



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (SCOTLAND)

Supporting the promotion of community development



*What community
development does*

A short guide for decision makers to how it achieves results

What this booklet is about

People can work together in communities to increase their wellbeing, and to make their lives wealthier, fairer, safer, more skilled, healthier and more sustainable, or 'greener'.

But the potential for this can not be taken for granted. The skills and values that we call community development help to make it happen.

This booklet:

- explains what community development is
- explains who is likely to be involved and what they do
- shows why policy makers should value community development as a way of achieving results
- gives examples, small and large, from around Scotland of what communities have achieved and the work that went into making this possible.



Communities

The communities we belong to can help us to be more effective citizens. They play an important part in our personal well-being. They are the source of many creative ideas and solutions, especially to the problems that arise because people lack equal power and wealth. They can care for or harm the environment we live in.

Communities do not just preserve old links and traditions. They change and grow. Sometimes economic and social pressures threaten to break up the links between people. But people also come together in new ways, undertake new activities and create new, more diverse communities, releasing new energy and resources.

In the modern world, one person can belong to many different communities, based on where they live, their interests or culture, or the people that share common difficulties.

Tremendous strengths can be found in communities. But these are not automatically built upon, especially when economic disadvantage or rapid social change makes it difficult.

In the end it is what communities can do for themselves that matters. But there usually needs to be something in the background – some person or organisation to help get things started, or to whom people can turn for advice or support, or to build up the right skills.



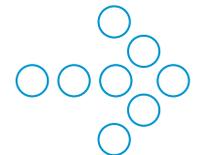
Community development

Community development is a process, a way of doing things. It can:

- bring people together
- help people to identify the problems and needs which they share and respond to these
- help people to discover the resources that they already have
- promote knowledge, skills, confidence and the capacity to act together
- strengthen organisation and leadership within communities
- strengthen contacts between communities.

Once people are working together it can help them to:

- take action to address inequalities in power and participation
- deal directly with issues they think are important
- change the relationships between communities and public or private organisations
- help public organisations to work in more open and inclusive ways
- promote increased local democracy, participation and involvement in public affairs.



Community development work often lays the foundations for:

- community engagement with public bodies
- effective consultation
- better partnership working
- improving services

But it goes beyond a narrow focus on any one of these things.

Good community development work is done in ways which challenge disadvantage and tackle inequalities. It involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power.

It is not simply about listening to the loudest voices, or doing things the way they have always been done. It is an approach to achieving social change. It is based on the idea that disadvantage and social injustice cannot be tackled by top-down solutions alone.



Giving Midlothian a voice

Midlothian Community Media Association runs a radio station (Black Diamond 107.8 FM). Midlothian had lost not only traditional industries but also parts of its area to neighbouring council areas. People felt that it was losing its identity.

Ofcom has been issuing licences for a new breed of not-for-profit community radio stations, owned and run by local people, mostly volunteers. This was seen as an opportunity to rebuild the confidence of the area and contribute to regeneration and social inclusion, as well as creative expression.

In January 2004 community learning and development workers helped people to establish a community radio group. The group is based at Newbattle Community Learning Centre, Newtongrange, which is also managed by local people. The group met monthly and were supported by the workers to secure grants and premises, build up an archive of recorded material, train volunteers, develop a Web site, secure engineering and technical support and draft an application to Ofcom for a 5 year licence – a major exercise in form filling.

The project now has 43 active volunteers, and other occasional helpers. Participation and training opportunities are available to all members of the Midlothian community, with support to disadvantaged individuals. Radio training covers many skills – interviewing, ICT, administration, individual self improvement and presentation, problem solving, and management.

After more than three years' work the station got its licence and now broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From 7am to 9pm music is mixed with news and local information. Presenters range in age from 17 to 70. Community groups across the area were invited to purchase a portable broadcasting kit which enables them to produce their own programme content.

The station has worked with the local Community Planning Partnership to present interviews and programmes about community issues.



Bringing Glasgow's newest residents together

Glasgow City Council agreed to accommodate asylum seekers in the City, on the basis of a Dispersal Contract with the Home Office. The city provides 2,500 flats for this purpose.



The Scottish Government provided resources for the 'Framework for Dialogue' project. This is a partnership between the Scottish Refugee Council and Glasgow City Council to take a community development approach to enable asylum seekers and refugees to influence service provision and social policy.

Two key elements of the approach were:

- involving host communities
- helping all the refugees and asylum seekers in each local area to meet and work together (not mainly in groups based on national origins).

Community workers in both organisations brought together and supported 'Framework for Dialogue' groups, initially in five areas

with a significant asylum seeker population. In these areas 130 people were identified who wanted to continue to be involved, and act as representatives with service providers.

Community workers helped groups to identify need, agree priorities, research issues and take action on them. Training was provided ranging from 'Immigration and Asylum – Policy and Practice' to 'Starting out as a community organisation'. Practical support is provided with meetings, including provision of interpreters and translation. Any one group might involve people from six different countries.

A Forum for other community development workers in the city was created, to promote good practice on refugee issues after the initial project. This enabled 'Framework for Dialogue' to become a long term process, with groups in additional dispersal areas in Glasgow.

Many asylum seekers and refugees have gone on to play a full role in their neighbourhoods. Actions taken include:

- liaison meetings held with police and other services: in one area health receptionists now ask people about their language requirements, not 'are you an asylum seeker?'
- meeting MSPs on asylum and refugee issues; response to consultations based on actual experiences of racial harassment
- promoting community cultural events
- support for organisations within the refugee community, such as a Single Mothers International Association.

A voice at the top table



Aberdeen's Community Plan contains a commitment to "give a focus for all community organisations in the City by establishing a Civic Forum, which will bring the voice of the community to the decision making table".

The Aberdeen Civic Forum has been constituted since 2002. It includes three or four representatives from each of the 31 Community Council areas in the city. There are also people representing eight 'Communities of Interest' (for example the Senior Citizens' Forum and LGBT Forum).

The Forum meets quarterly, to discuss issues arising from communities or on the Community Planning agenda. Four members are elected from the Forum to sit on the local Community Planning partnership (the Aberdeen City Alliance). It also has three representatives on each of the Alliance's thirteen forums which deal with different strategic issues.

An elected Lead Group of 20 meets eight times a year to plan Civic Forum meetings and deal with urgent business.

The Forum got started with the support of staff in the Community Development section of the City Council (with funding from Shell UK). Now funds held by the City Alliance are used to allow Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations to employ a part time support worker.

She gives administrative support to the Civic Forum and its Lead Group, follows up decisions, and publicises the feedback from all the representatives.

A key aspect of the job is to provide support to help Civic Forum members to become more effective in their representative role at all levels.

Work is also sometimes needed:

- to ensure that all the places allocated are filled, with attention being paid for example to those for young people or gypsy travellers, or to areas without a Community Council
- to ensure that people can actually take part (with a support worker if necessary).

Staff in the City Council's Community Learning & Development Service are active particularly in supporting people to get involved at local level.

There is a great variety of freely available information on the work of the Forum which suggests that it continues to have the commitment of many community members and contributes to a wide range of issues.

Community development in action

Community development is an active process. It happens when somebody intervenes to help people to achieve things that they might not otherwise do.

Who does it?

Community development work can be done by a wide range of workers (paid and unpaid) in a wide range of organisations. Knowledge and skills are required. These are often gained partly through training, which is available at all levels up to postgraduate.



In Scotland, especially in local authorities, nowadays many professional workers work in Community Learning and Development teams. These may include specialist community development or 'capacity building' workers, alongside colleagues who apply community development principles to adult learning or youth work.

But community development workers are also found in many other settings, including:

- other services, such as Housing or Social Work
- the NHS
- Community Planning or regeneration partnerships and projects
- voluntary organisations.

Or they may be employed directly by those community organisations that have the skills and financial strength to do so. As some of our examples show, organisations that have grown and strengthened with help from others can move on to become key sources of support for their own communities.

The agencies that employ community development workers often do so to help them to pursue their own particular objectives, such as improving health or regenerating an area. Provided these agencies are prepared to take a broad social view of how to achieve their objectives and to respond to what communities actually want, good community development work can be the result.

Professional work is a vital component. But community development has never been just the preserve of one profession. Many people make a contribution. Individuals and groups within a community do a great deal to support others. People in other jobs in agencies and services can learn from the community development approach and work in ways that empower people. They too need access to the right knowledge, skills and values to be effective.

What do they do?

Community workers work in urban and in rural areas and with a wide range of age groups. They help people in communities to come together, decide what they want to achieve and find ways of achieving it.

They aim to help a community to 'empower' itself in several possible ways:

- greater personal skills, knowledge and confidence
- action to reduce social exclusion
- more effective and representative community organisations
- involvement in wider forums.



They may be skilled in:

- understanding the informal workings of communities
- listening to what people are really saying
- investigating issues and helping people to understand and research them
- providing community-based learning opportunities
- building organisations and networks
- helping communities to obtain and manage resources that they control
- understanding and evaluating the results of their own work and of community action
- working with agencies to increase their capacity to understand and work with communities
- mediating between communities and public or private agencies.

Community development work is not exactly the same as supporting voluntary organisations and volunteering. These are usually an important element. But community groups can be either formal or informal in structure; and people often get involved in community action mainly to try to change their own circumstances, as well as volunteering to help others.

Helping people to learn how to do things for themselves allows people to build skills and organisations that can survive and respond to new issues.



Young people getting involved

Y Sort-it is a youth information and support service, working across the whole of West Dunbartonshire.

From the start it has been led by young people themselves. Eleven young people serve on the Board (plus three non-voting members under 16) with some adults. They appoint staff and play a full role in running the service.

The service is funded by the Community Planning Partnership and other local partners. Its 15 full and part time staff work in the Youth Information Centre in Clydebank (designed by young people), lunchtime 'satellite' points in schools, or around the area in groups or in the streets. Some staff have community development qualifications, others started on Y Sort-It's own training schemes.

On approaching Y Sort-It, a young person is assisted by a support worker. The help given to deal with personal issues such as housing or health is a vital part of the service. But there is always an emphasis on enabling young people to become actively involved. The service supports four of the area's Youth

Action groups, through which young people take action on issues they identify and talk to service providers. For example:

- in Whitecrook young people are planning the youth facilities in a new community centre
- in Dalmuir they transformed an unlit, dirty tunnel, using mosaics and lighting
- young parents produced a DVD about their experiences and took it into schools and colleges.

One Action Group was set up by young people in the Romany/Gypsy Traveller community, after an information bus began visiting their local site. They filmed their lives, and got involved in sports, arts, cookery and many other activities. Now they join the other groups for activities, and are getting their parents involved in learning.



In 2006/07 Y Sort-it dealt with 7,049 enquiries. 89% of all secondary pupils in the area know about it. Among service users surveyed, 83% felt more involved with their local community. One small but interesting fact is that there are no graffiti anywhere in the Youth Information Centre.

Linwood gets active about the environment

The Sustainable Communities project has worked in many disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Renfrewshire since December 1997. It has supported communities to identify and tackle environmental issues that affect them. It has also aimed to build confidence, improve health, and support people into employment.



Staff have community learning and development training and experience. The project has relied on temporary funding from the local regeneration partnership, from Renfrewshire Council (which employs the staff) and from other partners.

The Linwood area was not eligible for full regeneration funding and had not been the focus of much community action. Sustainable Communities was able to employ someone for a fixed

period, to work with local people to help them to decide what improvements they wanted to see. (They were supported by the Big Lottery Fund and the local Environmental Trust, which spends money raised in landfill tax).

Starting with just two local women who wanted to improve play areas, they helped the Linwood Active group to get going. None of the people involved had been involved in such things before. They decided that they wanted to create one multi-age 'family park' for the whole town, and, with Council support, where they wanted this to be. But then they had to struggle for three years with problems such as ground contamination.

In the meantime they decided to continue to focus on improving the local environment, organising

- volunteer clean-ups of woodland
- clothes recycling schemes
- galas
- tidying existing small playgrounds.

They talked to schools and got them to 'adopt' run down areas. Pupils made a model of the town which was used for consultations in connection with a new supermarket.

Sustainable Communities' period of support to the Linwood group has ended. But the members of the group have continued to increase in confidence, negotiate with the Council over the future maintenance of the park, train, and plan to establish social enterprises to help them continue their work.

Community Development helping to achieve results

The examples in this booklet show many different things that communities have achieved through working together. Good community workers do not take the credit for what the communities they work with achieve. But all these examples relied on initial or ongoing community development support.

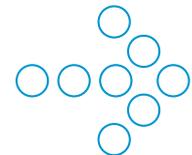
We value strong, inclusive communities for their own sake. One of the National Outcomes that the Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed to pursue is:

“We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others”.

Empowered communities also help to increase the well-being of those who live in them. They achieve practical results through:

- increasing people’s confidence and skills
- delivering some services directly
- effective communication of a community’s experience, leading to better public services or changed policies
- tackling the issues that make the most difference to people’s lives.

Community development helps the Scottish Government, local authorities and other agencies to achieve their aims. The Scottish Government has five strategic objectives for the country. Here are some ways that community development helps to deliver each of them.



Community development:

1

Wealthier and Fairer

- builds people's ability to overcome barriers that lead to low income and unemployment
- makes services related to employment better able to reach people and work with them
- helps to develop the social economy – businesses that trade for the benefit of the community
- helps groups that suffer from discrimination to have the strength to challenge it and play a full part in the life of the wider community.

2

Smarter

- gets people involved in learning by delivering it where people are, as part of their chosen activities
- builds skills by relating learning to real experiences
- gives people the confidence that change is possible
- builds public engagement and thus democracy.



3

Healthier

- helps communities to understand the factors that affect their health and:
 - take part in delivering their own solutions
 - participate in decision-making on health services and policies
- empowers people to take responsibility for changing their own health-related behaviour
- increases mental well-being through the experience of effective action and the building of social links.



4

Safer and Stronger

- helps people to look out for each other and their safety
- tackles problems that lie at the root of disorder and other threats to safety
- reaches out to and integrates vulnerable groups
- puts a real community dimension into community care.

5

Greener

- helps people to take action to improve their local environment
- ensures that regeneration improves the quality of life in communities, not just the use of land
- gives people a say in their housing conditions
- helps people to identify local actions that can help to solve global problems.

Community development is an essential foundation for the success of many aspects of policy, too numerous to list. They include:

- Community Planning. This is required by law to engage people in the decisions on public services which affect them. Strengthening communities can also be one of the priorities for the joint efforts of the partners.
- Sustainable development. One of the criteria is to put local people at the heart of the process, according to the national strategy
- Health improvement. A community-led approach is recognised as one of the key strands.
- Community empowerment. New opportunities for this are proposed. The capacity to take advantage of them will need to be developed.
- Community Care. Helping people to live 'within the community' requires action to help communities to respond.
- Helping young people and school pupils to become active citizens and to contribute to their communities.

The Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners are now seeking to direct their work towards a set of broad agreed Outcomes. Community development is a fundamental step towards achieving them. Too often in its history community development has depended on special short term funding programmes. Now it has the potential to make a long term contribution.



Cutting the carbon in the Angus glens

The Angus Village Halls Renewable Energies Group is a network of small communities, mostly in the remote area of the Angus Glens.

It has been working to examine how renewable energy sources can be used to heat village halls. It has looked in particular at more remote halls which are heated intermittently, and which do not have access to mains gas. It works to make halls more comfortable, to protect them from frost and damp, and to use heating systems which do not add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

A number of halls approached Angus Council about the issue. Community learning and development workers encouraged more villages to get involved. They helped to administer network meetings and assisted people to improve their research, organisational and project management skills – some projects involved multiple contractors and substantial budgets. Increasingly the network has begun to support its own members, passing technical expertise on to new areas and keeping people's morale up despite setbacks.

Funding was obtained in 2002 for a consultant to assess the practical options available. The resulting work has been supported from various sources, notably the Energy Saving Trust and the European 'Leader +' programme.

The ten halls involved have not always found it easy. The wider community rejected proposals in one area and two areas decided not to push for wind turbines because of a minority of objectors. One system was installed but found to be unsatisfactory. Community workers encouraged people to keep trying.

The solutions are different in every case. So far

- Glenesk has a heat pump drawing heat from deep in the local granite rock
- Letham heats its water with solar panels
- In Menmuir a local burn drives a pico-electric generator that powers a pump extracting ground heat
- Kilry has installed wood pellet stoves, electricity generating solar panels and enhanced insulation and the hall is now carbon neutral.



Other halls are now examining other solutions. Local schools and householders have also been inspired to change their own systems.

Taking the lead in Ardler's regeneration

The Ardler estate in Dundee, originally about 3200 homes, was built in the late 1960s to a high-density design that included 16-storey tower blocks and 4-storey flats.



In 1998, after a selection process which included extensive community consultation, a partnership of developers was chosen to regenerate the area, providing 1033 new homes, the majority for rent. Following a tenant vote in 1999, the estate was transferred to Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association.

By January 2007 all Ardler residents who wanted to be re-housed in Ardler were living in their new homes.

The early regeneration process was managed by a steering group which had representatives from residents, Dundee City Council and later the developers. This steering group was succeeded by the creation of an Ardler Village Trust in 2003, as had been proposed in the Masterplan for the area.

Ardler Village Trust is a charitable company is owned and operated by the community, with the participation of the Council, the Housing Association and others. Membership of the Trust is open to all residents aged over 16 years. It employs a small staff, with administrative help from the Housing Association.

The Village Trust sees one of its main roles to be community development within its own community. It can raise funds and deliver projects according to the needs of local residents. It has officially taken over as the local regeneration partnership, and is recognised as one of the City's neighbourhood councils.

Three working groups, open to residents and partner agencies, have consulted widely to identify projects.

The City Council decided to retain in the area £4 million, raised through the sale of land for private development, for spending on non-housing projects. The Physical group decides on these. They have included a major refit of the local shopping area, a multi sports play area, a youth shelter and a new café in the Community Centre.

The Social and Community group plans a busy programme of social events, and constantly tries to get new people involved, especially young people.

The Economic group has surveyed skills in the area and brings training and employment agencies to people.

The Trust now plans to develop a series of enterprises that will provide jobs for local people and generate a surplus from which it can continue to carry out its community development role.

Working for positive mental health



The CHANGES community health project has been active in East Lothian for over 12 years. It helps people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems to discover how to maintain positive mental health and well-being.

A voluntary organisation, with 2 full and 8 part time staff, it currently works directly with 600-700 people a year. People come to it, in community buildings all around East Lothian, by their own choice, not because they have been referred by medical staff.

The project works in the belief that 'each of us holds and can access the solution to our own problems'. Its staff help people to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to tackle them, both practically and by making changes in the way that they think about themselves and their situation.

The main focus of work is through short courses and groups including:

- Developing positive thinking
- Assertiveness
- First step towards positive mental health and wellbeing
- Self esteem

Much support is also given on a one to one basis.

Trained volunteers who have themselves participated in CHANGES help to facilitate groups and support people through the process.

The project takes 'a community development approach'. How can this be, when it often deals with people individually?

- A sense of identity, purpose and worth in the community is key to mental well being
- CHANGES learns what the issues are by being open to all and listening to people
- Working in groups helps people to recognise common issues
- Participants often continue to give support to each other
- Some groups organise themselves and carry on meeting e.g. walking groups
- Participants become 'anti stigma ambassadors' in their own communities.

Feedback suggests that the great majority feel better equipped to manage their own health. They have increased self confidence and new practical skills, such as managing anxiety or panic attacks. These enable people to establish healthy family and community relationships, go back to work or enter into education.

Most of the project's core costs are met by the NHS through the local Community Health Partnership. It plays an active part in the local mental health planning group.

Who we are

The Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS) is an independent network of national organisations that have the promotion of community development as part of their goals. Its members have been consulted on this publication, but may not necessarily share all of the views expressed.

Current CDAS members are: Association of Directors of Social Work; Association of Scottish Community Councils; BEMIS; Better Government for Older People; Care Commission; Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland; Community Health Exchange (CHEX); Community Learning Development Managers Scotland; COSLA; Development Trusts Association; Equalities and Human Rights Commission; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; International Association for Community Development; Poverty Alliance; Scottish Association of Further Education Principals; Scottish Community Development Centre; Scottish Community Development Network; Scottish Community Safety Network; Scottish Consumer Council; Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations; Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health; Scottish Grant Making Trusts; Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum; Universities Community Education providers; Volunteer Development Scotland; Youthlink Scotland.

Observer organisations: NHS Health Scotland; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education; Scottish Government (Learning Connections; Housing & Regeneration Directorate; Scottish Centre for Regeneration).

Where to find out more

For more information on CDAS look at

www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org

Here you can also find some sources of information and ideas about community development and links to our member organisations. Information on how to find out more about the examples used in this booklet is listed.

Community development is an approach and a profession that is recognised worldwide, both in developed and developing countries. For information and examples from the International Association for Community Development, look at:

www.iacdglobal.org



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