

Overview

This standard is about recognising that communities are diverse and complex. It is important that community development practitioners work with the whole range of different individuals and organisations within a community. This requires different approaches with different communities and the recognition of current and past relationships and realities of different communities. Community development practitioners need to establish how they are going to work with these organisations and how they will offer support to enable organisations from different communities to work with each other to achieve the changes they want.

This standard is relevant to all community development practitioners.

The community development standards are arranged in six key areas:

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

Governance and organisational development

This standard is within Key Area One.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. analyse the nature, composition, power relationships and structural factors impacting on communities
2. build relationships that acknowledge communities' perspectives on their lived experiences
3. include excluded and marginalised communities in community activity
4. recognise the rights of communities not to engage in community activity
5. encourage established and newer communities to work together
6. facilitate communities and organisations to identifying their shared issues when working together
7. support collaborative working relationships between communities and organisations in your area of responsibility
8. support diverse communities over the long term to bring about change
9. use the learning from communities' experiences to campaign for social or policy change
10. support communities to understand local and national policies
11. support communities to decide if and when it is appropriate to challenge local and national policies
12. support communities to make use of their legal rights
13. maintain the currency of own knowledge of and practice in community development

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the importance of using and promoting the values and process of community development
2. how to motivate people and overcome barriers to involvement
3. how to facilitate people and groups to come together within and across communities around common issues
4. how to use community development approaches to challenge inequalities, social injustice and discrimination
5. how to keep up to date with changes in communities and community development practice
6. the different kinds of communities that exist
7. social and structural factors which exclude and marginalise communities
8. sources of information about the communities worked with
9. perspectives used to explain structural factors and their linkages
10. how structural factors affect communities
11. rights to set own agendas and remain independent
12. ways to support community empowerment and facilitate community engagement
13. ways to build respect and dialogue between communities through examining histories and perspectives of oppression
14. how beliefs, values and prejudices towards different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and traditions, can affect working relationship
15. how to support communities to decide when it is appropriate to challenge local and national policies and how to do this
16. how to support communities to develop their knowledge of relevant law and legal remedies

Values

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

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

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

1. practitioners keep up to date with changes in the local population and consider how best to respond to newly identified needs
2. practitioners take responsibility to reach out to marginalised and excluded communities so that their voices can be heard
3. communities have sufficient information to make decisions about when and how to engage with other communities, groups and statutory bodies
4. the expressed needs, interests and concerns of the different communities inform planning by statutory bodies
5. different ways of responding to the development, support and training needs of diverse communities are acknowledged

Glossary

Collective action

Working together with others to achieve a common aim.

Community development practitioner

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

Empowerment

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

Learning

Can be informal, formal and non-formal:

- Informal refers to experiential and personal learning
- Formal learning refers to what we gain from courses, academic studies and continual professional development
- Non-formal education is that which can be informal or formal but occurs in non-traditional settings e.g. in communities.

Organisation

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

Structural factors

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

Support

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

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Relate to different communities



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