Community Development Alliance Scotland

Community Development: Tackling Inequalities

Membership Engagement Report
November 2019
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About Community Development Alliance Scotland

At Community Development Alliance Scotland, we believe that Community Development is an approach to achieving social change and supporting the creation of a more socially just and equal society. It is action taken through building organisation, learning and power within communities in order to promote democracy, sustainable development, equality and social justice.

Community Development Alliance Scotland is a member organisation that brings together networks and organisations in Scottish and beyond to promote policy and practice that supports community development.

Our aim is to raise the standards of community development through improved policy, practice and training and strengthen collaborative working with our membership organisations. We do this through membership engagement, networking events, our annual National Conference and raising awareness of the great work of our membership organisations and subscribers through our monthly bulletin.

With over 120 national membership organisations, and 600 subscribers to our bulletins from Scotland, Portugal, Brazil, New Zealand, Kenya, North America, Switzerland and Australia we continue to expand our networks and alliance in order to support and influence policy and practice in Scotland and beyond.

Become a Member

CDAS members are partners in a national network of practitioners, lead officers and decision makers seeking to promote community development and influence policy.

Membership is open to national organisations, or networks of regional organisations, whose aims include the promotion of community development and who are willing to endorse the principles of community development practice.

Membership is FREE.

To join us, please see full details and submission form on our website [www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org](http://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org).

Membership Engagement: National Conference

Community Development: Tackling Inequalities

Our national conference in Edinburgh on 10th September 2019 explored both the challenges and opportunities in tackling inequalities and promoting social justice through empowering communities. There was an exploration of community development responses including community action, community-led project delivery and collaborative action across sectors which addressed the root causes of inequality and barriers to community participation.

Keynote speaker, Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government praised the work of community development and highlighted the significant contribution CDAS membership organisations make to support the implementation of the National Performance Framework and Place Planning.

A wide range of membership organisations and regional representatives attended our conference and were involved in the process of having their voices heard in relation to community development and tackling inequalities.
Membership Engagement: Survey

For our membership organisations and subscribers who were unable to attend our annual conference, we provided an opportunity to have your say on the key questions, challenges and opportunities relating to tackling inequalities by way of a survey monkey.

Organisations involved in conference feedback and survey responses included:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Almond Housing Association
- Black and Ethnic Minorities (BEMIS)
- Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland
- CLD Standards Council
- Community Health Exchange (CHEX)
- Crossroads
- Dementia Friendly East Lothian CIC
- East Ayrshire Council
- Edinburgh City Council
- Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust
- Edinburgh Southside Community Council
- Education Scotland
- Energy Saving Trust
- Equality Network
- Ettrick Docher Community Hall, Falkirk
- European Community Development Network (EuCDN)
- Falkirk Council
- Glasgow Disability Alliance
- Glasgow Federation of Housing Associations / Shire Housing Association
- Hawkhead and Lochfield Community Council
- Healthy Valleys
- High Life Highland
- Inclusion Scotland
- Inspiring Scotland
- Intergenerational National Network
- International Association for Community Development
- LEAD Scotland
- NHS Health Scotland
- NHS Lothian Health Promotion
- Newbald Trust
- North Ayrshire Council
- PB Scotland
- Perth & Kinross Council
- Pitmeny Development Trust
- Raith Rovers Community Council
- Refugee Survival Trust
- Renfrewshire Council
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- Scottish Community Development Centre
- Scottish Community Development Network
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Refugee Council
- Scottish Regeneration Forum (SURF)
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Southside Community Council
- SS Explorer Preservation Society
- Sustrans
- University of Glasgow
- University of Stirling
- VOX Scotland

Feedback from all conference attendees and online survey were captured in relation to their views, thoughts and experiences of the main challenges and opportunities in tackling inequalities.

Collated feedback as follows:
Challenges

CULTURE / POLICY
- Culture change needed within authorities- take more risks- staff need to be empowered to help communities.
- Policy context great but we have become mere deliverers of policy doing “to” communities which is disempowering.
- Getting recognition that community assets really matter and so we need to focus on building communities who have fewer assets and people who can’t access asset rich communities:
  - Think we are getting there slowly but need help with narrative and evidence.
- Tensions unspoken by communities in methodologies eg. ABCD approach where voices are side lined.
- No service/ provision for particular activities/ services.
- Evaluation- policy/ project impact needs and capture of capacity and qualifications aspects of change.
- The changes to staying in care until 21 and supported until 26. There is no provision to ensure the children up to 18 will not be exposed to older behaviours etc.
- Policy is great but is the reality on the ground?
- Local politics & voluntary sector competing with each other
- Power of duty bearers needs to be addressed as there is often a neo liberal agenda.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- Recognition to CLD workers for their key skills, knowledge and understanding of community development- where is it??
- Erosion of community development capacity to support communities over time.
- What about a community development pathway where everyone knows their fit and contribution.
- Need for more work on democratic engagement using Community Empowerment Act.
- Community Empowerment Act needs to be more embedded in communities.
- Tensions for CD workers in self/ arg re funding/ partners.
- Tension of CD- as service delivery than calling out structural ??
- To develop CLD understanding.
- Increase knowledge of community development approaches with organisations not traditionally involved in CD.
- No understanding of CPP of power of participatory action research.
- Services understanding of community development approach and timescales.

ACTION
- Gap between community activity and influence.
- Lack of joined- up community action.
- Joined up planning- using HRBA EG. Homes for disabilities but no infrastructure.
- Fragility of sector.
- Ensuring that lived experience is at the heart of anything done to tackle inequality. This is often talked about but it isn’t always practiced.
- Power/ limitations of structures- what are the doing/ not doing?
- Sustainability- who are the next community leaders? Where do they come from?
- Sporadic 3rd sector involvement (planning stage is crucial).
- Local community organisations to get together, share analysis and advocate alternative approaches.
- Inequality of partnership working.

RESOURCES
- Community connections/ connectors.
- Structures of “partnerships” in particular in areas of deprivation are not forward thinking ie. Wrong partners around the table.
- Partnership working service level agreement.
- We need more enablers not deliverers.
- Understanding others situation and the solutions.
- Lack of professional understanding of others work.
- Excellent knowledge can vanish when “post holders” lose jobs/ change roles.- a “well Kent face” / key person is paramount- how can we maintain continuity?
- Resources- staffing (Health and Social Care/ local authorities/ health/ Third Sector).
- Resource- maximize- slow way of working.
- Insufficient resources on the ground to enable effective change to happen.
- Learning from each other, learning about communication and communicating better.

FUNDING / MONEY
- Scottish Government budgeting- Cross department invest in communications.
- Public sector funding for Third Sector to do CD work doesn’t currently exist communities which is disempowering.
- Invest in working with communities as solutions-HSCP.
- Changing financial landscape- resource decline/ budget cuts-capital spend for / long term.
- Community engagement requires funding- empower those that are empowered to raise awareness to local solutions.
- Restricted banking opportunities/ banks closing. Credit unions, locally banks need funding and policy changes to support youths and elders.
- Welfare system is not fit for purpose.
- Communication of community development approaches to grant funders.
- Long term outcomes with short term funding.
- Funding and support for local equalities groups eg. DPO’s.
- Short term investment in community and voluntary sector.
- Diminishing opportunities to access funding.
- Short term funding.
- Welfare; benefits and are subsequently being disenfranchised – no voice.
- Funding for accessibility of listed buildings.
- Welfare Reform/BREXIT.
- Welfare reform/ Brexit- complexity of needs/ crisis.
- Absence of longer-term investment planning.

COMMUNITIES / COMMUNICATION
- A lack of effective community based organisations based in the most deprived communities.
- Age, gender, race- youth empowerment, self esteem, leadership/ management- inclusion in decision making.
- “Communities of Interest!” Disabled people not involved enough.
- Communication channels “on line is exclusive. Not everyone has access to a computer/ to IT training.
- Disabled and elderly people less likely to be on line.
- May not be able to access training/ have to invest in IT equipment.
- How do we give people the support, skills, knowledge and confidence to challenge the “systems” which exclude them.
- How do you get the views of people with literacy issues/ IT barriers?
- New Scottish refugees- no refugee representation at meetings. There are 300 refugees now in Scotland with no rights to work; no right to access education;
- Building capacity of disabled people to participate and statutory partners to engage.
- Access to buildings for people with disabilities often not fit for purpose.
Opportunities

FUNDING / BUDGET
- Promote social return on investment
- Possible funding available as a Brexit gain?
- PEF Funding- facilities for CD not just education
- Local budgets- show what we can offer/ outcomes
- Participatory Budgeting needs to be linked to building community capacity and development of more participatory/ accountable decision making
- There should be an opportunity to relieve members of staff who feel the time is right to retire possibly creating opportunities for other staff
- Making Places Grants- apply for this key government funding what are the needs of the community. Great opportunity to bring a high proportion of the community together, highly inclusive, however, what is the follow through? Are we setting things up without any outcomes?

EXAMPLES
- TSI South Lanarkshire example
- COG complimenting the work of VASLan
- Quarterly meetings with the Executive Cabinet, Leader of South Lanarkshire Council
- H&SC Partnership- commissioned to create a framework for SP
- Example of Save Leith campaign

APPROACHES
- Whole systems approach
- Human rights-based approach to CD Nationally/ locally and with CD Standards, training, CD workers, activities- new law and task force.
- We are starting to work around an area where there is a lot of unmet need and not the money or time to build or spend our way out of it. It's a real opportunity to do something that develops a community led solution. Fingers crossed!
- Trauma informed communities to support organisations to better understand and support
- CDAS provides a good platform to influence policy

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- Inclusion/ Equalities- trusted face of community development worker
- Involving local people and those who have faced inequality and all that goes with it in the solutions that mean the most to them is crucial
- Community Development practitioners are often highly skilled in mediation and facilitation skills
- Continuity of CD to enable trust from communities
- Promote the economic benefits of community development

APPROACH
- The skills to work with communities lies within the voluntary sector
- Using the passion/ excitement from single issues to inform wider departments
- To be bold in our abilities/ what we can offer
- Training for CPP’s in community engagement, empowerment, LEAP frameworks
- Access to buildings for people with disabilities often not fit for purpose
- Communication and joined up thinking and working
- To develop workforce around inequalities
- Longer term thinking and approaches rather than short term
- Panel approach- participation, accountability, non discrimination, empowerment law.- Human rights based approach build skills.

OTHER
- Networking through CDAS, giving power to local issues through collective action through network
- Emphasis on implementing Community Empowerment Act needs to change- ensure capacity of people who are excluded is developed.
- Additionality to the CLW programme- local organisations in the heart of their community, embedded in local infrastructure, local knowledge and people as volunteers
- Develop understanding of political system in place
- Planning Act- CD/ CLD representation/ role is enabling. Local place plans. Alongside planning/ community planning- engagement approach
- Re-visit/ establish community activism
- Need to move away from seeing socio economic inequalities separate from other aspects of inequality and seeing each of them in isolation
- Need for greater diversity of political representatives
- Nothing new for 3rd sector buzz word with resources? Transforming Primary Care and Implementation Plans

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Reverse Panel: What is the “Ask” of Policy Makers and Strategic Managers

Our reverse panel members consisted of senior Managers from NHS Health Scotland, Scottish Government, Scottish Regeneration Forum and CLD Standards Council.

Questions posed by panel to conference delegates as follows:

Q1. How can we get funders and policy makers to value diversity between and within community-led activity and ensure its multi-faceted nature is seen as an advantage and not a hindrance in addressing inequalities?

Q2. What are the things you cannot currently do, to combat inequality and what types of support (eg. Collaboration, skills development, referral routes) would you need to be able to do these things?

Q3. What do you think the strengths and areas for development are in the competences (skills, knowledge and understanding) that you use in tackling inequalities through your/ your organisation’s community development work? What would help to develop them further?

Q4. If we are so concerned about tackling inequalities, why do we expect the poorest people and already struggling communities to do things for themselves that middle class ones get served on a plate?

Whatever happened to the political campaigning role of community work?

Ask

**Sharing**

- By developing in partnership with all communities within a community can spot the barriers/problems and identify solutions before policies/service change are implemented.
- Talk to activists whose focus is wider than their communities and who work as networks sharing, thinking, learning eg. East Lothian.
- Shared responsibility for issue, such as food poverty. All need to be held accountable. It is everyone’s remit.
- Passion - Find the passion in communities, find the hot spots and others who want to change the world, get together and do stuff.
- Asset based community development and trauma informed approaches are strengths. Development needed in sharing experience with projects tackling inequality across Scotland.

**Policy/Legislation**

- Will government take responsibility for and change policies that have led to a massive increase in people using foodbanks?
- Why are we not debating these things in our teams and organisations. Many reasons behind apathy need to be challenges.
- Need to tackle the private sector - make decisions that affect disadvantaged communities.
- Scottish Government - local government policy does not address the decisions or actions of multi-national developers/banking or business when they take decisions that negatively impact on communities.
- Policy is great but where is the reality on the ground?
- Legislation - Best Value 2 - Audit Scotland involvement in decision making.
- CD is not recognised in line with social work qualification despite duplicating much of the learning of both.
- National level needs to get closer to communities and understand better how policy/empowerment Act work on the ground.
- BiL - Connecting local issues and political policy. It’s up to community organisations but can work eg. With local action around poll tax becoming a national concern.

**Equalities/Inequalities**

- Equalities embedded in Scottish Government funding.
- Show a united approach in deeply engaging with and working alongside communities rather than paying lip service. By not doing things for communities that they are already capable of themselves and thus pushing skills out.
- Tackling inequalities needs campaigning skills, helping residents and staff organise and change policies etc.
- We do not currently work with the computable and affluent to make them aware of their impact on inequality. How can we do this and should we?

**Communication/Language**

- Communication - navigating local authorities/ NHS and other potential partners for Third Sector.
- Language and focus on duties.

**Pathways**

- What about a community development pathway where everyone knows their fit and contribution?
- Need to focus on “completer finisher” tasks and celebrate community development success.
- There is a need for training and recognizing the benefits of multi-cultural communities. There is a real need for promoting wider community facilities to young people leaving care.
- Need community workers who are not frightened of criticism - decision makers - fear of funding.
- Can CLD more specifically define/ describe itself as focusing on inequality and politicisation? How do we all learn from each other?
- It is about valuing community development skills so we need to educate policy makers and funders more.
- Can’t do work around acses, 1-1 work supporting people in crisis prior to involvement in CD. Additional staffing, raising awareness amongst partners in CD and timescales.
- Mediation, facilitation, compassion, insight and enlightenment are often the skills in community development which can take years to develop.
Conclusion

To conclude, it is evident that key themes have emerged from our membership engagement in relation to Community Development: Tackling Inequalities. On analysis of needs as well as strengths, it is clear that areas for development include long term vision, leadership, co-ordination, meaningful and purposeful partnership working, communication, co-production, community capacity building, evaluation, raising awareness of community development and impact, training needs and skills development. Feedback from our membership engagement and emerging themes will inform and be incorporated into CDAS Development Plan 2020-2024 as well as being highlighted to our various strategic partners.
Evaluation of National Conference

- 100% of delegates rated the annual conference as good or “very good” (Q1)
- 100% of delegates rated the relevance and quality of the information at our conference to be “good” or “very good” (Q2)
- 100% of delegates rated the opportunity for networking and discussions at our conference to be “good” or “very good” (Q3)
- 98% of delegates rated the opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience as “good” or “very good” (Q4)
- 100% of delegates rated the opportunity for gaining knowledge as “good” or “very good” (Q5)
- 98% of delegates rated the opportunity for increasing their overall motivation as “good” or “very good” (Q6)
- 100% of delegates rated the opportunity to make new contacts as “good” or “very good” (Q7)