

Principles of Community Development

Adapted from: Connors, S.K. (2016), *Developing Communities for the Future, 5th Edition*, Cengage Learning Australia, p26-34

<p>Social justice</p>	<p>Social justice underpins community development (CD) work and involves a commitment to improving the lives of people who experience disadvantage, marginality, exclusion and oppression - actively working to address power imbalances.</p> <p>Social justice is concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equitable distribution of economic resources • equality of civil, legal and industrial rights • fair and equitable access to services - housing, health & education • equality of opportunity for participation and decision making in society
<p>Citizenship</p>	<p>Citizenship refers to what it means to be a member of society, how we contribute, how we are resourced to be a member of society, what rights we have and should have, and what obligations we have as a member of society. In CD, there are two types of citizenship:</p> <p>Passive citizenship – refers to the rights and duties that are given, based on principles of social justice e.g. welfare rights or citizenship obligations to obey the law based on principles of moral duty.</p> <p>Active citizenship – is demonstrated when people are empowered to participate in the continual process of shaping their society, their communities and their identities.</p>
<p>Human Rights</p>	<p>Human rights are derived from what it means to be human, designed to protect the integrity of humanity. They refer to actions and attitudes about how people ought to be treated by others, institutions and governing bodies e.g. the right not to be tortured - and entitlements e.g. the right to freedom of association and the right to a secure livelihood.</p> <p>These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Australia is a signatory.</p>
<p>Empowerment</p>	<p>Empowerment within CD refers to a commitment to the <i>collective</i> empowerment of ordinary people and to changing and transforming social structures, relations and processes.</p> <p>Different levels of empowerment allow for people to be involved in influencing how well the system works in general; or altering the way the</p>



	<p>system works by changing structures and processes to ensure that disadvantaged and minority groups have more power; or dramatically altering who has power, how social structures are organised and public policies are developed.</p>
Self Determination	<p>All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.</p> <p>The right to self-determination is a right of 'peoples' rather than of individuals and has particular application to Australia's First Nations Peoples.</p>
Sustainability	<p>In CD the principle of sustainability has two main aspects:</p> <p>Social sustainability - being clear about whether there is a genuine ongoing need for the continuation of a community program, project or organisation. If there is not a clear need, if the program, project or organisation is not fulfilling a need or is resource heavy and not viable, then it might not warrant continuing support.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability – a program, project or organisation can only be considered sustainable if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p>
Collective Action	<p>Collective action is the coming together in groups or organisations strengthens peoples' voices – to work together for the common good.</p> <p>Collective action involves a commitment to reciprocity, rather than just participation or consultation, trust and solidarity, the sharing of information, and a strategy for activity and action that draws on the combined wisdom and abilities of all members of a group.</p>
Respect for Diversity	<p>Diversity can include diversity of values, cultures, lifestyles, skills, abilities, political outlooks and gender orientations. Recognising cultural diversity is particularly important for community development, as not only a dynamic feature of all societies - but the right to participate in ones' cultural traditions is a basic human right.</p> <p>Commitment to diversity allows for different ways of doing things and requires a willingness to learn from the community, respect for the culture of the community and sensitivity to the way things are done.</p>

References and further reading:

<https://humanrights.gov.au/>

<https://www.scdc.org.uk/who/what-is-community-development>