

# Practice Insights

**COMMUNITY**  
*is the answer*  
Edition



**Issue 4:** Community  
is the answer

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# The conference organising partners

Key to the success of the conference was the strength of the partnership between the two main organising partners. While the CLD Standards Council anchored the conference firmly in Scotland, IACD ensured the event had a truly international representation and content. However, together we were more than the sum of the parts. From this synergy flowed creativity, strength and passion to turn an idea of an international practice sharing event into a reality.

## IACD – the International Association for Community Development

IACD is a global network of community development organisations, practitioners, activists, researchers and policy makers who are committed to issues of global justice. Founded in 1953, it has since the 1990s been registered in the UK as a company limited by guarantee and a Scottish registered charity. It is governed by an elected Board representing seven global regions and has its administrative headquarters in Fife, Scotland. It is the main international membership organisation for those working in or supporting community development.

- Advocacy for community development values, principles and approaches in international forums;
- Facilitating links amongst community development practitioners, associations, educators and policy makers; and
- Championing community empowerment and the creation of an effective voice at the global level in support of community-based planning and development.

IACD links people to each other. We facilitate learning and practice exchange, both virtually and face-to-face. We work with partners to deliver regional, national and international events, study visits and conferences. We document the work that our members are doing around the world by collecting case studies, tools and

materials on community development, and sharing these through our website, publications and e-bulletins. We carry out research projects, drawing on international experience. IACD aims to give its members a voice at the global level, advocating for community development principles and practice in international forums and consultations. IACD has consultative status with the UN and its agencies.

[www.iacdglobal.org](http://www.iacdglobal.org)



## The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland was delighted to be a partner in hosting this international gathering of colleagues from around the world. The programme of seminars and workshops were, rightly, challenging many of the considerations of community work, work with young people and adults active in their community based settings. They challenged us to reflect on whether our current approaches are appropriate and sufficient to grow the changes required. We learnt much from all the participants, and hope we offered much to others also!

The Standards Council in Scotland is the organisation responsible for the registration of CLD practitioners, the approval of professionally recognised training programmes and driving up the quality of the continuing professional

development of the sector workforce in Scotland through the establishment of a new Learning Culture. Central to the core of our principles is that we are a peer driven organisation with a core investment in raising the confidence and effectiveness of our workforce.

We develop dialogue, debate and conversation with practitioners that will encourage us to lead, think and act beyond boundaries. Further, we aspire to be creative, provocative, inspiring and motivating. We work with partners to spark ideas that aspire to this. We encourage all colleagues to take responsibility and make their own contributions in developing conversations that look to positive action.

Our involvement in this international gathering is a part of this approach.

True to our collaborative principles, the CLD registration scheme and all other dimensions of the Council business has been developed for the sector, by the sector. The programme of activity is open to all CLD practitioners in Scotland, paid and voluntary, who demonstrate the values, principles, competences, Code of Ethics and commitment to CPD that underpin CLD practice. What matters is not where you practice or at what level – it's how and why.

Find out more:  
[www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk](http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk)



**Editorial**  
Stewart Murdoch

## If Community is the Answer, what was the question?

**B**etween 8 and 11 June 2014, 450 community development practitioners from 32 countries, representing every continent on the globe, with the exception of Antarctica, came together in Glasgow to explore the topic "What is our Common Wealth?"

In the lead up to the historic Scottish Referendum on Independence, and in the days before Scotland hosted the 2014 Commonwealth Games, it seemed an appropriate topic to examine from the perspective of community development practitioners.

Organising an event on this scale was a huge undertaking for IACD. It would not have been possible without the partnership forged between the CLD Standards Council and IACD and the wider partnership of organisations which supported the event.

Undertaking a project of this nature, you really get a sense of those who go the extra mile, turn a problem into a challenge, and simply graft away to make things happen.

The event itself was divided into three themes, which had emerged strongly in pre conference dialogue:

Health and the wellbeing of communities;

Wealth and the way in which we use, share or accumulate resources;

Power and, in particular, the relationship of citizens to the way in which they can control and influence their own lives.

In his address to the conference, Derek Mackay, the Scottish Government Minister for Communities, emphasised the commitment of the Scottish Government to addressing human rights and to giving people greater control over their own lives.

He referred to the legislation going through the Scottish Parliament which would, under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, provide more powers to transfer assets held in public ownership to local communities; provide the right of citizens to challenge public sector decisions; provide more tools and resources for communities to flourish; and provide the influence and control communities seek to enable Scotland to be a more participative democracy.

Over the course of the four days we spent together in Glasgow, friendships were formed, information was shared, opinions were challenged. Overall, there was strong unanimity on the part of those who attended this event that the social, economic, political and environmental challenges we all face will be solved best

when governments work with and support communities.

The real richness of this event came from the participation of delegates. In total, there were 140 presentations over the four days of the event. While this publication gives a sense of what was shared, and the photographs may give a feeling for the comradeship which evolved, the real value of the opportunity was in the face-to-face contact, and it is impossible to begin to summarise its significance.

Glasgow's "Community is the Answer" conference provided delegates with the opportunity to reflect, to reclaim time to think, to step back and look at the bigger picture, and to maintain a sense of the shared commitment and humour, so important for the work we do.

It was an inspirational few days that will live on for those of us who were privileged to take part. Many of the presentations and supporting papers can be accessed freely on the conference website and they have formed the basis of this edition of Practice Insights.

*Stewart Murdoch stepped down as Vice President of IACD in July 2015. He has served on the Board since 2003 and chaired the Conference Planning Group.*

Visit the conference website: [www.communityistheanswer.org](http://www.communityistheanswer.org)

## The Celtic knot

Like their Celtic cousins in Ireland, Brittany, and all over mainland Europe, the picti (the painted ones) developed an art form that was uniquely Celtic. The art form incorporated animal and geometric motives but adorning the surfaces of stones, skins and other everyday objects.

The circular drawings or "mandalas" are a single strand maze pattern that is endless, symbolising infinity and eternity. In pre-literate societies,

"mandalas" were considered to have magical properties, and even today, they retain a mystical quality that compels attention.

As a cultural icon, the Celtic knot has reached its most complex and refined form in the Celtic art of Ireland, Scotland and the Celtic fringe of Europe. It is an enduring cultural symbol which can take many expressions, but is a link between traditional societies and our future.





# Day 1: Health

Stewart Murdoch

It's impossible to consider the common good of a community without considering its health in a wider sense. Day 1 provided delegates with that opportunity of hearing expert opinion and reflecting on their own experience.



**M**onday morning began with keynote presentations from Sir Harry Burns and Dr Vikram Patel, who both emphasised that community health has much to do with the stresses and pressures that people experience, and this is not resolved by income levels alone. Both keynotes highlighted that promoting wellbeing and addressing the stresses which affect different communities in different ways is a global challenge.

We need the compassion to deal with the complexities faced by individuals, families and communities; and to recognise the way in which community organisation can help people experience wellbeing in their life.

## Community and Wellbeing

The first keynote speaker was Sir Harry Burns – Professor of Global Health at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. Up until April 2014 he was the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Scotland: the Scottish Government's principal medical adviser and Head of the Scottish Medical Civil Service. Sir Harry has done more than anyone to encourage an assets based approach to people's health which focuses on behaviours and influences. His work in Scotland had also focused policy on the social factors which impact people's health and wellbeing, especially in their early lives.

Sir Burns began with a question: What are the causes of wellbeing? Many think the cause of wellbeing is avoiding cause

of illness, but it's much more complicated than that. We need to shift our focus from medicalised intervention against disease to creating wellness.

From analysing the data we know that health inequality in Scotland is primarily caused by disorders caused by socio-economic drivers: suicides, drugs, alcohol, and violence. To solve it, we need to address the societal problems.

When speaking to patients, it is clear they feel that external forces, rather than their own choices, are in control of their lives; and that drugs / alcohol / tobacco are the only comfort they have in life. Pursuing the pathogenic approach is not going to solve this. We needed to apply a salutogenic approach – study of what causes people to be healthy.

There were three aspect of wellbeing that Harry Burns felt were best illustrated with case studies:

**Resilience:** Emily Werner's study of high child mortality in Hawaii, identified factors which aided survival (resilience): 1) Personal attributes: outgoing, bright, and positive; 2) The family: having close bonds with at least one family member or an emotionally stable parent; 3) The community: receiving support or counsel from peers. Nowadays, too often the peer group is the source of danger in relation to risky behaviour.

**Purpose and meaning:** Viktor Frankl, an Auschwitz survivor, identified that those who survived and went to on have

healthy lives had a sense of purpose. In Glasgow since 1970's industry jobs have disappeared, communities were being broken down and the sense of meaning and purpose was lost. When speaking to practitioners working with indigenous communities, they observe the same thing.

**Sense of coherence and control:** Aaron Antonovsky examined the biology of chaotic environments, by studying child survivors of concentration camps. The factors which aided survival were: a sense of coherence, an ability to see the world as a place that makes sense, confidence in being able to exert control on the environment surrounding them, and wanting to exert that control. Those who could not re-establish this suffered from lifelong acute stress responses.

To say the answer to inequality is to make the poor rich, is too simplistic. We don't just need an economic solution. We tend to push people with problems away, and they just drift away into margins of society. We need complex social intervention, at all stages of life; we need to take alienated people and bring them back into society.

Our social systems are based on doing things for people, rather than with people. Our responses tend to reduce their sense of control over their lives. A case study from England outlines lessons learnt from successful community development:

- institutions reached the limit of their

problem solving potential; supported community action was the solution

- listening, asking people what motivates them and what they want was key to helping them to co-create it
- give people a way in which they can contribute: jobs, time-banking, volunteering was important

Sir Harry quoted Gregory Boyle: "Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it."

Be amazed at the level of skills the poor and deprived demonstrate through living their complex lives, and allow those skills to be put at the service of others – that should be our guiding principle.

## Mental health for all – by all

Sir Harry's presentation was followed by Dr Vikram Patel – Professor of International Mental Health and Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow in Clinical Science at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK). He is a co-founder of Sangath, a community based NGO in India and author of "Where There Is No Psychiatrist"

Prof Patel's key message was: if we are ever going to achieve the dreamy goal of health, particularly mental health, for all, we will need to take the whole community with us – it's too important to be left to doctors alone.

## Question & Answer

**Q Dr Akwugo Emejulu, Scotland:** What, in your view, is the role of the welfare state? The state is really important, and I wonder if we're letting policy makers and politicians off the hook when we seek to fill that gap? NGOs and community efforts will never be able to give the kind of coverage and consistency in service provision that the state provides. What is the analysis of the state that we should have that doesn't simply blame the state for its failures, but sees it as part of the solution?

**A Sir Harry Burns:** It all depends on what you mean by welfare state. The changes which are being made in the UK at the moment are positively destructive – people who need state support often lead complex, chaotic lives; withdrawing state support, because a person was late for a mandatory appointment, is appalling. However, the way in which the state provides support to people in difficulty, is critical. When analysing growth in life expectancy across Europe, in many countries this growth was maintained at faster rate than in West of Scotland. In some of those countries you receive state support, but you have to do something for it. You need to ask: is this continuing to maintain the meaning and purpose in people's lives?

**A Dr Vikram Patel:** The state is the steward of guaranteeing health. NGOs can innovate – something that can be difficult for the state – but we need to work closely with the state to scale these ideas up.

In US, 60% of those with mental health problems did not receive any help. The instinctive reaction is that we need more mental health professionals. The puzzle is: the US has more mental health professionals per head of population than any country in the world. The problem is that mental health professionals often sit very far away from the community that needs them. The interventions are heavily medicalised, and alienate the community and patients they should engage.

Traditionally, mental healthcare is focused on clinical diagnosis. It's a medicalised approach, which does not relate to community understanding of mental health. It is delivered by a psychiatrist, of which there are few, particularly in the developing world. It is also delivered in the specialised clinic, which in some countries translated into big institutions set up during colonial times which have undergone hardly any reform since; that leads to frequent human rights abuses.





Pursuing the pathogenic approach is not going to solve socio-economic causes of ill health.

We needed to apply salutogenic approach – a study of what causes people to be healthy.

### The Global Mental Health model

We need to understand mental health problems differently from other health issues; it is embedded in personal narrative in a way other illnesses aren't. We need to avoid using alienating labels, and instead focus on tackling causes of distress, seeking outcomes the person and their family want, and mobilising community resources to address contributing social factors.

We need to use lay people in mental healthcare; the primary skill they need is to care about others – all other skills can be provided through training.

Finally, we need to provide the interventions where people are: in community centres, schools, and in their homes.

**SUNDAR** (meaning 'beautiful' in Hindi) sets out key lessons and guidance for creating successful mental health interventions:

- S**implify the message
- U**npack the treatment
- D**eliver it where people are
- A**ffordable and available human resources
- R**eallocation of specialists to train and supervise

"This will lead us to a paradigm shift: from focusing on lack of resource, to realising we have the best resource there is – people."

It would be a disservice to the richness and diversity of workshops which followed to try and summarise them. A number are available on the website or are listed in the programme. If there was one message that came out really clearly from both our key note speakers, colleagues, for me it was that community is the answer, and it is the only way to go, and that having a deal of compassion will help us get there.

### Rethinking health and wellbeing through the lens of social enterprise

The final input on Day 1 was provided by Professor Cam Donaldson – the Yunus Chair in Social Business & Health at Glasgow Caledonian University. He is a leading health economist, renowned for his methodological and practical research on economic evaluation and health care priority setting.

The beginnings of the problems are long before the person incurs diseases, and are happening in the communities. They are hopelessness, lack of connectedness, purposefulness, and these are the things we need to act on.

"Health inequalities in Scotland, which is a country with world-class public health practices, are widening, and they have been widening from before the period of austerity."

What is it that kills people at differential rates in different communities? The beginnings of the problems are long before the person incurs diseases, and are happening in the communities. If it's hopelessness lack of connectedness, purposefulness, then these are the things we need to act on. We need to look at 'the causes of the causes', and go into communities.

Cam proposed that we should consider the role of social enterprise as a public health initiative.

In one sense, since social enterprises operate with a social mission, they all could be considered as working on social determinants of health.

A good example of this is the social enterprise Passage from India which started as a group of Scottish women going to India to find out about women's self-help group, and how this learning could be applied in Glasgow.

Working with similar case studies, academics created a following hypothesis:

"Social enterprises can act on the individual and community assets and deficits, both in terms of those who are part of the social enterprise, and those who are the customers. This in a long run will lead to improved capital, cohesiveness, and health and wellbeing."

Cam concluded: "We need to expand our thinking about what can improve health and reduce health inequalities. We also need evidence-based local solutions, and that requires collaboration between academics, practitioners and communities."

# Day 1: Delegates' perspectives

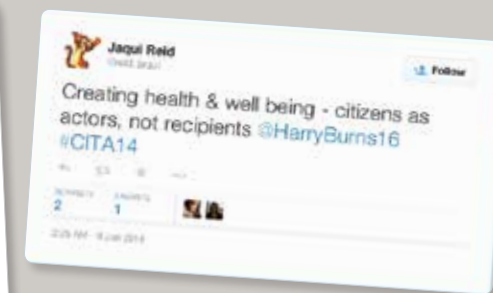
I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Sense of Place

Internal locus of Control

Inspired by research into social networks in community development, by the stories from the neighbourhoods in which we all work, and by the timely keynote from Sir Harry Burns just before our workshop, we explored the marked extent to which social networks affect behaviour, wellbeing and community resilience. The group, made up from delegates from across the world, discussed the importance of recognising the universal benefit of social connections, and how through growing them resilience and wellbeing can be created. Just like the shoots and nodes of the ginger, it is our roots, our connections and our networks, which allow us to grow stronger, to thrive, and to create wellbeing for ourselves.

*Holy Notcutt (Great Yarmouth, UK)*



Our workshop followed neatly on from the keynote input by Harry Burns. He stressed the complexities of the issues being addressed and warned that:

"Looking for instant solutions to complex problems can often worsen problems"

We looked for positive ways forward rather than instant solutions, emphasising the often subtle and ever changing nature of power, and used some work I'd completed with a group of South Asian women living in an area with appalling health statistics, to help us do this. This emphasised power and empowerment, inequalities and the complexities of action and solutions referring to how the social determinants of health determine the extent to which a person has the right physical, social and personal resources to achieve their goals and to meet needs.

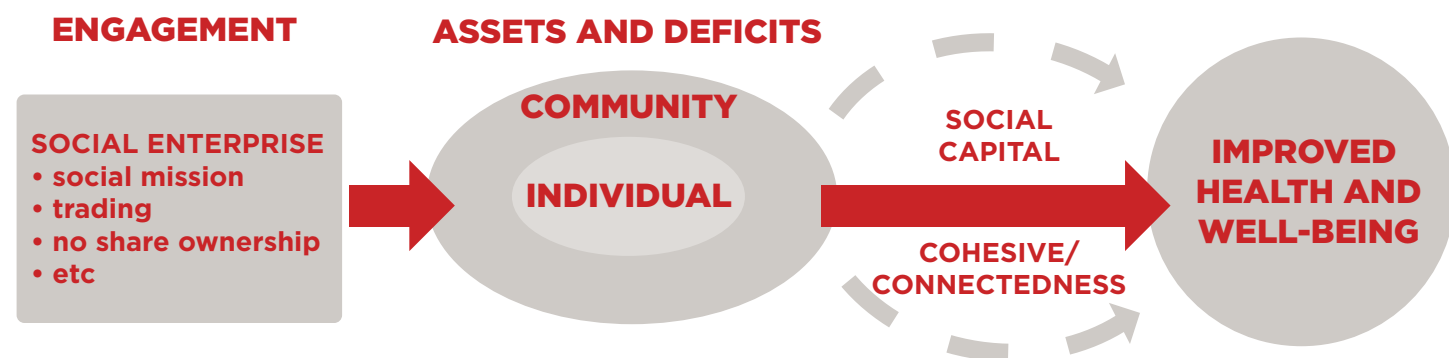
*Val Woodward*

What Causes People to be healthy?

Meaning & Purpose



### Rethinking health and wealth through the lens of social enterprise – a working hypothesis



AS PRACTITIONERS & CITIZENS ARE WE LOOKING TO 'MANAGE' ILL HEALTH AND INEQUALITIES OR ERADICATE THEM?



# Day 2: Wealth

Ingrid Burkett

Day two of the conference focused on wealth – and in many ways it was very poignant that this theme was sandwiched between health and power.

**O**n the first day Sir Harry Burns had brought home the deep connections between health and wealth, and in the keynote panel on the second day each speaker had something to say about the forward links between wealth and power. Of course all the themes are integral to building not only ‘community’, but a just society. The tone of the conversations on day two, however, were somewhat more contested – wealth is a topic that generates vigorous debate and robust conversation, and none of the sessions on this day were immune to the tensions involved in discussing the role wealth, money and economics plays in ‘community as the answer’.

Day two was packed with workshops and discussions – with an immense richness of dialogue and interaction that is impossible to summarise in a short overview. So what I’d like to do is to highlight five quotes that came from the opening panel and the discussion that was sparked, that we can trace through the day and through the whole conference.

## “Whose wealth are we growing? Where is wealth flowing?”

This was my opening question for the day. It comes from working in community economic development where, even in the poorest of communities it is often not about a total lack of resources, rather it is about unequal distribution of wealth, assets and resources. I deliberately focus on ‘wealth’ (the roots of which are ‘well-being’ and at the heart of which are assets) rather than ‘income’ or ‘money’, because just growing the size of a pie does not necessarily mean that all are fed nor that the distribution is equal.



Too often we focus on increasing resources (whether that be funding, investment or income) rather than on how to build longer-term well-being and community-based sustainability. Building wealth in a community requires a focus on assets, both tangible and intangible, and on ensuring that we follow the ‘flow’ of well-being, so that it does not just flow around or even leak out of those parts of a community that are struggling. This theme was followed up in a number of the sessions throughout the day – where presenters spoke about asset-based approaches focused on physical assets (such as community centres), financial assets (such as attracting and retaining local investment), economic assets (such as supporting entrepreneurship and establishing local businesses) and social assets (such as growing collective and resident-led initiatives).

## “Community itself is not the answer. It’s community plus...” (Anita Paul)

Anita Paul spoke of her work with the Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation (Grassroots), which she founded with her husband, Kalyan Paul and local villagers in Ranikhet, Uttarakhand, one of the northernmost states in India, bordering Nepal and



China. Anita spoke of the need for community development to focus on more than building ‘community’ – with people’s lives and livelihoods linked to land and ecology. Often ‘wealth’ is measured by people’s standard of living – which ties people’s wellbeing to income. However, as Anita highlighted, wealth is human, social and ecological – it is multi-dimensional, and it is important that we see ‘quality of life’ as a key to understanding people’s wealth and their well-being.

One of the things that Anita highlighted in her discussion was the need for communities to become resilient and prepared for change. By linking economic, social and ecological dimensions within our work in local communities, Anita argued there are more opportunities for responses to change and more effective collective ways for managing change.

A number of other speakers followed up with insights around this theme – with presentations about how community enterprises can build local wealth; how building economic and ecological resilience has prepared communities to face disasters; and how important a multi-dimensional understanding of wealth with incorporates communities, livelihoods and ecology is if we are to promote social justice in the face of neoliberal political agendas.



## “We can organise money, but money is not the solution. Organised community, is the solution – organised communities are the first cog, which can change people’s lives in a lasting way, which can secure resources, which can absorb capital in ways that create change” (Don Hinkle-Brown).

Don Hinkle-Brown, from The Reinvestment Fund in the United States spoke of the work that Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) have done in low to moderate income communities. He emphasised that money and the investment of money is not, on its own, a solution to poverty. Rather, he suggested that it was a question of ‘organising’ – that is, organised people, with organised capacities and data ensure that money can be organised in ways that can ensure the maximisation economic and social outcomes in communities. If the ‘community development’ part of CDFIs is left out, then all that is left is finance, which in itself can actually exacerbate poverty by fuelling inequality. The skills of community development and community organising is what are needed to ensure that money generates longer-term changes in communities. What this quote highlights is that it all starts with people organising – people coming together to act to change their futures. We heard the power of this in the reflections of each of the panel members – but most particularly in the reflections of the EFIN award winner – CAF Futuro member Michel Mosca who is involved in a savings cooperative

amongst people who have a mental illness, giving them access to the asset base of savings and to the opportunity to access fair credit (from which they are otherwise excluded).

## “The world comprises multiple economies. Money is not the measure of wealth – it’s a medium of exchange” (Andrew Lyon)

Andrew Lyons took us on a journey into the philosophical underpinnings of the days’ theme and explored some of the implications of narrowing the discussion of wealth down to ‘money’. He argued that we need to be wary of narrow and nihilistic visions of economies that emphasise production and consumption, supply and demand. Instead, we need to expand our view of economies so that we include participation, gifting, inclusion, diversity – and even ‘love’! Andrew challenged us to open up our conversations over the course of the day to incorporate different and multiple economies, and move beyond economics where the only organising principle is profit. People and planet are facing increasing turbulence and crisis, which we can respond to in three ways – denial; cynicism; or transformation. Andrew challenged us to explore how community development can help to build the practice and the currency of transformation. This theme flowed through the day with connections to both theory and practice. Keith Pople explored aspects of this theme in his paper on the past and futures of community development in relation to economic and social justice. And there were other papers exploring community learning and development values under neoliberalism; how community

development can regenerate its activist roots; and how practitioners and community members can participate in transformative agendas when more and more funding is tied to preset outcomes.

## “Money actually really matters. To pretend as if money doesn’t matter to community groups is a fantasy” (Dr Akwugo Emejulu – conference participant responding to the panel)

This theme reminded us that while we can speak of wealth in many diverse ways, we cannot ignore the version of wealth which dominates the global economy – that is, a monetary understanding of wealth. This highlighted the linkages between themes – how can we talk about wealth without talking about power? This was clear in so many of the workshops and in the keynote panel session. The links between what we do on the ground to organise around wealth and power – to build savings cooperatives, to build associations that can make decisions about how resources and capital should be best spent to build community and a healthy future.

The second day was such a rich tapestry of discussion and interaction around the theme of wealth. Many thanks to all those who presented and offered up conversations which contributed to this richness!

*Ingrid Burkett stepped down as the President of IACD in June 2014. She runs a social business in Australia and has practised, taught and researched community development for over 20 years.*





# Derek Mackay MSP on Scottish Government and community development

On behalf of the Scottish Government, Derek Mackay, Minister for Local Government and Planning, welcomed delegates to Scotland and to the conference. He spoke of his own experience as a community activist, which had led him into political activity and a political career.



**The Minister emphasised Scottish Government's dedication to leaving the world in no doubt about the commitment of Scotland to human rights. To this effect the Government is considering the development of a national action plan for the promotion of human rights**

Derek Mackay also spoke of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill which was going through the Parliamentary Committee process. The Bill would give communities:

- far greater rights of access to the ownership of public sector assets which were not being effectively used;
- the right to challenge public sector decisions;

- more tools to enable communities to flourish.

The Scottish Government also recognised the importance of working across the borders. The Government has committed to working in Malawi as its primary focus for international development work. This reflects the generation long links between Malawi and Scotland established through David Livingstone.

The Minister also highlighted the shared importance globally of developing new approaches to energy generation and energy consumption, whether in the developed or the developing world.

In conclusion, Derek Mackay said that the Scottish Government looked forward to supporting the work of IACD in the

months and years ahead, and congratulated the organisers in bringing 32 countries from across the globe to Scotland to discuss the relationship between community and government.

There followed a robust question and answer session where the Minister rejected the UK Government's position on the Big Society. He emphasised the aspiration of the Scottish Government to be internationalist and recognised the need to invest in staff to support communities and in the maintenance of standards in this field of work.

# Day 2: Delegates' perspectives

How do we ensure that the turbulence created by materialistic values and actions does not prevent the transformation of the common wealth at individual, community and policy levels?  
ICEADA Kano-Nigeria  
www.iceada.org

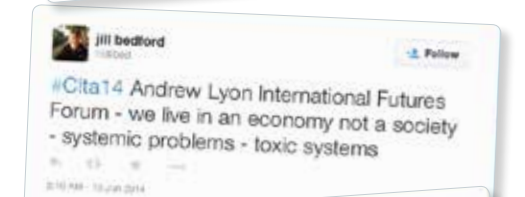
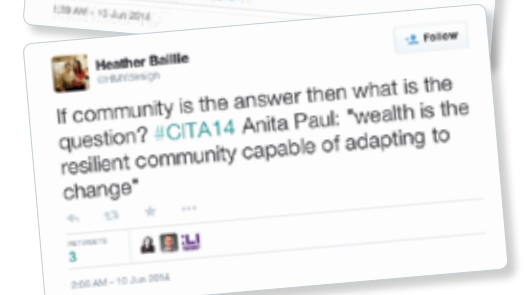
Faith communities have a long history of contributing to wider communities, whilst forming an important part of their diversity. My paper explored developing thinking relating to the concept of 'spiritual capital', which seeks to capture the wealth offered by such faith communities to wider society, in light of continuing debates over the role of faith groups in the public sphere.

Andrew Orton

DO NOT FORGET SOCIAL POLICY & REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.....

From a Nordic perspective, the community is not the only answer to questions about wealth and poverty, but it reminds us that human life means human interdependence, involving both collective and personal morality for the common wealth and well-being. We need further international deliberation on common wealth, welfare and community using the concepts of having, loving, being, and acting together.

Päivi Turunen





# The places we've been

**COMMUNITY**  
*is the answer*

Celebrating our **common wealth:**  
**an international gathering**  
**8-11 June 2014, Glasgow, Scotland, UK**

Glasgow was the perfect place to host 'Community is the answer'. The city's diversity, the strong tradition of community organising, even its official slogan – People Make Glasgow, all made it an ideal location for the conference. These are the places we've visited over the four days in June:

**1 The Glasgow University** – one of Scotland's oldest universities, it was the heart of the 'Community is the answer' conference

**2 Glasgow City Chambers** – home to the conference Civic Reception, where for one night the delegates had a chance to enjoy the sound of bagpipes and a traditional ceilidh

**3 GalGael Trust** – a safe harbour for those whose lives have been battered by storms such as worklessness, depression or addiction

**4 Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre** – "a place for people, a centre for all"; a dynamic, community-based organisation

**5 Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector** – the main development agency and advocate for Glasgow's voluntary and community organisations

**6 COPE** – a community anchor organisation and community access mental health service

**7 Chapelhall Allotments Association** – a 40-plot community allotment scheme for local residents, schools, a nursery, community groups and adults with learning disabilities

**8 Near Not Dear Food Co-Op & the Health and Wellness Hub** – a key local facility providing low cost food for local residents and delivering healthier eating projects with community groups

**9 Crossroads Youth and Community Association** – an organisation delivering youth and community work in areas of high migration in Glasgow

**10 Scottish Refugee Council** – the main agency working with refugees and asylum seekers across Scotland

**11 North United Communities** – an organisation steeped in community development approaches, seeking to address both immediate and critical needs of the local communities and the root causes of poverty

**12 Annexe Communities** – a development trust and a community enterprise, initially established as a Health Living Centre by a group of community activists

**13 Lambhill Stables** – a centre point for the community, it transforms vacant and derelict land into productive and attractive public green spaces, while providing training and employment for local people



**14 The ALLIANCE** – the national intermediary for health and social care organisations, ensuring the voices of people and the expertise of the third sector are at the heart of policy and practice

**15 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park** – a beautiful site hosting a number of community projects, including the Three Villages community hall and Community Hydro Scheme

**16 WEvolution Self Reliant Group** – the Women @ Work project was the first SRG in Scotland, bringing people together to support each other, learn new skills, and create small new businesses



# Day 3: Power

Rory Macleod

Day 3 has loomed for me because I was to chair it. All of the themes for the three days had in reality overlapped. Perhaps a collision lay ahead.



When old cultures are dying, there are always a few people who are not afraid to be insecure. They emerge from the crowd when things end and pioneering efforts emerge, even as systems are breaking down.

## 3 Cups of Tea

- \*The first, you are a stranger
- \*The second, you become a friend
- \*The third, you join our family.

(Nepali saying. Used as book title by Greg Mortenson)

'In our annual report and evaluation to funders, I wrote that 'we enjoyed 17,000 cups of tea last year.' I hadn't read that tea was important in any of the funding criteria. But common sense prevailed – you have to make time for people, have conversations, encourage them to take their authority. The benefits are immense.'

(A quote from a workshop)

In this power embrace, as pioneers we work together

- We strengthen relationships
- We support one another
- We learn from one another
- We understand the system
- We develop good solutions
- We become more confident (Meg Wheatley)

Later, in the closing session, Dr Richard Holloway, Scottish author and broadcaster, proposed that the pressure to win in our 'power holding' paradigm, makes human beings do terrible things to others. He referred to Simone Weil, who suggests that we can learn not to admire force, hate the enemy or scorn the unfortunate. But how do we do that in a world dominated by force – political, sexual, economic, spiritual?

How do we preserve ourselves from being dominated by it or becoming agents of it? The market doesn't see human beings as spiritual realities, it sees them as consumers. We must also challenge our temptation to see capitalists or power holders, as things and not as themselves human beings, people with the tragedies and glories of their own lives.

So how do we avoid falling into the trap of force? We're challenged to consider how we respond. Do we do more of the same, blame others, walk away, redo the old model, fall into despair, pretend only the good bits matter, or become an up-front cynic? Or will you assume your position, own it, and have a different reaction? Meg Wheatley suggests that what can help see us through is perseverance!

**B**ut in fact the collision has already happened. No one was seriously hurt, though many I think were stirred and shaken. It happened through people finding themselves sitting beside 60 second strangers, in 24 hour encounters, with 3 day companions, or with colleagues for much longer, sharing ideas, practice, celebrations, challenges, learnings and wide eyed 'wow!' moments. The daily themes have offered focus, a sense of shared business with unique threads running through it.

Margaret (Meg) Wheatley, today's keynote speaker, started with a quote from Grace Lee Boggs, a Detroit activist, speaking in her late 90's:

*'We must shake the world with a new dream.'*

Meg turned to look at us and said:

*'No one is coming to help! Know what? We are the ones we have been waiting for.'*

Power is all around us .... as an influencer,

energy, threat, opportunity and for many an addiction. In challenging us to take control, Wheatley offered a context for our work in hand.

## Power: How we ensure our institutions embody our values and the societies we want to create

That is a big challenge! But if we are in the 'now' of things – "the ones we've been waiting for" – we can resist looking back, avoid attempting to fix an old, failing model and accept that new cultures emerge, though they take time. In the context of community development we accept that we have to start over and create a new vision with a fresh shake of the world.

Meg asserted that, when old cultures are dying, there are always a few people who are not afraid to be insecure. They emerge from the crowd when things end and pioneering efforts emerge, even as systems are breaking down.

Here was a quote from Meg that I needed to consider.

*'We must hospice the old while simultaneously we midwife the new.'*

I've struggled at times to convince people when they ask, 'Yes, but what do you REALLY do?' I'll try the 'I midwife the new' line, next time.

Elsewhere, workshop leader Alison Gilchrist affirmed that 'Communities cannot be empowered; they can only empower themselves'. Look at her 'Power analysis; issues and challenges' slide on the website. I am keen on the very practical points she raises, the things we have to do, not just consider.

In moving from where we have been to where we are going we will, as pioneers and power shifters, experience

- Misinterpretation
- Ridicule
- Slander
- Invisibility
- Self-doubt
- Broken relationships
- Loneliness
- Exhaustion (Meg Wheatley)









# Field Visits

Kirsty Walker

The field visits were always central to our planning of the conference. Here was the opportunity not just to tell the world about our work, our communities, our people – we could take them there and show them, welcome them in, take the ideas we considered in the beautiful halls of the university out onto the communities of Scotland...

Our pot of potential visits overflowed with colleagues from all airts and pairts; Lochgelly to Lochgilphead, Kirkcaldy to Kirkcudbright, Inverurie, Invergordon, Inverclyde... (Each one a phonetic challenge to our visitors!)

But with three days for the conference, and geography against us, we had to focus on the work taking place in and around Glasgow. This still offered a rich, diverse scene. We grouped visits loosely around the conference themes of health, wealth and power, the places delegates visited on the 10th June all brought together the themes and animated in their own way why Community is the answer.

In Glasgow, visits were hosted by GalGael Trust, COPE, Annexe Communities, North United Communities, Crossroads Youth and Community Association, the Scottish Refugee Council, the ALLIANCE, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector and Lambhill Stables.

Delegates who visited GalGael discovered learning experiences anchored in practical activities that offer purpose and meaning; craft, furniture making, community boat building. They discovered for themselves the purpose of GalGael – to offer ‘hospitality to the margins, a sense of place to the disconnected and the right of responsibility to the disenfranchised.’

Also offering hospitality to the margins, COPE is a community anchor organisation and community access mental health service whose focus is on the needs of local people and communities. Delegates experienced the Dream Machine room, an innovative development between COPE and local entrepreneurs using ambisonics and visuals to promote creativity and well-being.

“COPE wasn’t what I was expecting – apart from the warm, friendly welcome! – it took me by surprise. The dream room was beautiful; the sounds of the

sea in the centre of the city, pictures of the beach, waterfalls, the light... there were comfy seats with blankets, shawls and pillows – like a cocoon! Hilda shared her own story with us, which was a privilege, then she and her colleagues talked about the range of work at COPE. But mostly they had us experience it. The space was so safe some of my fellow delegates drifted off entirely and when it came time to leave, I felt totally revived. I had really needed that and I didn’t know I did. It brought me back to myself.”

Annexe Communities in Partick was established by community activists; while it continues to provide support and activities locally, it has also grown to be a development trust, community enterprise and has been contracted to deliver community health activity to other areas in the city.

Also in North West Glasgow, delegates visited North United Communities which has been active for over 30 years. Over the past decade the work of the organisation has developed and grown to involve contact with hundreds of young people and an ever growing number of families. Steeped in community development approaches the organisations seeks to address immediate and critical needs while working to address root causes of the poverty and lack of opportunity which has characterised the communities it serves.

The field visit in Govanhill, to Crossroads, focused on the experiences and barriers facing recent migrants from Eastern Europe, the challenges this poses in a community where over 50 languages are spoken in the local primary school, and the implications of all this for community work practice. The visit was set within the wider context of learning from the Grundtvig project (now Erasmus+)

In the North, there was a visit to Lambhill Stables which serves communities in North Glasgow by transforming vacant and derelict land into productive and

attractive green-space, whilst maintaining and preserving it for public use. Their mission is to provide jobs and training opportunities for local people who are excluded from the labour market.

In the city centre, delegates met with two organisations who work across Scotland from bases in Glasgow. The Scottish Refugee Council works with refugees and asylum seekers. Delegates met with members of the Refugee Women’s Strategy Group and staff from the Women’s Project within Scottish Refugee Council. The Women’s Project has effectively combined skilled community development practice with policy and influencing work to provide a holistic approach to tackling the issues that affect refugee and asylum seeking women.

The ALLIANCE brings together around 400 organisations and many more individuals to ensure the voices of people and the expertise of the third sector are at the heart of policy and practice. The field visit enabled participants to develop a greater understanding of how the third sector and people power can drive real transformational change at community level within health and social care services in Scotland. The ALLIANCE showcased a range of person centred programmes that empower people to lead, change and drive improvements so that health, social care and community services can be centred on people and their lived experiences.

The group which visited Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, the main development agency and advocate for Glasgow’s voluntary and community organisations, heard from a selection of speakers drawn from these organisations and GCVS itself.

Some delegates ventured further afield...

The visit to Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park was much in demand (from volunteer leaders as well as delegates!) The mini bus set off with an itinerary taking in the Three Villages



Hall in Arrochar, a community facility developed and provided by the Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust sitting in an iconic position in the National Park and a visit to a Community Hydro Scheme being developed on the hill above Arrochar. Sadly, due to unforeseen circumstances blocking the road, delegates heard about all of this at a loch-side inn instead!

There were also a series of visits to North Lanarkshire taking in Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, Near Not Dear Food Co-op & the Health and Wellness Hub, and Chapelhall Allotments Association.

Visitors to Orbiston found a dynamic community-based organisation, offering activities that benefit more than 900 people every week – people of all ages and abilities. Activities include childcare, elderly care, community café, food store, computer learning, befriending and volunteering.

The food co-op provides low cost food and other items for local people 3 days a week and delivers healthier eating projects with local community groups; it is community run and a key driver in helping address food poverty issues. The Health and Wellness Hub is a community organisation set up to address the health inequalities that exist in the North Lanarkshire area. Delegates visiting Chapelhall found a 40 plot community allotment grown from a derelict piece of land that, until

2011, was open to illegal dumping and attracted a lot of anti-social behaviour. Now local residents, schools, a nursery, community groups and local adults with learning disabilities access training and support enabling them to manage and develop their own growing areas.

Thanks for establishing more links than we’ve had ever – and for bringing international delegates into our communities, boosting the spirits” – North Lanarkshire Council

To link to the morning presentation from the European Financial Inclusion Network and Cam Donaldson keynote speech, a group visited WEvolution’s Self-Reliant Groups (SRGs). SRGs bring people together so they can support each other, grow in confidence, learn new skills, create small new businesses and, in time, generate an income. Women @ Work in Provanmill was the first SRG in Scotland, set up following the visit of 13 women from 7 disadvantaged communities in Glasgow to learn about self-help groups in Mumbai and Gujarat – the Passage to India trip. Women @ Work started in 2011 with a lunch club and by 2013 was established as a Community Interest Company, launching ‘Fluff & Fold’, a laundrette business.

“There is never enough time to do everything but meeting people doing this work in Scotland made my travelling round the world worthwhile”

*Kirsty Walker stepped down as the External Relations Development Officer at CLD Standards Council for Scotland in May 2015. She currently holds the post of the Public Appointments Development Manager at the Scottish Government.*

## Field visit hosts hosts on-line

**GalGael Trust** <http://www.galgael.org/>

**COPE** <http://www.cope-scotland.org/>

**Annexe Communities** <http://www.annexecommunities.org.uk/>

**Crossroads Youth and Community Association** <http://cyca.org.uk/>

**Lambhill Stables** <http://www.lambhillstables.org/>

**Scottish Refugee Council** <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/>

**The ALLIANCE** <http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/>

**Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector** <http://www.gcvcs.org.uk/>

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park** <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/>

**Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre** <http://www.oncbellshill.org/>

**WEvolution: Provanmill Self Reliant Group** <http://www.wevolution.org.uk/>





# Community is the answer: international reflections



We are not certain that the representation of voices at the CITA conference reflected the social justice heart of community development, missing critical links to how community could be “the answer” to the betterment of our societies.

Working towards equality in the face of the complexities of cultural expectations, gendered norms, and issues intersectionality that privilege some and marginalise others, is the crux of community development, and the heart of our work. It came as a surprise, then, to find that gender, power, difference, and issues of intersectionality and equality were missing from many conference discussions. There was an overwhelming representation of white, Western, older, male academics giving lectures about individual research and work achievements. Even if this was an external factor in conference planning (e.g. conference applications were heavily skewed toward that demographic) perhaps that, in itself, could have been a conference session or topic, for example: “How can we be more inclusive, or encourage more diversity in the representation of our field?”

‘Doing community development’ is to find ways of giving voice to marginalized groups who are often left out of formal processes. The conference -- and perhaps the field -- seems to be trending towards a focus on community development as an economic process (e.g.: partnership with businesses) as a way to assure survival for community development organizations. Funding constraints, within increasingly conservative and neo-liberal political environments, result in us having to constantly justify the purpose and impact of community development. This maybe our current reality, but it shouldn't distance us from the heart of the work, which is to find new and innovative ways to listen, involve, and incorporate those most likely to be left out.

**Jill Bedford, UK and Holly Scheib, USA**



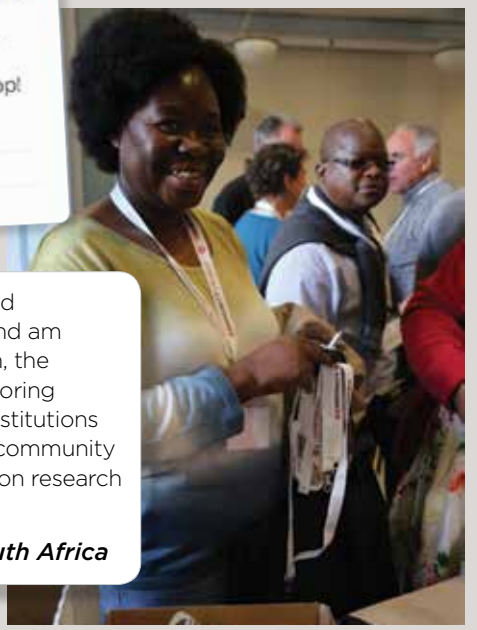
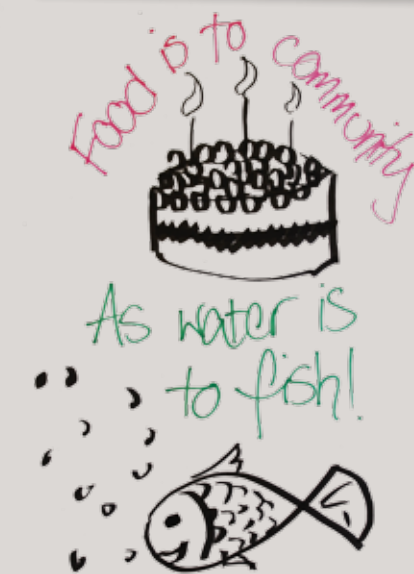
At the conference people spoke of undertaking a wide range of courses but still being ill equipped to practice in the field particularly in relation to increasing demands of disasters. This affirmed the relevance of much of my work in training community development practitioners, with particular focus on strategies underpinning collaborative engagement.

**Helen Sheil, Australia**

Grassroots comics are simple four-frame comics format, which are created by people themselves on two A-4 sized papers and distributed locally after being photocopied. Being non-threatening media, comics provide an opportunity for people to share their personal stories without disclosing their identity. An exhibition of grassroots comics showcasing the voices of the community from different parts of the globe was put on show prominently in the main hall of the Glasgow University. There were many who showed interest to learn about this new communication tool, and a number of them even tried their hand in producing their own.

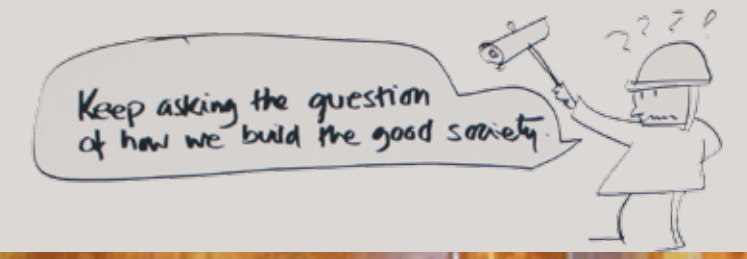
After the conference I travelled to northeast city of UK called Dundee, thanks to the invitation extended by Stewart Murdoch (IACD) to lead workshops on grassroots comics in collaboration with Dundee Contemporary Art. I also facilitated further two workshops in Leeds hosted by two community-based Organisations: Swarthmore and Oblong. Following my workshop an informal group Community Comics Power-UK was formed. This group is now actively promoting the idea of grassroots comics they are also producing comics on a regular basis.

**Sharad Sharma, World Comics India**



I have learnt more about asset based approaches to community health and am pleased to say that my organization, the Southern African AIDS Trust, is exploring collaboration links with academic institutions in order to strengthen asset based community development and participatory action research in communities that we work with.

**Felicitas (Flanny) Chiganze, South Africa**



When I found out I was able to stay with a host family during the conference, I literally leapt with joy! The warm welcome offered to me by my Stuart and Madge was very palpable. They did not just offer me a room to stay, they shared with me part of their lives during the short time that I stayed with them. They also gave me an opportunity to be exposed to the community development programs they are involved.

There are a lot of differences between Scotland and the Philippines in terms of culture and even community development practice, but there remains a lot of similarities, especially among the three of us who share a common thread

of working with the marginalized. While I experienced very efficient infrastructure and social services in Glasgow - a convenient life for middle class, I also saw faces of poverty amidst the wealth in the city. Our two countries also share the issues brought on privatization, budget cuts for social services, and neo-liberal policies.

However, what really makes this trip memorable is the connection made with two humble and friendly individuals who opened up their home and their lives, and for this I truly thank Stuart and Madge.

**Alleli Bawagan, the Philippines**



## Scottish Community Development Network

The Scottish Community Development Network (SCDN) was delighted to be a partner in the Community is the Answer conference, working to bring an exciting international flavour to current discussions and debate on community development in Scotland.

SCDN is a member led organisation, for community development workers, paid or unpaid, full or part time, from the community, voluntary or public sectors, who support the principles and practice of community development.

As a practitioners' network, we welcomed the opportunity to be part of this exciting event which raised the profile of community development and championed communities as the solution – not the problem. The timing of this event was very fortuitous, as developments in Scotland started to embrace notions of preventative approaches and community empowerment. SCDN wishes to see community development explicit within national policy. We would like to see community development recognised and valued as having a significant contribution to make to the realisation of empowerment and preventative aspirations and to the development of social justice, equality and human rights. We wish to see an investment in skilled, holistic grass roots community development.

We enjoyed learning from colleagues and communities from across the Globe and taking these lessons into ongoing debate within Scotland.



## The Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS)

The Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS) is the independent network for national organisations in Scotland that have the promotion of community development as part of their goals. Our objectives are to facilitate and raise the standards of community development practice by:

- Developing and influencing policy, practice and training
- Enabling exchange of information on community development policy
- Providing a forum for the discussion and debate of issues of national importance related to community development
- Providing opportunities for the study of specific aspects of community development
- Advising the Scottish Government, its Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies, on matters relating to community development
- Collaborating with national agencies and contributing to the development of national strategies.

84 organisations, from public, voluntary and community sectors, are members, and hundreds of individuals are registered to receive information from us. We are supported by funding from Education Scotland that allows for some part time coordination and management.



## Scottish Community Development Centre

SCDC is recognised as the lead agency for community development in Scotland and has been active for 22 years. Originally a partnership between the Community Development Foundation and the University of Glasgow, SCDC became an independent Scottish voluntary organisation and charity in its own right in 2009. SCDC's vision is for an active, inclusive and just Scotland where our communities are strong, equitable and sustainable.

Our mission is supporting best practice in community development. Our three key priorities for achieving our mission are to:

- Build strong, healthy, sustainable and equitable communities
- Work with agencies and partnerships to achieve effective community engagement and community participation
- Influence policy through research and by contributing to government working groups and committees on related policy issues

Our work involves the development and dissemination of frameworks and tools to support good practice, local delivery of training and development programmes, participatory planning and evaluation and action research.

SCDC incorporates the Community Health Exchange (CHEX) and the Scottish Co-production Network.



## Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS)

Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS) aims to provide a national focus on professional issues and standards for Community Learning and Development (CLD) provision, provided by local authorities either directly or indirectly, as the leaders of local partnerships.

Managers from all of the 32 Scottish local authorities are involved, in spite of the fact that services that deliver aspects of CLD are organised in a wide variety of different ways. Many managers responsible for specific areas of work, especially youth work, community based adult learning and community capacity building, are involved.

**Our strategic objectives are to:**

- Provide forums for discussion of and learning about issues of national importance related to CLD
- Strengthen the place of CLD in national policies and in local strategic planning
- Identify, share and develop good practice in CLD provision
- Ensure that the quality of CLD provision continues to improve.

We are supported by funding from Education Scotland that allows for some part time coordination and management.



# Acknowledgements

## Conference Partners (Planning Group)

Stewart Murdoch, IACD Board Member (Chair)

Gill Musk, Development Manager IACD

Jackie Arreaza, Membership Secretary IACD

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Scottish Community Development Centre

Community Development Alliance Scotland

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### Sponsors

Scottish Government

NHS Scotland

Education Scotland

Creative Scotland

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Glasgow Life

Praxis, Australia



The conference and this publication  
were made possible thanks to the  
kind support of:



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Registered in Scotland as a charity,  
number SC 036090 IACD has consultative  
status with the United Nations.



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