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Your Voice Has Power

Community Development and Human Rights

Foreword

When the UN Declaration of Human Rights was signed on 10 December 1948, it set out fundamental human rights as common standards for all people to live with dignity and respect. Obligations were placed on States to respect, protect, and fulfil these freedoms.

Human rights continue to provide a robust framework to hold States to account. Communities, community development organisations and social movements are increasingly organising using a human rights-based approach as a tool to advance human rights protections. Yet, we face incredible challenges globally. In the last decade, the climate crisis, right-wing populist political movements, institutionalised racism, increased gender inequality, the widening of wealth inequality, the continued dominance of neo-liberalism as an economic driving force, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all contributed to regressions in human rights. More recent global political shifts are resulting in the rapid introduction of repressive policies and legislation leading to the systematic dismantling of social protections and the reinforcement of discriminatory practices and treatment of women, migrant, and minority communities that disproportionately impact the most marginalised groups. This trend is exacerbated by the spread of misinformation and the erosion of trust in democratic institutions, which further enables the implementation of such regressive measures.

The call for communities and community development practitioners to take radical action in the face of these challenges has never been stronger. And the critical need for solidarity, alliance building, and sharing resources provides an opportune moment for community development practitioners and others concerned with human rights and social justice, to reflect on the values/standards of community development as a profession and the tools we need to support transformational change.

Community development work is a human rights practice. The IACD International Standards for Community Development Practice (2018)[1] assert human rights as an underpinning value and purpose of community development. Rights-based community development work places the principles of human rights such as equality, participation, accountability, and non-discrimination at the core of community development initiatives. A rights-based approach aims to empower communities, ensuring that community development efforts address the underlying structural causes of inequality and marginalisation.

This edition of Practice Insights showcases the diverse application of human rights principles within community development across the globe. Articles highlight:

- **Framing Community Development as Human Rights Practice:** Embedding human rights-based approaches using the PANEL principles and the FAIR process in Community Development work in Scotland.
- **Indigenous Rights:** Analysis of land sovereignty and community development with the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico and respecting Indigenous wisdom in Australia.
- **Shifting Perspectives:** Reflections on moving from "needs" to "rights" in Ireland (addressing racism and interculturalism) and Australia (exploring trauma-informed practice).
- **Children's Rights:** Examinations of sexual and reproductive health, education, and family life in Uganda and Rwanda, as well as disability rights in Nicaragua and Vietnam.
- **Rural Community Concerns:** Discussions on community development and human rights in Morocco and Zimbabwe.

Editorial Team

Anna Clarke (IACD Chair), Anastasia Crickley and Clare MacGillivray (members of IACD's International Relations Committee and former IACD Trustees).

1 https://www.iacdglobal.org/international_standards_for_community_development

Contents

01

Community Development Practice and a Human Rights Based Approach

Clare MacGillivray

When drafting the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Chair of the drafting committee, Eleanor Roosevelt said,

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood [they] live in; the school or college [they] attend; the factory, farm, or office where [they] work. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seek equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Rights based community development work aims to address the human rights breaches in 'small places, close to home' with collective community action that tackles structural marginalisation.

Group photo of report launch

What is a human rights based approach?

A human rights based approach (HRBA) is distinct in its focus on empowering rights-holders (individuals and communities) while holding duty-bearers (governments and other authorities) accountable for their obligations.

The approach centres on the assertion that all individuals are born free and equal, and entitled to human rights, such as access to education, healthcare, and participation in governance, by virtue of being human. It also emphasises addressing systemic inequities and ensuring that marginalised groups are central in decision-making processes, and that States must use the "maximum available resources" to progressively realise rights.

A human rights based approach means putting people and their human rights at the heart of policy, practice and the law. The **PANEL** principles are internationally recognised tools that help us make rights real in practice.

1. **Participation:** Communities are actively involved in identifying their human rights concerns, setting priorities, and implementing solutions.
2. **Accountability:** Institutions and individuals responsible for delivering rights are held to account.
3. **Non-Discrimination and Equality:** Participation of the most marginalised groups based on gender, ethnicity, disability, or other characteristics are prioritised.
4. **Empowerment:** Rights-holders are informed about their rights and equipped to claim them.
5. **Legality - linking to Human Rights Standards:** Initiatives are framed in the context of international human rights treaties and frameworks and seek to change laws, policies and practice.

Practical application of human rights in community development work

Increasingly used on the international stage, the FAIR process is used to bring human rights into practical use. It is a four-stage tool, first used by the Scottish Human Rights Commission[1] in the Housing Rights in Practice Project[2] from 2014-2019[3].

The FAIR process steps are as follows:

1. **F**acts: What is the experience of those involved and what are the important facts to understand?
2. **A**nalyse rights: Develop an analysis of the human rights at stake
3. **I**dentify responsibilities: Identify what needs to be done and who is responsible for doing it
4. **R**eview actions: Make recommendations for action and later recall and evaluate what has happened as a result.

Making Rights Real, Scotland

Making Rights Real (MRR) is a rights based community development organisation, established in Scotland in 2020 to support communities to name and claim their human rights following the successful *Housing Rights in Practice* Project[4] that delivered £2.3M of investment into substandard housing in Leith, Edinburgh.

Making Rights Real uses a human rights based approach to support communities to transform structural inequalities and build a movement for change. We work in a collective way, organising with communities to translate human rights principles into practical, actionable steps for social change.

MRR uses the PANEL principles and FAIR approach alongside communities that have been marginalised and are experiencing human rights concerns. We support communities to:

- carry out participatory action research to identify the issues of concern;
- build awareness and understanding to frame these in human rights terms;
- identify the duty bearers responsible;
- identify what the community wants to see change to realise their rights;
- campaign on their issues and measure the progressive realisation of rights through indicators set by the community using grassroots human rights monitoring and to participate with the duty bearer to advance progress.

Lessons from Making Rights Real

One example of our work is with a Gypsy Traveller community based at Double Dykes on the outskirts of Perth, the gateway to the Scottish Highlands.

Context

Gypsy Travellers are recognised in Scotland as an ethnic group, and as such retain a range of domestic and international protections. Despite these protections, Gypsy Travellers remain one of the most marginalised communities experiencing racialised inequalities in outcomes for health, education, poverty and face continued direct discrimination.

Public Health Scotland notes that *"The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community experience significant health inequalities. These include: a higher suicide rate than the general population; poorer health linked to poverty, social exclusion, stigma and hate crime; barriers when accessing health services; lower uptake of preventative health services, including antenatal and postnatal care and childhood development assessments; and living in unsafe environments."* [5]

Rights in action in Double Dykes

People living in Double Dykes Gypsy Travellers site are experiencing significant human rights issues. The Double Dykes site is run and managed by the Local Authority.

What we did

A group of residents have been working alongside Making Rights Real for three years to carry out grassroots human rights monitoring.

Residents learned about participatory action research and created a survey based on the main issues that people were experiencing on site. Almost half of the twenty households on site completed surveys or took part in peer interviews.

With the support of Making Rights Real, residents learned about their human rights and linked the results of their survey of human rights concerns to international human rights protections. They then identified the indicators they want to see change, as well as the reported change they want to see. The group have also identified which State actor (duty bearer) is responsible for their rights and have made recommendations for action by duty bearers that will support the realisation of their rights.

The research

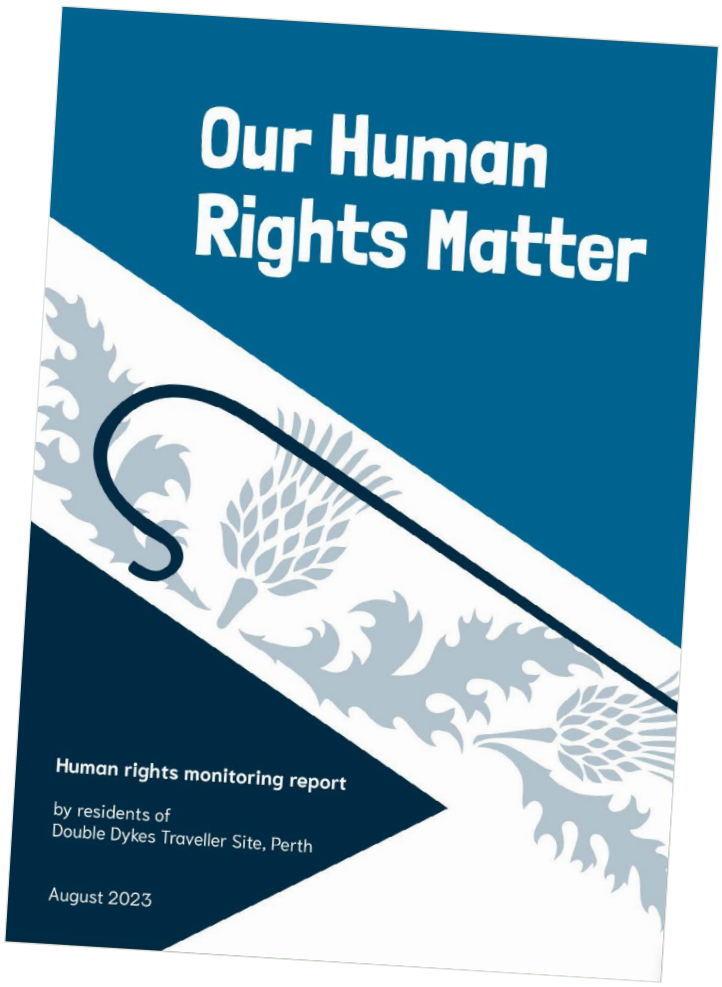
Residents at Double Dykes carried out research to find out people's experiences of living on site, what is valued about living on site and which human rights are at stake. Residents at Double Dykes were concerned about:

- Children's Rights including the right to safety, social development, and play (UNCRC Article, 3, 27 and 31)
- Rights to Accommodation (ICESCR Article 11)
- Rights to Participation (UDHR Article 21 and ICESCR Article 25)
- Rights to Live Free from Discrimination (UDHR Article 1)

They launched two reports[6], 18 months apart to show the progressive realisation and regression of rights. The 2024 survey revealed that the Double Dykes Travellers' site remains plagued by inadequate housing conditions despite incremental improvements:

- Mould and Damp: 83% of respondents reported these issues, slightly reduced from 87.5% in 2022, but still far above acceptable levels.
- Sewage and Drainage: Persistent problems affected 67% of households.
- Heating Issues: Increased from 50% in 2022 to 83% in 2024.
- Infestations: Mice and rats remain pervasive, with 83% of households affected.

Residents described their homes as hazardous to health, with one stating, *"I'm using bleach and mould remover and got scarring on my lungs. Is that from the mould?"* These conditions violate ICESCR's requirements for adequate housing that protects inhabitants from health threats and structural hazards.



Speaking at the launch of their report *Our Human Rights Matter* in December 2024 one resident commented, *"Travellers in Scotland often have our human rights breached. We face discrimination every day. But is up to us as rights holders to hold public bodies to account. Because it is their responsibility to deliver on the human rights duties they have. We want equality. Nothing more or less. Just the same rights as other people in Scotland."*

The right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and the continuous improvement of living conditions, is enshrined in Article 11(1) of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The issues presented in the *Our Rights Matter* report reflect significant gaps in rights realisation, particularly in culturally appropriate accommodation, children's rights and the right to live free from discrimination.

Influencing change and national housing policy

The persistent issues at Double Dykes highlight failures in providing housing free from health hazards. The presence of mould, dampness, and sewage problems violates the obligation to ensure safety, habitability, and adequate infrastructure.

Whilst the site is now being redeveloped with significant investment from the Scottish Government and Perth and Kinross Council, people have been living with substandard accommodation over many years and remain concerned about the way they were able to participate in discussions over site improvements. Tenants in Double Dykes have written to the Scottish Housing Regulator about the standard of their accommodation, and ways they were able to participate in the site redesign process. The Regulator is now investigating their complaints as part of their Serious Concern Process and national conversations are beginning about Gypsy Traveller site standards.

Connecting the local to the global

Connecting local issues to the global human rights monitoring framework is a key part of human rights practice. Residents at Double Dykes, submitted their reports to the United Nations, at the Committee for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination (CERD)[7] in July 2024 and the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)[8] in February 2025.

These Committees monitor states and make concluding observations and recommendations. For tenants in Double Dykes, CERD made specific comments on the availability of adequate housing for ethnic minority households, about the shortage of sites for Gypsy Traveller families and the provision for culturally appropriate accommodation, as well as recommendations around the forced assimilation of Gypsy Travellers.

Impacts and Challenges of using a Human Rights Based Approach

By adopting HRBA, community development initiatives can achieve outcomes that are more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive. The lessons from MRR demonstrate how this approach:

1. **Builds Trust:** HRBA fosters a collaborative relationship between communities to articulate for change
2. **Encourages Sustainability:** Empowered communities are more likely to sustain development initiatives beyond the project lifecycle.
3. **Addresses root causes:** By focusing on rights, HRBA tackles the systemic issues that perpetuate human rights abuses, poverty and exclusion.
4. **Delivers change on human rights concerns:** By targeting rights holders' demands directly to duty bearers who are responsible for delivering rights, change is possible.

Despite its benefits, implementing HRBA is not without challenges:

1. **Resistance from Authorities:** Governments or local officials may resist accountability measures, viewing them as threats to their authority.
2. **Capacity Constraints:** Both communities and duty-bearers may lack the knowledge or resources to effectively engage with human rights frameworks. Independent funding to enable good community development practice is essential for adequate support.
3. **Cultural Barriers:** Deeply ingrained cultural practices may conflict with human rights principles, requiring sensitive and sustained engagement.

MRR's approach to overcoming these challenges includes:

1. **Capacity Building:** Providing training for communities to enhance understanding of human rights instruments and their practical implications.
2. **Participatory Processes:** Engaging marginalised groups, in sustained participation that is authentic and at the pace of the community
3. **Movement building:** Supporting sights holders across different fields of interest to collaborate and campaign is helpful to sustaining progress on rights' issues
4. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Framing human rights in ways that resonate with local values and traditions is essential.

Conclusion

The experience of *Making Rights Real* underscores the transformative potential of a human rights-based approach in community development practice. By empowering individuals and holding authorities to account, a HRBA creates the conditions for equitable and sustainable progress. While challenges remain, the principles and practices demonstrated by MRR offer a way for organisations and duty bearers to integrate human rights into community development practice. Ultimately, a HRBA underpins achieving collective community development goals—and realising the inherent dignity and rights of every human being.

About the Author

Clare MacGillivray is a community worker, human rights activist and campaigner and Director of Making Rights Real in Scotland. Clare is a former IACD Trustee for Europe and an Atlantic Fellow for Economic and Social Equity with the London School of Economics.

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Strength, Friendships, Rights and Change: Using Human Rights Based Approaches alongside Assets Based Community Development at Cables Wynd House, Scotland

Hannah Kitchen Kirby

I have been working at Cables Wynd House, Leith, which is in Edinburgh, Scotland for the past 6 years, using a combination of Assets Based Community Development[1] and Human Rights Based Approaches[2]. In this article, I would like to share some things I have learned, and look at where human rights approaches can help practitioners to enact the IACD's International Standards for Community Development[3].

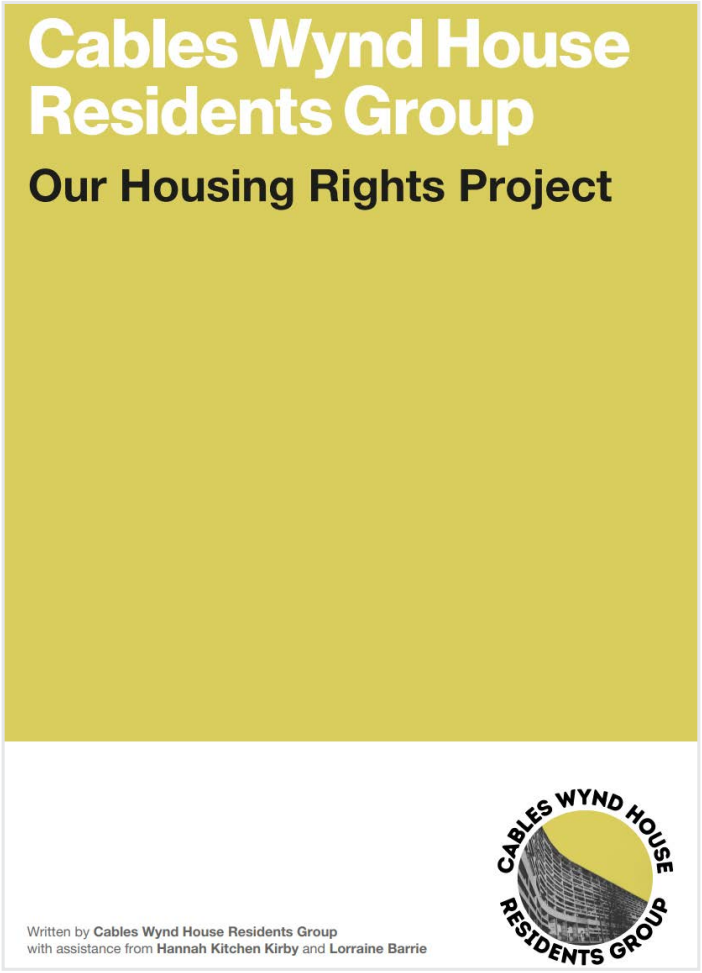
The project I work for is part of a Community Development programme called 'Inspiring Leith.' Cables Wynd House is a 1960's building which houses 212 flats and is famous for its brutalist architecture and appearance in Irvine Welsh's film *Trainspotting*. The main landlord is the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). Many people in the building experience health and economic struggles. When we began working there, some told us 'I just keep myself to myself': getting on with life inside their own home, without getting too involved with neighbours, often in order to avoid potential conflict or being affected by the bad state or reputation of the building.

Since then, I have had the privilege of getting to know residents, and have supported their ideas for fun, free community activities, an approach inspired by Assets Based Community Development. Over time, however, we learned that poor housing conditions were hindering not just their desire to run community activities, but their daily lives and health.

In 2022, a group gradually came together and carried out a participatory action research project in their building, repeating it in 2024, and also run a housing campaign based on Human Rights. This campaign has resulted in real gains for the community. The council has decided to fully retrofit the building, which will mean much improved insulation, security and ventilation. Although this project was planned by the council before the group started to campaign, we have been told that the residents' work to communicate their experiences of poor repairs, damp and mould, pests, broken lifts and anti-social behaviour, meant that the building was prioritised within the city, and the multi-million pound project has moved faster. The campaign has also led to the promise of new lifts, and a greater ability to hold the council accountable as well as growing friendships between neighbours.

Practitioner Reflections on the Project

The project is not perfect, there are still many problems in the flats, there is still a small proportion of residents involved, and we are yet to see the building work start that we hope will improve things. However, there is now a greater network of people in the flats who know more about their rights and can hold the landlord accountable. A number of residents have developed amazing leadership, organising and facilitation skills, which will continue to help the community in years to come. For me, one of the best outcomes is the new relationships between residents that have developed through working together on campaigns and also on community fun days and events. Loneliness is a serious public health issue in Scotland, and when



people know, trust and communicate with each other, the community can do things together more easily, making it more resilient for the future.

I suggest that the following features of the project have helped us and may be useful to others using a Human Rights based approach.

Community leadership

The talents, gifts, time, experience and passion of the residents is what has made the project happen and we have been particularly fortunate with an amazing group of people coming together. An ABCD approach meant we began our work by having conversations based around interests, family, talents and experiences, looking for strengths and sources of joy, not just problems. We could develop relationships of care and respect. It also gave us an appreciation of what residents were facing, in terms of health, caring responsibilities or just getting by.

There are many talents and skills in the building despite it sometimes being labelled negatively in the city. Every community of place is different, but if we approach it

Leith's motto is 'Persevere'. This stained glass window was in the Edinburgh Council City Chambers, and I drew it after our we did a deputation to the full council about broken lifts. The group have so much perseverance!

looking for strengths, we are more likely to see them. Understanding both the assets and the needs in the community, as well as barriers to participation and the local history and political situation are fundamental to any other activity, and we often need to circle back to this type of work and connection building. This is explored in theme two of the IACD International Standards for Community Development.

Perseverance, support and care

The small project I work for Inspiring Leith, has 1.5 paid workers, and is hosted by Bethany Christian Trust, a larger faith-based homelessness charity. The ethos of this charity means our work has a focus on individual wellbeing, and preventing homelessness, as well as collective action. The remit to care for people at the building, whatever their level of involvement, allows us to meet residents to listen, suggest sources of support, or catch up. The stability and long-term nature of the project has meant that we have been able to go at the pace of the community, which allows many different people to participate. I would suggest that, in communities where many people have health issues or are working long hours to make ends meet, longer-term, part-time community development work is an effective use of resources.

Human Rights expertise

When we began to see that a huge factor affecting residents' health and wellbeing was poor housing, we started to support tenants to rekindle a residents' association and to initiate the Cables Wynd Community Forum – a regular meeting with council, police, other agencies and residents to discuss and problem-solve local issues. This idea came from a resident who had been involved in something similar as a young person, in Birmingham, England.

Partnering with a new Scottish organisation, Making Rights Real (MRR), gave residents and workers an excellent framework for discovering and communicating the priorities of the wider community. MRR helped guid us through the detailed steps in taking a human rights approach and also link us to public bodies it felt difficult to approach on our own.

We used the FAIR process:

Facts: Find out the experiences of people affected by the issue.

Analyse rights: Discover what rights are at stake

Identify responsibilities: Which duty bearers have responsibility and what needs to change?

Review actions: Make recommendations for action and monitor how these actions are carried out. Evaluate what has happened as a result.

Next steps

In January 2025 we launched our report 'Our Housing Rights Project'[4] in Edinburgh City Chambers (where the local government representatives meet). This report[5] summarises the findings so far, links them to Human Rights standards, sets targets for the council and also gives additional best practice examples and recommendations from the residents.

The residents will then repeat the survey after 1 year and will be able to see if people's experiences have improved. It is important that we focus on people's real experiences, not what is written in a council plan or report somewhere. Similarly, the work needs to continue at a pace that suits the community and fits in with their lives, rather than professionals' timelines.

IACD International Standards for Community Development

A combination of ABCD and Human Rights based Community Development helps enact many of the standards set out by IACD in the International Standards for Community Development, particularly in the areas of organising for change, learning for change, diversity and inclusion and developing leadership. Learning that some living conditions they were experiencing were not only a systemic problem but threatened their right to a habitable home (Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), has enabled residents to have the courage and hope to take action for change, and to persevere until it happens. A Human Rights approach also prioritises the experiences and voices of people whose rights are most at threat or furthest from being realised.

About the Author

Hannah Kitchen Kirby is the Link Up Development Worker with the *Inspiring Leith* project, hosted by Bethany Christian Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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03

Taos Pueblo Priorities, Sovereignty, and Human Rights

Holly Scheib and Shawn Duran

Twelve years ago, Taos Pueblo, a sovereign Native American First Nation in Northern New Mexico, began a process to define their vision for the future of their community. We call this process the Taos Pueblo Priority Process. While it was modestly begun in a strategic effort to better align programming budgets to priority needs, the process has grown into a cornerstone of sovereignty and human rights, where the engagement of people is the critical factor.

Priority Process Workshop

As the authors reflect on the expression of human rights practice in the Priority Process, we apply the PANEL principles, as advocated by the Scottish nonprofit Making Rights Real, as an approach to human rights. The PANEL principles are: **Participation** (everyone has the right to take part in decisions that affect their rights); **Accountability** (people should be able to hold duty bearers to account for their rights); **Non-discrimination** (everyone should live free of discrimination and people who are most marginalized should be central to decision-making around rights); **Empowerment** (everyone should be able to name and claim their rights); and **Legality** (international human rights will be used to frame policies and practice). These principles provide a lens to re-focus future activities explicitly in these areas.

The sovereignty of Native Americans is a human right, one that requires constant effort to exercise. Sovereignty is a responsibility of governance, involvement, action, and activism. In 1970, Taos Pueblo became the first Native American Nation to have captured lands repatriated from the United States Federal Government, an effort of more than 60 years of dedicated community activism. Within the United States, Taos Pueblo is a leader in ideas and practice of sovereignty and in community organization and activism. That Taos Pueblo has this history is particularly notable given that Native American communities are some of the most disenfranchised peoples in the United States. Citizenship was denied to Native Americans well into the 20th century; the Indian Citizenship Act was passed in 1924. This federal law extended voting rights, but it is state law that grants the right to vote: it took decades for all 50 states to recognize the voting rights of Native American citizens. In New Mexico, voting rights were not extended to Native citizens until 1948. Active participation in any civic venue is uncommon and met with high levels of cynicism. This cynicism towards governance can extend within the community; citizens, accustomed to lifetimes of not being included, self-select out of public discourse so as not to be disappointed by their ideas and circumstances being dismissed. Even with its history of activism, the impacts of historical trauma and disenfranchisement are significant. Within Taos Pueblo, activism is understood and valued, but engagement must work past cynicism and mistrust to be effective.

The Priority Process went through several iterations from 2014-2018, when the tribe began a relationship with a community development oriented practitioner (author Dr. Holly Scheib), who facilitated specialized workshops. Working closely with the Tribal Chief Operations Officer (author Ms. Shawn Duran), workshops were thoughtfully co-designed, seeking strategic engagement with all areas of the tribal community, and working in the blessings of the traditional structures of the community. These workshops reflected traditional practices and co-built techniques unique to Taos Pueblo so that communication styles would be familiar to participants. The methods were employed specifically with the intent of being anti-racist and anti-colonial, with explicit intent of increasing participant self-efficacy and leadership capacities. Upon reflection, the authors' recognize how the PANEL principles are woven throughout the methodologies and present the organic development of the Taos Pueblo Priority Process.

In reference to PANEL's Participation principle, workshops were carefully considered in terms of participant representation, with some designed for wide representation (from throughout the community) and others specific to those often marginalised groups (e.g.: youth, women leaders, elders). When low participation in a particular group was noted, dedicated workshops were held in ways that met that groups' needs (e.g., weekend events for youth, babysitting at community events to reach parents, transportation for elders). Participants' anger, frustration, and pain were expected as part of the de-colonizing aspect to the process; space was made to hear and honor everything that was brought into the workshop. Recognizing pain and cynicism was necessary to ensure that participants' felt safe and seen, and provided foundations from which

to collectively build a future vision. As such, the written outcomes from the workshops served to both recognize past wrongs and set processes for accountability in addressing them; **speaking to PANEL's Accountability and Non-Discrimination principles.**

Through collective data generation, analysis, and decision-making, participant leadership capacities were increased. Each workshop was planned and de-briefed, organically creating a locally-based, indigenous process for engaging individuals to generate, analyze, and disseminate community data. Workshop evaluations saw self-reports of increased self-efficacy (the belief that an individual can affect change), enthusiasm in future participation opportunities, and willingness to collaborate within and outside of Taos Pueblo. Participant comments universally have been positive (e.g.: "I learned I am capable to affect change"; "I have the knowledge, training, and tools deep within myself to be an advocate for change"; "It [the process] gave the sense of empowerment and hope"). For these reasons, the authors feel that the Taos Pueblo Priority Process **operationalizes the PANEL principle of Empowerment.**

This process has led to the development of community-created goals which have significantly shaped leadership, programming, and community culture. Between 2018 and 2020, these small-group workshops engaged over a hundred individuals and produced tangible outcomes for the tribe. Between 2020-2025, the Priority Process is reflected in four Tribal Resolutions (Tribal Laws) which ratified tribal values, vision statements, and goals, set a structure for aligning programs and budgets to priorities, and extended support to strategic planning for multiple departments stemming from priority work. In short, the process led to participants to change their own laws, **an illustration of PANEL principle Legality.** These Resolutions have provided the foundation for dramatic growth in the community in annual budget, capital building projects, and leadership development. Hundreds of community members have now been involved in this process, through workshops, community events, collaborative meetings, and strategy sessions.

While the tangible results are valuable and impactful, the Priority Process itself values another outcome: that the process created a shift to values of engagement,

Priority Process Workshop

collaboration, and cooperation that are fundamentally bringing the community into an expression of their sovereignty and exercise of their human rights. The Taos Pueblo Priority Process is not controlled by one facilitator but is organically exercised across the community; its outcomes reflect a process where participants self-organize to produce and control their goals. As the data generation, analysis, and decision-making is driven by participants, starting in places of their interest, abilities, and traditions, the process moves as participants build their individual and collective self-efficacies. Participants self-identified their core themes and values, self-generated data, self-analyzed information, and collectively determined action steps throughout the process.

For a community historically disenfranchised (both in past and modern contexts) this level of self-organization to produce and control their community knowledge marks a radical disruption from marginalised groups which are "served" by outside entities. Within the process, participants are engaged and guided, at their own pace, through exercises which allow them to take a critical stance on social systems and structures that impact their lives. Weis and Fine (2012) call this "critical bifocality," an approach to looking at structures of dispossession, marginalization, and privilege while also participating in and resisting those systems. Critical bifocality, the authors argue, is often missing from social justice work and is important in order to *"understand the serious solidarity work that needs to be undertaken for … justice to be achieved"* .

Within the example of the Taos Pueblo Priority Process, the building of critical bifocality can be understood as the outcome of operationalizing the PANEL principles in a locally-based community development initiative.
In this way, the Taos Pueblo Priority Process not only is a function of sovereignty and an expression of human rights, it has invented itself as a vehicle for solidarity and justice. Taos Pueblo is dedicated to sharing its Priority Process experiences to all communities, especially those seeking to address injustice, stand in sovereignty, and fight for human rights.

About the Authors

Holly Scheib, PhD MPH MSW is an IACD Trustee for North America and Director of Community Development for Taos Pueblo, a First Nation in Northern New Mexico. Specializing in transformative practices that adapt scientific methodologies to fit the needs of communities, her work has reached more than 40 organizations across 5 continents.

Shawn Duran, MPA is the Chief Operating Officer for Taos Pueblo, a sovereign First Nation in Northern New Mexico. Throughout her 30-year career, she has been a leader in education, advocacy, and policy, serving in multiple roles in local, state, and national-level committees dedicated to sovereignty, federal compact advocacy, and budgeting to Native American communities in the United States.

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Taos Pueblo North House in Winter

From Needs to Rights: Community Work, Racism and Interculturalism

Balume Dube

Reflecting on the journey from needs to rights, particularly in the context of racism and interculturalism, my own journey draws on my experience as both an outreach worker with *Donegal Intercultural Platform*[1] in the North West of Ireland, and as a Master's student in Community Work and Youth Work[2] at Maynooth University.[3]

This has allowed me to engage deeply with issues of equality, human rights, and the experiences of marginalised communities. In particular, my work with refugees, asylum seekers, and international protection applicants has profoundly shaped how I view the intersections between racism, interculturalism, and the human rights landscape in Ireland.

Think Equality Donegal Training

From needs to rights

The title of this reflection—*From Needs to Rights*—captures something deeply important about how we understand the lived experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, including refugees, asylum seekers, and international protection applicants. Too often, people in these groups are seen as having needs—basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and security. While these are essential, framing the conversation solely around *needs* can be disempowering.

Needs place people in a position of dependency, whereas *rights* acknowledge a person's inherent dignity and autonomy. Rights are not something that are granted out of charity; they are inherent to every individual, regardless of their background or legal status. This shift—from seeing people as having needs to recognising their rights—is a critical step in promoting equality and combatting racism.

Racism and Interculturalism

In my practice as both a student and a professional, I've seen the many forms that racism can take. It is not only the overt and hostile acts of discrimination; it is the more subtle, systemic forms of exclusion that can be just as damaging. Racism is embedded in systems that, either deliberately or unconsciously, deny certain groups access to their full rights—whether through unequal access to housing, education, employment, or healthcare.

In this context, interculturalism offers a framework that pushes back against the notion of mere "tolerance" of difference. Interculturalism promotes mutual respect, dialogue, and the active participation of all cultures in public life.

Donegal Intercultural Platform is an independent non-governmental organisation made up of individual members & affiliated organisations who are committed to building inclusion and equality, promoting Human Rights, challenging discrimination and racism and mobilising and supporting migrant communities across the county. It is funded in part, by the Department of Rural & Community Development under the Community Development Programme.

In my work with Donegal Intercultural Platform, I have seen the power of interculturalism in creating spaces where diversity is celebrated and where the voices of minority communities are not just heard but amplified.

However, the path to intercultural understanding is not always straightforward. The reality for many refugees, asylum seekers, and people from BME communities is one of **systemic barriers and exclusion.** These barriers are often invisible to those who are not directly affected, but they manifest in very tangible ways for the communities I work with.

Public sector equality and human rights duty

One of the key areas where my academic studies in Community Work intersect with my professional work is in the *Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty*. This duty requires public bodies to take proactive steps to prevent discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights in the delivery of their services. It is a crucial tool for holding institutions accountable for ensuring that all individuals—regardless of race, ethnicity, or migration status—are treated fairly and equally.

The work undertaken through *Think Equality Donegal*[4] (a 3 year anti-racism project focused on BME communities in Donegal, including Travellers and Roma living in the county) helped to embed this duty across public services in Donegal. This involved training public servants to understand the complexities of racism and the importance of human rights in their daily work. It also means advocating for systemic change, ensuring that policies are designed with the input of marginalised communities, and that these policies actually meet their needs. To date, we've made significant progress, but there is still a long way to go in ensuring that equality and human rights are truly at the center of public service provision.

Challenges and opportunities in my work

In my role as an outreach worker with international protection applicants and refugees, I have seen first-hand the challenges that come with navigating systems that are

Staff from DIP and Donegal Travellers Project at their meeting with Sinéad Gibney, (4th left) Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

not designed with these communities in mind. For many, the asylum process is long, opaque, and deeply stressful. People are often left in limbo for years, uncertain of their futures, and facing discrimination on multiple fronts—be it in accessing employment, education, or even basic healthcare.

But amidst these challenges, there are also moments of hope. I have seen communities come together to support one another, advocating for their rights and building networks of solidarity. I have seen the power of education—not just for the individuals I work with, but for the public sector workers who undergo training in equality and human rights. There is something transformative about watching someone begin to understand the structural nature of racism, and their role in either perpetuating or dismantling it.

Reflecting on my journey

As a Master's student in Community Work and Youth Work at Maynooth University, I am constantly reflecting on how my academic learning intersects with my professional practice. One of the most significant lessons I have learned is the importance of seeing individuals and communities as agents of change, rather than as passive recipients of aid or support.

In my studies, I have come to appreciate the critical role that *participatory approaches* play in both community development and in youth work. When people are given the tools and platforms to advocate for themselves, to speak their truths, and to demand their rights, they are empowered to challenge the systems that oppress them. This is what community work and youth work, at their best, should aspire to achieve—building capacity within individuals and communities to advocate for their rights and to envision new possibilities for their futures.

Conclusion: Moving from needs to rights

So, how do we continue to move from *needs* to *rights*? It starts with recognising the inherent dignity and humanity of every individual. It means challenging the systems that perpetuate inequality and exclusion, and it requires all of us—professionals, community workers, public servants and students alike—to commit to the work of dismantling racism and promoting interculturalism.

We must continue to advocate for the full implementation of mechanisms like the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. We must ensure that public bodies are not only aware of their legal obligations but are actively working to fulfil them in meaningful ways. And we must create spaces where intercultural dialogue can flourish—where difference is not merely tolerated but valued as a source of strength and innovation.

In these ways, and together, I believe we can build a future where equality and human rights are not just ideals but realities for everyone in Ireland and internationally.

This article is based on a presentation prepared for an All-Ireland Symposium hosted by the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB), Dublin Ireland. October 2024.

About the Author

Balume Dube is the Asylum and Refugee Outreach Worker with Donegal Intercultural Platform, Ireland, and currently studying at Maynooth University on a part-time, in-service Master's Degree in Community Work and Youth Work. He is one of over 20 recipients of the AIEB Bursary Fund established to support those with degrees currently employed in community work and associated roles to pursue endorsed professional qualifications in 2023 and 2024. The Bursary Fund is supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

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Anastasia Crickley

Opinion Piece

'The progression from needs to rights has served as a foundational framework for IACD World Community Development conferences in recent years, and other national and international forums, including most recently the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB) bi-annual Symposium, held in association with Community Work Ireland (CWI) in October 2024. This commentary draws upon discussions from those events and is explored further in other contributions within this publication.

What does a rights-based approach to practice entail? Does it necessitate abandoning the concept of needs? And how might this shift impact Community Work practice and the field as a whole? This commentary aims to briefly explore these questions, which require an understanding of Community Development as a discipline focused on collective advancement rather than solely individual progress or needs, though these are often crucial starting points. Discussing justice for all is futile if individuals lack necessities like food, water, or shelter. However, the transition from individual needs to collective progress can begin by connecting these concerns and raising awareness about the underlying issues and those responsible.

Most Community Development initiatives commence with identifying the immediate needs and challenges faced by the community, forming the basis for subsequent interventions. While some identified issues can be resolved by the community itself, many originate from external factors beyond the community's control. Presenting these issues as needs can elicit an immediate response of concern from authorities but may lead to inaction due to financial constraints or other policy priorities.

Conversely, articulating these concerns as rights transforms authorities into duty bearers, obligated to ensure rights realisation. Naturally, there are ways to circumvent this, such as the insistence that the mere existence of a law, like one against racism, guarantees its implementation, or officials' determination to adhere to labels that offer an escape route. There is also the risk of mislabelling every need as a right, and the reality that achieving rights realisation is a complex and protracted process. However, persistent advocacy, grounded in principles and values, and practice informed by these, can and has, in some instances, facilitated the transition from needs to rights.

Jim Ife, Sue Kenny, Peter Westoby and others have given us plenty to consider from their research and writing about human rights and community development. Here in Ireland rights and their realisation using community development methods was one of the founding principles of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland and Community Work Ireland as well as AIEB, and also informed the process of renewal which led to the successful re-development of the inner city area where our AIEB Symposium took place and where, decades before helped the successful election to Dáil Éireann of an independent socialist candidate who stood on a rights ticket in particular in relation to housing.

Human rights remain a contested domain, not a universal solution for every problem, and often perceived by some as exclusively legal. This may contribute to an ambivalence among Community Workers about explicitly framing their work as rights-based and human rights practice. Yet, Community Workers are among the world's most courageous, albeit often unsung, human rights defenders, capable of effectively integrating human rights into Community Development practice. The intersection between rights and practice in Community Work demands courage from Community Workers, which in turn necessitates education within the discipline to embrace rights and the responsibility for teaching them.'

About the Author

Anastasia Crickley is Chairperson of the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training, and Chair of the International Council of the Minority Rights Group, the leading human rights organisation working with ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and indigenous peoples worldwide. In November 2024, she Chaired the Global Forum on Minority Issues at the UN in Geneva. She has formerly been Chairperson of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. She is a member of the Community Work Ireland Central Group, and played leading roles in establishing Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre and the European Network Against Racism.

05

Community Development Considerations and The Rights of the Child

Anthony Ssembatya

The United Nations convened in September 2024 for the World Summit for the Future which culminated with a Pact for the Future. This prioritizes action points to be followed by member states in ensuring a fair and transparent future for all. Action point 34 of the Pact places emphasis on the development of children and young people, so that they can reach their full potential. International Community Development, in theory and practice is crucial in shaping the future. This, however, calls for participatory methods and better analysis and intersectionality of community development and multilateralism. Participatory community development requires creating synergies between State and Non-State actors, in the best interest of communities. Against this background - the debate on children's rights, the role of community development emerges.

Kirabo Junior School Opening 2023

Several Member States have ratified and acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Noticeably, several key Articles that place emphasis on the Child, do also have indicators of the role of the community. Further, relying on the 2019 additional protocol key areas are mentioned, that is to say: Article 1. Prevention of unnecessary separation of children from their families and family networks. Article 2. If a child needs to be placed in alternative care: provision of supportive and protective care settings in a family-like environment, or in limited circumstances, a residential setting if 'appropriate, necessary and constructive' and 'in the child's best interests.'

The role of the community and community initiatives generates the debate on children rights, policies and the role of the nation state and non-state actors in legislating policies that work in the best interest of the children. The Convention places emphasis on a shift from institutional care to alternative family based care. The debate in several countries on institutional care for children has further created discussions on forms of abuse that may occur while children are under institutional care. However, the debates could also arise in the context of the understanding of family in civil legislation, and on what alternative family-based care could look like or rather what community-based care would imply.

It is therefore crucial to set up policies that align well and serve the best interest of the child and enable community and family reintegration. With the emerging challenges and circumstances, policies related to education, health, safety and protection of children are central. Taking an example from the Covid 19 effects, and how this could have impacted not only for access to education for children, but also the levels of abuse, the discussion then calls for community led mechanisms and initiatives, to enable societies to rebuild themselves but also giving due consideration to the needs of the children and always in the best interest of the children.

Placing a focus on the implications and effects of the Covid lockdown and how this will impact on children, Uganda, as reported in The Guardian news of 14th Jan 2022[1], had the world's longest school closure. Such a context, therefore, requires a critical analysis of the human rights implications, cross-matched with the community realm and the obligatory aspects of the nation state in question. The African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child is explicit on the need of every African child to access

proper and quality education. Yet, as The Guardian article notes, since the pandemic;

'Kampala's suburbs are littered with ghost structures that were once schools. Some buildings were sold, while others have been destroyed to make way for real estate development. Kampala Capital City Authority said that more than 40 schools in the city have closed for good. Local media is awash with reports of schools turned into bars, restaurants or travellers' accommodation. There are no official figures on the number of schools that have failed to reopen countrywide.'

While many schools failed to reopen, others that did saw very small numbers of pupils returning, principally due to increased tuition costs. The abilities to assess, and to rebuild require community driven solutions. A two-year school closure among other issues led to teen pregnancies, sexual exploitation, child labour. This implies a school dropout rate which is high and exposure to several risks including child poverty. This should as well not underestimate the role of communities in having a participatory approach to policies legislated by the State in the context of Uganda. A loophole in this structure has led to deficiencies in several realms, and in this case access to education. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasizes the urgent need for children to be reunited with their original families, or placed in "family-like environments".

Therefore, discussing this concept and reflecting on substitute family care, requires the debate on community and children. Substitute family care is an umbrella term for all types of non-institutional childcare where a child is placed, when, for various reasons, his/her biological parents

Tony Ssembatya Speaking at Kirabo Junior School Opening 2023

cannot provide care (Nožířová, 2012)[2]. Children are in this way, raised by persons other than their biological parents in an environment that is most similar to living in a "real" family.

Taking the example of Uganda and from our own perspective as the Kirabo Foundation Jinja- Uganda[3], the foundation I had the honour of setting up in 2012. We identified the needs of the community in Mbikko, Njeru. There were many young non-school going children, between the ages of 5 to 10, and we were keen to identify their families, context and needs. We identified underlying factors such as single parent families where children were only living with their

Marking the Opening of Kirabo Junior School 2023

Celebrating the Opening of Kirabo Junior School 2023

mothers, who themselves were most times unemployed and without means to fully provide for their children with regard to their educational needs and also their nutritional requirements. For this the foundation, was set up to first and foremost support and empower the young women. By doing so, we would better understand the needs of their children, hence setting up a kindergarten and day-care. These initiatives have and continue today to be community led, and community based. Our target has and continues to be to empower the rural people, so that they can build and shape their own futures. The Kirabo Foundation was able to later set up the Kirabo Junior School in 2023. This arose, from a needs assessment where we discovered that in Mbikko-Njeru, many school age girls could not return to studies after covid-19, partly due to forced early pregnancies, or due to being young child mothers, with a need to support themselves and their children. Kirabo seeks to embrace a community and solution led approach. There continue to be some challenges for self-reliance, financial stability, and awareness among others. The task is therefore for both scholars and practitioners to use our experiences to merge the needs from the grassroots as a means to impact and influence policy at the domestic and international levels.

As Nation States and Non-State Actors, that is to say Civil Society, Faith Groups and others, continue to design policies that work in the best interest of the child, community led initiatives ought to be prioritized. This calls for enabling communities to influence policies and legislation, both at the local, regional and global level. The rights of every child, education for children and ending poverty should be a priority as without which the safety of children is not guaranteed.

About the Author

Dr. Anthony Ssembatya served as IACD Trustee for Sub Saharan Africa for 9 years and represents IACD at the UN in New York and Geneva. He worked with UN Women for several years and now works with the Catholic Church in Rome around issues of Child Protection and Safeguarding. He founded the Hope for Afrika education Initiative in Germany and Uganda. More about Kirabo/Hope for Afrika can be found at:

https://kirabodoorsofhope.org/

https://hopeforafrika-kirabo.de/

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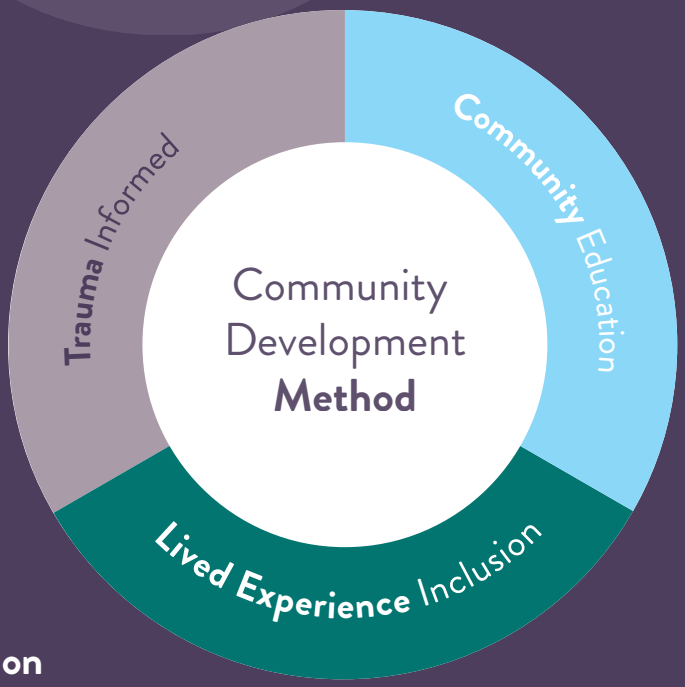
From Needs to Rights: Community Development and Trauma Informed Practice

Rachael Donovan



I acknowledge the ancestors and lands of Jinibara Country, Sunshine Coast,[1] Australia, which I live on, love and care for.

In this article, I share insights from my personal and professional journey with trauma informed practice and its' intersection with a community development approach to collective healing, agency, and social change. I highlight the importance of a trauma informed approach as a way of growing awareness in both the individual and social body, important for ourselves as practitioners and for our work supporting others. I also address the limitations of a predominantly medically constructed trauma discourse, particularly in regard to the larger human rights struggles to address the underlying causes of oppression and injustice.

Two stories

Let's begin with two stories about recognising the *phenomena* of trauma and its impacts (a category which is used to describe people's pain and its effects) - moments that illustrate the principles of a trauma informed approach in action.

My personal connection to trauma informed practice and community development began long before I knew what either term meant, but I was fortunate to experience them both in practice. Experiences that have deeply informed my work for over two decades. I spent my teenage years in foster care, removed from my mother's home and placed in a system that made decisions for me, without me. It was a time of profound difficulty, isolation, confusion and fear. Reflecting, I now recognise the personal, family and systemic trauma I experienced, both from my mother's treatment and in the supposed care of the child protection system that became my 'corporate parent'. But this story of trauma was not my only (or even most important) story.

Fortunately, at age 16, I was connected to a grassroots movement with other young people in out-of-home care, along with supportive adults who believed in us, and believed that we had a right to participate in decisions that affected our lives. **This was my first experience of community development and trauma informed work—where the focus was on creating safe and brave spaces for us to participate, organise, have a voice, and influence change.** Without knowing the terminology of 'trauma informed practice,' I was experiencing it firsthand, not in a way that limited or labelled us as 'vulnerable young people' with a 'care experience', but as a way of enacting care through recognising our experiences of both pain and resilience. We were trained and supported to become 'Young Consultants', which enabled us to make sense of and share our stories for the benefit of ourselves and others, and to influence change in the child protection system. We went from feeling powerless to having sense of agency and a seat at the table.

During these formative years, I was one of the young people that helped to form the **CREATE Foundation**, a national body representing children and young people in out-of-home care across Australia. I was blessed to have my first work experience as a trainee within the organisation, and 20 years later rejoined as the Queensland State Coordinator and National Advocacy Manager. **Experiencing firsthand these practices of community development with a trauma informed approach quite literally changed my life, taking me on a new trajectory of confidence and capability which deeply shaped both my sense of self and emerging professional practice.**

Fast forward many years, to my second story, of my professional practice in trauma informed community development work. [2]For the last two years, I have worked alongside a group of people with lived experience of homelessness. Like the CREATE story, this group started from a shared lived experience of homelessness and a desire to create change through education and awareness raising in the housing and homelessness sector in the region.

In partnership with local government and community centre workers, this group of Lived Experience Leaders have worked diligently to establish the group's vision and goals.[3] As workers, we have supported a process of consciousness-raising through workshops,[4]in safe storytelling, policy and political literacies, and understanding the housing and homelessness context. This has enabled the Leaders to speak with confidence and authority, and to have greater influence and impact in the homelessness sector and the broader community.

A trauma informed and community development approach underpins this work, and we have identified some important trauma informed practices which guide us. However, we also understand the systemic and multi-layered elements of trauma linked to housing inequities that require community development approaches, thus bringing collective awareness and action to these different layers through shared learning with the group.

Some key elements of trauma informed practice

- **Building and holding the container:** creating welcoming, trusting spaces through activities like check-ins and check-outs, sitting in circle, group agreements, speaking with intention and listening with attention.[5]
- **Social work support for debriefing:** ensuring people have access to supports that can help them process their emotions and experiences before and after stories are shared.
- **Safe story telling:** helping group members discern what elements of their story are safe for them to share and how this might change over time or with different audiences.
- **Participation in different ways:** Explicitly allowing people to show up 'as they are', creating spaces of trust through openness and honesty. Using invitational language to allow people to participate in ways that feel right for them in any given moment.

Street Up, Partners and Lived Experience Leaders, August 2024. Left to Right: Bronwyn, Kim, Jacqui, Chloe, Irene, Tracy, Jo, Rachael, K, Joelle

- **Nervous system regulation:** developing body awareness both individually and as a group to recognise when we are triggered or dysregulated. Inviting the group into somatic activities to release tension, support nervous system regulation and increase our 'window of tolerance.'[6] Facilitators and group members participate equally to enable a space of inner awareness and co-regulation.
- **Narrative practice:** holding space for both pain and resilience within stories, highlighting strengths and post-traumatic growth, not just the dominant story of trauma and pain.

In narrative practice, the concept of a "double story" refers to recognizing and telling two parallel narratives about a person or situation:

1. **The problem story:** This is the dominant narrative focused on difficulties, trauma, pain, or challenges that a person is experiencing. It often includes how external issues, such as societal pressures, negative experiences, or labels, have influenced and shaped their life. This story can dominate people's sense of self and limit their view of their abilities and potential.
2. **The story of resilience and capacities:** Alongside the problem story, there is always another story that highlights a person's strengths, resources, values, and abilities. This is about acknowledging the person's skills, courage, and resilience, showing that even in the face of trauma or hardship, there are acts of survival, wisdom, and resistance.

This approach encourages individuals to see their capacities and achievements that may be overshadowed by the dominant problem story.

Limitations of trauma informed discourse and approach

While my experience working with groups experiencing marginalisation has highlighted the importance of recognising the *phenomena* and effects of trauma on individuals and groups, I am also cautious of the medicalised trauma *discourse* that is becoming prominent in our workspaces. Labelling theory has taught us we need to be mindful about the lens we see people through. While understanding trauma can help people make sense of their experience and lives, it can also be a cage which limits them. People living on the margins are not just victims, they are survivors, resilient, resourceful, and exceptionally capable.

Thus, the discourse of trauma can be used in helpful and unhelpful ways. To discern which, it is most important as a practitioner, to reflect first within myself. I need to be aware of my own bias and power dynamics that can emerge from a trauma focus—that is, am I seeing myself predominantly as the practitioner with "resources and skills", working with group members as people who have experienced "trauma" that somehow need my "help"? How does this affect the way I see them, and in turn how they see themselves? Regular questioning of my motivations is an important part of my community development practice.

Through this reflection, I have learned that we have all experienced trauma[7], and we are all both vulnerable and capable. I have come to see trauma informed community development work as a practice of accompaniment - in all the beauty and messiness of the human journey and struggle. It is about walking alongside people, not as "beneficiaries" or people who are "vulnerable" (although we all may experience vulnerability at times), but as equal partners in shaping the solutions. It is a deeply humanising and equalising process, when done consciously and curiously.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the relationship between structural forces and collective trauma. **A trauma informed approach in a community development context must move beyond an individualistic focus on trauma to broader issues of rights and social justice. As community development practitioners, we know that the impact of trauma is situated within broader structural forces and processes of discrimination, marginalisation and multiple forms of poverties which ultimately have the greatest impact on people's experience of trauma.** The spaces people occupy—whether that be housing, community, environment, or societal structures—contribute to or perpetuate their experiences of trauma or sense of well-being and belonging.

In the context of homelessness, trauma is not just about personal experiences; it is tied to much broader systemic issues and is thus experienced collectively and it is important to understand the impact on both the individual and the social body. Pain is not just experienced within people's bodies but in how social relationships are experienced (for example, through profound mistrust). Our work with Lived Experience Leaders also helps to illicit the impact of structural and systemic barriers on their lives (individually and collectively), thus building their understanding and literacy in these areas. This is a key part of collective trauma informed work within the community development context, moving from the private concern (that is, the belief that "this is my fault") to collective analysis and action. **It is not enough to address trauma on an individual level—we must also address the larger structures that perpetuate it, together.**

In conclusion, trauma informed practice, when embedded within community development practice, recognises the impact of pain on individuals and communities, while also attempting to address the *causes of this pain*. Through understanding systemic and structural forces of oppression and marginalisation, a wholistic view of trauma aims to support both personal resilience and collective agency and action (to address the cause of pain). And all of this is held within the bigger understanding that when working with people, stories of both pain and capability (and many things in between) are always present, and the importance of being aware of how we see those we work with and how that influences how they see themselves.

That is all easy to say, but the most important question is always *'how do we do it'?* It is not always straightforward, and for me it is mostly about continual inner reflection on how I show up in my practice. As Paulo Freire beautifully reminds us:

Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were[8].

This article is based on a presentation prepared for an All-Ireland Symposium hosted by the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB), Dublin Ireland. October 2024.

About the Author

Rachael Donovan is Senior Social Practitioner/Director with Community Praxis Co-op, Queensland, Australia, and Facilitator/Guide at Three Rivers Initiative[9]. She has an academic background in international development, environmental management and business administration

References

1 The Sunshine Coast refers to a local government area about 80km North of Brisbane, in the state of Queensland, Australia.

2 https://www.communitypraxis.org

3 Street Up was launched during Homelessness week in August 2024 – see www.streetup.com.au

4 We use a Freirean approach of Conscientization and Praxis see https://freire.org/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire

5 See Circle Way for more information www.thecircleway.net

6 See: www.nicabm.com/trauma-how-to-help-your-clients-understand-their-window-of-tolerance/

7 Acknowledging there is also a difference between what Gabor Mate calls little t trauma that we have all experienced in some way and big T trauma that are more intense, shocking and lasting. See: https://innersense-life.medium.com/gabor-mat%C3%A9-makes-an-interesting-distinction-between-big-t-traumas-and-little-t-traumas-b82a3ce4454d

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07

Advancing Girls' Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health in Rwanda and Uganda

Jae-Eun Noh and Hyeran Hong

"Some parents abuse us and say that we are stupid... Other parents even say that we need to go and marry instead of wasting their money" A girl from Uganda

Many girls in developing countries experience gender-based violence and early marriage. The following is a short story about how Good Neighbors has delivered a message, "Your Voice Has Power", in promoting girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights.

SRH education for boys and girls in Rwanda

Human Rights and Community Development

Community development and human rights have contributed to improving development practices and promoting social changes. Both approaches commonly highlight people's participation and empowerment and encourage multi-sectoral actions given the multidimensional nature of poverty and injustice. Despite many commonalities, there are differences. Community development is embedded in local norms and knowledge, while human rights refer to internationally agreed conventions and frameworks. This can generate tensions between so-called contextual and universal. However, it is apparent that international development practitioners should think and act both globally and locally. Another possible tension lies in that community development is rather practical and non-confrontational.

The key idea of human rights is challenging power relationships by taking sides with the most marginalised. This difference can be the very reason for incorporating human rights in community development work.

For human rights from below

Community development and human rights can reinforce each other. A community development approach to human rights can promote a culture of human rights by engaging with the local understanding and the daily-lived experience of human rights. A human rights-based approach to community development can offer insights into the power dynamics of the community. The need for an integrated approach stems from development practitioners' needs for addressing structural and underlying causes of poverty and injustice.

Good Neighbors' Human Rights-Based Community Development

Good Neighbors (GN) is an international humanitarian development NGO founded in Korea in 1991. With the protection of children and integrated community development at the center of its approach, GN has been serving over five million children and community members in 48 countries to ensure the rights of the vulnerable and bring about sustainable changes in their lives.

'Your Voice Has Power' campaign marking International Women's Day in 2020

Global Development Approach

Good Neighbors (GN) established the 'Global Development Approach (GDA)', the strategic direction for its community development programs, to realize the rights of children, women, and community members. GN's GDA embodies a human rights-based approach to community development with the following four principles:

- **GN supports the most vulnerable.** GN focuses on the most marginalised and deprived children and women, who experience discrimination and social exclusion due to their gender, race, religion, class, and other social status. GN, directly and indirectly, supports people so that they can enjoy their rights without socio-economic or cultural discrimination, identifies the underlying causes of structural inequality, and advocates for equality.
- **GN raises awareness of right-holders and duty-bearers.** GDA is grounded on the belief that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. An understanding of one's rights and others' rights can lead to a transformative change. GN enables children and community members to voice their rights as right holders and strengthens the capacities of the government and duty bearers to protect and fulfill the rights of people.
- **GN empowers people.** GN understands empowerment as the result of people's having the will and power to solve the problems they face. GN supports people's empowerment by facilitating the establishment of community-based organisations led by children, women, and community members so that they can speak out for their rights as agents of change and make their own decisions for the better.
- **GN promotes cooperation and solidarity**. GN encourages children and community people to take an active role in the programs to help one another in solidarity and create the changes they want. GN cooperates with community-based organisations, community leaders and local governments from planning to implementation and evaluation to achieve sustainable development.

" One of the causes of school dropout is early marriages and early pregnancies"

a teacher from a Ugandan school

GN's approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) involves being free from sexually transmitted infections and gender-based violence and having access to quality health services. Securing sexual and reproductive health of girls and women can be best supported through a human rights-based approach. GN not only strengthens individual capabilities but also creates an enabling environment for realising girls' rights.

Experiences from Rwanda and Uganda

GN's understanding of human rights-based community development, as suggested in the framework of its GDA, is aligned with five principles of a human rights-based approach: participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and the linkage to human rights. This section illustrates how these principles are incorporated in GN's projects in Rwanda and Uganda, which have facilitated girls and their community to raise awareness and build a supportive environment.

In Rwanda, about 15% of girls aged 15-19 reported sexual violence, resulting in sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy. Uganda is one of the countries with the highest early and forced marriage, with 10% of girls being married before 15. GN Rwanda and Uganda hereby launched a project to promote gender equality by improving girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services and preventing gender-based violence (GBV). These two projects conceptualised girls' sexual and reproductive health as human rights issues engaging with gender and power relations, legal contexts, and socio-cultural norms. Both projects focus on raising awareness and establishing a safe space by involving diverse stakeholders - religious and community leaders, health workers, youth networks and community-based organisations in Rwanda, and parents, teachers and local government officers in Uganda. Human rights-guided principles promoted changes in both process and outcome.

Participation: Careful consideration was given to ensure girls' access to services and inclusion in the program. Both GN Rwanda and Uganda created girl-friendly spaces and school-based clubs to enhance accessibility and acceptability. As gender-based violence (GBV) is under-reported due to shame, stigma, or fear of revenge, GN Rwanda conducted GBV screening through routine health examination in partnership with UNFPA. An external evaluation report states that GN Uganda's participatory approach encouraged stakeholders to determine their own actions, fostering ownership and creating a strong foundation for sustainability.

Accountability: GN applies Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy to all employees and partners to protect program participants from potential harm and human rights violations caused by power imbalances in every aspect of programming and organisational operations. GN also prevents and deals with the issues by operating a complaint and feedback mechanism.

Non-discrimination: GN Rwanda and Uganda worked with girls vulnerable to sexual violence and early marriage. In line with GN's principle of supporting the most vulnerable, the most marginalised were identified and reached out. For example, GN Rwanda supported refugees, adolescent mothers and sex workers through counselling, life skill training and SRH education.

Empowerment: Awareness-raising and capacity building are essential for girls to access and control resources and power. Both projects found peer-to-peer support particularly effective and empowering. For example, peer-to-peer mentoring could build awareness and capacity of both mentors and mentees, create a safe space for discussion, and reduce peer pressure which was identified as a significant driver for early sex. These projects included boys and diverse stakeholders to challenge and reshape gender norms, gender relations, and cultural belief for community-wide changes.

"Girls understand their rights and know where to seek help and report."

a local government officer, in Uganda

"One of the causes of school dropout is early marriages and early pregnancies"

a teacher from a Ugandan school

Girls' messages for a safe school

"Our future can be different when we can decide our future."

a girl from a Girls' Ambassador Club in Uganda

Linkage to human rights: GN's key strategic focus includes improving policy and legal environment to protect children from GBV and promote children's rights. In the planning stage, GN Rwanda and Uganda identified relevant policies and laws (e.g., Rwanda's Reproductive Health Law (2016), Uganda's Children Act (2016), which specifies the minimum age of marriage). In addition, human rights education, gender training, and awareness-raising campaigns on sexual and reproductive health and GBV were carried out through Girls' Ambassador Clubs in Uganda and Health Clubs and Youth Corners in Rwanda in partnership with other community organisations and national networks.

Added values of incorporating a human rights perspective

Placing human rights at the heart of community development practice has yielded positive changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviours for sexual and reproductive health at both individual and community levels.

These results highlight the added value of incorporating a human rights perspective into community development projects.

Strengthening identification and analysis of the structural causes of girls' vulnerability and inequality Community development should not stop at providing health services. Gender relations and beliefs can be challenged and reconstructed through community engagement.

Restoring authentic values of participation and empowerment by ensuring the voice of the most marginalised Meaningful participation and empowerment are the most transformative changes in community development. Therefore, it is pivotal to establish a culture of

'Your Voice Has Power' campaign marking International Women's Day in 2020

"In the School Health Club, we teach everyone, especially boys, to help our sisters feel welcomed in every activity even during the menstruation period."

a girl from a School Health Club in Rwanda

human rights and enhance community control over how the programs are designed and operated.

Providing common language and tools to urge the duty bearers' accountabilities Challenging structural barriers cannot be achieved by one organisation. Community development organisations work together in advocacy, lobby, and campaigns around human rights to maximise their work's impact.

About the Authors

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03 Community Development Practitioners' roles in Human Rights

Anne Jennings

Background

I prepare this paper working from the home of the Yawuru people, the Traditional Owners/Custodians of this land in Western Australia.
As a non-Aboriginal person, I acknowledge Aboriginal (local Indigenous people's preferred term) knowledge and understanding of ways to work within community development frameworks, long before white colonisation and settlement here 230 years ago – even though that was not how they referred to it (Kelly, 2017, et al.). Kickett-Tucker et al. explain further:

ABCD 2008 Conference delegates group

...the importance of Elders, families, and communities working together to share knowledge, empowering and inspiring the next generation to hold onto notions of culture, kin, country, and community. Finding the vision for Aboriginal community development lies in the silent voices closest to the ground (2017, p. 226).

Aboriginal researchers Kelly et al. add to this by referring to:

... community development as a way of strengthening and prioritising the actions and views of a community through an empowering process that builds each member's capacity to achieve their goals. Founded on human rights, this process facilitates social inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity and for specific skills and knowledge (2017, p. 91).

I acknowledge both the ancient and contemporary knowledge held by Aboriginal people and realise their approaches reflect practices of many International Association for Community Development (IACD) members across the globe.

Community Development

Given this background, I move on to explore a settler Australian perspective on community development and if/how this practice links to human rights. Community development in Australia has a checkered history given inconsistent momentum towards this approach's collective understanding and practices across the country. This is despite having excellent academic courses and lecturers/researchers (for example Sue Kenny, Jim Ife, and Peter Westoby to name a few) and dedicated practitioners (ie. Peter Kenyon, and IACD Trustees Dee Brooks and Michelle Dunscombe). However, in Western Australia, the department with the legislated mandate for the safety of children has had various names during my time working in this sector, that have followed a change of government resulting in a change of, for example, the name of Child Protection to Department of Community Development. This proved confusing, labeling community development as service provision only, excluding many of the grassroots-driven approaches that produce positive outcomes for many communities. This also suggests children taken from

their residences for their health and safety is community development!

To be clearer on what community development entails the IACD has adopted the following definition:

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 (IACD, 2020, p. 13).

In addition, community development is no longer seen as an end in itself but rather as a useful means of mobilising people to achieve current and potential future goals (Jennings, 2005). Ledwith (2020) adds a clear note of caution, calling for us to avoid neoliberal processes that can misuse community development processes in favour of top-down managerialism.

The 'rights' noted in IACD literature and policy refer to human rights, as demonstrated by IACD's values and ethos that underpin practice, as "[c]ommitment to rights, solidarity, democracy, equality, environment, and social justice" (2020, p. 13). In today's world including climate change those rights, I maintain, should now be read to suggest the inclusion of other-than-human rights to environmental justice which, of course, includes social justice/human rights.

Human rights

So what exactly is meant by human rights? The area is not always explicitly included in community development education and training, so the following explores this question further. Noted Australian researcher/academic, Jim Ife, has been advocating for broader definitions of community development since the 1990's. His work embraces elements of this field that include the spheres of social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, spiritual and survival development (Ife, 2013). Further, Ife moved on to explore and publish Human Rights from Below: Achieving rights through community development (Ife, 2012). His work maintains that:

… practitioners - advocates, activists, workers, and volunteers – can better empower and protect communities when human rights are treated as more than just a specialist branch of law or international relations, and that human rights can be better realised when community development principles are applied (2012, p. (i)).

This belated review notes community development and human rights are consistently interconnected, noting those two areas are critical to thinking about and taking action to address, serious challenges faced by our world today.

To assist community development practitioners to undertake ways to adopt interconnected processes Ife suggests the development of a matrix that expands the development elements noted above by incorporating social rights, economic rights, political rights, cultural rights, environmental rights, spiritual rights, and survival rights. Further, combining community development theory and practice with human rights principles has been recognised at the United Nations level in Common Understanding of a Human Rights Approach to Development Cooperation (2006). They offer policy and service delivery elements under a human rights-based approach as follows:

- People are recognised as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services.
- Participation is both a means and a goal.
- Strategies are empowering, not disempowering.
- Both outcomes and processes are monitored and evaluated.

- Analysis includes all stakeholders.
- Programs focus on marginalised, disadvantaged, and excluded groups.
- The development process is locally owned.
- Programs aim to reduce disparity.
- Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are used in synergy.
- Situation analysis is used to identify immediate, underlying, and basic causes of development problems.
- Measurable goals and targets are important in programming.
- Strategic partnerships are developed and sustained.
- Programs support accountability to all stakeholders (United Nations, 2006).

Thus the ideals of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be used as performance indicators for community development. In addition, practitioners can use those contexts to illustrate how their current work is applicable and reportable against local through to international human rights agendas, as well as assisting further planning to strengthen their human rights outcomes.

Progressing Human Rights

While many Australians consider themselves to be living in the 'lucky country' we still have a long way to go, particularly in relation to human rights (Coggan, 2021). The key findings of Amnesty International's 2021 annual human rights report found Australia's major ongoing human rights issues include structural racism and discrimination; marginalisation of peoples and communities including Indigenous, women, disabled, and the LGBTQIA+ populations. Other serious discrepancies include refugees and this country's offshore detention policy and practice, and flawed vaccine rollout which underpinned the rights of vulnerable groups (Amnesty International, 2021). The list goes on!

So what can community development practitioners do to make a difference, understanding that people working in this field are often overstretched workwise within their local communities - thus have little time to undertake additional work:

- Link your community development outcomes reporting to the human rights needs of vulnerable people.
- Report on additional human rights discrepancies arising from your work that need to be addressed, not necessarily through your organisation.
- Advocate for change at every possible opportunity – grassroots through to national and international.
- Encourage community discussion on human rights and ways local people can address issues.
- Become involved in IACD's international community development advocacy work; education and training, and other important areas this organisation embraces.

If we all add these areas to our community development efforts, then change can happen. Remember the words of anthropologist Margaret Mead:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

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Disability Rights are Human Rights: Applying a Human Rights Based Approach to disability-inclusive Community Development

Karen Heinicke-Motsch

All rights everywhere; All rights everyone.

This is what universal human rights mean. A human rights-based approach to community development takes a human rights legal framework applying it to both duty bearers and rights holders. While duty-bearers are primarily governments and their agents, duty-bearers can also include non-government entities. Rights-holders are people – individuals and groups. A human rights-based approach to community development focuses on the capacity of duty bearers to fulfill their obligations as well as the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights. It has shifted the paradigm of development towards a realization of our collective obligation to respect, fulfill, and protect human rights.

Sayra, a fieldworker at ASOPIECAD, does some exercises with Adrian, 7, a boy with a physical disability, at home with his mother Yohana.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a necessary treaty because the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was not universally applied to persons with disabilities, in most countries. Since the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted in December of 2006, the disability movement and their allies have worked hard at the global, regional, and national levels for States Parties' ratification, awareness, and understanding of the Convention and to promote CRPD compliant policies and approaches. This includes, for example, the work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the work of the CRPD Committee, which monitors the implementation of the Convention.

There is a growing realization for both development and human rights actors that these global agendas and treaties need to be localized. This article highlights the essential role that inclusive community development plays in building from local experience and expertise, informed by a human rights treaty, to a better realization of human rights nationally.

At Christian Blind Mission (CBM), our inclusive community development work includes a wide range of programs with different development sectors and community stakeholders, building on community strengths and addressing gaps experienced by people with disabilities, their families, and other marginalized community members in realising their rights. Let's take the example of the right to education. Article 24 of the CRPD recognises the "right of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination and based on equal opportunity. To realize this right, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning".

Our inclusive education work is embedded in our Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) work. It encompasses work at the global level to ensure our partners and staff have the skills and tools they need to contribute to the realisation of the right to education. At the global level, this means we use the power of networks to advocate for investment in inclusive education and to develop capacity and tools that translate human rights commitments into practical approaches that result in children and youth with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries learning in their neighbourhood schools and continuing their education. It also means we use good practices and lessons from our partners around the world to strengthen inclusive education provision. To that end, we publish useful materials available in accessible formats and multiple languages and design teacher training packages

Editza, 12, and teacher Ana, both of whom have hearing impairments, in the classroom; Juigalpa, Nicaragua.

contributing to the quality of inclusive education provision. These materials are published online and available without restriction. At the local and national levels, we support our local partners, including the disability movement, local governments, ministries of education, and community-based organisations to improve inclusive educational provision.

Through an interview conducted by our colleague Katharina Pfoertner with David Lopez, the President of the Nicaraguan Blind People's Organisation (OCN) a snapshot of applying a human rights-based approach to improve access to education emerges. Additional analysis tells the broader story of community-based organizations applying principles of community development to facilitate and promote this progress.

Nicaragua ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2007. Dating back before this ratification, CBM's civil society partner Asociación de Programas Integrales de Educación Comunitaria Astrid Delleman (ASOPIECAD) has been providing home-based and schools-based services in support of inclusive education in the communities in which it is active. This work has had a positive impact on the availability and quality of educational services for children with and without disabilities in the communities in which ASOPIECAD works. Alongside this work, community awareness and advocacy towards government alongside the disability movement, including the OCN has been essential. David Lopez notes that following the ratification of the CRPD "In Nicaragua, the different actors agree to inclusive education, there is no discussion dispute. Only teachers are still wondering whether they will be able to carry out inclusive education, they will still need training." The strength of existing partnerships in support of community-based inclusive development and inclusive education built from the community up to national levels provided an important opportunity for the government to scale up these promising practices. This community-level experience has been essential to strengthening inclusive education provision in Nicaragua.

Essential to these achievements was the community-based work undertaken by ASOPIECAD and the organization's application of key international community development standards and principles, including:

- **Engaging with communities:** ASOPIECAD began its work many years ago by providing early childhood development services to children with disabilities. By

engaging with parents, family members, young children with and without disabilities, and with education and health sector workers in the communities in which it operates ASOPIECAD deepened its own understanding of inclusive early childhood programs while gaining new understanding of the struggles families and children experienced in the transition to school. Relationships with community stakeholders, then, grew from an initial engagement with disabled children and their families to broader engagement with community health services and local school personnel. This growing engagement was built upon listening to and understanding the concerns of children and their families and grew to encompass the understanding and relationships necessary to realize the right to education of children with disabilities in the communities in which ASOPIECAD worked.

- **Ensuring participatory planning:** Both within the communities ASOPIECAD was already working and, importantly, in its engagement with new communities participatory planning methods were systematically applied. Interestingly the approach used by ASOPIECAD began at the child and family level with participatory planning approaches forming the basis of both individual support plans and aggregating to contribute to a wider picture of strengths and challenges experienced in communities in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), local health and education providers, local government and other stakeholders used to inform community planning. Practical actions resulting from participatory planning processes meant children, parents, local teachers, local education authorities and local governments were able to...
- **Organising for change,** taking collective action based on an agreed plan of action arrived at by listening to each other and building on each other's strengths. These changes, which were occurring at a community level in a number of communities in Nicaragua were documented and, through targeted influencing at the national level meant community-level action for the rights of children with disabilities to attend school was leveraged into a program taken on by the national government which:

Adrian with other students at primary school in Juigalpa, Nicaragua.

- **Built on the leadership and infrastructure** gained by these community stakeholders to advise on the design and delivery of the national commitment to inclusive education. This includes the understanding on the part of ASOPIECAD of its role in ensuring rights holders themselves, including leaders from the disability movement like David Lopez, are supported to advocate and advise.

Excerpts from the interview with David Lopez shed light on Nicaragua's work to realise the right to education:

What are the 'hot topics' in the discussion of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning?

"I would like to start with the fact that inclusion is not the individual's adaptation to a standard model of development but the appropriate response of society through the goods and services, that should be given to each individual according to their characteristics and needs. In inclusive education hot topics revolve around the actions and measures to be taken to and in the educational system… these hot topics can be grouped into two major areas:

1. Philosophical and conceptual transformation… and
2. Actions and measures to be taken…"

[Based on enrolment of students with disabilities from the Ministry of Education and census information obtained by the Nicaraguan government's Everyone Has a Voice program of the Ministry of Health] "we observe a gap of 56% of people with disabilities who are not incorporated in the educational system, being aware that these numbers of the Ministry of Health represent only a part of children detected until this moment. As a result, both public entities [Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education] have committed to being united in each municipality of Nicaragua to share this information with the municipality and implement a joint plan of action to gradually reduce this gap."

What are your recommendations?

a. "Effective union of actors, subsystems, and educational resources.
b. Allocate additional funds specifically aimed at promoting inclusive education (an example: Perkins machines exist in some centres for Braille writing but need to be repaired).
c. More practical (experiential) than theoretical teacher training.
d. Active involvement of people with disabilities and their organisations in the process of designing and implementing policies and measures to promote inclusive education and the inclusion of people with disabilities in educational structures.
e. Establishment of indicators specifically related to inclusive education, enabling monitoring to assess the development of this topic.
f. Incorporation of multi-ethnic regions in the educational process."

David's recommendations find resonance in community development practice linking particularly to: participatory planning (recommendations d and f); engaging with communities (recommendation a); organizing for change (recommendations b, c, d); building leadership and infrastructure (recommendations b, d, e); developing and improving policy and practice (recommendations a, d, e) and promoting diversity and inclusion (recommendations d, e, f).

Realising the right to education in Nicaragua takes a diverse stakeholder group that involves government ministries, local government authorities, the disability movement, teachers, teacher training colleges, special education providers, and civil society organisations committed to inclusive educational provision. The load is lightened by building on the strengths of the people and organisations involved and the collective power of these people and organisations. This power of collective action is echoed in the steps the Nicaraguan government has taken to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation and deepen its engagement with rights holders. A deeper dive into developments in Nicaragua can be found in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2020).

Inclusive community development work, spearheaded by civil society actors ensures that human rights are realised in practical ways for people in their own homes, neighbourhoods, and towns. As this example from Nicaragua shows, the solid work and strong networks established by community development stakeholders can provide opportunities for national governments to bring excellent inclusive community development work to scale in line with their obligations as duty bearers.

Addendum:

As an organisation working in the disability and development space, CBM is obliged to ensure the work we do alongside our community-based partners around the world is undertaken in compliance with the CRPD. Working with

Adrian at school in Juigalpa, Nicaragua.

our partners, both rights-holders and duty-bearers, requires that we hold ourselves accountable. In furtherance of this responsibility, CBM has translated the principles of the CRPD into five key questions we ask ourselves about what we prioritise, who we work with, and how we measure the results of our work. While we still have much to do to fulfill our vision of an inclusive world and uphold the CRPD, these questions help guide us. Perhaps you may find them useful in your work:

1. Do our policies, position papers, and practices align with the CRPD to promote equality and non-discrimination?
2. Do our systems effectively measure equality of opportunity and outcomes for all persons with disabilities (women, men, boys, and girls)?
3. Do we safeguard and promote the voice, choice, dignity, and autonomy of women, men, girls, and boys with diverse disabilities in our programmes and workplaces?
4. Are OPDs and persons with disabilities engaged in every stage of our projects (project cycle), including training cycles?
5. Are our programmes and operations fully accessible, and are they in line with the principles of universal design?

These questions work alongside our key criteria for ensuring an inclusive community development approach. If you would like these criteria or would like further information reach out to the author.

About the Author

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10

Human Rights Claims as Community Development in Morocco's Rural Southeast

Karen Rignall

In the spring of 2012, a passenger bus carrying 67 people careened off the high mountain road linking the Moroccan city of Ouarzazate on the edge of the Sahara to Marrakech, on the northern side of the Atlas Mountain range. Accidents on this treacherous road are common, but the particularly horrific nature of this incident – the bus tumbled over 150 meters and 42 people died – drew national attention (El Hyani 2012a). It also drew sharp critique from activists and residents of the rural southeast, the poorest region in the country, who were tired of paying the costs of disinvestment and marginalization.

Meeting residents to discuss copper mining and renewable energy

One commentator wondered if, regardless of the circumstances that night, "given the nature of the road… whether the road itself was not the cause of the accident" (El Hyani 2012b). He decried the government's abandonment of plans to build a tunnel that would make road travel safer, as is common in the Alps. This road, the only one connecting the entire southeast to the rest of the country, was built in 1924 as part of the French colonial military campaign to "pacify" the region and extract precious metals. The road saw only minor improvements in subsequent decades and critics raised the issue as human rights and development issues, not simply an infrastructural one.

This incident does not usually come up in discussions of either community development or human rights in Morocco. It does, however, exemplify a convergence between community development and human rights practice—not just human rights activism but institutionalized claims to integrate human rights into governance, development, and citizen engagement. I first encountered these issues in the early 1990s as a young intern for an international development organization's program to support the emergent non-profit sector (called associations in Morocco). The historically repressive King Hassan II had allowed a political opening through the creation of an autonomous (albeit monitored) civil society. Although there was no established profession or field of community development, young college graduates from diverse fields and active citizens without formal education alike jumped in to establish what is now a vibrant non-profit sector. These efforts began with fairly conventional projects that, by the time I returned in 2001 to direct a community development foundation in the rural southeast, had nonetheless grown in scope and sophistication. Associations at the village, regional, and national levels took on everything from women's literacy, income generation, agricultural development, social service support to marginalized groups, and public health interventions, among others. I returned to Morocco more frequently in the 2000s as an engaged scholar and saw further evolution: activists and practitioners pushed for community development to go beyond the historically small-scale, community-level interventions to embrace good governance and even more pointedly, human rights as central to the project of "development." A new king, Mohamed VI, had acceded to the throne in 1999 and continued the political opening begun by his father; the release of political prisoners held throughout Hassan II's reign and the advent of a human rights reconciliation commission brought human rights claims to the forefront of political discourse in Morocco. The broadening of community development practice in the 2000s therefore reflected a convergence between an opening in civil society and the new prominence of human rights actors—many former prisoners—making claims for both representation and development. It was also a response to the co-option of participatory development discourses by the central government, a process that gathered momentum in the early 2000s and has made many rural residents suspicious of community development as a way for well-placed elites and government officials to reserve the benefits of projects for their allies.

Tizi n Tichka Road in Morocco

The development challenges of the arid regions on the edge of the Sahara have been well-documented. In 2014, the official incidence of poverty in the Draa-Tafilalet region that comprises the southeast of the country was by far the highest in the country at 14.6%, with Béni Mellal-Khénifra in the High Atlas Mountains the next closest with 9.3% (HCP 2014). Whereas comprehensive rural development plans, irrigation infrastructure, and agricultural extension have been the primary modes of development intervention in Morocco's other rural regions since independence in 1956, residents in the pastoralist-dominated steppe and oases of the southeast were largely excluded from these programs. Exceptions include internationally funded programs for livestock development and an agricultural development authority linked to two dams in the region. Many of these projects were led by idealistic and committed staff native to the region but with little overall impact on multidimensional poverty indicators relative to other regions. Community development understood only as projects or policies enacted by the state, international donors, or national civil society groups has therefore had limited scope and impact. Community development understood more broadly, however, has occurred in notable ways outside the purview of government authorities. Elsewhere (Kusunose and Rignall 2018; Rignall 2021), I have described an autonomous, resident-driven process of community development that over a half-century helped to transform living standards for many in the region. Beginning in the 1960s, large-scale migration to Europe and urban Moroccan brought remittances that enabled households to invest in agricultural production, businesses, consumption, health, and education. We need to consider this "auto-development" as much a story of community development as state and NGO-led programs. In many cases, the investments that rural residents made on their own transformed the agricultural landscape, infrastructure, and the social fabric of their communities.

This community-driven development is often invisible to official statistics and programs but is important to consider alongside the complicated history of more formal community development initiatives. The rise of the NGO sector in the 1990s coincided with official concern about the political threat posed by persistent poverty in rural areas. Programs like the National Initiative for Human Development (known by its French acronym, INDH) represented the government's attempt to target resources to the poorest areas of the country but have been criticized for their localized and uneven impacts as well as the politicization of community development (Bergh 2012). This politicization takes the form of "Makhzen NGOs" ("Makhzen" being the traditional term for the central state apparatus): civil society groups that form to receive INDH and other government funding but with little capacity or connection to community. It also emerges in critiques that the government has used the INDH to deepen state control over rural areas rather than foster the growth of community development capacity at the local level (Rignall 2021).

Copper mine in the South Eastern province of Zagora

While the INDH is still an active presence in Morocco, another community development framework has risen to prominence in the past decade: corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs that direct private funds to local or international NGOs. As the Moroccan state has retreated from delivering agricultural extension and other services in rural areas, private actors or public-private partnerships have become dominant community development funders in the regions surrounding large-scale projects such as the solar power plant in Ouarzazate and

Enjoying the traditional baked bread, Zagora

the mining installations that have historically provoked protest for poor labor conditions, environmental impacts, and the lack of economic development. Reports from these projects indicate that residents are satisfied working with the community organizations charged with CSR initiatives, but that these projects do not address their demands for more sustained state investment (Aoui, El Amrani, and Rignall 2020). Critics of CSR programs focus less on the content of the projects themselves than on the way state and corporate representatives have co-opted the language of participatory community development without substantive engagement with the full range of community concerns. Mines and renewable energy projects have become a flashpoint for rural political mobilizations and civil society activism for a more democratic and equitable commitment to rural development. This is where the convergence of community development and human rights has been most visible, as rights-based claims for recognition, shared decision-making, and a share of the wealth extend beyond activist circles to include residents and community development practitioners.

The claims these "regular" citizens make bring us back to the bus accident in 2012. The structural analysis of why so many people died on the Tichka pass that circulated after the accident finds echoes in analyses of the region's marginalization by NGOs, local community groups, women's organizations, candidates in local elections, human rights activists, the vibrant local media, and others. Many say it was their sustained demands that finally led to improvements in the mountain road over the last five years and to election victories for a new generation of local leaders espousing a broader conception of what community development means in the rural southeast. Similar calls for state accountability for historical dispossession and marginalization are unfolding elsewhere in rural Morocco and North Africa more generally. They link grassroots work on livelihoods and rural well-being with a big-picture assessment of rights-based approaches as more than ensuring broad participation "within" community development projects. Rather, diverse groups are articulating human rights as a framework for everything from transparency in local governance to waste management, health services, and educational access, to name a few. By laying claim to a more expansive definition of community development, this wave of human rights claims, civic involvement, and grassroots mutual aid shows why the rural periphery of Morocco is one of the more dynamic sites for civil society activism and social change in the country.

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11

Model of an Inclusive Education Network for Children with Disabilities in Vietnam

Tran Thi Bich Ngoc and Vu Thi Tuyet Mai

Quang Ngai is a province in central Vietnam. This was a region severely affected during the Vietnam War in the late 1960s. Today, Quang Ngai province has a population of 1.3 million[1] with an estimated number of 5459 children with disabilities. This is about 4.1.% of its population, in comparison with 2.83% of the total rate of children with disabilities[2] (2-17yo) in Vietnam[3]. According to decision no 1332/QĐ-UBND on issuance of an action plan for implementation of the population strategy of Quang Ngai province for 2020-2025 and vision to 2030 dated Sept 2020, the proportion of people with disabilities aged 5 years and over is 4.71%.

Resource room

As Vietnam ratified the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 1990 and 2015 respectively, all children have the right to education. In response to these commitments, the Department of Education and Training (DoET) in Quang Ngai recognised that the province lacked adequate resources, both material and human to meet their needs. In 2016, a DOET report indicated that only 21.4% of children with disabilities in the province had access to inclusive education. Meanwhile, CRPD ensures the right of all "Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live" (Article 24, UNCRPD, 2006) and Vietnam Law on disabilities (2010) also states the responsibilities of schools and resource centers for inclusive education on providing teaching and learning equity for persons with disabilities[4].

In partnership with the Special Education Faculty of Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE) and the DOET, CBM supported a project for capacity building for an inclusive education network from 2017-2021 in Quang Ngai Province. This project contributes to CBM's Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) approach as it is people-centred, human rights and community-driven, enabling inclusive development and bringing change in the lives of people with disabilities at the community level, working with and through local groups and institutions. CBID addresses challenges experienced by people with disabilities, their families, and communities in practical ways e.g., self-help groups for caregivers. The approach embraces diversity across multiple and intersecting categories of identity. CBID programmes community services e.g., health, and education, working closely with local partners, local governments, and the disability movement to bring about change. CBID particularly promotes the participation and voice of people with disabilities in decision-making processes at the local level[5].

In the case study illustrated, the project is based in a province, but supported by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). This model builds a solid network and collaboration throughout the education system from MoET (developing and improving policy) – The Special Education

Support from IESDC

Faculty as technical lead (providing capacity building and supervision) – DoET (responsible for resources and service provision at the provincial level)– A resource center for inclusive education– District Bureau of Education and Training (BoET) and Inclusive schools, which are based in communities (collaboration and support). This process enables a culture of learning together for change and being proactive in building an environment for inclusive education for all children, including those with disabilities.

MoET, as a key legislator for education in Vietnam, provides legal direction and guidance. It recognises that different provinces may require different solutions for implementing policies according to their context. Therefore, MoET encourages piloting new models of practice to evidence good practice to inform and influence the development of context-sensitive provision for implementing policy and scaling up to other localities.

The **Special Education Faculty** (University of Hanoi) provides technical support to the province and advises MoET on how to fulfill its obligations. As technical lead, the faculty works with DoET and BOETs to understand the local capacities and context. It provides trainers, researchers, tools, and training materials for capacity building, activity review, and monitoring of the model and its impacts.

The **provincial DoET** has local authority to monitor the collaboration and service provision between the stakeholders involved. It ensures that disability-inclusive budgeting is embedded in all government allocations for public education services in the province including the resource center.

As a kick-off from the project model, a provincial **Inclusive Education Resource Center (IERC)** for inclusive education was established to support inclusive education in mainstream kindergarten and primary schools in Binh Son District and Quang Ngai City. The IERC builds the capacity of teachers and provides ongoing monitoring and support. IERC is also pivotal in linking to the strategic plan of DoET/ MoET on the one hand and implementation at district BoET and inclusive schools at community levels on the other. The IERC provides services on early intervention in order to reduce the impact of disability on children. Early intervention plays an important part in school readiness. The IERC also provides school-based or widespread coaching/ training for inclusive teachers, outreach support at inclusive schools, vocational training classes for adolescents with disabilities, and production of adaptive teaching and learning equipment. Through IERC provision, the individual needs of children can be met and their abilities strengthened, regardless of type or level of disabilities. IERC staff also

support at the community level with additional outreach programs. Children can be referred to the IERC and can be signposted to other services or specialist interventions or be referred to external education and health care services as needed.

At the district level, the **Bureau of Education and Training (BoET)** is responsible for mainstream schools within a given district of the province. It coordinates training courses and planning for mainstreaming schools. This is the hub where the IERC coordinates activities for a whole district.

Children with disabilities attending mainstream community schools have access to multi-sectoral support. Due to an increasing need for community-based inclusive resource-based provision community-based solutions were developed. In collaboration with BoET, DoET, and community representatives, schools were identified to have resource classrooms with the support of the project. This provision provided spaces for group or individual intervention/ support; storage for teaching and learning materials/ resources; community meetings for caregivers, small group trainings, children activities of their own, etc. Children with disabilities practice life skills and social skills in small groups with friends. Parents may join intervention sections to cooperate and practice with their children at home. Community-based meetings were convened by teachers, including holding discussions with a range of stakeholders, including parents and children (with and without disabilities) and sometimes social workers or community volunteers to understand their needs and expectations. Through the discussions two needs were highlighted i) support for children with disabilities in the school and ii) individualized support for each child according to their needs. The schools, parents, and IERC develop and maintain an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for each student. Inclusive teachers are trained and coached by staff from IERC with mentoring provided by Faculty staff from the University of Hanoi through school-based training or lesson study and outreach activities. These involved conducting home visits to explore the family context and inputs from a multidisciplinary team of experts, including caregivers and children. IEPs are translated into activities in the classroom, resource room, at home, and in the community. Thus, children are supported as required by trained teachers, experienced staff from IERC, and modified learning equipment in the community. In addition, awareness-raising activities about inclusive education have been held in the communities where they live enabling communities to gain a better understanding of the rights, strengths, and abilities of all children including those with disabilities e.g. activities where children with and without disabilities play together. This involvement of the community in local development activities encompasses

Meeting with BOET

other sectors (e.g. Health and Social Affairs) paves the way to removing some of the discrimination and barriers that children with disabilities face in education and social life. In addition to parent training, the Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) also provides awareness-raising, and child-focused inclusive events are held. One example of such activity was when Vietnamese Sign Language training was carried out in collaboration with teachers and deaf OPD representatives. This made a positive impression on all children in the schools with hearing children communicating in basic sign language with deaf children.

In 5-years, the project has supported over 100 children each year through its early intervention programme and provided 50 training workshops involving 250 core mainstreaming teachers. Such was the success of the programme that it was scaled up to a further 13 districts. This approach enabled schools to provide opportunities for children with different types of disabilities to learn with their peers within their community. To support this inclusion, 1 IECR is established, and 5 school-based resource classrooms have been established at kindergarten and primary schools to support and implement inclusion effectively. In 2020, a total of 1094 students with disabilities were attending inclusive schools, and 235 students with disabilities were engaged in 3 specialized schools in the whole province. Moreover, the quality of education for students with disabilities has strengthened and improved through many activities carried out by schools and IECR under the technical assistance of HNUE or IECR.

Due to the Covid pandemic, many activities have been affected. However, undeterred services have continued with support provided for online learning, facilitating the provision of laptops, and learning tools/ toys to learners with disabilities. In 2021, IECR supported a total of 385 students with disabilities in inclusive schools and specialized centers. 40 students with different types of disabilities were provided weekly e-learning support activities by staff from IECR, 60 parents were trained at home and 370 participants in arts, sports, and cultural programs the support network facilitated through events on Children's Festival (June 1), Vietnamese Day of People with Disabilities (April 18). A support teacher shared " I am happy to know that supported children are happier. While supporting them, I observe and see that they can express their love to the person who teaches or plays with them, they show their trust in me. I love them and need more time with them".

In brief, through an active inclusive support network, children with disabilities in Quang Ngai province have more opportunities to access their learning. All these have led to the creation of a successful platform in community development to serve a quality inclusive education for learners with disabilities in Quang Ngai enabling them to fulfill their right to education.

Keywords: rights of children with disabilities, network, capacity network, inclusive education, students with disabilities.

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Awareness raising event

12

Perspectives of Zimbabwean Rural Communities Mobilising to Overcome Resource Curse

Tatenda.G.Nhapi

Introduction and Background

The purpose of this article is to cast a critical eye on the prisms of extractivism, human rights, and community development as expressed, embodied, and resisted within resource-rich Zimbabwean communities. Perspective into how natural resources-rich Zimbabwean rural communities' empowerment to defend their livelihoods and habitat are offered. The aim is to uncover the underlying, interrelated, and systemic constraints that are preventing Zimbabwean rural communities from realising sustainable and inclusive development futures as well as a more productive role in supporting local-level processes of economic development and poverty reduction.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that one challenge to human rights-grounded community development implementation is that the right to development is not singular and specific hence rights holders cannot distinctly claim for it to be implemented. On the same note Turgwi -Mukosi Development Centre (2021) observes that development projects inception typically is often marked by political grandstanding emphasising placed on the need for trade-offs between meeting national socio-economic developmental targets and debt servicing rather than the welfare of development-impacted communities.

This practice insight aims to offer pathways towards communities empowering sustained efforts for engagement in advocacy and mobilisation towards overcoming. Zimbabwe is a land-locked, lower-middle income, food-deficit country. Over the last decade, it has experienced several economic and environmental shocks that have contributed to high food insecurity and malnutrition. At least 16 percent of its population lives in extreme poverty and it is estimated that 5.3 million people across rural and urban areas are food insecure – many impacted by the effects of climate change, protracted economic instability, and COVID-19(WFP 2021).

UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa (2016) rightly asserts that cumulatively the mining sector presents "great potential for shared economic growth" that "could drastically reduce poverty levels in these countries.

Perspectives on the extractive sector and Right to development

Extractivism industry practices centre around extracting and processing the resource as quickly and as economically efficiently as possible. This is whilst often disregarding the environmental impact it causes unless governments ensure compliance with environmental laws. The practices through which these resources are harvested can be extremely damaging to the earth, like deforestation; land, air, and water pollution; acid drainage from mines; and the loss of biodiversity (Sibindi 2018).

The right to development is an empowerment and necessary tool in basic human development and in solving multiple problems spanning all spheres of society. The right to development was first recognised in 1981 in Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as a definitive individual and collective right. Article 22(1) provides that:

"All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind."

Pertinently, it is disconcerting to note that in the Zimbabwean context, powerful elites get fingered in manoeuvres for exploitative natural resource extraction endeavours. The lack of public access to relevant and accurate extractives (mining, oil, and gas) information is a major issue. With the agricultural sector decline, mining emerged as the leading sector for economic revival, and in 2012 mineral exports accounted for 64% of total exports (Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA) n.d). However, ZELA notes as is the case with other mining countries like Australia with respect to geological data, mineral production, trade and exports, licensed site statistics, and other relevant information no "single point of truth" by the government exists.

Citizens' Human rights-based community development

For equitable democratic citizenship and effective interventions responsive to everyday lived realities, citizens' participation in local planning processes is essential. Faced with considerable state neglect, neighbourhood organisations, social movements, and NGOs are consolidating alliances and federations to reclaim the capacity to modify their living environments as a collective right.

State complicity in human rights violations may be linked to failed UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights concept implementation. In the same vein weak Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) compliance results in potential impacts and risks on communities by mining companies. Henceforth a community-based social accountability for assessing EIA commitments compliance needs to be embedded in Zimbabwean community development thrust in areas where extractivism is happening.

Case studies

In the following sections, I enumerate case studies illuminating the impacts of extractivism on human rights-centred community development initiation.

Chilonga

Chilonga in South Eastern Zimbabwe has a conflict in pitting traditionalists wanting to keep land use as it has been and those who want a multi-billion-dollar irrigation scheme that will

dramatically increase production, but requires reorganisation of land. According to the Government of Zimbabwe this trust facility, with the associated lack of title deeds, is constitutional since it recognises the land rights of communities. In the case of the irrigation scheme under review, very few people would need to move, since the land is largely uninhabited, and those who had to move would get full compensation and be relocated to alternative land.

Murehwa district

Located in Mashonaland East province, 39 households faced eviction in 2021 as 300 hectares of land were intended to be taken by a Chinese company, for black granite extraction. Heijin's black granite mining claim covers the entire Kaseke village and the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) in a letter demanded EIA certificate copies and the miner's prospecting license. The letter was copied to the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) (Saunyama 2021). The pegs cover their homesteads, grazing areas, and cultivating fields. ZLHR considered Kaseke village pegging unlawful in terms of Section 31(1) of the Mines and Minerals Act, which stipulates a holder of a prospecting license shall not exercise any of the rights conferred in the license on communal land without the consent of the occupier (Saunyama 2021).

In Matabeleland North district of Hwange 3 600 villagers face eviction due to Chinese company Beifa Investments, coal mining. On the same note development and expansion of Batoka Township is resulting in 100 homesteads from Jembwe, Jabula, Kasikili, and Kanywambizi communal lands facing eviction.

Rural Women of Chipinge Policy Declaration on Land Rights

On 05 October 2021 the Rural Women of Chipinge in Zimbabwe supported by Platform for Youth and Community Development (PYCD) and Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies ([PLAAS)-University of Western Cape met at a place called Checheche and conceived a declaration. The Rural Women of Chipinge community declaration made demands to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement to promote women's access to use, control, own, inherit and transfer their land and natural resources. Other demands in the declaration included:

- A review of investment policies that promote 'land grabbing' at the expense of the needs of local farmers.
- Reduction of high rising land prices.
- Fair compensation that includes alternative productive land and adequate time for relocation in the case of us saying yes to the state/investors taking land for other uses.
- That compensation must include women and children and not prioritise just men.
- Fulfillment of promises by the investors like employment of locals.

Conclusions

Extractivism is resulting in social exclusion and generating deepening inequalities, jobless 'growth', climate chaos, and social division. Furthermore, natural resource extraction that can be exploitative desecrates and degrades communities' natural resources and social spaces in the process disempowering them. As extractivism has intensified in Zimbabwean communities to offer alternatives and resistance community development practitioners and human rights defenders must become enablers through the application of methods of interventions that empower communities. This is for them to withstand coercive forces propagating extractivism. Legal literacy of communities on their human rights entitlements towards robustly understanding how to navigate around state duty bearers so that they uphold the communities' human rights as natural resource extraction occurs.

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THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES:

A Call to Action for Community Development

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The United Nations has declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC2025)[1], in recognition of their role in fostering sustainable and equitable development. Under the theme "Cooperatives Build a Better World," this year spotlights the crucial contribution the cooperative model makes to addressing key global challenges.

Cooperatives and Community Development

IACD recognises the connection between the cooperative model with its focus on member ownership and democratic control, and the core community development values of community participation and empowerment. Cooperatives can contribute to community development in several ways:

- Serving as tangible examples of participation, empowerment, and collective action.
- Addressing poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.
- Creating economic opportunities, enabling access to resources,
- Operating on principles of equality and inclusivity, providing space for diverse voices.
- Prioritizing environmental sustainability.
- Offering an alternative model promoting collective ownership, democratic decision-making, and self-determination.

The International Year of Cooperatives: A Call to Action

The UN IYC2025 is an opportunity for everyone concerned with community development to call for policies that support community empowerment, collective action, and solidarity, which place renewed focus on social justice, human rights, and climate justice and within that to emphasize the important role of cooperatives in achieving equitable and sustainable development.

This year IACD will be highlighting IYC2025 by:

- Hosting a webinar featuring key inputs on cooperatives and community development.
- Publishing and sharing articles, reports, and case studies from members on cooperatives and their contribution to community development.
- Using social media and online platforms to raise awareness of IYC2025.

IACD invites you join to:

- Share with us any articles, reports and case studies which promote cooperatives and their contribution to achieving community development outcomes.
- Mark **Saturday, July 5th, 2025, the International Day of Cooperatives**, in your calendars and use this day to celebrate and promote cooperative values and achievements within your communities.

You can share articles, case studies and other documents by email to **membership@iacdglobal.org**

1. https://social.desa.un.org/issues/cooperatives/un-international-year-of-cooperatives

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (IACD)

IACD
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

IACD is a global multi-disciplinary network for professional community development practitioners and others with an interest in community development practice. As an organisation, and collectively as members we are committed to promoting participative democracy, sustainable development, human 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.

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