COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems."[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_development#cite_note-unterm-1) It is a broad concept, applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens, and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities.

Community development is also understood as a professional discipline, and is defined by the International Association for Community Development (www.iacdglobal.org), the global network of community development practitioners and scholars, as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings".

Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. These skills are often created through the formation of social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger [social institutions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_organization).

*Community development* as a term has taken off widely in anglophone countries, i.e. the [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), [United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), [Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia), [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada), [New Zealand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand), as well as other countries in the [Commonwealth of Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations). It is also used in some countries in [Eastern Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe) with active community development associations in [Hungary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungary) and [Romania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania). The *Community Development Journal*, published by [Oxford University Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_University_Press), since 1966 has aimed to be the major forum for research and dissemination of international community development theory and practice.

Community development approaches are recognised internationally. These methods and approaches have been acknowledged as significant for local social, economic, cultural, environmental and political development by such organisations as the UN, WHO, OECD, World Bank, Council of Europe and EU.

There are complementary definitions of community development.

The United Nations defines *community development* broadly as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. and the International Association for Community Development defines it as both a practice based profession and an academic discipline. Following the adoption of the IACD definition in 2016, the association has gone on to produce International Standards for Community Development Practice. The values and ethos that should underpin practice can be expressed as: Commitment to rights, solidarity, democracy, equality, environmental and social justice. The purpose of community development is understood by IACD as being to work with communities to achieve participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice. This practice is carried out by people in different roles and contexts, including people explicitly called professional community workers (and people taking on essentially the same role but with a different job title), together with professionals in other occupations ranging from social work, adult education, youth work, health disciplines, environmental education, local economic development, to urban planning, regeneration, architecture and more who seek to apply community development values and adopt community development methods. Community development practice also encompasses a range of occupational settings and levels from development roles working with communities, through to managerial and strategic community planning roles.

The Community Development Challenge report, which was produced by a working party comprising leading UK organizations in the field (including the (now defunct) [Community Development Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Community_Development_Foundation&action=edit&redlink=1), the (now defunct) [Community Development Exchange](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_Development_Exchange) and the [Federation for Community Development Learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Federation_for_Community_Development_Learning&action=edit&redlink=1)) defines community development as:

A set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at [the grass roots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassroots_democracy) and deepening democracy. There is a community development 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 community development techniques on a voluntary basis, and there are also other professions and agencies which use a community development approach or some aspects of it.

Community Development Exchange defines community development as:

both an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority) and a way of working with communities. Its key purpose is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect.

Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals.

Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organizations and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for :the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.

Different approaches

There are numerous overlapping approaches to community development. Some focus on the processes, some on the outcomes/ objectives. They include:

* [**Community Engagement**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_Engagement); focuses on relationships at the core of facilitating "understanding and evaluation, involvement, exchange of information and opinions, about a concept, issue or project, with the aim of building social capital and enhancing social outcomes through decision-making”
* [**Women Self-help Group**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-help); focusing on the contribution of women in settlement groups.
* **Community**[**capacity building**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacity_building); focusing on helping communities obtain, strengthen, and maintain the ability to set and achieve their own development objectives.
* [**Large Group Capacitation**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_Group_Capacitation); an adult education and social psychology approach grounded in the activity of the individual and the social psychology of the large group focusing on large groups of unemployed or semi-employed participants, many of whom with Lower Levels of Literacy (LLLs).
* [**Social capital**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_capital)**formation**; focusing on benefits derived from the cooperation between individuals and groups.
* [**Nonviolent direct action**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_Action); when a group of people take action to reveal an existing problem, highlight an alternative, or demonstrate a possible solution to a social issue which is not being addressed through traditional societal institutions (governments, religious organizations or established trade unions) to the satisfaction of the direct action participants.
* [**Economic development**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development), focusing on the "development" of [developing countries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing_countries) as measured by their economies, although it includes the processes and policies by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people.
* [**Community economic development**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_economic_development) (CED); an alternative to conventional [economic development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development) which encourages using local resources in a way that enhances economic outcomes while improving social conditions. For example, CED involves strategies which aim to improve access to affordable housing, medical, and child care.
  + A [worker cooperative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worker_cooperative) is a progressive CED strategy that operates as businesses both managed and owned by their employees. They are beneficial due to their potential to create jobs and providing a route for grassroots political action. Some challenges that the worker cooperative faces include the mending of the cooperative’s identity as both business and as a democratic humanitarian organization. They are limited in resources and scale.
* [**Sustainable development**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development); which seeks to achieve, in a balanced manner, economic development, social development and environmental protection outcomes.
* [**Community-driven development**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community-driven_development) (CDD), an [economic development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development) model which shifts overreliance on central governments to local communities.
* [**Asset-based community development**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development) (ABCD); is a methodology that seeks to uncover and use the strengths within communities as a means for sustainable development.
* **Faith-based community development**; which utilizes faith-based organizations to bring about community development outcomes.
* [**Community-based participatory research**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community-based_participatory_research) (CBPR); a partnership approach to [research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research) that equitably involves, for example, [community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community) members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process and in which all partners contribute expertise and share decision making and ownership, which aims to integrate this knowledge with community development outcomes.
* [**Community organizing**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_organizing); an approach that generally assumes that social change necessarily involves conflict and social struggle in order to generate collective power for the powerless.
* [**Participatory planning**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_planning) including community-based planning (CBP); involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes of [urban planning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_planning); or, community-level planning processes, urban or rural.