TOWARDS SHARED INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE









IACD

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Foreword

This paper provides the basis for shared international standards for community development practice. It presents the key themes and areas common across community development practice wherever that practice might take place across the world. It identifies the purpose of professional community development practice, the values that should underpin practice and the key methods used by the practitioner.

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The Scottish Government
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In October 2016, the International Association for Community Development (IACD) wrote to all members of the association to inform them that following the adoption of IACD's new definition of community development at the 2016 Annual General Meeting, the IACD Training and Professional Development Committee was initiating work to produce guidance for members around community development practice. The IACD Board agreed to work with the Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland [1] (CLDSC) to take this project forward. The CLDSC was IACD's partner in organising our 2014 international community development conference in Glasgow and is the specialist agency in Scotland working in this area, with a track record in the production of community development standards going back three decades.[2] A joint task group was set up to produce a draft guidance paper and in November 2016, we circulated to members an initial discussion paper highlighting examples of existing work that was already going on in some countries to produce national community development standards.

The task group met on several occasions to then prepare a member consultation paper called Draft Guidance Towards Common International Standards for Community Development, which was sent to all IACD members for a four-month consultation which ended on 31st March 2018. This explained the background to this project and why IACD felt it would be helpful to the various stakeholders involved in community development – communities, practitioners, trainers, employers, funders, policy advisers and others – to be able to present a shared international understanding as to what was meant by community development practice. In other words, what it is all about. We saw these International Standards as a starting point for members and others working in different countries to apply and adapt to their different working contexts.

We received responses to the Draft Guidance consultation from members around the world, from China and South Africa, to Canada, Australia and Portugal, from the USA and New Zealand, to the UK, Kenya and beyond. This was a truly global effort and we express enormous thanks to members for both their supportive responses and their critique. A few of the submissions were from individuals, but the majority came in from national/regional networks and clearly reflected much time in their preparation. Most of the feedback related to the specific wording of particular sentences and paragraphs in the Draft Guidance and proposals that we amend, delete or add to these, but generally there was strong support for what was being proposed. The majority of responses were strongly in favour of this initiative by IACD. However, we did receive several from members concerned that in publishing such Guidance and the association's earlier adoption of its definition, IACD was in effect excluding unpaid practitioners and community activists from our understanding as to what community development is all about and worse, falling into the trap of others in creating a closed profession. These are important criticisms and we seek to address these concerns in a way which underlines our strong commitment to being an open organisation. Indeed, it has never been our intention to be otherwise.

IACD has always been inclusive about whom we see as being a community development practitioner – while being clear that this is something different from being a civic leader, activist or involved citizen. Community development practitioners can be and often are unpaid and whilst IACD is not a trades union, we would underline our long experience that doing community development work can be complex and challenging. So generally, we do wish to see practitioners remunerated for this work and 'employed' with good terms and conditions.

1. Community Learning and Development

2. CLDSC is the body in Scotland responsible for setting standards and for endorsing professional training. This work was originally carried out by the Scottish Community Education Council and transferred to CLDSC.









We are also keen to see that all community development practitioners have access to high quality pre and in service professional training opportunities and strongly urge education and training providers to recognise and accredit prior experiential learning and provide wider access for people from indigenous and working-class communities who have been community leaders and activists.
There are, we believe, around a thousand undergraduate courses around the world that offer community development (See Global Mapping Survey below). And promoting high standards in the preparation these courses provide for community development practice is in the interests of both community development practitioners and communities.

In the IACD definition, we talk about community development being both a practice-based profession AND an academic discipline. To do this often complicated, challenging, sometimes dangerous and certainly muddy work, practitioners need an understanding of political, social and ecological sciences to give them wider insights into the inter-connected realities of people's lives, of the social, political, cultural, economic and environmental contexts within which people live and of how to achieve change that empowers people. Practitioners need skills in communication, in how to be effective educators and organisers, in how to access resources, in how to be empathetic. And underlying all of this, practitioners need to commit to what we see as universal values of social and environmental justice and democratic participation.

We have elsewhere commented upon a trend in some countries whereby community development education and training courses provided by Higher Education institutions are becoming over theoretical. There is a need for a sensible balance covering the canon of scholarship in our field AND the practical skills training and experience to do the job. To be truly transformative, community development practice needs our heads, hands and hearts, with our practice underpinned by an organised body of knowledge that is in turn informed by practice and research.

In publishing *Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice*, we recognise the need to clarify what we mean by the term 'profession'. One of the responses to the Draft Guidance highlights this and we quote it here... *"While there is no definition of professionalism in the standards of practice document, by implication (references to working alongside professionalised cognate disciplines, such as social work; the health disciplines; urban planning; and architecture, and the need for setting up standards of practice), it would seem that the term professional, as used in the document, refers to people with expert knowledge and skills who are employed as community development workers operating within set standards of practice, which are monitored by a professional organisation. There are, of course, other uses of the term professional, such as in reference to a person acting respectfully, sensitively and competently, and in the case of community development, within terms of reference set by communities, rather than as an outside expert. However, this approach to understanding the meaning of professionalism is not articulated in the document".*

This point is well made and in responding to it, we emphasise that IACD uses the term in both senses. This is why at IACD we have adopted the notion of community development being an ***'empowering profession'*** to underpin the nature of the relationship between the practitioner and the people we work with (who may also be our employer). People power and empowerment are central to the ways in which community development practitioners and agencies should work. We must acknowledge that not all community development practice has been good at this. Some indeed has been damaging, further disempowering vulnerable communities and it is for this reason that we are clear as an association as to the type of community development we would hope to see members and others adopting and promoting.

But we also recognise the several interests who, in reality, need to have a voice in supporting and improving our practice, from our peers, paid and unpaid, employers and funders, national and regional professional occupational standards endorsement agencies (where they exist) and the communities with whom we work.

We are clear that where they exist, it is for national bodies, comprising these many stakeholder voices, to have the responsibility for agreeing national standards, for monitoring and supporting practice and for endorsing pre and in-service community development education and training courses. IACD's role is to encourage the networking and the sharing of ideas and approaches between these national bodies, encouraging as we always seek to do, creative international Communities of Practice. Such national bodies and national standards are however to be currently found in only a handful of countries – one such being Scotland, where IACD is currently based.

We present this report from the IACD Training and Professional Development Committee to members and the wider field around the world as a guide for practitioners, communities, education and training providers, employers, regional and national CD associations and to national governments, in order to improve the quality, visibility and accountability of community development practice and the quality of the initial and continuing professional development to support that practice.

Paul Lachapelle, President, International Association for Community Development

John Stansfield, Chair IACD Training and Professional Development Committee

Background

In 2016, the IACD Board and AGM adopted the following global definition of community development for the association:

"Community Development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings."



Since then a number of national CD associations have also adopted this definition or are considering doing so. This indicates a growing consensus amongst members that the IACD definition resonates with the realities of practice and thus helps provide a common understanding of what that practice is about.

The IACD definition builds upon the very broad understanding of community development adopted by the U.N. in the 1950s when IACD was founded and which we still endorse as a general statement of intent i.e. as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems." Since the 1950s when the U.N. first started adopting the term, it also described community development as being a "process of providing technical assistance programmes and of inter-agency co-ordination.....by which an undeveloped area develops or is developed". From the very early days the U.N, national governments and others, including IACD, have understood community development to mean the linked processes of collective action by communities with the provision of technical or other forms of assistance to such communities.

In early 2018, we published a special issue of the IACD magazine *Practice Insights*, to celebrate our 65th anniversary[4]. In that we traced through the many people and influences that have shaped our movement over the past six decades. Many people had a hand in shaping our thinking and practice. As we said in the editorial "Over the past six decades tens of thousands of community development practitioners have dedicated their expertise to empowering communities to take action collectively to improve the lives of people and to care for the planet. Their work has supported some of the most vulnerable people across the world to have not simply a voice, but also the means to take action".

In the *Practice Insights* 65th anniversary issue, we saw that community development had always been a politically contested practice, with both conservatives and radicals adopting the term, sometimes for very different ends. Community development practitioners and the thousands of research papers, toolkits and publi cations about community development demonstrated and continue to demonstrate the wealth of critical reflection in our field, always the sign of a healthy profession. It has been those practitioners and others who also shaped our thinking about our underlying values, recognising that community development is neither a politically nor values neutral process. We have made clear public statements as to what we see those values as being. And it is those core values that remain central to IACD's 2016 definition and which underpin this document.

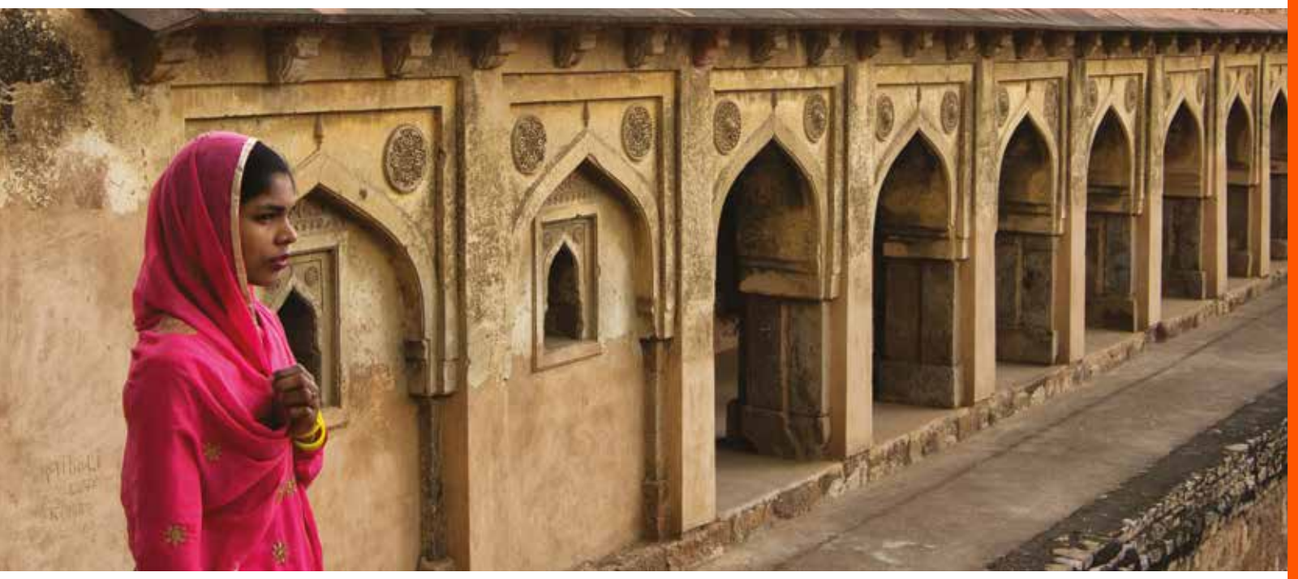
4. *Practice Insights* 9. Special 65th Birthday Issue. January 2018.





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IACD's decision to publish its own statement defining and explaining community development resulted from research (the 2015 IACD mapping study of CD training programmes around the world) which indicated that community development was indeed being interpreted very widely and loosely by different training providers, employers and practitioners in different countries. We identified several hundred graduate level training programmes which include community development as part of an undergraduate course. Some we discovered were specialist community development degrees; others link community development with disciplines such as health, economic development, social work, rural development or international development (to name a few!). Our research did not look in detail at what these degrees taught nor tried to assess their quality, but the fact they exist and are marketed as providing education and training to enable students to enter a career in community development, indicates that practice is taking place in many countries across the developing and developed world and that there is a market demand for practitioners.

IACD, therefore, as the international professional association, believed that it was important to encourage practitioners, paid and unpaid, to adopt a shared understanding of the purpose of community development, built upon shared values. Our intention here being to support high standards of practice based upon an agreed collective view of what it is, as much as professional being equated with being qualified. Agreeing the IACD definition of community development would then be the starting point for designing and promoting shared international standards for community development practice and for the education and training of practitioners.

At a time when there are increasing challenges as well as new employment and practice opportunities for community development across the world, the most significant being the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and their implementation nationally and locally, it is essential for our profession to take stock and to reassess whether the community development professional learning opportunities that currently exist are up to the challenge. The adoption of the SDGs by the U.N. in 2016 presents a huge opportunity for community development practitioners to demonstrate how to enable communities to build their capacities to engage in the SDG agenda, whether that be strengthening the resilience of communities to deal with climate change, health promotion, poverty reduction or lifelong learning.

Building Upon National Standards

In recent years a number of national community development associations and agencies have produced what are generally called national standards or occupational standards for community development. These describe what a person needs to do, know and understand to carry out good quality community development practice, and assist in the professional development of the workforce by promoting good practice, bringing together the skills, knowledge and values that underpin the work.

In some countries these national standards have a 'peer led' monitoring function, including practitioner, management, 'user' and training provider interests and expertise in its oversight of practice. The intent is to develop a set of agreed standards that reflect a shared understanding of the purpose, processes and key roles of community development that can support all practitioners.

While most of the current standards are based in the practice and scholarship (and the assumptions) of societies in the global North, the fact that different national CD networks and agencies in several countries have produced them is a tremendous starting point and we believe that these approaches could be adopted/ adapted around the world and indeed this is beginning to happen, with for example movements in that direction in South Africa and New Zealand.

Over the past three decades or more great work has been led in different countries by practitioners, trainers and employers to agree the competences required for practice and thereby what knowledge, skills and values practitioners should have and the training they need.

These national standards provide a starting point upon which to build through a process of challenge, change and enrichment (examples of standards can be found below).[6] What we are calling 'Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice' have been informed significantly by the work emerging in recent years from countries such as Ireland, the UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

Community development practice is more than community work

In the themes, key areas and statements about practice section below, we describe what IACD sees community development practice as being. This practice is carried out by people in different roles and contexts, including people explicitly called professional community workers (and people taking on essentially the same role but with a different job title), together with professionals in other occupations ranging from social work, adult education, youth work, health disciplines, environmental education, local economic development, to urban planning, regeneration, architecture and more *who seek to apply community development values and adopt community development methods.*

We propose to refer to them all as "community development practitioners", and to use this as an overarching term that includes also "community workers". **We are using the term 'community development practitioner' to include people employed (paid and unpaid) in the occupational field of work and other professionals in allied sectors who are applying community development values and using community development methods.**

Community development practice also encompasses a range of occupational settings and levels from development roles working with communities, through to managerial and strategic community planning roles.

All of these practitioners play a vital part in promoting participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality, and social justice, through the organisation, education, and empowerment of people within communities. And we hope to see these Standards being helpful for all.

6. http://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/
http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/courses/community-development-for-health-promoters/module-one-concepts-values-and-principles/values-
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/choose-and-adapt-community-interventions/ethical-issues/main
cdctn.org/photos/custom/3.%20Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf
http://www.iedconline.org/web-pages/inside-iedc/iedc-code-of-ethics/
http://www.comm-dev.org/about/principles-of-good-practice
http://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/resources/national-occupational-standards/

Let us look in more detail at the IACD definition again:

Community Development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.

This definition can be seen as embodying a set of underpinning values, a purpose and a set of methods for work.

A. Underpinning values

Within the definition are both explicit and implicit statements about the values and ethos that should underpin practice; these can be expressed as:

Commitment to rights, solidarity, democracy, equality, environmental and social justice.

This value statement positions professional practice as working according to ethical standards applied in various contexts, working with people and organisations with different agendas.

B. The purpose

Within the definition is a statement about the purpose of community development:

To work with communities to achieve participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice.

This high-level purpose statement can be used as a template against which to measure both the journey and the destination.

C. The central methods and processes

Within the definition there is a clear statement of the methods and processes adopted by community development practitioners:

"(the) organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities…".

Community development methods of organisation and education are distinguished by their focus on and concern with how participants can be enabled to empower themselves, and by the linking together of organisation and education, of action and learning. This process is based on dialogue between participants and the community development practitioner, in her/his role as organiser/educator; it needs to be based on the development of mutual respect, trust and learning. We acknowledge here the tensions in community development practice, the importance of dealing with uncertainty and contradiction, of challenging the status quo and what one respondent in our consultation has called the application of 'competent solidarity'.

But who are the participants?

D. Participants

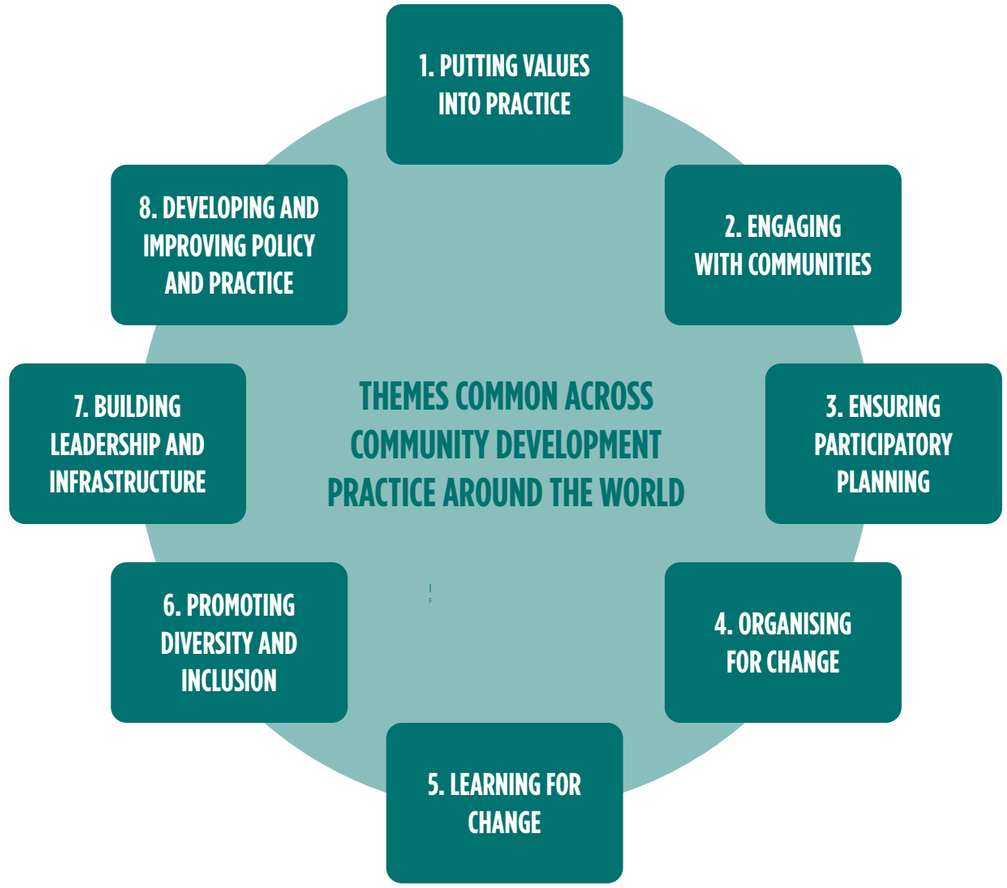
The IACD definition refers to people within their communities, whether these are of locality, identity or interest. The inference here is that the primary groups of people the community development practitioner will be working with are those within communities; and clearly this is at the heart of community development. But a community doesn't exist in a bubble; it constantly interacts with a wide variety of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, businesses, service providers and decision-makers, politicians and the wider civil society.

This highlights the two-way direction in which community development practitioners must work: both with people within their communities and with a wide range of agencies and organisations that may lie outside those communities e.g. government, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, private sector, international and national donors and other funders etc. So, the organisational and educational work that the practitioner engages in also relates to influencing those external agencies to work in more empowering ways with communities.

We have identified eight themes that are common across practice in community development. These are:

- Putting values into practice
- Engaging with communities
- Ensuring participatory planning
- Organising for change
- Learning for change
- Promoting diversity and inclusion
- Building leadership and infrastructure
- Developing and improving policy and practice

Figure 1



This figure is illustrative only and not intended to imply some sort of artificial linear process whereby one follows the other. The muddy realities are that there will be a continuous feedback loop between each of these themes as the community development practitioner works with people in communities and with the many agencies and organisations that impact upon those communities.

We then identified key areas related to each of these themes for community development practice carried out by people whatever their occupation. Following from this, we have developed standard statements for each of the key areas about what practice should demonstrate.

This detail is set out in the following sections.

As already noted, professional community development practice encompasses a range of occupational settings. Within particular roles, practitioners will be focused more on some themes and work areas than others and may not have the opportunity or the need to practice in ways that relate to all of the standard statements. All community development practitioners should nonetheless have an awareness of all the themes, work areas and standard statements so that they know how their practice relates to and impacts upon wider processes of change.

The strategies and tactics that communities choose to adopt (and that are most likely to enable them to achieve positive change) vary greatly, under the influence of different political, economic, environmental, social and cultural contexts. The role of community development practitioners in relation to these choices is to enable communities to develop their understanding of these contexts and their implications, and to deliberate together to reach their own decisions about their aims and how they seek to achieve them; it is not to decide for communities what strategies and tactics they should adopt, although community development practitioners should be using their educational and organisational expertise to share with the people they are working with new ideas and opportunities. Practitioners need to know when to adopt both directive and non-directive interventions.





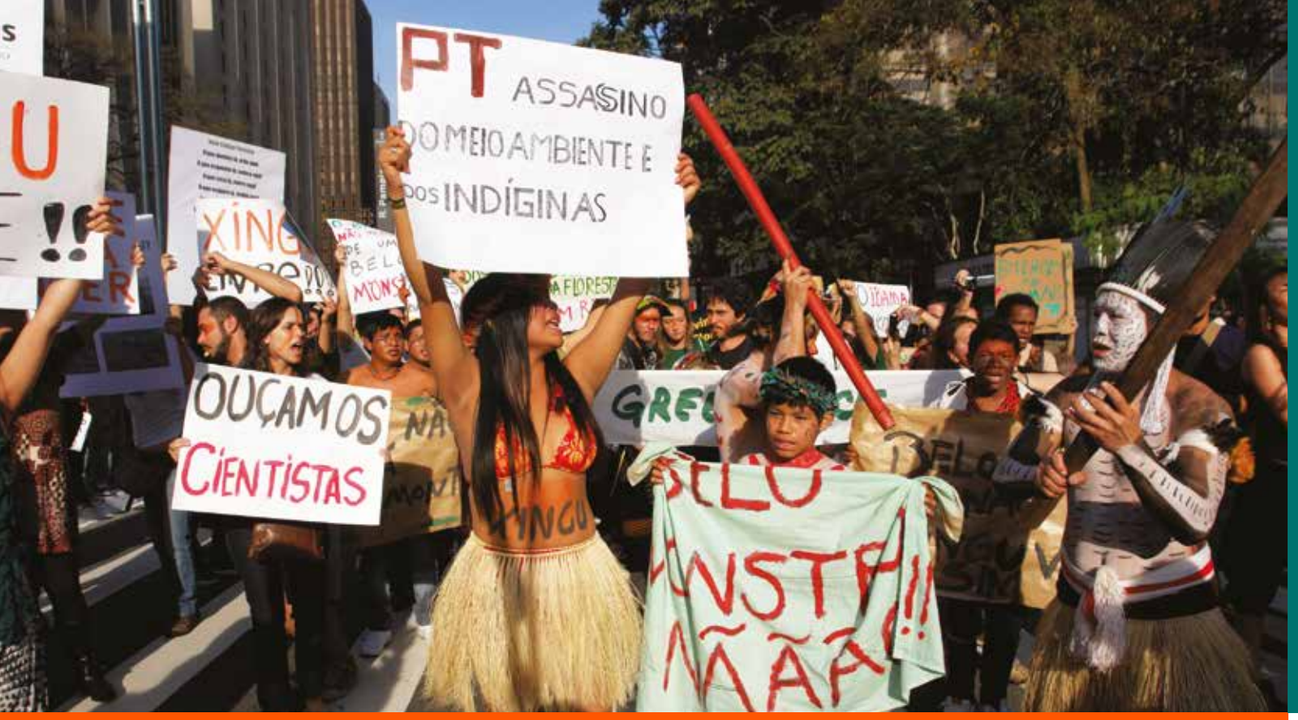




The themes, key areas and statements about practice provide guidelines for community development practice; they are not intended to imply preference for one type of strategy or tactic over another.

THEMES AND KEY AREAS

	THEME TITLE	KEY PRACTICE AREAS
THEME 1	PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE	Understand the values, processes and outcomes of community development, and apply these to practice in all the other key areas.
THEME 2	ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES	Understand and engage with communities, building and maintaining relationships with individuals and groups.
THEME 3	ENSURING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING	Develop and support collaborative working and community participation.
THEME 4	ORGANISING FOR CHANGE	Enable communities to take collective action, increase their influence and if appropriate their ability to access, manage and control resources and services.
THEME 5	LEARNING FOR CHANGE	Support people and organisations to learn together and to raise understanding, confidence and the skills needed for social change.
THEME 6	PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	Design and deliver practices, policies, structures and programmes that recognise and respect diversity and promote inclusion.
THEME 7	LEADERSHIP AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Facilitate and support organisational development and infrastructure for community development, promoting and providing empowering leadership.
THEME 8	DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE	Develop, evaluate and inform practice and policy for community development, using participatory evaluation to inform and improve strategic and operational practice.



Themes, Key Areas and Statements about Practice

Theme 1:
Putting values into practice

This theme focuses on understanding of the values that underpin community development practice in all contexts, the processes on which it is based and the outcomes that result from it; and the application of this understanding in the practitioner's own context.

Community Development Practice
KEY AREA 1:

Understand the values, processes and outcomes of community development, and apply these to practice in all of the other key areas.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they:

a. Understand the values, processes and outcomes of community development within their own context and role.

b. Know how to develop themselves as a community development practitioner.

c. Know how to support and promote community development within the practice of their own and other organisations.

Theme 2:
Engaging with communities

This theme focuses on getting to know the communities the practitioner works with, understanding the issues that impact on them and developing the relationships that provide the basis for working for positive change.

Community Development Practice
KEY AREA 2:
Understand and engage with communities, building and maintaining relationships with individuals and groups.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they:

a. Understand the social, political, economic, cultural and environmental factors impacting on local communities, particularly marginalised groups.

b. Understand how to get to know a community, identifying assets, needs, informal networks, interests, motivations, power dynamics, barriers to participation and opportunities, and how to make use of research skills in doing this

c. Know how to seek out and engage with all sections of the community, listen and communicate effectively in person and through media accessible to them.

d. Understand, respect and recognise the work, values, capabilities and objectives of groups involving all sections of the community, and build relationships based on mutual trust.

e. Know how to work with communities and others to identify opportunities to develop participation and inclusion and how to overcome barriers to these.

f. Know how to work with communities towards collective agreement, recognising where there are conflicts of interest and using effective ways of resolving these.

Theme 3:
Participatory planning

This theme focuses on developing community participation and empowering partnerships and supporting communities and agencies to develop the skills to sustain these.

Community Development Practice
KEY AREA 3:
Understand Develop and support collaborative working and community participation

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they know how to:

a. Assist communities to understand local, national and global political processes and where power and influence lie.

b. Enable communities to understand and utilise both existing research information and the application of research methods in their own setting.

c. Initiate and participate in partnership and collaborative working for the empowerment of communities, acknowledging and addressing conflicts of interest.

d. Promote relationships between communities, public bodies, non-governmental organisations and other agencies for the empowerment of communities and in pursuit of their interests.

e. Influence public bodies and other decision-makers and service providers to build effective and empowering relationships with communities.

f. Work with communities and agencies to identify needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities, acknowledging and addressing conflicts of interest.

g. Break down barriers to community participation and enable community representatives to play active roles in strategic planning, decision making and action.

Theme 4:
Organising for change

This theme focuses on enabling communities to take collective action and to develop the skills needed for this; and on developing a context where their collective action is sustained and supported as a positive force for change.

Community Development Practice
KEY AREA 4:

Enable communities to take collective action, increase their influence, access resources and participate in managing and delivering services.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they know how to:

a. Enable people to work together, identify what they want to achieve, and develop groups and activities.

b. Support communities to organise to bring about positive change.

c. Support people to effectively manage and address conflict, within and between communities or community groups.

d. Influence decision makers to recognise the potential benefits of collective action by communities and build relationships with them.

e. Support communities to engage in participatory budgeting and the management and ownership of land, resources and services.

f. Support communities to access resources, funds and technical aid to realise their activities.

Theme 5:
Learning for change

This theme focuses on facilitating the learning of people in communities and practitioners working with them in support of their priorities for change and development.

Community Development Practice
KEY AREA 5:

Support people and organisations to learn together for social change.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they know how to:

a. Use people's experiences, knowledge and skills as the starting point of participatory activities and methods for then identifying and meeting learning needs of participants and practitioners.

b. Develop learning opportunities and activities to meet expressed needs in dialogue with individuals and groups on the development of their communities.

c. Use effective communication skills such as active/ empathetic listening, and also written and visual communication, social media, film and print media and ICT – to support collective learning and community action.

d. Promote change that reflects the values and aims of community development through community learning.

e. Support partnering governmental, non-governmental and private sector organisations to identify the learning needs of their staff in relation to community development.

Theme 6:
Diversity and inclusion

This theme focuses on recognising diversity and supporting inclusion as core aspects of practice.

Community Development Practice

KEY AREA 6:

Design and deliver practices, policies, structures and programmes that recognise and respect diversity and promote inclusion.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they:

a. Understand how social, political, economic, cultural and environmental factors impact on different sections of the community, particularly marginalised groups.

b. Work in inclusive ways across diverse and marginalised communities, ensuring that methods of engagement with communities promote inclusion and respect diversity.

c. Know how to support groups to develop the skills and confidence to involve marginalised communities.

d. Know how to challenge discrimination by agencies working in communities and by community groups, and support people who are excluded, marginalised or discriminated against to participate fully and actively in activities and groups.

e. Know how to demonstrate cultural humility, creating spaces that are safe for people with different world views and perspectives, including indigenous ways of knowing and doing, to participate fully.

f. Know how to support agencies and communities to adopt inclusive practices and respect diversity.

g. Know how to develop and advocate for socially inclusive policies, programmes and practices.

Theme 7:
Leadership and infrastructure

This theme focuses on developing empowering leadership in and with communities and developing the infrastructure for community development and sustainable social change.

Community Development Practice

KEY AREA 7:

Facilitate and support organisational development and infrastructure for community development, promoting and providing empowering leadership.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they:

a. Support groups to review their own practices and policies and external opportunities and threats.

b. Support groups to plan for their future sustainability, and to develop strategic and business plans to achieve their aims and objectives.

c. Support the development of capacities for accountable and democratic leadership within communities.

d. Know how to influence and advise on organisational structures, culture, policies, practices and behaviours to support community development within own and partner organisations.

e. Understand the political context and the opportunities, challenges and risks arising from it; and support communities and partners to do so and to decide on strategies in that context.

f. Nurture and encourage local community leaders to adopt democratic, participative and inclusive styles of leadership for working with communities and in partnerships that seek to involve communities

g. Support and influence organisations to develop work systems that promote effective community development practice.

Theme 8:
Developing and improving policy and practice

This theme focuses on using evidence from participatory evaluation, and from analysis of relevant external factors, to inform and develop policy and practice.

Community Development Practice KEY AREA 8:

Develop, evaluate and inform practice and policy for community development, using participatory evaluation to inform strategic and operational practice.

In this Key Area, community development practitioners working in a range of disciplines should demonstrate that they know how to:

a. Review and evaluate community development activities and practice using participatory methods.

b. Support community groups to use monitoring and evaluation to reflect on progress, learn from experience, evidence impact and inform future action.

c. Gather and use evidence from own practice and from communities worked with to inform and influence the development of policy and practice.

d. Analyse the impact of social, political, economic, cultural and environmental change on community development practice in own context.

e. Support practitioners and community groups to use participatory monitoring and evaluation of community development activities to reflect on and develop practice and to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes with communities.

f. Assess the evidence from evaluations of community development activities and analysis of the wider social, political, economic and environmental context to inform the development of policy and practice.

g. Incorporate critical reflection processes into our work, in order to identify and apply learnings, and continually improve our practice.

h. Prepare accountability and evaluation reports for one's agency, funders and other stakeholders, including impact measures.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Working towards a shared set of International Standards was always the logical next step in developing a shared definition of community development. Just as the definition gains growing support for its adoption and use, we hope that these International Standards will also.

In the opening sections of this paper, we stated that we see these International Standards as a starting point for community development practitioners working in different countries to apply and adapt to their different working contexts – socially, economically, culturally and politically. We recognise that these contexts vary considerably, and so the Standards are not intended to be prescriptive. IACD is not a regulator of practice and there is no obligation or requirement on practitioners or organisations to adopt these standards. However, in developing these standards, our intention is to offer them as a guide for practitioners, education and training providers, employers, regional and national CD associations and to national governments, to be used to enhance the quality of community development practice and the quality of professional development programmes and opportunities.

These shared international standards also offer an opportunity for enhancing international collaboration and exchange in community development teaching and practice globally.

More than anything, we hope that as shared international standards, they will support a growing global understanding and inter-connectedness of practice among those engaged and involved with community development.

How might the International Standards be used?

While the Standards can be used as a guide to help collectively identify the destination (outcomes) and shape the journey (process) they can also be used to critically reflect on both the journey and the destination. In other words, they can be used to plan, implement and review action and support learning from the process.

As such, they can be used by all community development practitioners in many ways:

- to build shared awareness and understanding of what community development is,
- to promote the values upon which community development is based,
- to enhance practice,
- to inform theory and policy
- to shape academic and practice-based learning.

We hope that they will be embraced by community development practitioners and used in a complementary manner in countries where national standards and frameworks already exist, and as a guiding resource in those countries where no national standards have been developed.





As part of our consultation process on the draft Standards, we asked for specific ideas on how the Standards might be used. We have included these ideas below:

- To generate discussion on the purpose, values and key areas of community development in global and local contexts, within and between communities and between different agencies and organisations
- To develop resources that help to demonstrate how different contexts impact on shared areas of practice within different countries/communities
- To support international networking and sharing of practice examples and experiences
- To build shared understanding within communities and within organisations about the key purpose and values of community development
- To support discussions around participatory planning and community ownership that build collective action and empowerment
- To inform the design of pre and in-service education and training of community development practitioners
- To develop reflective practice self-assessment learning tools
- To support the development of stories from the 'field' sharing examples of how the Standards are being used to support practice development – perhaps around each of the Key Areas – international examples around common/shared themes
- To develop international resources for inclusion in programmes of education and training – drawing out the contestations and sensitivities associated with practice
- To inform the IACD Global Community Development Exchange (GCDEX) repository of teaching and learning resources
- To provide a 'common base' upon which to develop international research and scholarship exploring aspects of community development practice

To support shared learning we encourage you to share how you are using these Standards. As a first step to building live "Communities of Practice" IACD will be hosting an open forum on the Standards on its website and, through GCDEX, we shall be creating a special section where members can share how they are using the Standards and any resources they develop relating to them. It is also our intention to support the establishment of an international forum for community development educators.

In the 1970s and 80s, IACD ran the Community Development Training Clearing House. This has long closed and with the wider proliferation (and in some cases loss) of under-graduate and graduate programmes around the world claiming to offer some level of community development education and training, such a role is now well beyond our current means. Over the coming years, however, the IACD Training and Professional Development Committee will work with partners to design and accredit courses, including online programmes and continuing professional development modules, aimed at community development practitioners from different countries, and including an accredited element to our Practice Exchange short course study visit programmes.

If you are interested in participating in this work and in joining the IACD International Standards "Community of Practice", please contact the IACD Training and Professional Development Committee Chair John Stansfield jstansfield@unitec.ac.nz

This report was prepared for IACD by Colin Ross, Anna Clarke, Charlie McConnell, Paul Lachapelle and John Stansfield. IACD wishes to acknowledge the considerable support received from the Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland.

















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