



Community Work Ireland

Working collectively to support and promote community work as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality and to advance human rights.

Social Inclusion Forum 2018

Community work at local level: its contribution to understanding and responding to poverty and social exclusion

May 10th 2018

COMMUNITY WORK IRELAND



- Established in 1981 as the Community Workers' Co-operative (CWC), Community Work Ireland (CWI) is a national organisation that promotes and supports community work as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality, promoting, protecting and advancing human rights and ultimately achieving social change that will contribute to the creation of a just, sustainable and equal society.
- Join CWI – www.communityworkireland.ie

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND 'REPRESENTATION'

- CWI has always believed in and worked to promote the right of people and communities that are marginalised to have a say in decisions, policies and programmes that affect them.



DEFINITION

Community Work/Community Development is:
A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

Recognised as such in Ireland, Europe and Globally

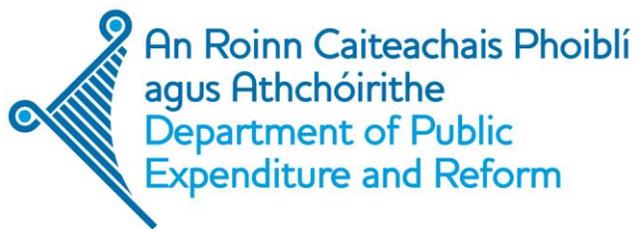


WHY A COMMUNITY WORK APPROACH?

- Better and more effective policies, better programmes better outcomes
- Builds strong and resilient communities
- Creates the conditions where agencies (including local authorities, Government depts. and others can engage meaningfully and directly with communities)
- Cost effective
- Builds social cohesion (sense of belonging, sense of shared ownership and responsibility to others)



CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES & GUIDANCE



Consultation Principles & Guidance

- Commits to greater citizen consultation and involvement to strengthen democracy and improve public services, in the belief that this is essential to the functioning of government institutions and economic growth.
- Meaningful participation increases the legitimacy of public decision-making, improves citizens' knowledge and awareness of complex policy challenges, helps decision-makers to make better decisions and can lead to the improvement in the quality of service provision

Downsizing the Community Sector

Changes in employment and services in the voluntary and community sector in Ireland, 2008-2012

Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Community Sector Committee



Putting People First

Action Programme for Effective Local Government

Department of the Environment,
Community and Local Government



In Whose Interests?

Exploring the Impact of Competitive Tendering and Procurement on Social Inclusion and Community Development in Ireland

October 2012

Community Work Ireland

Community Work under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2014-2017

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE	NO
15	20
13	20
19	12
16	17
17	16
12	20
15	15

Emerging Issues

The key issue that emerged from the research is that the model of programme implementation is a central factor in impacting community work.

As outlined, the research reviewed and the awarding of contracts for the implementation of SCAP was in accordance with the prevailing model used heretofore. It required prospective tenderers to indicate their capacity to achieve certain defined targets that were expected to fit within the budget specified. The responsibility of being the contract holder was delegated to the local Community Development Committee. This research highlighted a number of consequences to this new way of working.

Emerging Issue No.1 Targets

Excessively high targets and highly prescriptive programmes, is difficult to meet, disadvantage communities, with every structured outcome.

The competitive nature of the process meant that tenderers responded to the targets as they were presented. The issue of targets was one of the main challenges identified in the research. A number of comments to the changes were identified as outlined below.

Responsiveness to local need

When the programme went out to tender, the targets to be met were centrally devised. While there have been some minor changes, the targets have generally remained as they stood in the time of tendering. This has resulted in increasing difficulty for many programme implementing organisations for a number of reasons.

First, the targets are programme targets. They are not based on local needs analysis and therefore do not take into account specific issues in different areas. This is a significant issue for many who operate in rural areas. They noted that they are often not able to respond to issues in their communities or they respond but the work is not sustained. They consistently responded with comments that not specified towards their targets, but that they undertake because these are the real issues in their communities.

Second, the rigidity and lack of flexibility of the targets is also a significant issue arising as it does the ability to respond to new and emerging needs in communities. Research participants indicated that they are often unable to respond to the emerging needs of their communities, and having to provide the targets that were set, despite the issues highlighted, homelessness and the housing crisis, violence, and mental health issues. A number of programme implementing organisations noted that they are not able to respond to their own communities' needs.

Programmes are not always designed to meet local needs.

The design of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) was a result of a number of organisations being consulted. It was a result of a number of organisations being consulted. It was a result of a number of organisations being consulted. It was a result of a number of organisations being consulted.

COMMUNITY WORK IRELAND 20
COMMUNITY WORK IRELAND IS THE NEW NAME FOR THE COMMUNITY WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Communities facilitated to identify needs and organisations develop strategies to identify needs supported by funding from the State.



COMPETITIVE APPROACH

State designs programme and sets the targets to be achieved and the organisation becomes the delivery agent for pre-defined service.



ALL IRELAND STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY WORK



THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY WORK

COMMUNITY WORK VALUE 1: COLLECTIVITY

A collective approach requires practitioners to focus on the potential benefits for communities rather than focusing only on benefits to individuals.



COMMUNITY WORK VALUE 2: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Community empowerment involves an approach which leads people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential.



COMMUNITY WORK VALUE 3: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Promoting a just society involves promoting policies and practices that challenge injustice, poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion, and valuing diversity of identities and approaches. Promoting a sustainable society involves promoting environmentally, economically and socially sustainable policies and practices



COMMUNITY WORK VALUE 4: HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

In seeking a society where human rights and equality are realised and discrimination is addressed, community development is reinforced by human rights mechanisms and frameworks, processes and standards for the protection and promotion of human rights for all.



COMMUNITY WORK VALUE 5: PARTICIPATION

Participation is rooted in the self identification of needs and interests, the formulation of responses by the community or group concerned and is central to their ability to continue to influence outcomes



Professionalism

WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

- Professionalism
- Local knowledge
 - Issues
 - Solutions & responses that are rights-based
- Strategic approaches
- Professional judgement and skills



FRAMEWORK POLICY FOR LOCAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



- Our Communities, the National Framework Policy on Local and Community Development - published at the end of 2015.
- In November 2016, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government hosted a **National Forum On Local And Community Development** in Ireland.
- Cross-sectoral working group developing the **Implementation Plan**
- **Based on an agreed set of values**

FRAMEWORK POLICY FOR LOCAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- CWI position has been to argue for:
 - **Recognition and respect** for the **contribution** community work makes to addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality
 - A programme to support **autonomous community work**;
 - Programme of **continuous professional development** for community workers;
 - **Training** for those charged with **monitoring** community work programmes or programmes with a community work element

COMMUNITY WORK IRELAND

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www.communitiyworkireland.ie