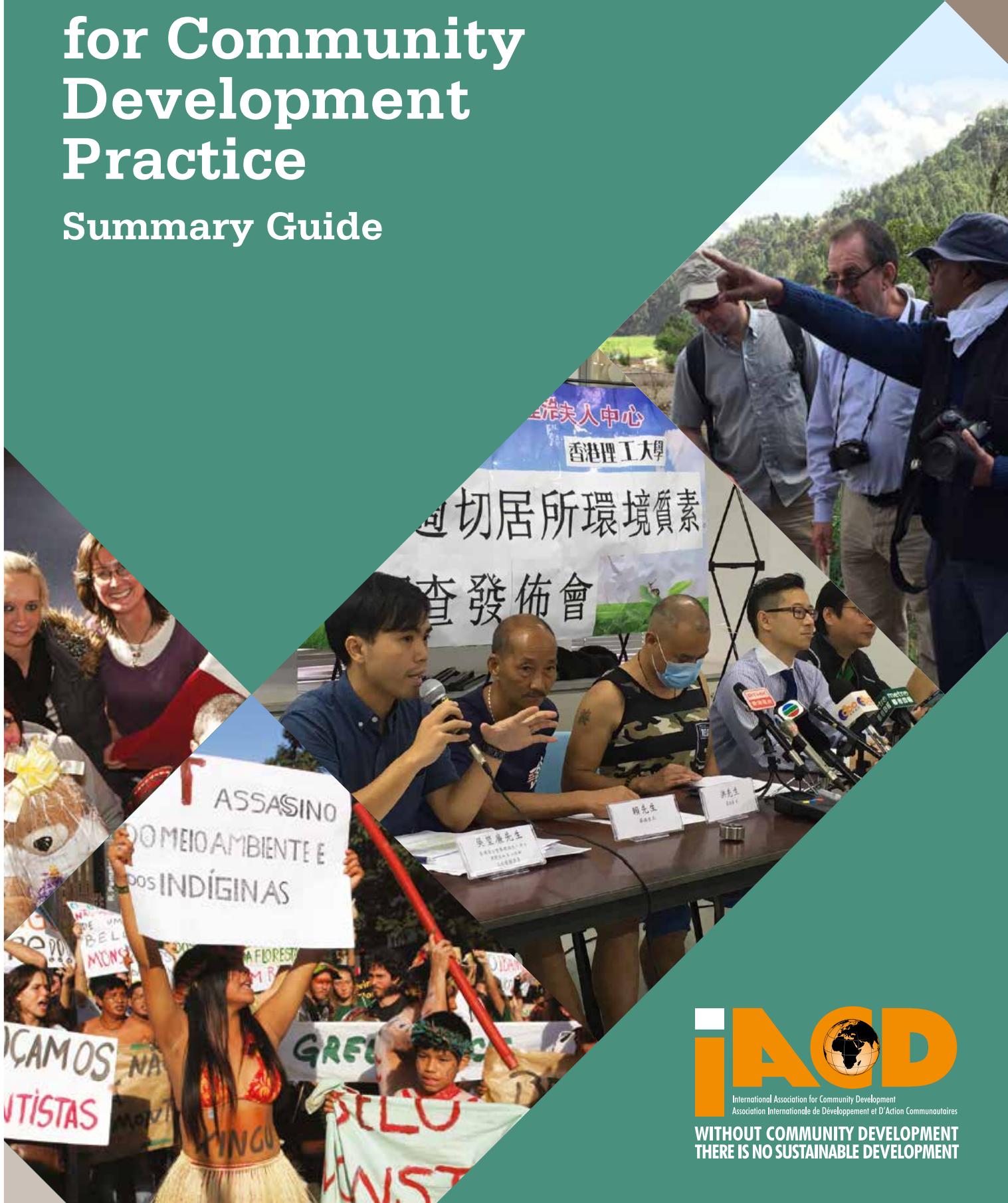


# Towards Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice

## Summary Guide



International Association for Community Development  
Association Internationale de Développement et D'Action Communautaires

**WITHOUT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
THERE IS NO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**After adopting its global definition of community development in 2016, the IACD began work to produce guidance for community development practice. The IACD worked with the Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland and, following an extensive consultation process with colleagues, practitioners and members from all over the world, the IACD launched the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice at the IACD International Conference at Maynooth in June 2018.**

IACD, as the international professional association, believe that it is important to encourage practitioners, paid and unpaid, to adopt a shared understanding of the purpose of community development, built upon shared values. The IACD aims to support high standards of practice based upon an agreed collective view of what practice is. While it values relevant qualifications, it does not equate professionalism with being qualified.

## **Community Development Practice**

Community Development practice is carried out by people in different roles and context who seek to apply community development values and adopt community development methods: by people called professional community workers (and people taking on the same role but with a different job title); by professionals in other occupations such as social work, adult education, youth work, health disciplines, environmental education, local economic development, urban planning, regeneration, or architecture; and by people active in their own communities. We refer to them all as 'community development practitioners' and use this as an overarching term that includes also 'community workers'.

## **The IACD Definition of Community Development**

"Community Development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings."

This definition embodies a set of underpinning values, a purpose and a set of methods for work.

## **A. Underpinning values**

The definition expresses values that should underpin practice:

Commitment to rights, solidarity, democracy, equality, environmental and social justice. It positions professional practice as working according to ethical standards applied in various contexts, working with people and organisations with different agendas.

## **B. The purpose**

Within the definition is a statement about the purpose of community development:

'To work with communities to achieve participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice.'

This high-level purpose statement can be used as a template against which to measure both the journey and the destination.

## **C. The central methods and processes**

Within the definition there is a clear statement of the methods and processes adopted by community development practitioners: "(the) organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities...".

## **D. Participants**

The IACD definition refers to people within their communities, whether these are of locality, identity or interest. These are the primary groups of people community development practitioners will be working with. They will also engage with public agencies, NGOs and businesses in support of the values and purpose of community development.

## Themes and Key Areas

Eight themes that are common across practice in community development. These are outlined below together with the eight Key Areas. Each of the Key Areas have a range of statements about practice that provide guidelines for community development practitioners. More information is available within the full Standards document.

Theme Title	Theme Description	Key Areas
<b>Theme 1:</b> <b>Values into practice</b>	This theme focuses on understanding of the values that underpin community development practice in all contexts, the processes on which it is based and the outcomes that result from it; and the application of this understanding in the practitioner's own context.	Understand the values, processes and outcomes of community development and apply these to practice in all the other key areas.
<b>Theme 2:</b> <b>Engaging with communities</b>	This theme focuses on getting to know the communities the practitioner works with, understanding the issues that impact on them and developing the relationships that provide the basis for working for positive change.	Understand and engage with communities, building and maintain relationships with individuals and groups.
<b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Ensuring participatory planning</b>	This theme focuses on developing community participation and empowering partnerships and supporting communities and agencies to develop the skills to sustain these	Develop and support collaborative working and community participation.
<b>Theme 4:</b> <b>Organising for change</b>	This theme focuses on enabling communities to take collective action and to develop the skills needed for this; and on developing a context where their collective action is sustained and supported as a positive force for change.	Enable communities to take collective action, increase their influence and if appropriate their ability to access, manage and control resources and services.
<b>Theme 5:</b> <b>Learning for change</b>	This theme focuses on facilitating the learning of people in communities and practitioners working with them in support of their priorities for change and development.	Support people and organisations to learn together and to raise understanding, confidence and the skills needed for social change.
<b>Theme 6:</b> <b>Promoting diversity and inclusion</b>	This theme focuses on recognising diversity and supporting inclusion as core aspects of practice.	Design and deliver practices, policies, structures and programmes that recognise and respect diversity and promote inclusion.
<b>Theme 7:</b> <b>Leadership and infrastructure</b>	This theme focuses on developing empowering leadership in and with communities and developing the infrastructure for community development and sustainable social change.	Facilitate and support organisational development and infrastructure for community development, promoting and providing empowering leadership.
<b>Theme 8:</b> <b>Developing and improving policy and practice</b>	This theme focuses on using evidence from participatory evaluation, and from analysis of relevant external factors, to inform and develop policy and practice.	Develop, evaluate and inform practice and policy for community development, using participatory evaluation to inform and improve strategic and operational practice.

## How might the International Standards be used?

The Standards can be used as a guide to help collectively identify the destination (outcomes) and shape the journey (process). They can also be used to critically reflect on both the journey and the destination. In other words, they can be used to plan, implement and review action and support learning from the process. As such they can be used by all community development practitioners in many ways to:

- build shared awareness and understanding of what community development is
- promote the values upon which community development is based
- enhance practice
- inform theory and policy
- shape academic and practice-based learning

We hope that they will be embraced by community development practitioners and used in a complementary manner in countries where national standards and frameworks already exist, and as a guiding resource in those countries where no national standards have been developed. As part of our consultation process on the draft Standards, we asked for specific ideas on how the Standards might be used. We have included these ideas below:

- To generate discussion on the purpose, values and key areas of community development in global and local contexts, within and between communities and between different agencies and organisations
- To develop resources that help to demonstrate how different contexts impact on shared areas of practice within different countries/communities

- To support international networking and sharing of practice examples and experiences
- To build shared understanding within communities and within organisations about the key purpose and values of community development
- To support discussions around participatory planning and community ownership that build collective action and empowerment
- To inform the design of pre and in-service education and training of community development practitioners
- To develop reflective practice self-assessment learning tools
- To support the development of stories from the 'field' sharing examples of how the Standards are being used to support practice development – perhaps around each of the Key Areas – international examples around common/ shared themes
- To develop international resources for inclusion in programmes of education and training – drawing out the contestations and sensitivities associated with practice
- To inform the IACD Global Community Development Exchange (GCDEX) repository of teaching and learning resources
- To provide a 'common base' upon which to develop international research and scholarship exploring aspects of community development practice

### For more information on the IACD or a full copy of the Shared International Standards, please contact us:

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 International Association for Community Development

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