AIEB

All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education & Training

ALL IRELAND STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY WORK

Community Work Ireland

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The *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* provide the foundation and guiding framework for community development[1] in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These *Standards*, developed by the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training[2] (AIEB), articulate and re-emphasise the key values and associated knowledge, skills and qualities required for the practice of effective community development work.

The aim is to provide a reference point and guide for key stakeholders that seek to support community work for the promotion of social inclusion, social justice and equality and as an intervention for social change. These stakeholders include communities[3], community workers, programme implementers, employers, policy makers, funders, organisations, groups and community work educators.

The *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* are designed to act as a guiding mechanism in:

· the design, development, monitoring and review of programmes, policies and other initiatives focussing on community development, family support, local development, rural development, urban renewal and the eradication of poverty;

· the design of relevant elements in a variety of community engagement, community participation and social inclusion initiatives[4];

· the development of community work education and training curricula at all levels including Continuous Professional Development for community work practitioners, managers of community workers and those using a community work approach in their work;

· the recruitment and employment of community workers and personnel with a remit in using a community development approach.

The *Standards* aim to be useful for community workers and those who use a community work approach in Ireland and to act also as a reference point for our community development colleagues at European and global levels. They are an essential starting point for all community work education and training.

BACKGROUND

In 2010 the *Towards Standards Ad Hoc Group*, the precursor to AIEB, published, launched and disseminated *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work: An All-Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards*[7] (hereafter referred to as *Towards Standards*). Its purpose was to provide a framework for community work in the context of economic, social and cultural developments across the island of Ireland and to capture the richness and multi-dimensional nature of community work in increasingly diverse societies in both jurisdictions.

In 2015, the AIEB, supported by Community Work Ireland, received funding from the Pobal Community Fund to revise Towards Standards and to publish, launch and disseminate these revised *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* as an updated framework to support community development.

The production of Towards Standards, its subsequent review and the publication of these *All Ireland Standards for Community Work*, have taken place in the context of increasing professionalisation, which involves the development of professional standards across a range of disciplines and professions including youth work, social work and teaching at primary, secondary and further education levels.

Consultation workshops for the *Standards* review process were held in Dublin, Limerick and at a North South Community Work Educators Forum at Maynooth University. The workshops were a key mechanism in the development of these revised *Standards*. They were attended by over 60 community development practitioners and educators from the Republic and Northern Ireland who re-endorsed the key points in Towards Standards.

DEFINING COMMUNITY WORK

Drawing together and reflecting the core elements of shared international meanings and practice in the Republic and Northern Ireland, community work/community development is defined as,

> *"A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change[8] 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'[9].*

This definition echoes global understandings of community development and a community work approach, for example:

- **The Budapest Declaration** describes community development as, 'a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their organisations and the capacity of institutions and agencies to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities based on principles of human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity and a specific skills and knowledge base'[10].

- **The International Association for Community Development (IACD)** highlights the importance within community development processes of, 'Harnessing the innate abilities and potential that exist in all human communities to become active agents in their own development and to organise themselves to address key issues and concerns that they share'[11].

- **The European Community Development Network** describes community development as being, 'fundamentally about people working together to change their collective circumstances. It has established a clear intention, strong value base and tested processes, all of which are connected in seeking to contribute to change in the lives of communities. It is a globally growing practice, dynamically reflecting diverse communities, conditions, contexts and challenges. For Europe it can be a powerful force in challenging injustice, environmental and economic crises, protecting human rights, advancing civil society and encouraging democratic and civic participation'[12].

· In the UK, the **Community Development National Occupational Standards** articulate the purpose of community development as being to enable people 'to work collectively to bring about positive social change. This long term process starts from people's own experience and enables communities to work together to; identify their own needs and actions; take collective action using their strengths and resources; develop their confidence, skills and knowledge; challenge unequal power relationships; promote social justice, equality and inclusion, in order to improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part'[13].

PURPOSE OF THE STANDARDS

The purpose of the *Standards* is to articulate the values, knowledge, skills and qualities that underpin:

- **community work practice;**
- **education and training for that practice;**
- **community work policy at national and local levels;**
- **design and implementation of relevant programmes with associated funding.**

The *Standards* are designed to support stakeholders and practitioners in the field of community work:

- **Community Workers** - to support practice (whether undertaken on a paid or a voluntary basis), reflection on practice and Continuous Professional Development;

- **Education and Training Providers** - whether higher or further education institutions, community development organisations or other training providers, as a framework for the design, delivery and assessment of programmes and curricula;

- **Organisations** – in developing, monitoring and evaluating strategies and approaches for the realisation of equality, social inclusion and human rights;

- **Funders** - as a tool for designing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and assessing applications;

- **Employers** - as a support in recruitment, supervision, support, monitoring, education and training, and Continuous Professional Development of community workers, managers of community workers and employees using community work approaches in their work;

- **Policy Makers and Programme Implementers** – in designing and delivering relevant and associated policies and programmes;

- **Communities** – In collaborating with and holding to account all of those charged with responsibility to support progress towards the achievement of social justice, sustainable development, human rights, equality, anti-discrimination and meaningful participation.

THE STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND INTEGRITY

As in all professions, maintaining high standards in practice requires community workers to continually focus on upholding professional integrity in practice. In community work, this means acknowledging and balancing their accountability to the community, to their employers, their colleagues, their funders and the legal system, and ensuring that their working relationships with others are not distorted by their personal, religious, political, or business interests. Community workers should abide by best employment practice including promoting proper financial accountability and good financial practice in their organisation. Community workers should be self-aware, regularly reflect on practice and approach and think and work strategically. They should contribute to the knowledge base of community development by recording, promoting and sharing the reflections, analysis and lessons from their work and strive to continually improve their practice through Continuous Professional Development.

CORE VALUES

The *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* are framed around five core community development values:

1. **Collectivity;**
2. **Community Empowerment;**
3. **Social Justice and Sustainable Development;**
4. **Human Rights, Equality and Anti–discrimination;**
5. **Participation.**

As well as a clear understanding of community development, community work practice requires community development knowledge, skills and qualities which are set out below. In addition, key ways for practitioners and funders, employers, policy makers, and programme implementers to support and apply these values in their own practice are set out.

The values are interdependent, with considerable cross–over between the knowledge, skills and qualities required and inherent in all of them. Each is important, and needs direct consideration, and all need to be integrated in community development undertaken by practitioners, supported by other stakeholders and taught by educators. To avoid repetition here, not all of these elements are repeated for each value.

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.

Collectivity, includes collective analysis, collective action and collective outcomes in pursuit of a just and equal society. It involves working in collective ways and establishing groups, networks and organisations that enable communities to come together to identify common goals and to work together to achieve them. A collective approach requires practitioners to focus on the potential benefits for communities rather than focusing only on benefits to individuals. The UK Community Development National Occupational Standards describes collective action as promoting the active participation of people within communities, using the power of a collective voice and goal, recognising the wealth of creative and positive resources within individuals and communities; promoting and supporting diverse communities to agree and take action on their common concerns and interests; using the power of the collective voice to plan and take collective action while respecting the rights of others[14].

A collective approach therefore, involves supporting the rights of communities to;

· Analyse their situations and articulate a vision and strategy for change;

· Build solidarity, organise and take action for change;

· Identify and seek to remove barriers to participation;

· Act together to address inequality and injustice;

· Be supported and resourced in their collective work for equality and rights.

The following sets out the knowledge, skills and qualities required by community work practitioners in promoting collective work for change:

KNOWLEDGE

· Community work theory, principles and processes;

· Power, power relations and their impact on communities;

· Poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion and its impact on women, men, children and young people, families and communities;

· Social policy, social theory, community studies and the theories and processes of change;

· Public administration including local and national legislation, policy and decision making structures;

· Practice theory including engaging, planning and strategy implementation;

· Group work theory, principles and processes;

· Social movements and their contribution to bringing about change;

· Management and Governance theory and practice.

SKILLS

· Engaging with people and groups for empowerment and collective action based on a clear understanding of the context, conditions, lived experiences, dynamics and diversity of those involved;

· Identifying and addressing barriers to participation;

· Conflict management and resolution;

· Practice skills including programme planning, monitoring, reflection and evaluation;

· Governance, organisational management and project management skills;

· Social research;

· Leadership;

· Group work, facilitation and supporting collective decision-making;

· Use of creative and innovative methodologies.

QUALITIES

· Solidarity and empathy, recognising the diversity that exists within society and communities;

· Commitment to working collectively for social change and social justice;

· Commitment to equality, inclusion and rights;

· Leadership.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Based on the value of collectivity, and building on the knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above, the following are essential dimensions of practice for community workers in supporting collective ways of working for change. In doing so community workers need to:

· Inform themselves about the realities experienced by the communities/groups with which they work and build relationships framed by these realities;

· Inform their work by research and analysis of core issues and engage with policy makers at all levels, the media and other stakeholders in seeking change;

· Work inclusively, respecting diversity, addressing divisions and power differentials, bringing people together to build collective consciousness of the issues which affect them, developing, implementing and evaluating collective actions for change;

· Develop strategies to resolve, manage and learn from conflict;

· Challenge practice which undermines rights and work inclusively with women and men in ways that promote equality and address discrimination;

· Contribute to good governance and management policies, procedures and practices within their organisations;

· Develop and engage in networks and strategic alliances;

· Seek engagement and meaningful dialogue with key stakeholders and decision makers towards the design and delivery of effective responses to poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion.

APPLICATION BY EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS

In supporting the essential value of collectivity in community development, employers, funders, policy makers and programme implementers need to:

· Recognise the rights of communities and groups, including funded organisations, to work autonomously and maintain a critical voice;

· Acknowledge the responsibility of community workers to facilitate and support action for change by communities and groups;

· Engage in meaningful dialogue with community groups on the issues that concern them to inform the design and delivery of effective responses to poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion;

· Support and resource collective initiatives at local, regional and national levels for the achievement of a more equal, just and inclusive society;

· Employ qualified community workers with the values, knowledge, skills, and qualities required to practice community work.

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 is about the empowerment of communities by increasing their knowledge, skills, consciousness and confidence to become critical, creative and active participants. It aims to address inequalities of power and provide genuine participation and involvement. Community empowerment involves an approach which leads people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential. An empowering approach supports communities to:

· Define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action;

· Be consulted, involved and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives;

· Develop increased confidence and capacity to engage in dialogue, debate discussion and collective action for change.

The following sets out the knowledge, skills and qualities required by community work practitioners in supporting community empowerment:

KNOWLEDGE

· Analysis of power and disempowerment and its causes and consequences for individuals and groups in society;

· Social analysis;

· Social issues, including poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion, and their implications for community disempowerment;

· Empowering methodologies, approaches and practices for working with communities and groups.

SKILLS

· The design and delivery of programmes and initiatives that build confidence and raise consciousness;

· Social analysis and capacity to link analysis with practice;

· Recognising and addressing differentials in power between women and men, and minorities and majorities, as reflected externally and internally in groups and communities;

· Constructively managing views that are contradictory to the values of community work;

· People skills, including the capacity to give constructive feedback, providing support and supervision to staff, community leaders, volunteers and representatives.

QUALITIES

· Personal awareness and awareness of their own personal power, limitations, roles and responsibilities;

· Empathy with communities and groups and individuals who are a part of them;

· Respect for diversity and sensitivity to diverse opinions;

· Discretion - showing good judgement, tact and diplomacy;

· Solution focussed;

· Openness to change, challenge and questioning, and flexibility to change plans while maintaining overall direction and principles.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Based on the value of community empowerment in community development, and building on the knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above, the following are essential dimensions of practice for community workers in supporting community empowerment to work for change. In doing so community workers need to:

· Establish, develop and support community groups and organisations to adopt empowering approaches and co-operative ways of working;

· Build the confidence, consciousness and capacity of the people and communities with whom they work;

· Build the capacity of communities to contribute to policy and programme development and to critique where appropriate;

· Promote the equitable distribution of power and resources at all levels;

· Work in solidarity with and across marginalised communities to address root causes of poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion towards gaining concrete improvements in their quality of life and the progressive realisation of human rights.

APPLICATION BY EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS

In supporting the essential value of community empowerment in community development, employers, funders, policy makers and programme implementers need to:

· Be aware of and facilitate the time and effort required by community workers and community organisations seeking to work in empowering ways to address embedded discrimination and disempowerment;

· Enable community work organisations to have flexibility at local, group and organisational levels to address local needs, as well as to meet national programme priorities;

· Recognise the value of qualitative results and outcomes and resource qualitative research as a core element of funding.

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

The pursuit of social justice and sustainable development are core elements of community development and require an analysis of the changes needed in policies[15] and laws in order to ensure that all people can benefit equally from an equitable distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges in society. 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. It requires the practice of thinking globally and acting locally for the present and the future. In pursuing social justice and sustainable development, community work is concerned with the redistribution of wealth, power and resources in society. It seeks to mitigate against the effects of climate change

and ensure equal access to a good quality environment for all. These rights are all inter-related, interdependent and intersectional.

A social justice and sustainable development approach involves promoting the rights of communities to:

· Advocate collectively for their rights using all legal and policy mechanisms available to them;

· Challenge and address the unequal distribution of wealth, power and resources in society including between women and men;

· Have a voice in sustainable development policy and planning.

The following sets out the knowledge, skills and qualities required by community work practitioners to integrate essential social justice and sustainable development dimensions in their work:

KNOWLEDGE

· The laws, policies and practice of government, organisations and society as they affect social justice and sustainable development;

· Local, national and international social justice, environmental justice and sustainable development issues, concerns and priorities and the ways they are interconnected;

· Sustainable development initiatives and frameworks;

· Development theory and processes;

· Understanding of the inter-related ways in which social and environmental injustice impact on communities and groups.

SKILLS

· Critical social analysis and policy analysis;

· Research and policy development;

· Ability to make national and international climate change and sustainable development frameworks relevant and understandable;

· Capacity to link global climate change and sustainable development issues with local concerns and work towards solidarity in addressing them;

· Ability to mobilise communities to recognise common issues and concerns and to work in solidarity with one another.

QUALITIES

· Political consciousness;

· Solidarity, commitment to building co-operation, equality, mutual support and respect for diversity;

· Commitment to social justice including global justice;

· Commitment to sustainable development and environmental justice.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Based on the values of social justice and sustainable development, and building on the knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above, the following are essential dimensions of practice for community workers in advancing social justice and sustainable development. In doing so community workers need to:

· Build understanding and awareness within communities and groups of social justice and sustainable development concerns and the links between them locally, nationally and globally;

· Build understanding within communities and groups of the ways in which the policies and activities of government, and national and international organisations and society either create solidarity, inclusion, equality and sustainability or contribute to disadvantage and unsustainability, and use this analysis to inform and support the attainment of social and environmental justice;

· Support communities to contribute to policy development at local, national and international levels from a social justice and sustainable development perspective;

· Build strategic relationships and alliances with sustainable development and global development groups and organisations.

APPLICATION BY EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS

In supporting the essential values of social justice and sustainable development in community development, employers, funders, policy makers and programme implementers need to:

· Support and resource communities in their work to achieve social justice and sustainability;

· Recognise and support the role and responsibilities of community workers in working with communities to achieve social justice and sustainability;

· Promote social justice and sustainability within programmes, policies and funding frameworks.

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 is concerned with the promotion of human rights and equality in society and with addressing the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by many groups including Travellers, Roma and other minority ethnic groups, people with a disability, young people, older people, and LGBTI people. Promoting equality requires community workers to develop an analysis of the particular experiences of women and the impact of gender inequality on women (including women from marginalised communities and minority groups) and on society as a whole.

Human rights are inherent to all human beings irrespective of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status. 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 development should seek to affirm human rights, and should enable people to realise and exercise

their human rights and to be protected from human rights abuse[16].

A human rights, equality and anti-discrimination approach involves supporting communities to:

· Challenge oppression, stereotyping and prejudice in all its forms;

· Have a voice in the development of human rights frameworks and infrastructure in their country;

· Be resourced and supported to advocate for their human rights;

· Promote the rights of women in all their diversity, and advance women's rights as a core priority, including addressing violence against women and the under-representation of women in decision making;

· Promote the rights of marginalised groups including Travellers, Roma, minority ethnic groups, migrants, LGBTI people, older people and people with disability;

· Use all legal routes to promote equality and address discrimination.

The following sets out the knowledge, skills and qualities required by community work practitioners to integrate essential human rights, equality and anti-discrimination dimensions in their work:

KNOWLEDGE

· Analysis and understanding of key current equality and human rights issues and concerns, including those for women, and of how other policies e.g. economic, social welfare or health policies impact on them;

· Analysis and understanding of the discrimination faced by marginalised and minority groups;

· National and international human rights mechanisms and frameworks, and their application for the protection and promotion of human rights;

· Policies, legislation and commitments for the promotion of equality, for example relating to Travellers, Roma, women, LGBTI people, older people, migrants, people with disability and all groups covered by equality measures in both jurisdictions, as well as by relevant and applicable EU Directives;

· Knowledge of current civil society and state responses to human rights and equality and of organisations representing groups experiencing inequality and discrimination.

SKILLS

· Capacity to make national and international human rights and equality frameworks relevant, developing consciousness, understanding and associated actions;

· Ability to network and build connections with organisations representing diverse communities;

· Capacity to probe and question attitudes and assumptions regarding equality concerns, and highlighting and responding to stereotyping and discrimination;

· Ability to develop, implement, manage and evaluate policies and codes of practice to promote human rights and equality and address discrimination.

QUALITIES

· Commitment to practice which promotes human rights and equality, and rejects and challenges anti-oppressive practice;

· Commitment to rejecting and challenging oppression, discrimination and prejudice in all its forms;

· Valuing, having respect for and supporting diversity.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Based on the value of human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, and building on the knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above, the following are essential dimensions of practice for community workers in promoting human rights and equality and addressing discrimination. In doing so community workers need to:

· Recognise, celebrate and promote diversity and opportunities for people from different groups to engage with each other;

· Develop anti-oppressive and equality policies and procedures at organisational level;

· Develop critical awareness amongst themselves, the people they work with and policy makers, of human rights and of the causes and impacts of inequality and discrimination;

· Integrate human rights, equality and discrimination concerns into all dimensions of their practice;

· Hold stakeholders accountable for their responsibilities regarding rights realisation and promote human rights within the context of national and international human rights frameworks;

· Contribute to policy development at local, national and international levels from a human rights and equality perspective;

· Frame issues as part of a bigger picture in society building solidarity and mobilising communities to take action for equality;

· Focus on equality of outcome, as well as equality of opportunity, through monitoring and analysing the impact of policies, programmes and laws on communities;

· Promote women's participation and voice at all levels;

· Highlight and address all forms of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination in an empowering way that is strategic and outcomes focussed;

· Target absent groups through outreach, inclusion and policy.

APPLICATION BY EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS

In supporting the essential value of human rights, equality and anti-discrimination in community development, employers, funders, policy makers and programme implementers need to:

· Recognise and support the rights of communities to frame their concerns within an equality and human rights context and the role and responsibilities of community workers in advancing human rights, equality and anti-discrimination;

· Support and resource communities in their work to promote equality and human rights, and challenge discrimination and oppression;

· Improve their own understanding of rights and obligations as duty bearers;

· Recognise the particular experiences of women, including poverty, violence, and under representation, and seek ways to promote the advancement of women;

· Prioritise, develop, and support policies and programmes that serve to promote human rights and equality for all;

· Ensure that all relevant decision making structures include appropriate representation from communities affected by poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion.

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

The process of participation is fundamental to community development. It 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[17]. Community development recognises that policies and programmes targeted at communities and groups experiencing poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion will not and cannot be effective without the meaningful participation of those communities and groups in their design, implementation and monitoring. Community development seeks to remove barriers preventing community participation in mainstream social, economic, cultural and political development. Community work supports the ideals of participative democracy i.e. the development of integrated and participatory forms of planning and organising, and promotes the active engagement of communities with state agencies and others in decision making structures and processes.

A participative approach involves promoting the rights of communities to:

· Be supported to establish and develop autonomous, participative groups and networks to promote and advance their rights;

· Be consulted, involved and participate meaningfully in decision-making processes that affect their lives;

· Be supported to gain the confidence and skills to articulate and represent their needs in an effective and inclusive manner.

The following sets out the knowledge, skills and qualities required by community work practitioners to integrate essential participation dimensions in their work:

KNOWLEDGE

· Theory of participation and participatory democracy including barriers to these;

· Participative methodologies for engaging communities;

· Local, national and international mechanisms and forums for community participation;

· Community work theory.

SKILLS

· The capacity to conduct needs analysis and community profiling;

· The ability to support community representatives and to represent communities and organisations;

· Interpersonal and communication skills and ability to develop mutual, reciprocal relationships;

· The capacity to use participative methods, strategies and approaches.

QUALITIES

· Commitment to meaningful participation, inclusive of the voices of women, marginalised, excluded and minority communities and groups;

· Transparency, openness, honesty and accountability;

· Flexibility;

· Resilience – in moving processes forward even through difficult circumstances;

· Commitment to building constructively critical participation.

APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Based on the value of participation, and building on the knowledge, skills and qualities outlined above, the following are essential dimensions of practice for community workers in building and supporting meaningful participation. In doing so community workers need to:

· Develop the participation of communities experiencing poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion on relevant decision making structures and provide supports for meaningful participation;

· Support community representatives and participants to engage in decision-making structures based on community needs, concerns and interests;

· Support and promote the development of decision-making structures that are open, accessible and inclusive of groups that experience social exclusion, discrimination and other inequalities, and ensure that work to build effective participation is at the core of community work practice;

· Ensure the existence and maintenance of structures and processes for consultation with, support for, accountability and feedback to communities and community representatives;

· Seek to ensure that strategies for participation are inclusive of women, diverse groups and minorities;

· Recognise, address and support communities to recognise and address power imbalances;

· Ensure that community engagement goes further than consultation and moves to meaningful participation;

· Work with communities to review and evaluate participative processes and structures against community goals.

APPLICATION BY EMPLOYERS, FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS

In supporting the essential value of participation in community development, employers, funders, policy makers and programme implementers need to:

· Recognise and respect the rights of communities and groups to represent their concerns in relevant decision making fora and other spaces;

· Recognise and support the role and responsibilities of community workers in building and supporting meaningful participation;

· Create and maintain fora which go beyond consultation to participation and power sharing with communities and groups;

· Recognise the right of communities to critique policies and decisions which affect them without fear of negative consequences.

THE *STANDARDS* AND COMMUNITY WORK EDUCATORS

The *Standards* provide an essential underpinning for community work and community development education and training at all levels. This means that curricula, teaching methodologies, professional development processes and assessment need to be underpinned by them. As in other disciplines, it also requires that educators have a background in community work and community development, an overall personal commitment to the values outlined and to the understanding of community work associated with them. The *Standards* form the basis for the assessment criteria by the AIEB for the endorsement of education and training programmes[18].

CONCLUSION

All stakeholders have a collective responsibility to create the circumstances where the *Standards* are discussed, evaluated and upheld, and to determine how they are maintained into the future

The *Standards* point to community development as a unique activity which articulates a vision for human rights and social justice and sets out the realisation of that vision through practice. They set out core values and associated knowledge, skills and qualities required for community development work. They are a foundation and guiding framework to inform practice for those supporting, funding, managing or developing relevant policies and programmes in the Republic and Northern Ireland. Having been produced in collaboration with people involved in, or associated with, community development work, they are grounded in the realities and challenges of day to day practice and policy.

The question of how the *Standards* are applied and ensured is challenging for communities, practitioners, employers, funders, policy makers, programme implementers and community work educators. All stakeholders have a collective responsibility to create the circumstances where the *Standards* are discussed, evaluated and upheld, and to determine how they are maintained into the future.

Towards Standards contained a commitment to five yearly reviews in order to evaluate and contribute to the ongoing development of community work standards in the Republic and Northern Ireland. The publication of these All Ireland Standards for Community Work represents the first such revision. The Standards will be subject to ongoing review in line with best international practice.

APPENDIX 1: CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALL IRELAND ENDORSEMENT BODY FOR COMMUNITY WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The All Ireland Endorsement Body, which oversaw the development of the *Standards* seeks to build an inclusive framework for endorsement of community work education and training at all levels[19].

Current members of the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training are;

- **Anastasia Crickley,** Chairperson AIEB
- **Aiden Lloyd,** Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Initiative
- **Áine Deely,** Loughrea Family Resource Centre
- **Ann Pendleton,** Belfast Metropolitan College
- **Helen Lowry,** Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- **Iryna Pokhilo,** Cáirde

- **Isobel Hawthorne-Steele,** University of Ulster
- **Liam Mc Glynn,** Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
- **Maria Farry,** Pobal
- **Maria Joyce,** National Traveller Women's Forum
- **Michelle Kearns,** South Dublin County Partnership
- **Oonagh Mc Ardle,** Maynooth University
- **Paul Burgess,** University College Cork
- **Sally Flynn,** Student representative

Rachel Doyle, AIEB Secretariat

Ann Irwin, Community Work Ireland

APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES AND END NOTES

1   It should be noted here that as in Towards Standards, the terms community development and community work are used interchangeably throughout this document reflecting their interchangeable use in practice.

2   AIEB comprises community development educators, practitioners and employers from the Republic and Northern Ireland.

3   Community is taken to mean people who share a common neighbourhood as well as those with a common identity or interest.

4   In particular, those focusing on health including mental health, drugs, environmental concerns, women, children and young people, older people, marginalised men, people with disabilities and the integration and inclusion of; Travellers, Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

5   Pobal acts as an intermediary for programmes funded by the Irish Government and the EU. They do this by supporting groups and communities across the country that are applying for, or receiving, funding for specific programmes www.pobal.ie

6   Community Work Ireland was formerly the Community Workers Co-operative CWI continues to work collectively to support and promote community work as a means of addressing poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion and advancing human rights

7   www.communityworkendorsement.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Towards-Standards-for-Quality-Community-Work-PDF.pdf

8   In the context of community work, social change refers to the changes in policy and law, structures and institutions, individual attitudes and behaviour and societal ideologies that are required for a just and equal society to prevail. Community work is a developmental process, involving incremental change and social change itself is often incremental.

9   Adapted from Pobal (1999) – Community Development Strategies and Actions within the Integrated Local Development Programme, Insights No. 11. Pobal, Dublin.

10   Budapest Declaration (2004) - Building European civil society through community development - A Common statement created by delegates at the March 2004 Budapest conference, jointly organised by International Association for Community Development, the Combined European Bureau for Social Development and the Hungarian Association for Community Development

11   IACD Annual review (2014-2015)

12   Community Development in Europe – Towards a Common Framework and Understanding - European Community Development Network (2014) www.eucdn.net

13   Community Development National Occupational Standards (2015) P. 5 www.fcdl.org.uk/learning-qualifications/community-development-national-occupational-standards/

14   Community Development National Occupational Standards (2015) P. 7 www.fcdl.org.uk/learning-qualifications/community-development-national-occupational-standards/

15   Including economic, social, political, environmental, development and legal policies and laws, programmes and priorities at local, national and international levels.

16   *Ife, Jim (2002) Community development: community based alternatives in an age of globalisation Longman Australia*

17   Partnership, Participation and Power – Community Workers' Co-operative (2000)

18   Information and guidance in relation to endorsement for community work/development education and training programmes (honours degree postgraduate qualification levels 8-10) can be found here; www.communityworkendorsement.com/application/

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