

Introduction to Community Development – Glossary Of Key Terms

Advocacy

An advocate is "one who pleads, intercedes, speaks for another; one who argues on behalf of a proposal or tenet". (Oxford English Dictionary)

Advocacy can take on many different forms and functions. Usually the term is associated with a planned and systematic series of activities aimed at achieving a specific change. It may be conducted through the legal system, as in a class action suit, or be directed at changing organizational policies or practices. A coalition may be formed to advocate for a change in government policy. Many organizations avoid the use of the term advocacy due to concerns that it may jeopardize their charitable registration or relationships with funders and members.

Assets

Assets are useful or valuable skills, facilities or tools within a community that can lead to positive change.

Asset-Mapping

This is a technique for groups to identify the assets of their community and connect them in order to increase the capacity of the community to meet its needs.

*[W]herever there are effective community development efforts, those efforts are based upon an understanding, or a map, of the communities assets, capacities and abilities. For it is clear that even the poorest neighbourhood is a place where individuals and organizations represent resources upon which to rebuild. The key to neighbourhood regeneration, then, is to locate all of the available local assets, to begin connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness, and to begin harnessing those local institutions that are not yet available for local development purposes.
(McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993)*

Capacity

As it is used in health promotion literature, capacity is the participatory leadership, skills, resources, knowledge and tools of individuals in communities and organizations that enables them to address, and have greater control over, conditions and factors that affect health.

To build organizational capacity is to:

- develop a participatory and collaborative process of decision-making, program development, planning and research; and
- develop resources, tools, skills, education, training, knowledge and continual learning.

To build community capacity is to:

- have a participatory process of developing a shared vision, leadership, resources and skills within communities; and
- strengthen linkages/networks and collective processes.

To build individual capacity is to:

- have a process that enables individuals to increase access to the information, skills and networks that support their participation in communities and organizations.

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(Macdonald, 2002)

Citizen Engagement

Citizen engagement is active, meaningful involvement of a wide range of community members in the governing structures and other organizations that influence community decision-making. Sherry R. Arnstein (1969) describes a continuum of citizen participation, which moves from non-participation (manipulating or curing people) to tokenism (informing, consultation, placating) to a degree of power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control).

Coalition

A coalition is an organization of individuals, representing diverse organizations, factions or constituencies, who agree to work together in order to achieve a common goal.

Collaboration

Collaboration involves exchanging information, modifying activities, sharing resources and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

Communal

Communal usually refers to collective ownership and use of property by members of a group or community (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Community

Community can be defined either by geographic boundaries, or can be a community of interest e.g. church congregation, sports club, people who have a particular medical condition, etc. In a geographic community people share physical space they go to the same stores and services, the children play in the same park and go to the same school. The members come into contact with each other because they live nearby, not because they particularly want to be together. In a community the members often have shared values and symbols.

Community Animation

Community Animation is a method of community development in which the worker serves as a catalyst to bring together people, knowledge, skills and other resource to enable a community coalition or group to bring a community vision to life. Community Animators work with a number of different communities; while remaining accessible on an intermittent basis to provide continuity, they do not provide a continuous service to any one community.

community capacity

Capacity is the combination of assets such as leadership, skills, resources, knowledge and tools of individuals and organizations within the community that enables them to address and have control over those conditions that affect community well-being. Communities with high capacity engage in participatory processes to develop shared vision, leadership, resources and skills and have strong linkages and networks in place.

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Communities Characteristics

- 1) understanding and acceptance of the importance of each member and his/her capacity to contribute
- 2) collective effort people working together, assuming shared responsibility, utilizing talents
- 3) informality transactions of value take place without money, advertising or hype; there is a hidden order to community groups
- 4) learn through stories story-telling is an ancient method of social analysis it passes on wisdom, and is also a way of reflecting on individuals and communities abilities to achieve a better life.
- 5) incorporate celebration community members plan parties or social events as part of their activities; the line between work and play is blurred.
- 6) to be in community is also being part of the consolation of members and to be part of the sharing of tragedy

(John McKnight 1987)

Community Development

In 1948, the United Nations defined community development as "a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community initiative." (quoted in Head, 1979:101)

Common goals of community development programs include:

- empowering the community to identify and solve its problems;
- improving the socio-economic conditions of the community;
- increased community participation;
- increase social integration of isolated groups; and
- identifying and developing local leadership.

Basic values and principles of community development include:

- democratic processes; protection of the rights of the minority;
- capacity-building; focus on strengths;
- acceptance, respect for and sensitivity to diverse viewpoints;
- non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical structures;
- self-help, self-reliance;
- community ownership;
- community participation;
- working with natural networks and developing/extending networks;
- beneficial community services are planned, developed and monitored by community members;
- community involvement in decision-making; and
- promotes social justice and equity.

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Comprehensive community initiative

These are neighbourhood based efforts that seek improved outcomes for individuals and families as well as improvements in neighbourhood conditions by working comprehensively across sectors. CCI's are:

comprehensive; i.e. they address a range of areas rather than a single concern. They usually select an 'umbrella' issue as their focus (e.g., poverty reduction or air pollution).

Holistic - they break down artificial boundaries

"multi-spectral" they encourage collaboration among health, business, faith based organizations, etc. **long-term** - results will not be seen for several years

Developmental - these are not discrete interventions to reduce or compensate for identified problems. Rather, these efforts aim to build the capacity community from the perspective of decision making and resilience.

Inclusive - to involve diverse sectors and groups that have typically been excluded, such as people living in poverty, youth, Aboriginal Canadians and members of racial minorities.

Concerned with process and outcome - they set tangible goals, and carefully track and evaluate their work, and also establish effective structures that can enable the community to address problems effectively, change policy and introduce innovation.

Source: Torjman, Sherri and Eric Leviten-Reid. Comprehensive Community Initiatives. March 2003. www.caledoninst.org/Publications/Detail/?ID=4. (accessed Jan 16, 2008)

Constituents

Members of a constituency; i.e. a body of citizens entitled to elect a representative (as to a legislative or executive position) Source:

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Constituency>

Determinants of Health

The Population and Public Health Branch of Health Canada has identified the following as "broad determinants of health" that extend beyond the health care system:

- income and social status
- social support networks
- education
- employment and working conditions
- physical environments
- social environments
- biology and genetic endowment
- personal health practices and coping skills
- healthy child development
- health services
- gender, and
- culture

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(PPHB Ontario:4)

Diversity

Diversity refers to the variation of characteristics within a population, such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, income, education, political ideology, values and beliefs.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. Enable and help others to gain the power to influence planning and decision-making within the organization. Effective leaders empower them with responsibility, authority and trust to make decisions. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment>

Equity

Equity refers to the right of the individual to a fair share of the goods and services in society, However, equal treatment will not necessarily guarantee equal results. Creating equity sometimes required training people differently from each other; e.g. providing additional resources to some individuals so they are better able to compete for jobs, obtain education, or access to other programs and services.

Evaluation

In the context of this handbook, evaluation is an assessment of the magnitude, quality, impact, process or outcomes of a project or program.

Facilitator

To facilitate is "to make easier or less difficult; help forward (an action, a process, etc.): e.g.; Careful planning facilitates any kind of work. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/facilitate>. A facilitator is a neutral presence who assists the group to meet their self-defined goals. The facilitator does not push their own agenda onto the group, but help the group to develop and follow its own agenda. In the context of a potential role within a collaborative, a facilitator assists in community problem-solving process by liaising among various players and being a source of fairness and encouragement.

Health

"Health is the extent to which an individual or group is able, on the one hand, to realize aspirations and satisfy needs; and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment.

Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities" (World Health Organization, 1986a).

Health includes a capacity to achieve "full potential through a safe, non-violent environment, adequate income, housing, food and education, and a valued role to play in family, work and the community"

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(Health and Primary Health Care Task Force, Haliburton, Kawartha & Pine Ridge District Health Council, March 1993:2).

Health is also a means to achieving "such valued outcomes as participation, opportunity, employment, income, ... well-being ... wealth, sustainability, independence, equity, and social justice"

(Premier's Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice, 1994:1).

Healthy Community

"A healthy community is one that is constantly creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential."

(Hancock and Duhl, 1986)

Guiding Principles of Healthy Communities are included in Appendix 2.

Health Promotion

"Health promotion is a process of enabling people to improve their health status by influencing the behaviors and conditions that affect their health" (Francisco and Fawcett, 1993:403). The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (World Health Organization 1986b) identifies 5 activities in health promotion:

1. Developing personal skills;
2. Strengthening community action;
3. Creating supportive environments;
4. Building healthy public policy; and
5. Reorienting health services

Healthy Public Policy

Healthy public policies are decisions or actions, which are intended to have a positive impact on peoples' health.

Inclusiveness

The Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health defines social and economic inclusion as

"...both a goal and a process. It welcomes individuals and groups who have been left out into the planning, decision-making and policy-development processes in their community. And it empowers them by offering the opportunities, resources and support they need to participate." (Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health, 2001)

The Laidlaw Foundation defined social inclusion as:

"the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society -the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and

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economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life, and its common wealth."

(Laidlaw Foundation, 2001)

Indicator

An indicator is a measurement that reflects the status of a system (e.g. social, economic or environmental) over time.

Information literacy

There are many definitions of information literacy just as there are many definitions of literacy. For some people, information literacy means being able to cope and adapt to technology. In its broadest sense, information literacy refers to the ability to access and use a variety of information sources to solve an information need. The American Library Association's definition of information literacy is the one that is used most often today, partially because it was widely publicized and distributed.

To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand. ([ALA, 1989](#))

Source: Hayden, Alix K. Information Literacy. EDCI 701 - The University of Calgary

In-kind contributions

Dollar-value of non-cash contributions (which directly benefit a project) by the grantee or another party other than the funder (volunteer services, equipment use, facilities use, staff time or other resources, as distinguishable from a monetary grant.)

Source: A Glossary of Grant-Related Terminology The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida, <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/grants/Glossary%20Terms.htm>

Mobilization

Mobilization is the process of organizing people and resource to create change. It puts ideas into action and brings momentum to a project. It fosters initiative and wide community participation, secures the necessary resources and navigates obstacles and opportunities.

Organic process

A [process occurring in living organisms](#); a phenomenon of gradual changes through a series of states. <http://www.wordwebonline.com/en/ORGANICPROCESS> This phrase is often used to indicate that change must originate and develop from within the target (e.g., the community), rather than being imposed by an external agent.

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Qualitative and quantitative evaluation

Program evaluation plans may involve the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the outcomes and impacts of a program. Quantitative methods focus on things that can be counted or directly measured, e.g., number of participants involved, number of sessions conducted.

Qualitative methods, such as open-ended interview questions, focus groups or visual depictions, provide more in-depth information about individual experiences, perspectives and context.

Source: Strategies for Effective Proposal Writing, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
<http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca/publications/misc/fundproposal.pdf>

Representation

This is the action or fact of one person standing for another so as to have the rights and obligations of the person represented. Source:

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Representation>

When working with communities it is essential that the scope of representation of individual members of Boards, committees and community groups be clear; particularly in terms of whether the represents has the authority to speak on behalf of or bind the organization or community s/he purports to represent.

Resources

Resources can be tangible (e.g., money, computers, staff, volunteers) or intangible (e.g., motivation, in-kind services, actions).

Self-help

The term self-help group refers to more than two people who come together to deal with a shared concern or problem. Such groups exist all over the world; they are sometimes called mutual aid or support groups. These groups are run by and for the members, "experts" themselves.

Source: Self Help Resource Centre. www.selfhelp.on.ca/start.html

Social capital

Social capital is the value generated by various forms of civic engagement, trust, norms of reciprocity, networks, associations and information sharing within a community.

Family and friends are the most basic forms of social capital. Then there are the more organized examples, from youth sports clubs, neighbourhood associations to service groups and government representatives. Robert Putnam, in his book, *Bowling Alone*, warns that our stock of [social capital](#) has plummeted, impoverishing our lives and communities.

Source: The Sgaurio Seminar: Civic Engagement in America <http://www.bowlingalone.com/>

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Social support

Social support is a network of family, friends, colleagues and other acquaintances you can turn to, whether in times of crisis or simply for fun and entertainment. Family ties, friendships and involvement in social activities can offer a psychological buffer against stress, anxiety and depression. Social support can also help you cope better with health problems. Social support can also increase your sense of belonging, purpose and self-worth, promoting positive mental health. It can help you get through a divorce, a job loss, the death of a loved one or the addition of a child to your family.

Source: CNN Health Library - <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/library/MH/00041.html>

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

(UN Commission of Environment on Environment and Development, 1987) The goals of sustainable community development are:

- build communities which are more self-supporting and which can sustain and regenerate themselves through economic self-reliance, community control and environmentally sound development.
- build communities which will be worth preserving because they are grounded in the life experiences of people who live in them and in the natural histories of specific regions. This calls for building local culture and meeting the full range of people's needs.

Synergy

Synergy (from the Greek *syn-ergo*, meaning working together) refers to the phenomenon in which two or more discrete influences or agents acting together create an effect greater than that predicted by knowing only the separate effects of the individual agents.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synergy>. It is originally a scientific term but has become more popularly defined as "the whole being greater than the sum of the parts", or "2+2=5". It is often used to describe the advantages of collaborating with others to work towards a shared goal.

Universality

Universal services are available to everyone, without the need to meet eligibility requirements or to demonstrate financial need. For example, in Ontario we have universal access to elementary and secondary education and most medical services (for Canadian citizens and landed immigrants), whereas we do not have universal access to day care or housing programs.