

Roles and Skills for Community Development Practice

The National Occupational Standards in Community Development Work consist of 6 key roles that workers adopt within the process and outline the skills needed to carry out the roles.

Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) would welcome feedback on how you use the Standards, so please let us know through phone, email or website feedback. This is important in order to ensure that they remain relevant and useful.

This is a summary document. The full Standards are available from FCDL. They may be down-loaded from www.fcdl.org.uk or www.lifelonglearninguk.org or bought on a CD from FCDL.

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Thanks to Community Work Education and Training Network (CWETN) Northern Ireland for the original design of this summary sheet.

Role A

Develop working relationships with communities and organisations

- > Make relationships within communities
- > Build relationships within and with communities and organisations
- > Develop strategic relationships with communities, organisations and within partnerships.

Role B

Encourage people to work with and learn from each other

- > Contribute to the development of community groups/networks
- > Facilitate the development of community groups/networks
- > Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
- > Promote and support learning from practice and experience
- > Create opportunities for learning from practice and experience
- > Support individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict
- > Take action with individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict.

Role C

Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action

- > Work within communities to select options and make plans for collective action
- > Contribute to collective action within a community
- > Support communities to plan and take collective action
- > Ensure community participation in planning and taking collective action
- > Contribute to the review of needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities within a community
- > Work with communities to identify needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities.

Role D

Work with people in communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation

- > Support communities to monitor and review action for change
- > Facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks.

Role E

Develop community organisations

- > Encourage the best use of resources
- > Review and develop funding and resources
- > Develop and evaluate a funding/resourcing strategy
- > Develop people's skills and roles within community groups/networks
- > Facilitate the development of people and learning in communities
- > Develop and review community-based organisational structures
- > Develop and maintain organisational frameworks for community-based initiatives.

UNITS IMPORTED FROM NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MANAGEMENT

- > Contribute to planning and preparation
- > Co-ordinate the running of projects
- > Contribute to project closure.

Role F

Reflect on and develop own practice and role

- > Identify and reflect on own practice, knowledge and values
- > Review own practice, knowledge and values
- > Evaluate and develop own practice
- > Identify and take action to meet own learning and development needs
- > Review and meet own learning and development needs.



The National Occupational Standards can help you if

- you are involved in community development work
- are developing community development education and training provision (accredited & non-accredited)
- seeking to employ a community development worker
- developing strategic and operational plans

A Summary of Good Practice Standards for Community Development Work

INSIDE:

Values of community development work

- > Social Justice
- > Self-determination
- > Working and Learning Together
- > Sustainable Communities
- > Participation
- > Reflective Practice

What is community development work?

The key purpose of community development work is collectively to bring about social change and justice, by working with communities¹ to:

- Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- Plan, organise and take action
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action

all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities.

What are the Standards?

The National Occupational Standards outline clearly the Skills, Values and Practice Principles required for community development work and have been developed to provide a guide and a reference point for best practice.

The Standards provide the basis from which we can promote effective and appropriate community development work practice. We need to use these Standards with confidence to argue for values and processes to be integral to the work.

The Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) will work with practitioners, groups and organisations within the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to ensure that the Standards continue to reflect good practice in community development work and the different contexts in which it takes place.

The Standards applied to practice will ensure that community development impacts on poverty, racism and social exclusion in a way that empowers, enables and encourages participation.

The Standards are for use by

- Community development workers and community activists
- Individuals/organisations adopting a community development approach in their work
- voluntary management committees
- employers of community development workers
- funders of community development work
- community development education & training providers.

¹communities refer to those that can be defined geographically and/or those defined by interest.

In community development work the HOW and WHY, the PRACTICE and PROCESS are key to the work. Central to this is the reflective practitioner. Community Work for social change entails reflecting on incorporating the values into the many roles of community development work.

Values of community development work

These outline the basic Values and Practice Principles for good community development work practice.

Values and Practice Principles The Reflective Community Development Practitioner

Encourage people to work and learn from each other

Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action

Work with people in communities to develop and use Frameworks for Evaluation

Develop community organisations

Reflect on and develop own practice and role

Develop working relationships with communities and organisations

Social Justice

- > Respecting and valuing diversity and difference
- > Challenging oppressive and discriminatory actions and attitudes
- > Addressing power imbalances between individuals, within groups and society
- > Committing to pursue civil and human rights for all
- > Seeking and promoting policy and practices that are just and enhance equality whilst challenging those that are not.

Sustainable Communities

- > Promoting the empowerment of individuals and communities
- > Supporting communities to develop their skills to take action
- > Promoting the development of autonomous and accountable structures
- > Learning from experiences as a basis for change
- > Promoting effective collective and collaborative working
- > Using resources with respect for the environment.

Self-determination

- > Valuing the concerns or issues that communities identify as their starting points
- > Raising people's awareness of the range of choices open to them, providing opportunities for discussion of implications of options
- > Promoting the view that communities do not have the right to oppress other communities
- > Working with conflict within communities.

Participation

- > Promoting the participation of individuals and communities, particularly those traditionally marginalised/excluded
- > Recognising and challenging barriers to full and effective participation
- > Supporting communities to gain skills to engage in participation
- > Developing structures that enable communities to participate effectively
- > Sharing good practice in order to learn from each other.

Working and Learning Together

- > Demonstrating that collective working is effective
- > Supporting and developing individuals to contribute effectively to communities
- > Developing a culture of informed and accountable decision making
- > Ensuring all perspectives within the community are considered
- > Sharing good practice in order to learn from each other.

Reflective Practice

- > Promoting and supporting individual and collective learning through reflection on practice
- > Changing practice in response to outcomes of reflection
- > Recognising the constraints and contexts within which community development takes place
- > Recognising the importance of keeping others informed and updated about the wider context.