

Overview

This standard is for all community development practitioners who work across different communities and provide links and/or co-ordination between communities.

It involves relationship building between diverse communities, public bodies and other organisations. It includes creatively handling the tensions when working strategically across a wider area or with larger initiatives which impact on many different communities.

Note: Partnerships includes formal and informal partnerships and networks.

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 Four.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. assess the changing political, social and economic environment affecting own community
2. communicate the benefits of networking within and between communities and sectors to communities, public agencies and other organisations
3. support partnerships to work together over competing as well as common issues
4. support the development of partnerships where none exist and it is advantageous to establish them
5. support informal networking which promotes dialogue and understanding between and across communities
6. promote collaborative working which challenges exclusive practices, assumptions and stereotypes
7. raise awareness of barriers to involvement for community groups
8. maintain fair and equitable organisational systems within own organisation
9. promote fair and equitable organisational policies within partner organisations
10. consult on planned activities and strategies that may impact on communities
11. promote ways of involving marginalised communities and small community groups in strategic networking, influencing and decision-making processes
12. enable partnerships to recognise how power and resource imbalances affect relationships between and across communities
13. use models for inter-community working which will support collective problem solving across communities
14. seek support and resources to facilitate inter-community learning, working and engagement with decision making

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how representative and participatory democracy work in practice
2. concepts of political literacy, citizenship rights and responsibilities in relation to governance
3. relevant local, national and international government policies
4. the contribution that diverse communities and autonomous groups can make to decisions affecting communities
5. how injustice, discrimination and social exclusion impact on the lives of individuals and communities
6. partnership organisations that make, or contribute to, decisions that affect communities
7. how decisions or recommendations can be influenced
8. the diversity of groups and communities
9. how injustice, discrimination and social exclusion can prevent involvement in partnership working
10. models of collaborative working and the implications for community involvement
11. resource and support implications for engaging with the wide spectrum of potential stakeholders
12. the life cycle of partnerships, their limitations and the factors that can reduce sustainability
13. inclusive and participatory techniques for strategy and action planning
14. inclusive and empowering models of advocacy
15. systems and procedures to ensure accountability to communities
16. exit strategies for initiatives or projects with a set life span
17. communication and organisational systems to support strategic collaborative work across networks and partnerships
18. techniques and frameworks for the monitoring, review and evaluation of collaborative work

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. the contribution of communities and groups is valued in terms of strengths, skills, knowledge and experience rather than monetary resources
2. mechanisms are put in place to support the involvement and representation of marginalised communities in networks and partnerships
3. the influence of communities is strengthened through collective and collaborative actions
4. processes and procedures reflect transparency and accountability to communities
5. learning from the diverse experiences of people within the network is encouraged and supported

Glossary

Accountability

Involves being responsible within and to communities for the actions taken and decisions made; and the opportunities for members of communities to hold to account representatives, decision-makers, groups and individuals working on behalf of communities

Advocacy

Entails enabling others to have a voice and get their views across. It is about ways in which power relationships can be addressed and rigid systems challenged.

Community

Strategically co-ordinate networks and partnerships

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

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.

Community Engagement

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

Community groups and organisations

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

Community involvement

Community members participating in community projects and programmes that often originate outside the community.

Empowerment

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

Evaluation

Entails an overall assessment of the achievements, effectiveness and impact of work carried out.

Learning

Can be informal, formal and non-formal:

Strategically co-ordinate networks and partnerships

- 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.

Monitoring

The systematic collection and recording of information to help an organisation know how it is doing; it helps to account for the work of the organisation.

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.

Political literacy

The use of critical reflective, visioning and planning techniques which encourage individual and group questioning of cultural, social, economic and political norms, and their interdependence, that maintain inequalities and oppressions.

Resources

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

Support

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

Technology

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

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