

Community development practice in three dimensions

Community development is a wide-ranging discipline that encompasses economic development, political development, and social development. Community development is a process whereby all citizens are involved in the process of community change and improvement. Success in community development leads to more success in economic development. A set of values and beliefs and ethical standards has been developed that should always guide the community development process.

Introduction

As discussed in previous chapters, community development is a broad subject incorporating many different disciplines. As a process and an outcome, it is inextricably linked to economic development, which may also be defined as a process and an outcome. Because of its multidisciplinary nature, recent research on establishing a theoretical foundation for community development has drawn from different fields including sociology, economics, psychology, and many others. The focus of this chapter is on the practice of community development.

Professional community development (CD) practice could involve a community that is comprised of a single city, town, or village. On the other hand, it may involve working with a community comprised of several cities, towns, and villages, or a community of counties that decide to form a regional development organization. When considering a single city (town or village), it is also important to realize that citizens may not be residents. Those who make investments in, work in, or operate businesses in a city but live outside of the city boundaries are still very many citizens and stakeholders of that community. Similarly, major corporations may also be corporate citizens who invest in a community and represent the interests of the many individuals who have invested in their company. As the city goes, so go the fortunes of the investing corporation and its shareholders. Therefore, when organizing a community development initiative, it is important to carefully define the community and who should be included in the process. The community should not be too narrowly defined.

Looking to the future, CD professionals may find themselves working in unique communities such as “virtual communities.” With the great advances in computers and electronic communications, it is possible for individuals with common interests and Community development is a wide-ranging

discipline that encompasses economic development. Community development is a process whereby all citizens are involved in the process of community change and improvement. Success in community development leads to more success in economic development. A set of values and beliefs and ethical standards has been developed that should always guide the community development process. concerns to have electronic communities without legal or physical boundaries. Their interactions, business dealings, and common concerns may result in an interdependency that requires support from a community developer. This brings a whole set of unique problems and opportunities to the CD professional.

Practicing community development

Community development is both a process and an outcome. The practice of community development may be described as managing community change that involves citizens in a dialogue on issues to decide what must be done (their shared vision of the future) and then involves them in carrying it out. Critical issues addressed in the CD process include jobs and economic development (business attraction, expansion and retention, and new business development); education and workforce development; infrastructure development and improvement; quality of life, culture, and recreation; social issues such as housing, crime, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse; leadership development; the quality of governmental services; community image and marketing; and tourism development.

The professional community developer's role

A professional community developer's primary role is to facilitate the CD process. He or she is an agent of change, an individual in an advisory role focused on helping citizens assess their current situation, identify critical issues and options for the future, weigh those options, create a shared vision of the future, and make informed decisions about what they will do to make that vision a reality. If a professional community developer finds dependent citizens, he or she works to empower them so that they come to realize that they are not helpless and that their actions can make a positive difference in their communities. The professional developer moves citizens from a state of helplessness and dependency to one of self-directed interdependence. For a community developer, success is being "no longer needed." The professional works him or herself out of a job. Professional community developers as defined in this chapter would include consultants

trained in the field, but also local residents whose jobs involve community development activities such as economic development, planning, community health, and a host of other fields. The community development professional could also be a volunteer who is taking a lead role in the community development process. People who spend a large portion of their time in community development activities – whether paid or volunteer – may be considered professional community developers. As discussed below, professional community developers can obtain national certification as an indication of their experience and knowledge in the field. Whether considered a professional community developer or not, the more local citizens that understand the principles and practice of community development, the more successful the process and outcome will be.

Inclusiveness

CD is based on the idea that all people are important and should have a voice in community decisions, have the potential to contribute, resources to share, and responsibility for community action and outcomes. Citizens are entitled to make informed decisions about the factors influencing their community. The process is always open and transparent. Therefore, the CD is an inclusive approach to working with people who participate in the process to the extent that they are capable and interested. The professional community developer uses many techniques that offer citizens an opportunity to be part of the development process. These techniques may include responding to a survey, being interviewed as part of a community assessment, and participating in a public meeting, task force, subcommittee, or strategic planning committee. These actions greatly increase local citizen involvement and, thus, the potential to improve their quality of life. CD is guided by a set of values and beliefs. These may be thought of as mental tools that professional community developers use to provide guidance and direction for their work.

Providing the groundwork for the process

The process of building a solid foundation for an effective community-visioning project includes a number of key tasks. The first is the selection of an initiating committee – a small group of 12 to 15 individuals who represent a slice of the community. Their job includes:

- Selecting a stakeholder group that reflects the community's interests and perspectives.
- Designing a process that will reach the desired outcomes of the community effort.

- Forming subcommittees that will play key roles throughout the project.
- Addressing key logistical issues such as staffing, siting, scheduling, fundraising, and the project name.

Activity:

Write down any local issues of your community which is considered as the development of community:

Also write down five community development programs started in Pakistan.