



The Community Development Challenge

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Glossary of abbreviations

ABCD	Achieving Better Community Development
CA2020	Community Action 2020 (Defra sustainability programme)
CCB	Community Capacity Building
CD	Community Development
CD2	Temporary name for the new initiative and working group on community development which led to this report. The group is subsequently known as the Community Development Challenge Group or, for short, CD Challenge
CDF	Community Development Foundation
CDW	Community Development Worker
CDX	Community Development Exchange
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
FCDL	Federation for Community Development Learning
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IDeA	Information and Development Agency
LA	Local Authority
LB	London Borough
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LEAP	Learning, Evaluation, Action and Planning
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now part of Communities and Local Government)
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NSF	Neighbourhood Support Fund
NTO	National Training Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SCCD	Standing Conference for Community Development
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

Foreword

The community development challenge

The ambition of our government is to give citizens and communities a much bigger say in the services they receive and in the quality of the communities in which they live. This is where our new Local Government White Paper starts from, and we have put forward radical proposals for ensuring that we achieve that bigger voice. The White Paper sets out how public service delivery can keep pace with growing expectations; how to ensure a continuing commitment to participatory democracy; how to ensure respect for people and communities; how to promote, cohesion between people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds. What we want to achieve, by enabling people to have a greater say, are neighbourhoods that are safe and friendly so that no one is disadvantaged by where they live or left out of the benefits that a decent society can bring.

We recognise that problems can only be solved by government and people together, hence our Together We Can programme. Millions of people help to keep society healthy and harmonious through a thousand and one daily actions. Many also take part in constructive action on public issues in their locality. But a majority feel they have no influence over what goes on in their locality, and this sense of helplessness is even greater in disadvantaged areas. Community development – which specialises in encouraging and empowering people to gain control over the conditions in which

they live gives us a very powerful way of turning alienation into engagement.

We need to know more therefore about where and how community development is effective; how to develop and spread good practice and how to make the most of it.

These questions were addressed by a national working party – ‘CD2’ – set up as part of the Together We Can programme and run by the Community Development Foundation at the invitation of the Community Empowerment Division¹ in Communities and Local Government. *The Community Development Challenge* is the first report of the working party. It assesses strengths and weaknesses in the current position of the community development occupation and proposes a range of actions to ensure that it plays a more powerful role in meeting the needs of present-day society. The Department warmly welcomes the general thrust of the report, and will be examining the detailed recommendations in the light of the proposals we have set out in the Local Government White Paper, so as to determine ways in which we can support the Working Party in taking forward particular recommendations.

Community development is a field which can suffer from a loss of focus and from fuzzy definitions precisely because it is wide-ranging. This report brings new clarity by identifying the unique contribution community development can make which is to bring together a particular combination of practices which are scattered throughout the social professions and which, together, make a powerful platform for change.

Society needs now more than ever a strong community development occupation with clear objectives and public endorsement. National policies in the twenty first century need to embody community development values, and building the capacity of the community development occupation will in turn help national policy aims to be delivered more effectively.

The Community Development Challenge is a fresh, penetrating and indeed challenging approach to this field of practice. It is essential reading for all involved in strengthening the role of local communities, be they community development practitioners, managers, funders, policy-makers or local residents themselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Baroness Andrews OBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Introduction and summary

Origin and purpose

During the 1990s, and particularly since 1997, government in the UK has increasingly sought to stimulate community engagement in public affairs and local development through a wide variety of policies. In 2006-7 these policies are being further multiplied, for example (in England) through Local Area Agreements (LAAs), neighbourhood empowerment and a new round of local government reform.

The implementation of policies on community involvement and engagement depends fundamentally on community development (CD). Yet CD, which is a particular way of working with communities, has an unclear profile, and policy-makers and public alike are not yet fully aware of its crucial role in society. In semi-obscurity and with uneven investment, it is also not easy to discern whether CD practice is working as well as it needs to.

In late 2005 the government's Civil Renewal Unit (now the Community Empowerment Division in Communities and Local Government, then in the Home Office) asked the Community Development Foundation (CDF) to look at the present state of CD in England and assess what steps might be necessary to raise its profile and effectiveness. This initiative took place in the context of Together We Can, the cross-government campaign linking public policy and active citizenship.

CDF drew together a small working party, reflecting some of the key stakeholders in the community development field, including the two other national CD organisations in England, the Community Development Exchange (CDX) and the Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL). A list of the contributors can be found in the acknowledgements. The working party met six times, collected a wide variety of evidence and has produced this report. As will be seen, the working party concluded that this report could only be the first step in addressing the issue, and hoped that the initiative would proceed to further steps, and that other stakeholders in this field would feel stimulated to move in the same direction.

This report incorporates views from a diverse working party, and should not be taken to imply that every member of the group necessarily supports all the views within it. However, the group reached broad agreement on the key recommendations and is happy to be associated with the overall report.

The report is intended primarily for those with a direct interest in the practice of community development and for policy-makers in government, local government and the voluntary and community sector, and all who invest in it and make use of it. It has significance however for the whole question of how contemporary society operates and develops new forms of decision-making and service delivery.

The Community Development Challenge assesses strengths and weaknesses in the current position of the community development occupation and proposes a range of actions to ensure that it plays a more powerful role in meeting the needs of present-day society. Issues it addresses include:

- What is it that community development does which is not done by any other occupation?
- What are its achievements and why are they little known to the general public?
- What obstacles hold it back from maximising its effectiveness?
- What should now be done to enable the community development occupation to play a more powerful role in achieving the participative society envisaged in *Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper* (Communities and Local Government 2006)?

Achievements and obstacles

The working party finds that community development plays an important behind-the-scenes role in achieving the objectives of a wide variety of public policies.

Examples are given where local areas blighted by decline, isolation and crime have been transformed into friendly, co-operative communities, with benefits for safety, health, employment, environment and general living conditions.

Community development is often held back, however, by a number of obstacles, some within its own practice, some in external conditions. The unstable deployment of community development through many different funding streams, often short term, make it difficult to achieve a sustained, cumulative effect. At the same time, the commonly low-profile style of

working, with patchy documentation of outcomes, leaves community development less understood and less evidence-based than it should be.

The basis of community development is a set of values about collective working, equality and justice, learning and reflecting, participation, political awareness and sustainable change. CD works primarily with local people and community groups, and secondly with public authorities and agencies to help them understand and engage with the communities they serve.

Across the UK there are the full time equivalent of about 20,000 CD workers, including many who use a CD approach as part of another job. Over half these workers are located in the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and just under half are in public authorities, mainly local authorities. Local authorities with a strong CD commitment may have a significant number of CD workers, though rarely more than a fraction of the number of workers in main departments, and overall the picture is very uneven.

The role of community development is often overlooked at the higher levels of policy, although there is wide reliance on its methods at the level of implementation. This reliance is largely hidden from view because it takes place in detailed local situations. CD's own ethos of stressing its role in providing background support rather than leadership reinforces this low profile.

Few local areas have overall CD strategies which link efforts across sectors, agencies and the full range of policy issues. Many people doing community development work feel isolated and lack support, although a number of regional, sub-regional and local networks are in existence, and there are several national organisations which promote the practice. Local networks are vital to keep information, skill and best practice updated, and there is growing importance in regional networks, which need to be strengthened.

Major training and education opportunities in community development are not widely available. There is an uneven spread of short-term training in specific aspects of CD work, mostly not accredited. There are some programmes leading to qualifications at levels 1-3, and a limited range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including some new foundation degree courses. The 'activist' route into the CD occupation is now well established in principle, providing a valuable basis through direct local experience rather than formal qualifications.

Summary of recommendations

The report concludes with recommendations in six key areas:

1. the definition and status of the community development occupation
2. improving the evidence base
3. creating a strategic approach across localities, and establishing regional support
4. funding
5. management and delivery, and
6. training, education and recruitment

The main proposals for action under these six headings can be summarised as follows – detailed recommendations are at the end of the report:

1. Definition and status of the occupation

Policy-makers and practitioners alike should commit themselves to a consistent, concrete and rounded definition of what community development and its outcomes are, and ensure that this is reflected in the relevant national occupational standards

and other core sources. This should combine these six aspects:

- helping people find common cause on issues that affect them
- helping people work together on such issues under their own control
- building the strengths and independence of community groups, organisations and networks
- building equity, inclusiveness, participation and cohesion amongst people and their groups and organisations
- empowering people and their organisations where appropriate to influence and help transform public policies and services and other factors affecting the conditions of their lives
- advising and informing public authorities on community needs, viewpoints and processes and assisting them to strengthen communities and work in genuine partnership with them

2. Improving the evidence base

Government and community development organisations should put in place research which builds a picture of the impact and outcomes of CD work from given baselines, with evidence on the cumulative effects of CD over long periods and examples of milestones which can be achieved over shorter periods, including the benefits for different public services and policy areas.

The community development field should plan and evaluate its work in terms of outcomes as well as processes. And, should champion indicators of stronger communities and associated issues which are in government and local government performance management instruments such as Local Area Agreements.

3. Creating a strategic approach across localities and establishing regional support

All public agencies should contribute to the empowerment of communities by supporting community development. The government's framework for community capacity building called *Firm Foundations* (Home Office 2004) should be adopted in each locality, with community development as a driving feature and empowerment as an explicit objective. The sustainable community strategy in each local authority area should include a strategic approach to community development across the locality, linking input from all providers, both statutory, independent and VCS, and forming a strong theme in Local Area Agreements and the Local Strategic Partnership. Linking with these, Government Offices, Regional Development Agencies and other regional bodies such as Centres of Excellence in Regeneration should promote and support community development within their region.

4. Funding

Community development funding should be adequate to achieve and maintain a major step change in the level of community strengths and empowerment across the nation and especially in disadvantaged areas.

Government, local government and other public agencies should commit themselves to long term structures for funding CD, not necessarily by incurring new costs but by reviewing and reorganising the way CD is continually 'reinvented' in disparate funding streams with short term objectives.

All policies which invoke community empowerment or rely on community engagement should allocate a margin of their budget to CD/community capacity building.

Local authorities should maintain ample small grants regimes (both 'seedcorn' as recommended by *Firm Foundations* and long-term), particularly for community groups for whom social enterprise and asset building are not appropriate or viable.

Guidance on the role of community development in local projects should be provided for independent trusts and foundations, and CD national bodies should develop a guide for public funders to assist good practice, co-ordination of funding from different sources, longer timescales, appropriate criteria and evaluation, realistic outcome expectations and models for ways in which funding from different sources could fit together at local levels.

5. Management and delivery

Community development should be managed and delivered to the highest standards. Authoritative management guidance to community development should be developed, and management training modules should be created for CD team leaders within local authorities, housing associations, the VCS and other agencies and projects. Job descriptions and person specifications should include both an understanding of the theory and practice underpinning community development and practical fieldwork experience. Best practice models and case studies should be drawn together and disseminated.

6. Training, education and recruitment

High quality community development training should be made available in each region at all levels, from 'tasters', through accredited programmes at levels 1-3, to degrees and postgraduate qualifications. The National Occupational Standards for CD should be refreshed and further disseminated, adding recognition of the CD role within public agencies. Guidance should be provided for schools, universities and careers advisers to promote CD as a worthwhile career combining both practical, social and ethical challenges, and publicising routes into work.

The Academy for Sustainable Communities, the Information and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Regional Centres of Excellence in Regeneration should assist the CD profession itself to achieve greater effectiveness and recognition as well as drawing on CD to enlighten other professions.

development practitioners, managers, funders, policy-makers or local residents themselves. The working party proposes to continue to a second stage, with a wider reference group, addressing some of the challenges identified in this report.

Capacity building for local councillors, policy makers and officials should include understanding the role of CD and should be linked wherever possible with community capacity building.

Capacity building for CD workers and champions should include how to work with tensions and conflicting agendas, how to work in inclusive ways and support the involvement of marginalised and excluded communities, how to support social cohesion, how to link participative and representative democracy, and how to translate CD principles and insights into policy terms. Members of all marginalised communities, including Black and Minority Ethnic ones, should have opportunities to develop their skills and capacity for becoming involved in community development and entry into the CD profession.

Conclusion

Society needs now more than ever a strong community development occupation with clear objectives and public endorsement. National policies in the twenty first century need to embody community development values, and building the capacity of the community development occupation will in turn help national policy aims to be delivered more effectively.

The Community Development Challenge is a fresh, penetrating and indeed challenging approach to this field of practice. It is essential reading for all involved in strengthening the role of local communities, be they community

The policy context

Shifting power

A profound change is taking place in public understanding of how society is governed. Whilst governments are responsible for running the country and are held accountable for how they do it, there is a growing appreciation that responsibility and power are much more widely distributed and that another function of government is to support, negotiate and reconcile that dispersal of power. Modern developments are too complex, fast-moving and diverse to be micromanaged from the centre. Yet things have to be held together by common aims and transparent structures. Government remains the essential, accountable focal point of power but its job is changing to some degree from delivery to enabling.

Of course, no government wants to – or could – simply let go of the power it has, or can avoid being held accountable for its actions and the delivery of public services. So the shift to an enabling role requires a complex, paradoxical, partial transfer of power and responsibility. Inevitably this can face resistance and tensions. Community development helps people and public institutions to respond positively to this transformation by creating additional avenues for participation and releasing new energies from below. It can also assist more traditional forms of government to adapt to change and disperse power by stages.

Prosperity and polarisation

Globalisation and diversity has become a daily reality in our cities, and to some extent everywhere. On average, prosperity grows, but this is accompanied by inequalities in income and opportunity. Within a single town, part of city or rural area life expectancy between different neighbourhoods and parishes can vary by as much as ten years – as much as the average difference between well-off and poorly-off countries. Traditional vehicles for mass participation, such as political parties and trade unions, have declined and local voting is very low. Scores of issues attract public concern yet most people feel that they have little influence over the decisions that affect their lives, and this is particularly acute in disadvantaged areas.

All this means that we are living in a society that urgently needs better means of participation and that requires of us adaptation and lifelong learning at a level more intensive than previous generations. It also means that some people benefit far less than others from prosperity and democracy, that poverty persists, and new forms of poverty and conflict can emerge in the midst of plenty. It is an exciting but very demanding time to be alive. Huge advances are being made in science, health, nutrition, productivity, yet equally huge challenges are facing us – challenges of polarisation between those who benefit most and least, challenges of the clash of beliefs and affiliations, and challenges of 'success', such as the costs of longevity, diversity and the environmental costs of increased productivity.

Change agents needed

Governments cannot legislate for how all this change and challenge is to be managed. We have to help each other to learn and adapt and ensure that our public institutions and services stimulate participation and respond to it positively. The root of these processes is in face to face interaction and word-of-mouth communication. Relationships based on trust and mutual respect at local community level are crucial to successful change in the public sphere.

But government cannot abdicate, either, from its responsibility to create the best conditions for us to carry out this constant adaptation. The present government has signalled a clear intention to change both public capability and its own behaviour by adopting the slogan Together We Can.

For this commitment to become more than a slogan, profound change is needed across the whole of government and civil society. This cannot happen overnight or even in five years. Nor does it take place smoothly and evenly across all government departments and levels of public decision-making. Such a widespread change needs people with the inter-personal and strategic skills to champion and manage the necessary cultural and political changes at micro and macro level.

There is a form of practice which specialises in this role of change agent. It is called community development.

Spotlight on community development

The purpose of this report is to make CD better known and understood, to examine its present condition and to make recommendations for how it can itself develop to meet more effectively the

challenges we have been describing. We have termed this initiative CD2 to indicate both that it is based on an existing discipline and that we are seeking to re-establish it at a new level.

Community Development is an occupation with an estimated 20,000 professional practitioners around the UK yet it is barely known to the general public². There are some understandable reasons for this. The CD ethos is an enabling and empowering one, which builds up the skills and confidence of others and deliberately avoids the limelight itself. Personal progress and collective achievements are usually attributed to the efforts of communities (and individual community members) themselves. Critical of the type of professionalism which uses its expertise to mystify the public, community development workers are committed to passing on knowledge and understanding to people so that the role that they play in supporting local groups and organisations can be increasingly undertaken by community members themselves.

However, highlighting the achievements of community members can mask the specific contribution of the community development worker, and to the casual observer it can seem as though community achievements which have been skilfully nurtured over a long period have popped up spontaneously.

This work is difficult and often hidden from the public gaze, but is crucial in creating an environment conducive to an inclusive, democratic and sustainable society. The many successes of community development in almost invisibly boosting community activity and overcoming disadvantage may have misled policy makers into an over-optimistic impression of what communities can do spontaneously, even in harsh conditions.

If there was no community development

To understand the necessity for this work, it is useful to reflect on the kinds of situation that can be found in many localities *without* CD. It is often the case that:

- there are few community groups, and many individuals do not realise that the issues that concern them are shared by others and can be affected by joint action
- the most disadvantaged people receive poor quality public services yet are least confident and skilled at representing their needs to authorities
- some of the groups that do exist remain small and exclusive, dominated by cliques or strong individuals who keep decision-making (and sometimes benefits) to themselves; organisations may be run unconstitutionally or unfairly
- community organisations fail to adapt to changing circumstances or miss out on funding opportunities which might enable them to expand or change direction. Their work becomes unsustainable or inappropriate and does not evolve
- community leaders and representatives are not properly selected and held accountable and may flounder or be ineffective on partnership boards
- different interests in communities are unable to reach a consensus or vision that articulates their views to others and as a consequence their interests do not register in public decision-making
- sections of the local population are not able to participate in activities that are intended for the whole community because prejudices, assumptions and cultural differences are not tackled

- public agencies and departments that need to engage with local communities are unaware of each other's efforts, lack insight into how communities work and have few channels for dialogue with them

Community Development is often instrumental in setting up groups, supporting forums and networks, and organising events and activities that enable people to work together across organisational and community boundaries. CD actively tackles the divisions, social exclusion and discrimination that deter some people in communities from participating in mainstream activities and decision-making.

Community development too often an afterthought

That CD is of great practical use is attested by the fact that despite its low profile it is regularly rediscovered, reapplied, even reinvented, by particular agencies for their own purposes. As society has become more complex and change more demanding, creative local management and political thinking has inevitably come back again and again to the need to create or rediscover a form of public service which lies between the monolithic services and the public, which can help both to adapt to each other.

High level government statements rarely invoke CD by name but the policies which invoke community involvement and engagement get passed on for implementation by people closer to the 'sharp end' who have to think out how these aims are to be achieved. Creative people at this level realise that they need something like CD to deliver these policies on the ground.

However, this means that provision for CD is mostly an add-on to other policies at a late stage, often after the main resources

have been committed and the main plans and structures established. Time and again CD is called in at a late stage to remedy problems which could have been anticipated if CD principles and experience had been consulted at the start.

New Labour's coming to power in 1997 can be seen to a degree as an attempt to apply CD principles to large-scale planning. There was a renewed emphasis on promoting social justice and revitalising democracy. There was much talk of finding a 'third way' to end social exclusion and overcome poverty, based on participation and social capital. The focus on tackling inequalities and striving for social justice aligned well with the core values and ideals of community development, which, as a profession, unexpectedly found itself largely in tune with government thinking. This appeared to open the way for a more central role for CD, though there was little sign of government or media awareness that there was a specialist occupation devoted to implementing precisely these objectives at local level.

A new focus on social justice

One of New Labour's first actions in 1997 was to establish the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). The SEU was asked to report on how to develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of poor housing, crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, poor schooling and other issues. In September 1998 the SEU recommended the establishment of the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal 'to bridge the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of England'. 18 policy actions teams then came up with several hundred action points, and from many of these the seeds were sown for current policy on neighbourhoods, cohesion and sustainable communities, an overarching agenda that all government departments were to contribute to. This mirrored international

developments taking place in the form of the Millennium Development Goals.

Key policy concerns have continued to be focused on improving people's life chances and improving public services. Community engagement is frequently included as a vital component of the policy package for several purposes: to boost democratic consent, to engender pressure 'from below' on underperforming services, to build social capital and to nurture alternative service provision through non-profit businesses.

However, policies are turned into implementable actions through a cascade of levels in which the necessity for CD only becomes unavoidably obvious at the end of the supply chain. Front line staff are directed to engage with local communities but a corresponding culture change has not always taken place at the higher levels. To remedy this, the government's Community Empowerment Division (which runs the Together We Can campaign) acknowledges a necessity for mirror-image change in institutions as well as in communities. (See Panel 1 for a description of the Civil Renewal Agenda on which the work is based).

So, as social policy has taken shape over the last 10 years, it has moved on from trying to tackle inequalities on a top-down basis, and, in theory at least, realised the importance of a bottom-up approach. This means that community development theories and language are becoming increasingly used, as managers and policymakers wrestle with the complexity of drawing people into the decisions which affect them. But there is as yet no correspondingly clear strategy for community development, and funding and deployment continue on the piecemeal, semi-invisible pattern established in the preceding decades.

However, an important pointer towards better strategy was the production by government in 2004 of a national

'framework for community capacity building' called *Firm Foundations* (Home Office 2004), and we come back to this in more detail later. Other developments in 2006 which will have major effects on the CD landscape are *Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper* (Communities and Local Government 2006), the establishment of Communities and Local Government (replacing the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), including the former Home Office units on civil renewal, cohesion, faith and race equality, and the establishment of the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office, including former Home Office units on the VCS, charity law and related issues.

Panel 1: Civil renewal

Because engagement with people is vital, the area of civil renewal and democratic engagement is now seen as crucial in overall successful policy delivery.

'Civil Renewal is about people and government, working together to make life better. It involves more people being able to influence decisions about their communities, and more people taking responsibility for tackling local problems, rather than expecting others to.

The idea is that government can't solve everything by itself, and nor can the community: it's better when we work together.

There are three key ingredients to civil renewal:

1. Active citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed
2. Strengthened communities: community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions
3. Partnership with public bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people'

(Communities and Local Government website 2006)

The community development offer

Definition

Community development is a set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grass roots and deepening democracy (Panel 2). There is a CD profession, defined by national occupational standards and a body of theory and experience going back the best part of a century. There are active citizens who use CD techniques on a voluntary basis, and there are also other professions and agencies which use a CD approach or some aspects of it.

This report is focused on the CD occupation, primarily those people who are employed to do CD, and encompassing also people doing the same kind of work within another profession or as an unpaid activist.

This report does not cover developmental processes spontaneously taking place within communities, though these underlie people's capacity to act together. We are

not using CD here to mean an all-encompassing process of social change but a deliberate, and mostly paid, intervention in how people organise themselves on issues of joint concern.

Attempts to define CD often become muddled because of an assumption that a community is a fixed entity and that the aim is to develop it as such. A community is a group of people with some important common characteristics or concerns and a network of relationships which endure over a long period. However, these same people also have other relationships and networks and belong to other communities, and it is not the purpose of CD to limit this essential freedom and fluidity.

The term 'community' is loosely used, especially in public policy, to mean all the people in a given neighbourhood, town, estate or parish (a geographical community). Or, a more selective network of people with other strong interests in common, whether or not these are geographically grouped – an ethnic community, a religious community, a

Panel 2: Five aspects of community development

CD is a set of **values**

embodied in an **occupation**

using certain **skills and techniques**

to achieve particular **outcomes**

or provide an **approach** used in other services or

occupations.

Panel 3: Community development values, principles and roles

Values and principles:

- Social justice
- Self determination
- Working and learning together
- Sustainable communities
- Participation
- Reflective practice

Key Roles:

- Develop working relationships with communities and organisations

- Encourage people to work with 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

Extract from National Occupational Standards, see Appendix 1

community of young or old people, an occupational or cultural community. There is a reality to these groupings but CD is not about strengthening phantom entities called communities as though these were mutually exclusive and internally consistent bodies. It is about strengthening the ability of people to act on joint interests and in the common interest, including having equal concern for other communities. 'We are all members of several communities, and our ties with them can increase or decrease. It is both illogical and dangerous to corral people as if they could belong to only one community' (Sen 2006)³.

A formal definition of CD work known as the Key Purpose Statement, was created as part of the development of National Occupational Standards for CD work⁴. The key purpose of CD work is defined as to being to 'collectively bring about social change and justice by working with communities to:

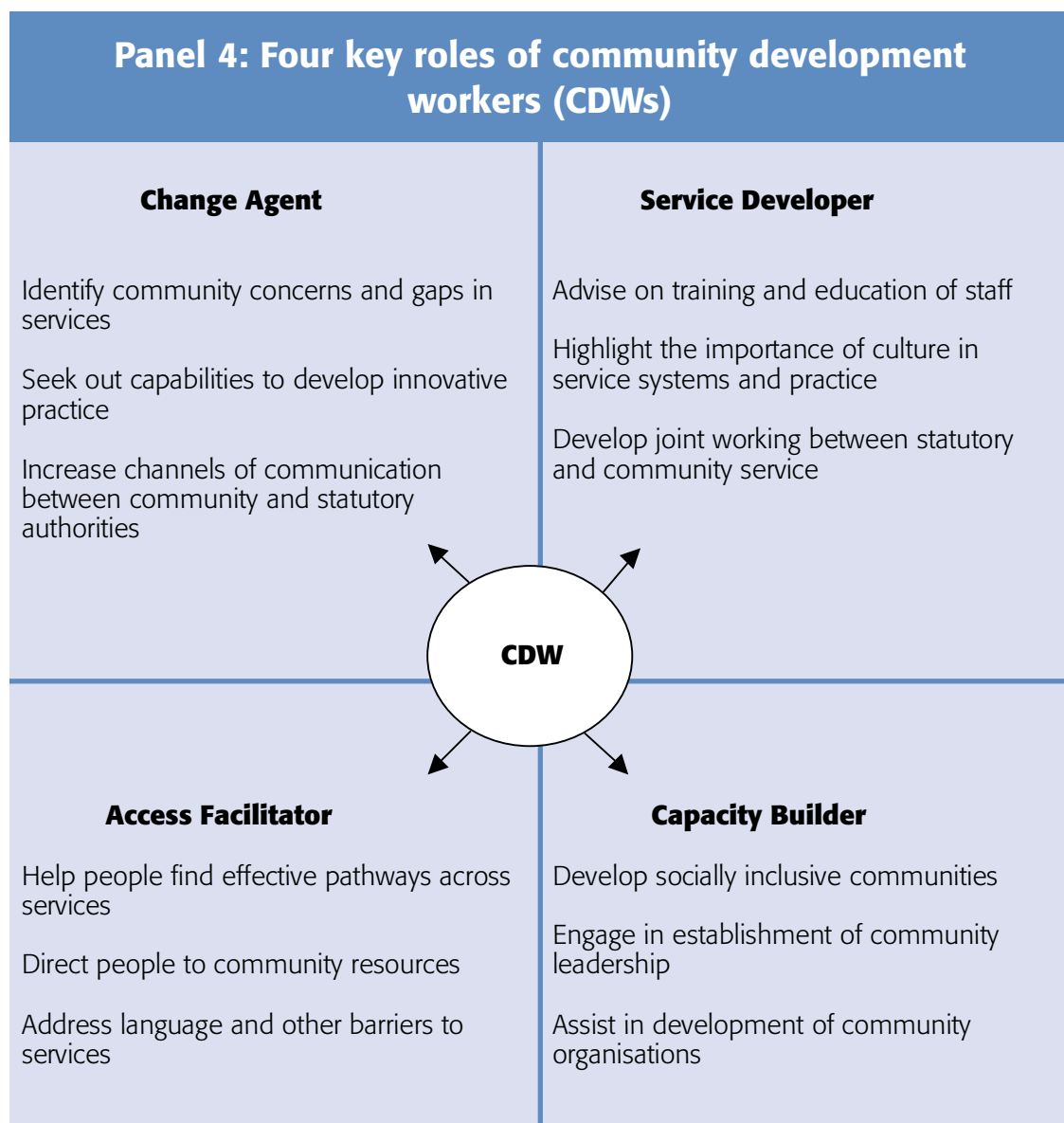
- identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- plan, organise and take action

- evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities.⁵

This is underpinned by a set of values, principles and roles. The main headings of the National Occupational standards (NOS) are shown in panel 3 and a more complete statement is in Appendix 1. Included in the detail is the important principle that 'communities do not have the right to oppress other communities'. Also clearly implied in the CD commitment to human rights, challenging oppression and tackling inequalities is the principle that communities, however defined, do not have the right to oppress their own members either.

In the NOS definition, 'communities' means networks of people linked by where they live or by other common concerns on which they may want to act together voluntarily. But CD also works with public authorities, services and agencies, to enable them to better understand, engage with and respond to communities. So a fuller definition would add: CD also works with public agencies to increase their ability to strengthen, engage with, respond to and work jointly with communities.

It is important to bear in mind this dual-facing role of CD, towards communities and towards agencies, in order to understand the actual tasks with which CD is confronted and the inevitable contrasts of perspective and sometimes tensions with which it has to deal. A different way of looking at the CD worker's role, giving the agency perspective more weight, was produced by the Department of Health and is shown, slightly adapted, in Panel 4.



(Department of Health 2004)⁶

What does community development do that other occupations don't do?

The principles of CD, taken individually, do not belong to CD alone. Many other professions – and individuals in the course of their daily lives – would claim to be pursuing some if not all of these same principles. So in a sense CD interweaves with professional, community and personal life in a way that makes it difficult to identify its boundaries and its specialist role in society. However, CD concentrates these together, and applies certain techniques to realise them, in a way which is rarely found at random. Let us illuminate this by identifying first what it is that CD does which other occupations don't do (the distinctive contribution of community development as set out in Panel 5), and then by giving some illustrations of CD in practice (Panels 6 to 9).

What distinguishes CD is that it pursues objectives in all six components illustrated in Panel 5, starting with the identification of key local issues and working through to assisting partnership between communities and public bodies. Even though specific pieces of work will, at a given time, focus on one or more of these components in particular, CD is always looking for ways to move the action on from one level to another and to maximise the outcomes of each level.

Let's look at this in practice. If we look at the case study of CD workers in Ashton, for example (see Panel 6), they were not merely mobilising volunteers. They were also building a complex network of relationships and interactions between all the residents, and between all the residents and the housing authority, and between both of these and the safety of the area, and between all these and the life chances of the children in the area. In Blyth Valley (see Panel 9) CD was not merely used to find ways to get more resources into the

area via the voluntary sector. It doubled the opportunities for social interaction, changed the culture of the local public services and turned around the economy of the locality.

The following panels also show community development workers:

- creating and facilitating opportunities for communities and local authorities to discuss strategies for addressing their needs
- identifying and supporting community members to take on more active and responsible roles
- helping organisations to establish informal networks and ensuring that they take on appropriate structures
- providing advice on constitutions, legal requirements and resourcing
- setting up and servicing strategic forums that bring together people and groups with a common agenda or similar life experiences.
- encouraging groups to think about people in their communities who find it more difficult to participate in their organisation, and helping organisations to change or to develop new activities and services that are more inclusive and accessible

Panel 5: The distinctive contribution of community

CD consists of six progressive components. These follow on from each other, building up a combined effect. Additionally each stage has authentic outcomes of its own. Other community practitioners may adopt one or more components in isolation. Only CD pursues the whole process through its six components.

Role	Outcome
1. Help people see that they have common concerns about local or other public issues and they could benefit from working on together under their own control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of isolation and alienation • Increase in social capital and co-operation
2. Help people to work together on those issues, often by forming or developing an independent community group, supporting them to plan and take actions, and encouraging evaluation and reflection as a way of improving effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation or improvement of bona-fide community groups • Increase of opportunities for activity in the community • More effective community activity
3. Support and develop independent groups across the community sector non-directively but within an ethical framework, and increase networking between groups	<p>Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community sector • Volunteering • Mutual aid and autonomous services • Learning between groups • Improvement in conditions in the locality
4. Promote values of equity, inclusiveness, participation and co-operation throughout this work	<p>Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Social capital • Co-operation • Community cohesion
5. Empower people and their organisations to influence and transform public policies and services and all factors affecting the conditions of their lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement and influence <p>Improvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue between community and authorities • Coherence and effectiveness of public policies
6. Advise and inform public authorities on community perspectives and assist them to strengthen communities and work in genuine partnership with them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of agencies, authorities and professions to engage with communities • Improvement in delivery of public services • Increased resources for the community sector

Panel 6: Reclaiming the neighbourhood

The Ashton regeneration area in Tameside consisted of blocks of terrace housing with gaps between them which had become degraded, vandalised and unsafe, to the extent that residents now largely stayed within their own homes and there was little community interaction. Council community development workers brought tenants together to look for solutions, which led to a widespread demand for 'alley-gating' at a time when this was a new and little-known option. This would need the consent of every resident in the relevant block. The CD workers located enthusiasts in each block and supported them in mobilising their neighbours and negotiating with the council and police for the installation of gates and the

reclamation and improvement of the common areas. The scheme gave residents a new feeling of control over their territory. There was a dramatic reduction of crime in these formerly vulnerable areas, and the newly protected spaces were turned into safe areas for play and leisure. Residents volunteered to take their turn in keeping watch on the areas, and there was a huge increase in resident interaction and volunteering, visibly building social capital. Within a short time there were five residents' associations where there had been none before.

(Getting Closer to Communities Beacon scheme, ODPM/ IdeA, 2005)

Panel 7: Negotiating together instead of getting lost in the system

'I work with about 30 refugee community organisations in Leeds... Most of the groups are very new and rely on people giving their free time. They don't have staff or office space. It's quite hard for the groups to survive...Refugees are often traumatised when they come here. They also have to learn about what's expected from community groups in this country... I support the groups with making sure the process of setting up is transparent and the constitution is OK. I also work with them to ensure they understand issues like women's rights and children's rights, because that situation might be very different in their home country. Maybe it's easier to hear that sort of thing from someone like me rather than someone from the council. I came here as a refugee myself so I understand some of the issues they face. One of the things I've done is help set up a Refugee Forum. The organisations now come together in a group and talk about their issues, what action they want to take and how to

make a strong voice... Many of the issues they face involve government or council policies. If you go as individuals or as an individual group you can get lost in the system and be dismissed... But you can make things happen through collective working. In the past the organisations were working alone. But now the forum is acting like a magnet – it's bringing ideas and resources together to help solve problems and improve services...We have strategic bodies at one level and communities and grassroots activity at another level. Community development work is somewhere in the middle. If you take that out, the structures will collapse, the issues which need to be addressed by the policy makers just won't reach them.'

(Mani Thapa, CD officer with Refugee Action. Adapted from CDX Information Sheet, Sheffield, CDX, June 2006)

Panel 8: Organisational development in the community sector

The Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF), a Department for Education and Skills (DfES)-funded programme, helped young people not in education, training or employment. It ran between 2000 and 2006 and was designed on the community development principle of building greater long-term capacity of community organisations as well as providing immediate benefits to the 50,000 young people who passed through the programme. Largely designed and managed by the Community Development Foundation, NSF was structured on the principle that medium-sized community-based organisations, not necessarily with any specific remit for youth work, could become effective stepping stones to get young people at risk back on a positive path by involving them in purposeful activity close to where they lived. Another important principle

was building the capacity of the community organisations to expand their interface with young people. The organisations were given enough resources to employ an extra worker, some near-at-hand help from a local VCS intermediary body, and guidance and sympathetic evaluation from the funding body. 520 projects were funded for three years, and 131 of the most effective for a further year. In addition to helping the young people many of the organisations mobilised many new volunteers, created new community activities and expanded their future plans to reach young people. Some also brought young people into the planning and management of the organisation itself.

(Based on Gavin Bailey, Neighbourhood Support Fund Evaluation, CDF, 2006)

Panel 9: A district-wide community development strategy with striking results

A new community development strategy played a central part in Blyth Valley achieving a remarkable turn-around of conditions and morale between 1995 and 2005. Following a period of shocks resulting from high unemployment, poor conditions and the deaths of a number of young people through drugs abuse, the council reshaped itself as 'a community based council'. Though only a district council with limited resources they took a holistic view of the needs of the locality, and invested £1m out of their £10m budget in CD, drawing in complementary resources from other authorities. 20 CD workers were employed to build up the capacity of the community in terms of its own socially productive activities and its engagement with the Council and other authorities. In parallel, the Council built up a 'hub and spoke' network of 25 community centres, at least one in each ward, as a focus for the community development process. The aim was to generate greater capacity of the community both to solve its own problems and to draw in extra resources.

The result over ten years was a doubling of the number of voluntary and community organisations from 300 to 600, with a corresponding doubling of volunteers. The danger of Blyth becoming

a stigmatised area after industrial decline and emergence of major social problems was averted. It changed from a low housing demand area to an area with demand for new housing and consequent investment by property companies, bringing further money into the area. The Council used the Section 106 housing receipts to create further community amenities, whilst the growth in the VCS also enabled it to bring in an extra £6.5m from external sources.

The 20 CD Workers were distributed across a number of thematic areas dealing with the main social issues, thus enabling the community to get maximum benefit not only from this council but from other providers – the county, police authority, PCT and others. The authority applied a CD approach to its corporate and service strategies: key staff were trained in the principles of community development which they then cascaded both through the authority and wider partnerships.

These achievements were recognised by the government awarding Beacon status to Blyth Valley Council for 'Getting closer to communities', 2005, from which this is drawn.

Overcoming fragmentation

Other forms of work in communities may use some of the components in Panel 5 (which can range from identification of concerns to impacting on public service delivery) for a limited purpose. A great deal of capacity building which takes place outside the CD framework is of this kind: capacity building of a certain organisation for service delivery; capacity building as training of staff or volunteers in a particular

skill, supporting a particular community group to fill a service gap; supporting another group in becoming a social enterprise. These are all useful contributions but they don't confront the overall development needs of communities. Community capacity building in the round, that is in a CD framework, sees any specific component as part of a larger and longer term development which ultimately contributes towards the empowerment of the population.

In fact the benefits of good CD are so varied and complex that it is can be very hard for theory to keep up with them. There is very little theory that captures its full complexity, and there is immense reliance on the creativity of activists, workers and managers. But by the same token, there is a great deal of work that claims to be CD which would not meet our description. Research into CD learning in London⁷ has found a wide variety of work taking place with communities but that 'although many respondents said they were undertaking community development, the vast majority of their work ... was either to increase individual skill levels ... or to improve the ways that groups organised... There were only a few organisations that were primarily concerned with working with communities to determine their own agendas and to take action to meet their own identified needs. Some ... staff with community development work in their title ... were handling grants and monitoring resources... The situation is not confined to London... There was a lot of training... linked to preparing voluntary organisations to take on a role in the delivery of public services.'

We have to wonder how much of the work of our estimated 20,000 CD workers in the UK is of this limited kind. Building and supporting particular skills or particular organisational improvements might be *part* of CD – indeed CD cannot take place without including these. The key question therefore is whether or not these practices are indeed functioning as components in a more rounded process driven by the priority of increasing communities' autonomy and power in a framework of equitable values.

This is not necessarily something that can be achieved by individual workers in isolation. It requires synergy and vision of CD across a locality. Possibly many of the people who are carrying out isolated pieces of work with communities *could* be doing CD if their work was reconfigured within a local CD strategy. This would be likely to

require new training, education, objectives and strategies not only for the workers but for their managers and agencies.

Outcomes

Some of the types of impact which CD has can be found in the case study panels six to nine:

- residents are brought together around common concerns, and create improvements in their neighbourhood
- dialogue is created between residents and authorities
- positive interaction is created between formerly isolated neighbours
- people learn new organising skills
- groups and organisations negotiate improvements for their members and other residents

And there are many secondary benefits: young people are helped by new community activities; refugees from different countries are helped to acclimatise to each other's cultures; crime is reduced; new amenities are established. People within different communities come together to tackle common problems.

It is precisely because of the wide ranging benefits that follow from CD that there is some confusion about results. Funders and policy-makers are tempted to prescribe the results they want, but this is to treat CD as if it was a simple top-down process like other forms of public provision – forms of provision which we have seen not working well without a CD component.

The point about CD is that it works from communities' own perceptions, problems and intentions – as mediated by the community development worker (a caveat to which we return below). *Specific* results

from working with a certain group therefore cannot be prescribed or predicted: *which* results emerge will depend on what turns out to be of most concern to a particular community or section of the community, and on surrounding conditions. But a CD strategy across a locality could predict that there would be increases in the level of participation in community groups, the effectiveness of groups in achieving their own objectives, and benefits for a range of public services from these complementary activities.

Addressing CD across a locality would have five important implications for funders and authorities:

- individual community initiatives must be allowed to find their own pathways
- it is the aggregate of CD results which is important across a neighbourhood or locality; and therefore
- investment in CD by an individual department or agency needs to be seen as part of a co-ordinated and long-term investment by all agencies in that locality
- there needs to be an arena where the overall and long-term view can be co-ordinated for the locality or area
- CD workers must have a remit which includes scope, time and resources for networking, cross-referral and participation in strategic planning

'Funding-led' versus 'Generic' community development

A perceived difference of perspective between 'funding-led' and 'generic' CD has produced much discussion and debate between CD activists and workers and public funders and authorities. At extremes, some funders will insist on building specific types of public policy outcome such as increased employment, educational

qualifications or health improvements into CD project objectives. Whilst CD workers will argue that only wholly 'generic' CD, with no presuppositions, is genuine. In practice there are workable compromises and there are also ways of judging success which don't violate CD method yet which contribute to public service objectives.⁸

Much CD is funded by a particular agency or department and is therefore concerned with some degree of specialist issue, be it health, housing, social welfare or any other. What matters then is whether the CD worker, at the point of interaction with local people, has some flexibility as to the breadth with which the issue can be interpreted. Equally important is whether there is good networking and scope for discussion between CD workers in that locality so that when issues come up that can't be dealt with under the specific heading, other CD help can be mobilised. And there are always such issues: community life, unlike that of institutions, is naturally joined up.

Whether CD is working well across a given locality therefore depends not only on whether there is sufficient CD help available but on whether the employing agencies and funders, in defining the CD workers' roles, have built in sufficient flexibility and networking to enable CD across the locality to build up synergy.

Studies of CD workers suggest this is often far from the case. CD workers often complain of isolation and of being managed in ways which thwart the necessary processes of CD. Agencies and organisations which have invested some resources in CD to address a particular issue may not grasp that it is what happens to the community as a whole that will largely determine whether there is success in the agency's particular issue, and that this – often very limited – investment in CD has to work as part of a network of investments by agencies across the board. This lack of synergy is wasteful. What are

needed are neighbourhood-wide, area-wide or locality-wide CD strategies. The aim would not be to regiment the different types of CD input but, recognising the necessary diversity, to provide a framework to join up different pieces of activity and allow the components to work together more effectively.

But the picture of how CD works is not complete without returning to our caveat: the process is community-led *as mediated by the community development worker*. The CD worker's judgement about community priorities, about what actions are best advised, what is most feasible, who is best fitted to speak for the community, what actions will best advance CD values and even who the community is, is itself a significant factor in the situation. Prevalent CD practice and guidance does not focus much on this component of the CD process. Numerous reports are presented simply in terms of 'what the community wants or needs', which are in fact complex (and necessary) judgements on the workers' part. This can be frustrating to funders, authorities or community members themselves, who want to be able to see what professional judgements were made. Differences of view which are sometimes expressed in terms of 'what the community wants' versus 'what the funder or authority wants' can be misleading.

Breakthrough on indicators

It has seemed at times that the necessary fluidity of CD method was impossible to reconcile with funders' requirements for specified outcomes. This led to something of an impasse whereby CD advocates insisted that the point of CD was 'process not product' whilst funders and authorities felt that they could not invest public money in a practice which refused to specify outcomes. This partly explains the historic standoff between funders and practitioners of CD whereby on the one hand, there seemed to be agreement that CD is a long-

term process with major objectives to change the whole of society for the better, whilst on the other, most funding has been short term and 'experimental'.

The introduction of indicators in this field has opened up the prospect of a much more positive relationship. By taking a strategic view of a whole neighbourhood or locality, and of all CD inputs from all sources into that locality, one can say, without compromising communities' own choices, that a certain investment of CD over a certain period of time should show measurable improvement on such things as:

- whether people feel they can influence what goes on around them
- whether people feel their locality is one in which people from different backgrounds can get on well together
- amounts of voluntary activity
- numbers of community groups and numbers of people involved in them
- range of public issues tackled by community groups
- numbers of people benefiting from the activities of community groups
- numbers of people who become skilled in local organising and representing community interests.⁹

Some indicators of this kind are now embedded in official guidance on Local Area Agreements and local authority Best Value Performance Indicators in England.¹⁰

This still leaves much to be done in terms of linking specific practice with verifiable outcomes, but it opens the way to a new kind of understanding between funders and practitioners. No-one pretends that a few headline indicators capture the whole intentions and impact of a complex practice

like CD, any more than exam results capture the whole significance of education or hospital waiting times capture the whole process of health. An indicator merely indicates a single central factor in a complex process. It cannot prove that changes are *solely* due to CD, any more than changes in health or education are solely due to the education and health institutions. But it anchors some of the main intentions of the practice in a publicly visible way which tells you whether things are moving in the right direction. The absence of CD indicators until recently, at a time when they have been adopted in all other social policy areas, has severely held back strategy and investment and, arguably, the effectiveness of practice.

The introduction of indicators in CD needs to be followed through with some changes in the time-honoured ways that advocates promote and defend this field. We must learn to talk of process *and* product. We must learn to qualify 'it's a long-term process' by adding 'but there are measurable milestones along the way'. We must 'own' and promote the indicators and learn how to use them. We must develop the input and output measures which will link specific practice to these generic outcomes. We must link up across localities to present the outcomes of successful practice in these quantifiable terms as well as in descriptive terms. And – perhaps hardest of all – we must be willing to question and change practice if it turns out *not* to be producing effects that advance our declared values.

Who does community development?

National surveys: provision across sectors

A UK-wide survey of community development workers was carried out in 2003-4¹¹ and a 'drill down' in six contrasting local areas in England was carried out in 2005.¹² These together provide the picture summarised in Panel 10.

One of the interesting facts brought out by these surveys was the spread of CD workers between the voluntary and community sector and public authorities. Most workers were found in the VCS but almost as many in public authorities, mainly local authorities. And many of those in the VCS were funded through public authorities or government programmes. This poses the question of whether there might be important differences between what workers do, and can do, in these different settings. Does CD done from different bases, organisations and departments within a given area add up to more than the sum of its parts? To what extent is there synergy between these different efforts?

Local strategies – building up evidence

CD national umbrella organisations have not up to now done a great deal to address this question of how to create comprehensive local CD strategies, the case for which is highlighted in our previous chapter. (A notable exception is

the Strategic Framework for Community Development, developed and published by CDX, formerly the Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD), and which has been drawn on in many of those CD strategies which do exist). A scan of the CD literature shows a predominant interest in how the individual worker, or an individual project, should or did carry out CD. And, a considerable body of material about core CD principles and concepts. But, little about how CD strategy could address the needs of a whole neighbourhood or locality and all its different groups and contributory CD streams, and how these should relate to the full spectrum of public services.

In the absence of such strategies, policies like the Single Regeneration Budget, Neighbourhood Renewal, New Deal for Communities and Local Strategic Partnerships have all generated considerable CD resources and projects, but have done so largely in a random, scattergun, stop-start way which leaves most local CD operators less powerful and effective than they should be.

Our Blyth Valley example (Panel 9) is exceptional as a documented source of a coordinated local strategy with documented long-term results, though a number of other local authorities, and perhaps some VCS umbrella bodies, may have similar material within their own organisations. There is now a need to bring together evidence, ideas and models for building such strategies.

Panel 10: Provisional profile of the CD occupation

The following figures are estimates based on limited samples and background information.

(i) From Peter Taylor/Gabriel Chanan, *Who Are the Capacity Builders* (summary edition), CDF 2006:

Paid community development workers across the UK: 20,000 (fulltime equivalent). Much of this work is community capacity building (CCB).

About 70% of the total funding is from statutory sources. Other sources include housing associations, faith organisations and independent funders.

A conservative estimate of the cost of paid community development nationally is approximately £350m, of which about £245m would be borne by government (including local government and other local agencies).

CDWs are the main people carrying out CCB but around a quarter of CCB is being provided as small components in work by other professionals.

In six case study areas there were the full time equivalent of 45 CCB jobs, for a combined population of 88,000. This was an average of 7.5 per neighbourhood of about 15,000 people, or 1 per 2,000 people. But there was a dramatic contrast between the most heavily invested area (East Manchester) and the others. Eliminating East Manchester produces a figure of 21 full-time equivalent CCB workers for 70,000 people, equivalent to 1 per 3,300 people.

Six main types of agency employ workers with a hands-on CCB remit: local authorities; social landlords; other public bodies; local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations; VCS infrastructure organisations; and other voluntary organisations.

(ii) From Andy Glen et al, *Survey of CD Workers in the UK*, CDF/CDX 2004:

These figures are from a 'snowball' sample of approximately 2,800 respondents to a widely circulated national invitation to CD workers to respond to the survey:

80% of respondents who were paid CDWs were full time, 20% part time.

39% of paid CDWs were in short-term posts.

42% of CDWs were employed in the statutory sector (many in local authorities), 53% in the voluntary and community sector, and 5% in private or mixed sector bodies.

83% of CDWs were white, 17% black, minority ethnic or of dual heritage.

About half of CCB work is flexible across all types of community groups and half focused on particular target groups related to an agency priority.

Community development in local authorities

It is in local authorities if anywhere that one would expect to find a more co-ordinated approach to CD. To some extent this turns out to be the case. Some local authorities have fairly substantial CD teams and local CD planning processes. However these have been very little drawn on in national CD debate. Indeed, there have been very

part of the Together We Can initiative. They are therefore not a typical cross-section of LAs but provisionally illustrate the state of practice amongst some LAs that claim to be *most committed* to CD.

The work done by CD units in these authorities covered a wide range of assistance to community groups, individuals and organisations, from bringing people together to establish common issues through organisational development for experienced groups to technical assistance

Panel 11: Investment in CD by local authorities with a significant CD commitment

34 Local authorities were approached and 12 detailed responses were obtained, from: Aberdeen; Burgess Hill (Surrey); Harlow; Ipswich; Newcastle; Middlesbrough; LB Newham; Sheffield; Slough; South Somerset; LB Southwark; Tameside. 15 Local authorities came to a seminar to compare and discuss findings:

Total number of CD workers employed by the 12 authorities: 229.

188 of these (71%) were described as 'generic', i.e. not issue-limited.

153 of the workers (63%) were employed in dedicated CD teams or units, 76 (37%) were members of other units or departments.

Total cost of employing these workers: £5,157,000 p.a.

Resources for CD increasing: 4 authorities (34%) holding steady: 5 authorities; (41%) declining: 3 authorities (25%)

Location of CD in the authority structure: strategic position e.g. CE: 4; (34%) regeneration or community safety: 3 (25%); other department: 2 (17%); cross-department or area teams: 2 (17%)

CD perceived as: well integrated with council as a whole: 6 (50%); fairly well integrated: 3 (25%); marginalised: 1 (8%)

Involved in LAA process: 5¹³

few external or comparative studies of CD in local authorities which would bring this activity to light. We therefore carried out a brief pilot study as part of the present initiative to get information about the level of CD provision. Key findings are summarised in panel 11.

The Local Authorities (LAs) in this limited sample were largely identified through the Civic Pioneer network of LAs which form

for community representatives on major partnerships. It is not clear whether all this work could be counted as CD in the rounded sense which we have depicted in Panel 5. The picture as to whether CD provision was increasing or declining was mixed.

It is notable that the Local Government Association's vision for the future¹⁴ (2006)

is very much in tune with the need for partnership between people and authorities, including the need for building social capital and working with the VCS – but not explicitly recognising the key role of CD in making this happen.

By its nature CD carried out from within VCS organisations is more diverse and less easily profiled, and we don't have a comparable picture of it at this time, but would hope to make it a priority to compile one in a second phase of the CD2 initiative.

Challenges and obstacles

The challenges and obstacles facing community development can be divided into four main areas:

- the **attributes of the occupation** itself, i.e. the nature of the work undertaken and its lack of current standing
- the **resourcing** of the occupation, in terms of funding and organisational position
- **support and development** for the occupation, in terms of training, continuing professional development and support networks
- linking for impact: the need for **strategic co-ordination across localities**, and links at regional and national levels

Attributes of the occupation

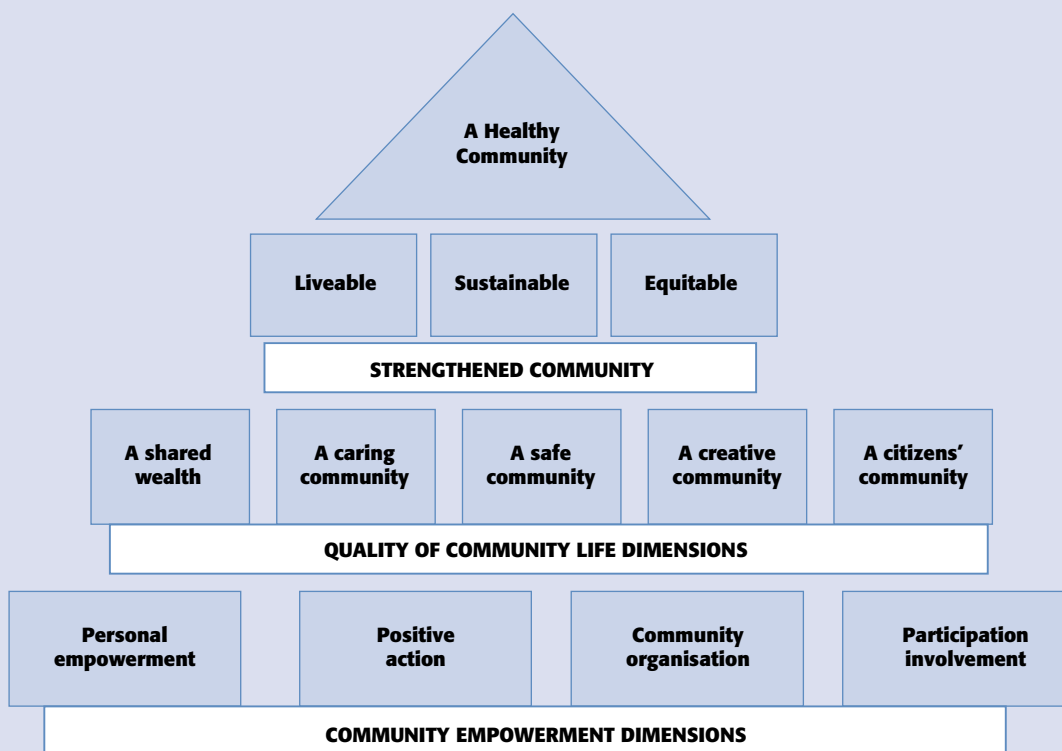
The scope of community development

Much of the positive social change and participation that is being achieved in society now is being achieved with the help of community development. But for reasons which we have set out above, CD achievement is often hidden, and it is likely that CD is not being used by funders, policy-makers and managers as effectively as it might be. If the need for community cohesion and participation in public affairs is becoming even more acute than ever before, how can we ensure that CD is widely understood and used to maximum effect?

One of the prominent features of New Labour's social policy language is a much enlarged role attributed to communities and neighbourhoods in running their own affairs and engaging with public services and local issues. But it still remains unclear how far this enhanced role for communities is expected to happen spontaneously, how much simply as a result of changed attitudes and practices amongst LAs and public services, and how far it requires specific stimulus and knitting together by CD practitioners.

The relative harmony of current government language with CD principles masks a number of uncertainties on both sides. Principally, it is not clear either in government policy or in CD theory what the specific role of CD as an occupation or a set of methods needs to be in order to achieve the social vision currently shared by government policy and CD values. In principle CD is an instrument serving a comprehensive vision of a better society, as depicted notably in the 'Achieving Better Community Development' framework, Panel 12.¹⁵ In practice CD is a number of projects and initiatives, scattered in the VCS and various public agencies. Can CD practice be deployed in such a way as, interweaving with all the other necessary public services, to produce the kind of society it envisages?

Panel 12: The Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD) framework



(Alan Barr and Stuart Hashagen 2000, ABCD Handbook, London, Community Development Foundation)

Community development 'invisibility'

Ironically CD itself inadvertently feeds the widespread notion that communities, including disadvantaged communities, will spontaneously play a much larger role in local society and development if they are simply 'allowed' to do so. A main tenet of CD practice is for the practitioner to be an 'enabler' and 'facilitator', not a leader. The validity of practice is vested in helping groups of people in communities to pursue *their own* goals, not those of the worker or agency. The conscientious and skilled CD worker works in the background, so that the members of the community concerned can build confidence and skills and take ownership and leadership of group actions and achievements.

One result of this professional ethos is that the CD role is hidden from view. Often only the core members of a community organisation know how crucial the work of the CD worker has been in their development. The result is that whilst there are now thousands of examples of successful community initiatives in disadvantaged areas which owe their existence to CD, from setting up clubs and societies, securing funding and mobilising volunteering to acquiring new amenities and influencing local service delivery, very little of the CD function is documented. Even reports written by CD workers themselves for their employing agencies or funders characteristically submerge their own role in that of the group.

Managing tensions

Other factors compound the hesitation of public authorities to commit themselves wholeheartedly to CD. As disadvantaged communities begin to gain confidence and assert themselves, they frequently go through a stage of becoming more articulate in their grievances against whatever authorities they have to deal with. In mature CD theory and practice there is a well recognised journey from powerlessness through blame and protest to confidence, responsibility, negotiation and partnership. But this requires on the one hand that CD workers are very skilled and far-seeing, and on the other that authorities themselves have an understanding of this process and do not react to the initial stages with denial or repression. Lacking far-sightedness and an understanding of community development processes, politicians and officials, both local and national, may prefer evasion to development.

It is endemic to CD practice to face tensions between different pressures:

- Between the practices and procedures of local or national government, which may be funding CD workers, and the wishes of people in their neighbourhoods and parishes
- Being employed by an authority to support and empower groups which may, in the course of their growth, need to be critical of the authority

This requires much from the CD worker:

- Balance and the ability to moderate seemingly opposed viewpoints in the longer term interests of both parties
- Keeping an eye on the bigger picture whilst empathising with people's immediate and detailed problems

- Getting people who are isolated, frightened and depressed because of awful social conditions to work together precisely to change those conditions
- Getting people for whom the public authorities represent a threat, whether of policing, landlord or social services, to see themselves as contributing to the governance of those very authorities
- Keeping hold of a long-term sense of optimism whilst working with people who feel crushed by immediate short-term obstacles
- Reconciling the exploratory aims of a group in a state of development with the pre-set demands of some funding schemes

Resourcing the occupation

Scattergun funding

It is quite often specific individual enthusiasts within front line agencies or funding bodies who realise the need for CD. This can vary from voluntary organisations like the Children's Society or Age Concern, and local VCS infrastructure bodies like Councils of Voluntary Service, to particular departments of local authorities, units of central government or philanthropic funding bodies like the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is these people who have realised that CD contains the kinds of practice and philosophy which could reconcile their organisations' strategic aims with spontaneous, half-emergent motivations by local residents.

This 'organic' growth of CD champions helps to explain the fragmentary pattern of CD provision. There have also been some significant government programmes which adopted CD on a more strategic scale, notably the participation section of Neighbourhood Renewal. But even now,

while the underlying ideas of CD and its values can be found in a wide variety of avenues of government social policy, the relationship between those aims and investment in CD remains unclear.

Thus CD workers are found embedded in all sorts of different settings and service areas. The largest number are found perhaps in the realm of housing, whether in local authority housing departments, housing associations or Tenant Management Organisations, due to the fact that tenants as a body need very accessible communication channels. Other workers using a CD approach are tackling needs ranging from people with mental health issues, Black and Minority Ethnic communities and women's health to traveller communities, elderly people in rural areas, the regeneration of ex-coalfield areas and even the isolation of families on airforce bases. Defra's 'Every Action Counts' programme (originally 'CA2020'), the community-oriented part of the government's sustainable development strategy, is an interesting variant where government has chosen to use community organisations and CD workers as a vehicle for a national/global objective.

Funding community development and funding the community sector: the key relationships and differences

It is important to be clear about the relationship between funding for community development and funding for the community sector (community groups and organisations). These are two quite different things which need to work together but which don't substitute for each other. Community groups need both some funding of their own – usually quite modest compared with the work which they themselves put in – and help from CD workers. Sometimes funding for community groups may include the costs of buying in CD help. More often their funding is for basic operational costs whilst the CD help – if any – comes from a separate source, such as a local authority CD unit, a VCS CD

project or an independent funder, providing assistance to a range of local groups. Indeed, one of the key forms of assistance which CD workers give to community groups is advice on getting funding for their general operation.

Studies carried out for Funding South West show that funding advice is crucial to community groups but needs to be integrated with advice on all-round development to work well: 'In areas where there is not significant funding advice and limited capacity building, VCS development, including the number of groups, the range of issues they cover, and their accessibility and effectiveness are much more limited... An approach which combines capacity building and organisational development with funding advice appears highly productive... New and small to medium sized organisations, especially disadvantaged groups... may need substantial locally available help to get "fit for funding" thus becoming more self managing and sustainable, and able to deliver positive outcomes for their beneficiaries and the wider community'.¹⁶

Current trends in the funding of the community sector

There is a growing acceptance of the idea that community organisations should become more independent by acquiring buildings, or long term management of them¹⁷, and/or by becoming social enterprises. The government has asked Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, to chair a review of the powers and policies necessary to overcome barriers to the management and ownership of assets by community organisations. Proposals for the use of unclaimed bank assets for good causes have been framed in the form of providing revolving loans to voluntary and community organisations¹⁸.

These ideas are exciting and promising for a certain stratum of organisations which Stephen Thake calls 'groundbreaking,

wealth-creating, multipurpose organisations that provide an important anchor role for the communities they serve¹⁹. But it is vital to see this part of the discussions and debate about how the community and voluntary sector can develop in proportion. The asset building/social enterprise/loan-raising route applies to organisations whose objective is to provide services that can be paid for. It is not viable or appropriate for the great majority of community groups, whose role is primarily mutual aid and representing community interests.

Some groups may be able to combine the roles of representing community concerns and owning local assets. For others, as for Tenant Management Organisations, there may be an important role in managing assets which remain in the ownership of a public authority. Many other groups, however, perform equally vital roles which don't involve physical assets, and where the handling of physical assets would be a burden and distraction. They still need some basic operational funding. This funding may sometimes be 'seedcorn' for development (the only kind specifically recommended in *Firm Foundations*²⁰) but there is often a genuine ongoing need for funding, just as mainstream public services are. The difference is that the funding of community groups, even if it were done much more adequately and systematically, would still remain a tiny charge on the public purse compared with the cost of any mainstream public service. For this very reason, funding of community groups is often regarded as the most marginal and expendable line in a public authority's budget. Yet it is by far the most economical way for society to ensure high levels of social capital. Considering the role of these groups in meeting needs which could otherwise impact much more expensively on mainstream services, the withholding of such grants is a wholly false economy.

Worryingly, the discourse on assets and loans has tended to be accompanied by assumptions about 'weaning community

groups and organisations off grant dependency'. The community sector is actually the least grant-dependent part of the sector, consisting overwhelmingly of members' own labour. Grants for small groups are vital to help the community sector function and grow – including a limited number who do want to go down the asset/enterprise route – but this part of the sector is and always has been fundamentally self-reliant, as is echoed in the whole ethos of community development. Some local authorities and other bodies have used the social enterprise debate as a cover for reducing or closing down grant regimes for community groups. Ironically, it is often rents and fees from these groups that are being relied upon by the building-based groups to earn enough to service their loans.

Training, support and development for the occupation

Research by FCDL²¹ shows that genuine CD training and education, reflecting the fully rounded sense of CD defined in this report, is not widely available. This sparsity is masked by a considerable amount of training and education in separate skills and techniques for working with communities which may be called community development or have some similarities but lack the essential values and depth. In London and in Yorkshire and the Humber the information gathered about CD courses was mapped against the national framework mentioned earlier. 'In the whole of London there were only 13 taster sessions being run that we could see that were related to CD work – we would have expected to find that kind of amount and range within each borough... There are no National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessment centres for CD within London.' National Open College Network CD awards were only found to be available in three boroughs. Six universities or higher education colleges were offering some form of relevant degree.

A similar picture was found in Yorkshire and the Humber with some degree programmes and pockets of lower level qualification programmes, no NVQ centres and few opportunities for in-depth training.

Foundation degrees may be a particularly useful vehicle in this field, and there are some promising new initiatives at this level in some parts of the country.

Possibly some of the variety of existing training in isolated community skills could be developed into CD education. To achieve this it would need to be linked to the driving features of CD, namely long-term and all-round development of communities' own strengths and empowerment led by their own priorities and guided by the core CD values. It cannot be assumed that this will happen automatically. Major new CD training and education initiatives are needed to ensure the effective implementation of the learning and qualifications framework. The Academy for Sustainable Communities, set up in 2005 to guide training and learning to support the sustainable communities agenda, should also play an influential role here.

The community activist route into community development

Entry to the CD profession has always included a special route via community activity. This is a distinctive feature of CD which is not available in other professions. At the heart of the CD occupation is close working with those people in a community who, even under the pressure of disadvantaged conditions, can work to a wider vision and longer term goal in the common interest. People who embody this experience gain a profound understanding of the empowerment process because they have been through it themselves. However such people may lack formal qualifications and so be unable to access higher education and qualifications for the kind of

employment that their skills warrant. They may also need additional skills to be able to generalise from their experience to people in other situations.

Community development networking

Another aspect of training and education in this field is the importance of networking and in-service education. Community development workers use networking as a way of improving their own knowledge and skills and co-ordinating their work with others. This is important at both local, regional and national levels. Networking is also a way for communities themselves to gather information and develop working relationships with other communities, voluntary groups and statutory bodies²².

There are a number of self-created local networks of CD practitioners, many of which are supported with information and advice from CDX (the Community Development Exchange) and who in turn feed into CDX's role as the 'voice' for the occupation in relation to national policy. However, there are likely to be many other workers who are out of the reach of support networks.

There is also an increasing need for networking of CD interests at regional level (in England) to make links with government and European policies which are applied through Government Offices of the Regions, Regional Development Agencies and other regional bodies.

Regional CD Networks in England began to be established in 2001 and 2002. Their objectives are to:

- enable better understanding, promotion and influence of the core community development values

- develop crucial specialist CD infrastructure and support and encourage the formation of local, area and sub regional community development fora and networks
- develop regional structures to enable the linking of the local, area and sub regional issues and concerns to regional and national policy and decision-making structures, concentrating on issues of information provision, networking activities, challenge and change, and policy summaries
- encourage and enable the policy-practice-development loop
- encourage the joining up of and maximising of funding streams to better support the work of community development
- promote the greater use of grass roots training to contribute to the building of enhanced skills and expertise of local people empowering them to challenge, participate in and change local communities
- share information and assist the process of bringing together a fragmented sector, including offering buddying, learning sets, e-mail groups, in-depth workshops and peer information and advice for experienced CD workers as well as those coming into the sector from other disciplines or the activist route who need to acclimatise

Three of the English regions have functioning CD networks which support practice through regular sessions exploring current issues and policies, and there are serious efforts by a newly created English Regions Steering Group to stimulate development in the other six regions.

Such activity will enable local CD workers to carry out their work more effectively and support the growth of local networks. Regional networks are currently seeking

their own distinct funding to enable them to develop and offer adequate support to local ones.

Strategic coordination across localities

A community capacity building framework

We mentioned earlier, in relation to policy, that the nearest government has got to having an overarching CD policy is the 'community capacity building framework' presented in *Firm Foundations* (Home Office, 2004). This could be a vital stepping stone towards more effective and strategic CD. But it is only an outline, and needs some adjustment and filling-in of key points in order to make it effective.

Firm Foundations firstly points out that numerous government objectives 'depend on the involvement of citizens and communities and therefore on successful efforts to build people's capacity to become involved'.

Much public policy that seeks engagement *assumes* the existence of a coherent community that can be engaged, and focuses only on quite 'high level' local authority-wide structures such as a Local Strategic Partnership or Local Area Agreement as channels for engagement. These may cover a population of up to a quarter of a million. CD experience shows that the connectedness, motivations and citizenship skills of people need building up through relationships, organisations and networks at much more local levels in order to link with such structures.

However, even a community that is densely-connected within itself doesn't *necessarily* become engaged with public authorities, services and local democracy in an active way. Again, CD is often necessary to facilitate those links, both upwards and downwards. With government and local government

determined to enhance the role and effectiveness of ward councillors as community leaders, this is also the right time for CD to expand its attention to creating better synthesis between participative and representative democracy, including urging people to make more use of their local voting power, which is often chronically underused in disadvantaged areas.

Firm Foundations identifies five factors that need to be in place at neighbourhood, parish or small town level to ensure that communities can function cohesively (the numbering is ours):

1. A meeting space or base (sometimes called a hub) which is available, welcoming and accessible to all...
2. Access to seedcorn funding, most often small grants or community chests...
3. Access to support provided by workers with community development skills (and) ...values. The critical element is ... to start from the goals and needs that communities and groups define for themselves...
4. A forum or network that is deliberately inclusive, open and participatory, owned by and accountable to the community...
5. Learning opportunities to equip people for active citizenship and engagement...'

Firm Foundations sees these coming about by 'adopting a community development approach' and pursuing four types of action:

1. Building up learning opportunities about active citizenship and community engagement, both for individuals, groups and public agencies

2. Developing community 'anchor organisations' – organisations embedded in neighbourhoods which are naturally suited to carry out most of the *Firm Foundations* functions
3. Local action planning to link organic community activity and statutory mechanisms
4. Better collaboration between 'those who support community capacity building' at local, regional and national levels

Firm Foundations is a long way from being a practical plan, especially as it had no funding programme attached to it. It also contains a number of loopholes through which good intentions may fall. The coming wave of local government reform could provide the channel for turning these recommendations into a reality.

Building a strategic local approach

The last of the four *Firm Foundations* 'actions' (better collaboration, point 4 above) needs to be the starting point for redoubling the impact of community development. Collaboration at regional level is gradually growing, and will be boosted by the regionalisation of Together We Can. Collaboration at national level (initially in England but with UK and European links) is also growing, and the present report is an outcome of that. But it is collaboration at local level which will make the most impact on people's lives and conditions.

Local collaboration should focus on establishing a co-ordinated approach to local community development in every principal local authority area. This should be part of the Sustainable Community Strategy, integrated with the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreements. It should link particularly with the 'Safer and Stronger communities' part of the LAA but identified clearly as cross-cutting **all** social

issues not merely as being a support to safer communities. The approach should encompass CD across the local authority, other public bodies and the VCS.

Local co-ordination of community development would not mean complete integration. Different public agencies would retain different objectives for their use of CD, and CD carried out by VCS organisations would contribute its independent strengths. Local co-ordination should mean co-operation in such ways as:

- pooling information to establish a comprehensive map of the **need** for community capacity building across the locality
- mapping existing **provision** by all community capacity building providers, both statutory and VCS
- providing evidence to funders and agencies of the long term value of CCB and advising them on models for more **sustained and consistent funding**
- jointly considering **redeployment or rationalisation** of provision to fill gaps
- seeking additional **resources** to fill gaps which can't be met by rationalisation amongst existing providers
- mapping **issues** covered, including where community capacity building is generic and where it is issue-specific, and seeking ways to fill gaps in issues covered
- establishing common or reciprocal objectives and organising **networking and cross-referral** to maximise impact
- agreeing ways to capture **outcomes**, and linking the mandatory indicators of 'strong communities' in LAAs with other community capacity building objectives, processes and measures

- agreeing steps to bring all **practice** up to the standard of the best

The current reforms in local government and other major public services cover of course a much wider canvas than community development alone, incorporating a wide range of participatory mechanisms and changes in institutional culture. But without CD many of these mechanisms and changes may lie dormant or fail to achieve their objectives, especially for people in disadvantaged situations. The current wave of reform presents a huge challenge to community development to deploy its methods more fully than ever before, and to government and all its agencies to support and enable it to perform this role by a more strategic approach to what they ask CD to do, how they fund it, and how they respond to the new level of citizen participation which a more concerted CD role will stimulate.

Conclusion: a vision to deliver community development more effectively

We conclude this report with a set of vision statements, of which the aim is:

to map a route to create an effective, valued, strategic, recognised and sustainable community development sector

We identify five aspects of the vision and a number of steps towards achieving them.

Panel 13: Five aspects of a community development vision

- 1. Role and status of the occupation**
Community development is promoted as a nationally recognised occupation with a clear basis in values, methods and outcomes
- 2. Local and regional coordination**
A strategic approach to community development operates across each local area, with appropriate regional and national links
- 3. Funding**
Community development funding is adequate to achieve and maintain a step change in the level of community strengths and empowerment across the nation and especially in disadvantaged areas
- 4. Management and practice**
Community development is managed and delivered to the highest standards
- 5. Training, education and recruitment**
High quality community development training is available in each region at all levels and in different ways to suit the needs of new and experienced practitioners and talented new entrants are recruited

Key partners and stakeholders

In order to realise this vision, many partners would need to be involved. Some points clearly require action by a specific stakeholder, but many others require action on several fronts. Key actors would include:

National

National government, especially Communities and Local Government, Office of the Third Sector (in Cabinet Office), Department for Education and Skills, Department of Health, DEFRA and others

Regional

Regional government and agencies, especially Government Offices of the English Regions, Regional Development Agencies, the Regional Centres of Excellence in Regeneration, Regional Community Development Networks, and Regional warden training centres

Local

- Local people, communities, community groups and voluntary organisations
- Local authorities and their partners in Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements, especially local VCS umbrella bodies and 'anchor' organisations
- Local area forums and neighbourhood bodies
- Housing Associations
- Primary Care Trusts
- Police Authorities

Funders

- All of the above institutions
- Independent funders

The CD occupation

- National bodies for community development
- Community development managers
- Community development practitioners and other people using a community development approach
- Local, regional and national networks of voluntary and community groups
- Voluntary activists carrying out CD roles

Educational institutions

- Universities and colleges involved in community development
- Community development training providers both nationally and locally
- The Academy for Sustainable Communities

The detailed recommendations follow.

The recommendations

1. Role and status of the occupation

Vision: Community development should be promoted as a nationally recognised occupation with a clear basis in values, methods and outcomes.²³

To be achieved by the following steps:

(a) Government, national CD bodies, local authorities, Regional CD Networks and other stakeholders should recognise that in order to be authentic and effective community development work needs to include all of the six components identified in this report, namely:

- helping people find common cause on issues that affect them

- helping people work together on such issues under their own control
- building the strengths and independence of community groups, organisations and networks
- building equity, inclusiveness, participation and cohesion amongst people and their groups and organisations
- empowering people and their organisations where appropriate to influence and help transform public policies and services and other factors affecting the conditions of their lives
- advising and informing public authorities on community needs, viewpoints and processes and assisting them to strengthen communities and work in genuine partnership with them

(b) Government and other stakeholders should recognise community development as an integral component in the delivery of good public services and local governance.

(c) Government and CD organisations should put in place research which builds a picture of the impact and outcomes of CD work from given baselines, with evidence of the cumulative effects over long periods and examples of milestones which can be achieved over shorter periods, including the benefits for different public services and policy areas.

2. Local and regional coordination

Vision: A strategic approach to community development should operate across each local area, with appropriate regional and national links.

To be achieved by the following steps:

(a) The sustainable community strategy in each local authority area should include a strategic approach to CD across the locality,

linking input from all providers, both statutory, independent and VCS, and forming a strong theme in Local Area Agreements and the Local Strategic Partnership.

(b) The stronger communities element in Safer and Stronger Communities should be seen as a distinct component affecting all issues, not merely a sub-issue of 'safer', and agencies working on all social issues should contribute to the empowerment of communities.

(c) Local and regional community development networks should be established or strengthened and co-operation between agencies using CD should be encouraged. This should include funding of strong local and regional networks to work in parallel, improving effectiveness and morale.

(d) The *Firm Foundations* framework for community capacity building should be adopted in each locality, with community development as a driving feature and empowerment as an explicit objective .

(e) Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies should adopt a strategic approach to community development within their region, linking with Regional Community Development Networks, Regional Centres of Excellence in Regeneration, Local Skills Councils, Warden Training Centres and other suitable bodies, and considering community development when developing regional strategies, including sustainable economic strategies.

3. Funding

Vision: Community development funding should be adequate to achieve and maintain a major step change in the level of community strengths and empowerment across the nation and especially in disadvantaged areas.

To be achieved by the following steps:

(a) Government, local government and other public agencies should commit themselves to long term structures for funding community development, not necessarily incurring new costs but by reviewing and reorganising the way CD is continually 'reinvented' in disparate funding streams with short term objectives.

(b) All policies which invoke community empowerment or rely on community engagement should have a built-in margin of their budget allocated to CD/ community capacity building.

(c) Local authorities should maintain ample small grants regimes (both 'seedcorn' as recommended by *Firm Foundations* and long-term), particularly for community groups for whom social enterprise and asset building are not appropriate or viable.

(d) In recognition of their significant contribution, independent funders should be assisted in understanding the value that community development brings to delivery of projects, and a guide for independent funders should be produced to aid this building of understanding.

(e) National community development bodies should develop a guide for public funders to assist good practice, co-ordination of funding from different sources, longer timescales, appropriate criteria and evaluation, and realistic outcome expectations for different types of funding, and models for ways in which funding from different sources could fit together at local level.

4. Management and practice

Vision: Community development should be managed and delivered to the highest standards

To be achieved by the following steps:

(a) Models for practice should cover the six components identified in recommendation 1(a) above and make use of the National Occupational Standards as amplified in this report.

(b) A management guide to community development should be developed, taking account of the varied contexts in which CD workers are employed, including situations where there is little CD management expertise.

(c) Management training modules should be developed for CD team leaders within local authorities, housing associations, the VCS and other agencies and projects.

(d) Norms should be established for CD units, projects and practitioners to collect, as a routine part of their work, evidence of input and impact using recognised criteria, distinguishing CD input and the value added to outcomes by CD, and relating to the relevant indicators in performance management frameworks.

(e) Visioning, benchmarking and self evaluation systems such as Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD) and Learning, Evaluation, Action and Planning (LEAP) should be widely used.

(f) Best practice models and case studies should be drawn together and disseminated.

5. Training, education and recruitment

Vision: High quality community development training should be available in each region at all levels and in different ways, to suit the needs of new and experienced practitioners, and talented new entrants should be recruited.

To be achieved by the following steps:

(a) Employers of community development workers should develop appropriate job description and person specifications for recruitment. Pre-requisites should include both an understanding of the theory and practice underpinning community development and paid or unpaid experience as a community development worker.²⁴

(b) National umbrella organisations, Regional CD Networks and training and education providers should refresh and further promote the National Occupational Standards, adding recognition of the CD role within public agencies, and further mobilise and disseminate quality-assured training at a variety of levels from 'tasters', through accredited programmes at levels 1-3, to degrees and postgraduate qualifications.

(c) National CD organisations and training and education providers should review CD training in terms of recruitment, curricula and qualifications, drawing on the framework for CD learning developed in 2004.²⁵

(d) All CD practitioners and potential recruits to the occupation should have access to relevant and appropriate training and mainstream policies and funding streams should provide opportunities for communities and CD practitioners to access CD learning.

(e) Guidance to CD courses and materials and routes into work should be promoted through schools, universities and careers advisers to promote CD as a worthwhile career combining both practical, social and ethical challenges.

(f) The Academy for Sustainable Communities should assist the CD profession to achieve greater effectiveness and recognition, by working with the Regional Centres of Excellence in Regeneration and the Information and

Development Agency (IdEA) and continuing its dialogue with the Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) and its networks, as well as drawing on CD to enlighten other professions and support the development of sustainable communities.

(g) Capacity building for local councillors, policy makers and officials should include understanding the role of CD and should be linked with community capacity building.

(h) Capacity building for CD workers and champions should include how to work with tensions and conflicting agendas, how to work in inclusive ways and support the involvement of marginalised and excluded communities, how to support social cohesion, how to link participative and representative democracy, and how to translate CD principles and insights into policy terms. Members of all marginalised communities, including Black and Minority Ethnic communities, should have opportunities to develop their skills and capacity for engagement.²⁶

(i) Progression routes for people to gain these skills, particularly those in marginalised communities, should be developed in order to address the chronic lack of quality CD trainers and educators.

Notes

1. Formerly the Civil Renewal Unit in the Home Office.
2. Based on two studies, the *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK* by Andy Glen and others (CDF/CDX, 2004) and *Who Are the Capacity Builders?* by Peter Taylor (CDF 2005). The figure is an estimate which some commentators regard as over-generous although the FCDL regards it as a possible underestimate, if we include unpaid CD workers who were excluded from the original mapping. At the same time it is acknowledged that a 'CD approach' is used by many other workers and residents.
3. Sen, A. 2006. *Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny*, London, Allen Lane.
4. The CD National Occupational Standards were originally created by the Community Work Forum within the Care Sector Consortium and later reviewed by Paulo as the relevant National Training Organisation (NTO) for CD. They are now owned by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), as the Sector Skills Council which covers CD work. See Appendix A.
5. FCDL, 2005. *A Summary of Good Practice Standards for Community Development Work*, Sheffield. Also see the FCDL website www.fcdl.org.uk and the Lifelong Learning UK website www.lluk.org.uk
6. Department of Health, 2004. *Community Development Workers for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities: Interim Guidance*, Appendix A (slightly adapted). Available from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk
7. Harris, V., 2006. *Community Development Work Learning in London*, Executive Summary, Sheffield, FCDL for the England Standards Board for Community Work.
8. Evidence of this can be found in the conference report on Community Development Workers in Yorkshire and Humberside, June 2006, available on the FCDL website www.fcdl.org.uk
9. Chanan, G., 2004. *Measures of Community*, London, CDF.
10. See Communities and Local Government, 2006. *Safer Stronger Communities Fund – Indicators of Strong Communities*. Only available electronically at www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1567
11. Glen, A., et al, 2004. *Survey of CD Workers in the UK*, CDF/CDX.
12. Taylor, P., 2006. *Who Are the Capacity Builders*, Summary Edition, London, CDF, 2006.
13. Miller, C., 2006. *Community Development in Local Government Survey Analysis*. Unpublished.
14. Local Government Association, 2006. *Closer to People and Places, A New Vision for Local Government*, London, LGA.
15. The ABCD framework, which sets out the varied and variable dimensions leading to a strengthened community, then led on to the development of the practice-based Learning, Evaluation, Action and Planning [LEAP] model. See Barr 2002 in the references section.

16. Creating: Excellence, 2006. *Funding Advice for the Voluntary and Community Sectors: What Difference Does it Make?*, Exeter, Creating: Excellence. This is available at www.creatingexcellence.org.uk
17. See Stephen, T., 2006. *Community Assets, The Benefits and Costs of Community Management and Ownership*, London, Communities and Local Government.
18. Commission on Unclaimed Assets, 2006. *A Social Investment Bank*, Consultative Paper, London, Commission on Unclaimed assets.
19. Stephen, T., 2006. *Community Assets, The Benefits and Costs of Community Management and Ownership*, London, Communities and Local Government.
20. Home Office, 2004. *Firm Foundations* p11.
21. See England Standards Board for Community Work, 2006. *Report of the ChangeUp Project to Map Community Development Learning and Qualifications across London*, Sheffield, Federation for Community Development Learning, and England Standards Board and Regional Advisory Group on Community Development, 2006. *Report on Community Development Working and Learning Research Project*, Yorkshire and Humberside, Sheffield, Federation for Community Development Learning.
22. See Gilchrist A. and Rauf T., 2006. *Community Development and Networking*, 2nd ed. London, Community Development Foundation and Community Development Exchange.
23. Community Development work is recognised as an occupation with its own standards by the SSDA. The CDW national occupational standards are owned by LLUK as the sector skills council with responsibility for CDW.
24. Research into employers of community development workers by FCDL and Workforce Development Hub is taking place in 2006. Progress will be reported on the FCDL website: www.fcdl.org.uk
25. *Community Development Roots and Routes Framework*, 2004. Developed through a national conference of key stakeholders held at Loughborough University.
26. Research into the training needs of Black CD practitioners is being carried out by FCDL and the Changeup Workforce Development hub in 2006. Results will be reported on the FCDL website: www.fcdl.org.uk

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Appendix 1

What are the National Occupational Standards for community development?

The National Occupational Standards outline clearly the Skills, Values and Practice Principles required for community development work and have been developed to provide the basis from which we can promote effective and appropriate community development work practice. The Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) led the development and subsequent review of the National Occupational Standards through widespread consultation and endorsement within the community development work field. The standards identify community development work as an occupation in its own right, and are now held by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the sector skills council for lifelong learning. For more info www.fcdl.org.uk

Key purpose of community development work

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

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

Values and practice principles of community development work

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

Self-determination environment

- 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
- Supporting communities to gain skills to engage in participation
- Developing structures that enable communities to participate effectively

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

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

Participation

- Promoting the participation of individuals and communities, particularly those traditionally marginalised/excluded
- Recognising and challenging barriers to full and effective participation

- 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

Roles and skills for community development work

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



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