups to access funds from other sources by providing information and, when necessary, match funds.

Specialist funders such as the Health Service have an important role, for example by supporting community groups with specific interests and supporting service user groups.

There are many programmes providing project funds for specific initiatives and pump priming funds for small developments. However, the distribution of these funds is not necessarily related to social need. The introduction of specific funds should be preceded by an analysis of need and consultation with potential beneficiaries. Mechanisms to monitor the overall distribution of funds and include communities in setting priorities are also necessary.

Better and more accessible information and advice about funding sources and the availability of support are important if community organisations are to access funding. Simple application procedures, quick decisions and funding in advance and not in arrears are all important. It is not helpful when funds for small initiatives require match funding as this can result in a disproportionate amount of time being spent on making applications and producing accounts.

Research suggests that take up and use of funds improves when there is a development worker supporting groups in

Resources for community development in Durham

Durham County Council has a community development strategy based on a policy commitment to four inter-related themes:

- *Improving community governance*
- *Tackling social exclusion*
- *Improving partnerships*
- *Building community capacity.*

The strategy explains the themes and links them to an action plan. Priority is given to communities in greatest need. In the section on capacity building, the Local Authority recognises the resource problems facing community groups due to the lack of a clear framework for communities to access consistent help.

The strategy is committed to developing guidance and processes on funding and technical support for community groups.

A new community development team has also been established which links with the Council's political modernisation and the formation of local Member Area Panels.

Staff in the team will provide the link between local communities and elected Members in their new community leadership role.



applying for and managing resources.

Staffing

In the recent past community development has suffered from an insufficient number of posts designed to provide general support to community activity- it is usually easier to obtain funding for specialist posts. Yet the evidence is that if general support work is not undertaken, then community participation will be weak. It is the combination of generic community workers with the availability of specialist staff that produces the best results. Experienced staff with knowledge of community development are also required within the management, policy and programming functions of organisations.

People active in communities on a voluntary basis make an essential contribution to community development. It is important that this is

recognised, that obstacles to participation are removed and that people involved voluntarily have opportunities for support, training and development. This could lead to opportunities to achieve accreditation and join the paid staff.

Information

Crucial for community groups and community workers is the ability to access information from government and other organisations that is clear, jargon free and available in relevant places, formats and languages. It can also be provided by telephone and on web sites with links to other related sites.

The information needed is about particular neighbourhoods and communities of interest that is available from the census and other sources. Information about policies and practice that have worked, and to enable contact with other groups

working on similar issues is also useful.

Other resources

Community development requires the use of a range of other resources. These include buildings, information communications technology, media, stationery, design and printing, insurance, recruitment and equipment. Advice and assistance with matters such as budgeting, employment, accounting, law, and marketing may also be necessary. In many cases it is possible to open up and share resources that already exist. Purchasing consortia can bring the benefits of discounted prices to small organisations. Recycling and supply by community businesses can also be cost effective ways of resourcing community development.

The Bradford Community Statistics Project

The project makes use of new technological developments to present local area statistics in ways that enable local communities to have access to accurate evidence from officially recognised sources.

Apart from identifying the sites of public services the user can select statistics for areas such as electoral wards

or areas of at least 500 addresses which they choose.

The statistical data, its presentation for small areas, and the community development support to understand and access the data, will all allow a rich understanding of local conditions by many more people than at present.

Evaluation and Dissemination

Evaluation and dissemination are about learning from practice and sharing this with others. They are fundamental to community development because of the role they can play in empowering communities and contributing to social change.

Evaluation

Community development has measurable outputs (for example an information service, a playscheme, a community plan) and outcomes (for example an information service may empower people to claim their rights, a playscheme can enable children to meet new friends, a community plan can result in more public resources being allocated to the priorities of excluded groups). These goals need to be planned for and evaluated. There should be an understanding of all the resources available and contributing, the processes and activities and the anticipated achievements and outcomes.

Evaluation helps to assess the effectiveness of community development projects, programmes and policies, and why they are or are not successful. It should be a continuous process so that experience effectively informs future planning and development. It is not something to be left until the end but should be undertaken

from the beginning. Evaluation is not the same as routine monitoring or performance management. It focuses on the broader picture i.e. the contribution to meeting long term objectives, and the reasons why achievements or difficulties happen.

Evaluation should have the values and commitments of community development at its heart. It should be a participative process in which measures and indicators are relevant to, and produced with the communities concerned. It should be an empowering experience with all those involved having their say in setting the criteria and analysing the findings.

Applying the values of community development to evaluation helps ensure that it is:

- integral to community development
- empowering
- part of a learning and participative process
- relevant to and understood by the communities concerned.

Evaluation should:

- be a continuous process which is a tool to assist planning and development rather than just reviewing the impact of a particular initiative or strategy ‘after the event’.

- involve all ‘stakeholders’ and help to answer the questions which are significant to them.
- be imaginative and creative, enabling and encouraging all involved to fully participate.
- be part of accountability to the wider community.
- challenge discriminatory and oppressive policies and practice and seek to overcome inequality and disadvantage.
- highlight and celebrate successes and achievements as well as exploring weaknesses and difficulties.
- have sufficient resources allocated (including time and money) to be effective.
- have planned processes for disseminating what has been learnt both within communities and more widely.

Dissemination

Dissemination is about sharing learning from experience more widely. It is an opportunity to record and celebrate what has been achieved as well as highlighting issues that might be approached in a different way in future. No two communities, or situations, are the same so examples of work disseminated cannot simply be replicated elsewhere. The dissemination of community development experience can, however, be a

valuable source of ideas, insights and issues that need to be taken into account by others involved in similar work.

Effective dissemination requires:

- time and resources.
- production of material in a variety of forms that are

attractive and accessible to a wide range of potential users.

- contributions from all those who have been involved in the work.
- acknowledgement of the role played by all stakeholders in achieving change.

- material being made available to all the different audiences (communities, statutory authorities etc) with a potential interest.

Monitoring and evaluation in Glasgow

A working group was set up to devise a monitoring and evaluation process for community work that could be applied across Glasgow. Making use of material such as Achieving Better Community Development produced by the Scottish Community Development Centre the group produced a

package of materials including guidance on process and a framework of indicators and measures to evaluate inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes in terms of changes in community organisations and in the wider community.

The framework is set out in a grid format with each page representing a broad stage in the development of a piece of work: (1) Engaging with

Communities; (2) Development of Community Organisation; (3) Building Organisational Strength and Capacity; and (4) Effecting Change. Examples are given of the type of information to gather in relation to each stage.

The package meets the requirements of Best Value and the Departments accountability procedures while at the same time building on existing good practice in community work.

Community Multi-Media Archive (COMMA)

The Children's Society is pioneering the use of this multi-media archive in its work on participation and social inclusion across more than 25 projects in England and Wales.

The software is produced by the Storyville co-operative and allows users to create a wide range of digital material and catalogue them in a database. The simplest way to explain the approach is to imagine a traditional card-index system, but instead of merely names, dates, telephone numbers and so on – sound, video, complete documents and still images are stored together with the traditional text and data categories.

This enables young people, community groups, individual residents, agency workers etc to enter their own material into the community's archive – providing both a record and a commentary on issues within that community. No one person or agency's perspective is dominated by another.

The complete archive can be searched using the underlying relational database, and copied for distribution – both to those people and groups who have contributed materials, and to decision-makers.

In Partington (Trafford, Manchester) COMMA is being used to document the views of different sections of the community on the regeneration process ("How was it for you?"). The approach is particularly effective in providing a genuine opportunity for children and young people to log their views and aspirations and for community and voluntary groups to ensure that the "official" record of regeneration is not written solely by the big agencies.



Learning, training and occupational standards

People are the main resource for community development. The learning that takes place when people come together to share experience, perspectives, knowledge and skills is crucial to the process of change through community development.

In parallel to this strategic framework the Federation of Community Work Training Groups have developed a strategic framework for community development learning in England. Discussions about similar work are being held in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They aim to improve the content and quality of training and learning opportunities and increase community development knowledge, understanding and skills of all stakeholders. This framework should be used in conjunction with the frameworks for community development learning.

What's in place

There are many examples of effective community development learning. These include taster courses for people who want to understand the basics of community development, introduction to community work skills courses accredited through the Open College Network, short courses, training the tutor courses,

national vocational qualifications and higher education leading to qualifications. A variety of approaches are used including accreditation of learning from previous experience, accessible and flexible training courses, mentoring and exchanges.

To support these learning opportunities community work has had occupational standards for a number of years. These have been used as the basis for the content and endorsement of courses. The standards are relevant for community activists, volunteers, professional community work staff, staff in other professions who are contributing to the community development process, managers and councillors.

There is a National Training Organisation (PAULO) covering community work and the allied professions of community education, community based adult education and youth work. Endorsement of training courses has been piloted.

A major concern is that learning opportunities at local level can be ad hoc, of limited relevance and not related to the values of community development. Infrastructure support for community development learning could also be better co-ordinated and resourced.

Features of community development learning

Effective community development learning is based on community development values and commitments. A key feature is the value placed on people's experience as the starting point for reflection and analysis. Community development learning aims to create accessible learning opportunities, often within people's communities. An important consideration is how existing resources in schools, colleges and universities can be used more flexibly and adapted for use as part of community development learning. The provision of appropriate learning support, and recognition of previous learning through accreditation are important. Evaluation of learning opportunities with participants is essential if community development learning is to be effective.

School pupils and college students

Many schools and colleges involve pupils and students in activities in their neighbourhood. They often have a variety of other links with communities. It is important that this work is based on community development values and commitments and that pupils and students are introduced to

community development as part of the curriculum.

Community activists and volunteers

For many people who left school with no formal qualifications, involvement in community development and community based learning and training can offer appropriate first learning opportunities. The increase in self esteem and self confidence, the reduction in social isolation from being part of a group, and the development of new skills empowers many people to go on to more formal education, training, jobs and to make positive life changes. Involvement in community development can be a significant aspect of life long learning, with people taking on new roles in organising, leading and representing communities.

Community workers

Generic community work is an occupation that requires knowledge, experience and skills. It is based on ethical principles and values. Its role is to build individual confidence and organisational capacity in

communities, to make links between communities and work on public policy and programme development. Generic community workers require education and training opportunities and qualifications that recognise this role and are comparable with those available to similar professions.

Community development managers

Community development requires the support and involvement of knowledgeable and experienced managers. There are two reasons for this:

- The inherent tensions faced by workers between the issues and priorities of the communities they are working with and the demands of their employing agencies.
- The need for policy, strategy and organisational development to enable community empowerment and support grassroots community development.

The policy of government and the demand for local authorities and other organisations to increase community involvement –

because this is a key part of Community strategies, Best Value, social inclusion, health improvement and regeneration policies – underlines the importance of having effective community development managers. Learning and development opportunities are therefore crucial for this group of staff.

Other professionals and service managers

Many agencies are seeking ways of improving how they relate to, and work with, communities: economic development, planning, housing, leisure services and health are examples. The majority of staff and managers in these sectors have limited experience and understanding of community development, yet the potential of these staff to contribute more substantively both to the strengthening of communities and to providing services in more appropriate ways is considerable.

This requires dissemination of existing examples of good practice. Professional training and in-service courses should be adapted to include community development. Reading and

Empowering Communities Programme in the North East

This is a regional programme of learning and training opportunities based on the National Occupational Standards for Community Work. It has several linked components:

1. *An outreach and development project enabling the effective participation of people active in communities on a voluntary basis.*
2. *Training the trainers courses and the establishment of a register of trainers in the region.*
3. *Training and support for assessors in the region.*
4. *Mentoring support for community workers, including training for mentors.*

other material could be produced in order to introduce and develop these staff and managers understanding and skill in applying the values and processes of community development.

Elected members

It is important that politicians have a better understanding of community development. This can be achieved through the contact and dialogue that

community groups and community workers have with politicians. An introduction to community development values and processes and the relevant policies of the Local Authority should be included in training courses for councillors.

Working together as partners

Partnerships where community representatives, elected members, managers and staff

work together are increasingly important. For partnership working to be effective it should be backed up with opportunities for partners to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding together.

The Community partnership skills development programme

Working together: Learning together is a community participation skills development programme funded by the Scottish Executive. It is designed to encourage a shift in culture in public sector bodies towards working with, listening to and empowering communities. The aim is to support all partners –community representatives, elected members, managers and staff who are involved in community partnerships.

People learn together in order to:

- Improve the effectiveness of working in partnership.
- Achieve a shared vision of what needs to happen, why it should happen and who should be involved.

- Build clarity about why things are being done and what they are designed to achieve, so making partnerships more accountable to each other.
- Improving communication between communities and agencies.



Quality Assurance

To be effective, community development requires competent organisations where there is an understanding of, and commitment to community development. Reviewing the community development function in organisations should be as important as a financial audit and reviews of other functions.

The responsibilities of organisations

Organisations, whether in the public, private, voluntary or community sectors, which adopt community development as an approach have responsibilities to the public, their staff and other stakeholders. These include the responsibility to:

- Have clear policies in place for community development.
- Recognise that community development is a long-term process which requires a long-term commitment.
- Provide information to the public and staff about the organisation's commitment to community development and what this means.
- Undertake community development, and allocate resources, in ways that promote equity within and between communities.
- Be transparent about the deployment of staff, finance and other resources.

- Recruit staff and volunteers fairly and give attention to their training and long-term development.
- Be committed to promoting the health and safety of volunteers and employees, giving consideration to the specific risks inherent in community development
- Have in place recording systems, which ensure accountability.
- Have clear and well-publicised processes that enable stakeholders to provide feedback. This includes processes to monitor progress and to raise and consider any complaints or concerns of stakeholders.
- Dedicate time and resources to evaluation and commit themselves to share experience with others.

and are transparent. It is important to share experience of reviews and develop tools for good practice.

Reviews

The community development function in Local Authorities is now subject to review as part of Local Authorities' responsibility to ensure best value. It is good practice to periodically review community development undertaken by organisations in other sectors too.

The values of community development mean that it is important that reviews actively involve all stakeholders, tackle inequality and discrimination

Quality assurance in Brighton and Hove

Local Authorities in Brighton and Hove have supported community development for the past 30 years and for the last six years there have been teams of workers. The teams are part of the Social Services Department and work to Local Authority policies on equal opportunities and complaints. Managers have access to Local Authority training in management and supervision skills and information about the work is publicised in the Local Authority newsletter.

Quality work is ensured through regular monthly supervision of staff which is prepared for and recorded. This links with a work programme that has clear targets.

There is also a supportive team culture and regular review of progress.

The teams are currently developing service level agreements with local communities, including agreement about how progress is monitored.



Social Audit of the Arts Factory

The Arts Factory, in the Rhondda valley in South Wales, started as a work scheme for people with learning disabilities and expanded taking on broader regeneration objectives. It runs arts and pottery businesses which win commissions from across South Wales, as well as a garden centre and other local community businesses, managed work space, and youth facilities.

The Arts Factory embarked on its first Social Audit using the New Economics Foundation workbook as a guide. Against each of the core values of the organisation (e.g. "ground-up action", "ordinary people", "positive attitudes") specific organisational objectives and strategies were defined, and a series of indicators drawn

up to assess how well the values were put into practice. The different teams within the Arts Factory came together in workshops to discuss the values and complete a questionnaire based on the indicators.

Undertaking this exercise in groups meant that individuals who had difficulties with reading and writing could be paired with members of their team and therefore fully participate.

Networking and Strategic Support

Effective community development requires opportunities for community activists and volunteers, community workers, and managers to share ideas and experiences and take joint action on issues of common concern. Some of this networking will be face to face and it is important that time and resources are allocated to enable this to happen. Increasingly the internet is used as a tool to enable more frequent contact and networking over longer distances.

The importance of networking

Networking is important because it provides access to information, support, resources and influence. It enables co-operation between practitioners, researchers and policy makers in different sectors through the development of trust and understanding. This co-operation depends on

establishing and maintaining both organisational links and personal relationships. Connections which span agency, geography and identity, are especially useful because they bring new perspectives and challenges. These are also the links, which can be most difficult to sustain, and their development may need particular attention accompanied by practical measures to counter prejudices and institutional discrimination.

Networking opportunities are important locally, within regions, countries, and on a UK, European and international basis. Networks related to specialist aspects of community development such as health and the environment are of increasing significance. Networks concerned with urban or rural issues and the perspectives of people experiencing discrimination, for example due to race, gender, disability, age or sexuality also have an important role in effective community development.

Networks can draw together a range of voices into a collective whole, thus adding weight to individual perspectives. Clear links with strategic decision-making across sectors are important to achieve maximum influence.

Support for networking

Community workers facilitate networking by putting people in touch with one another, by creating opportunities for people to meet, and by providing safe spaces for interaction and learning. They may assist links between different organisations, or provide support to membership organisations, cross sector partnerships and coalitions.

This aspect of community development needs greater recognition through funding to membership and support agencies, along with careful evaluation of how this supports the development of communities based on social justice and mutual respect.

Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations and Ethnic Minority Foundation

The Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations aims to empower the minority ethnic voluntary sector by providing infrastructure support and developing a professional cadre through its new MBA programme. Each person taking part agrees to transfer his or her knowledge to a further 40 minority ethnic organisations. The project also supports organisations in achieving quality standards.

The Ethnic Minority Foundation aims to generate £100m over a ten year period to support minority ethnic voluntary and community sector organisations. This will be achieved by mobilising a movement of 100,000 minority ethnic professionals who will donate resources of both time and money to strengthen the minority ethnic voluntary and community sector.

Wakefield and District Community Network

The Network started in 1992 when a few Community Workers identified that there was a lack of communication about and support for community development work in Wakefield.

The Network currently has 255 members from various groups and organisations. It offers:

- Quarterly forums which enable members to communicate and share information and knowledge. New members are welcomed and exercises undertaken to consider how to enable communities to attain greater understanding of community development processes and how they work.
- A bi-monthly newsletter exchanging information.
- A data-base of members, enabling people to find people working in particular geographic areas, on

particular forms of community support and with varying skills. Regular mailings also offer other groups the opportunity to advertise events, training and job vacancies.

There are two specific support groups for Community Development Workers and Managers. These groups provide peer support and information workshops. They also inform policy makers and funding applicants about the positive outcomes that can be achieved following genuine community consultation and participation.

The Network is supported by statutory training and health funds. It also relies on "in kind" support. There is a Steering Group of members to manage and co-ordinate the network. Most members take part through sharing information and peer support. It is a democratic network with regular reports to members who identify needs and decide on direction.



Conclusion

This framework is about working with communities and from their experience developing policies, programmes and priorities based on clear values and commitments. This requires a strategic approach which:

- recognises and analyses the changing context
- is about working with communities in ways which are empowering, educating and enabling
- ensures that resources are accessible and allocated fairly within and between communities
- has clear processes for evaluation and dissemination
- links community development with strategies for learning
- ensures that organisations across sectors have policies and practices which support quality community development
- encourages involvement in existing networks and creation of new networks to support the strategy.

W E LOOK
FORWARD to
receiving
feedback
about how this
framework has been
used and how it could
be developed and
changed for future
use.

Useful organisations and publications

Organisations

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England)
Dean House, Somerford Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester GL7 1TW
Tel: 01285 653 477

BASSAC (British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres) 1st Floor, Winchester House, 11 Cranmer Road, London SW9 6EJ
Tel: 0207 735 1075

Community Development Cymru, Amman Valley Enterprise, 43 Heol Cae Gurwen, GwaunCae Gurwen Ammanford SA1 1HG
Tel 01269 822733

Community Development and Health Network (N. Ireland), Ballybot House, 22 Cornmarket, Newry, County Down. BT35 8BG
Tel: 028302 64606

Community Matters, 8/9 Upper Street London N1 0PQ
Tel: 0207 226 0189

CDF (Community Development Foundation) 60 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AG
Tel: 0207 226 5375

Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations, Boardman House, 64 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 1WG
Tel: 0208 432 0308

FCWTG (Federation of Community Work Training Groups) 4th Floor, Furnival House, 48 Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 4QP
Tel: 0114 273 9391

Forum for Community Work Education (N. Ireland) 3rd Floor, Philip House, 123/137 York Street, Belfast BT15 1AB
Tel: 02890 232587

SCDC (Scottish Centre for Community Development) Suite 329 Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 248 1924

SCDN (Scottish Community Development Network), 82-84 Windmillhill Street, Motherwell ML1 1TA

SCCD (Standing Conference for Community Development) 4th Floor, Furnival House, 48 Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 4QP
Tel: 0114 270 1718
Email: admin@sccd.solis.co.uk

Ubuntu, 4th Floor, Furnival House, 48 Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 4QP
Tel: 0114 273 9391

WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) Llys Ifor, Crescent Road, Caerfilli CF8 1XL
Tel: 01222 855100

Publications

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- Wilson M and Wilde P (1999) *Active Partners: Benchmarks for Community Participation in Regeneration*, Yorkshire Forward.