The Community
Development Challenge



Management

Towards high standards in community development

by Colin Miller

National Empowerment Partnership

strengthening communities for 40 years

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The Community Development Challenge Series Introduction

Empowerment: the essential contribution of community development

Empowerment, under one name or another, has been an objective of social policy for several decades, but it has never had such a specific and high profile commitment in policy agendas as now. It is being promoted as a key concept in the way forward to a more healthy, inclusive and fully-functioning society, and is being included in policy developments applied to the whole population.

How can a major increase in empowerment be achieved? What practical action has to be taken, locality by locality, to bring it about? No single discipline will be enough to achieve the major increase which government is seeking. But it is essential that strategies to accomplish this objective take particular account of the one discipline which has community empowerment as its foremost aim – community development.

This new policy focus on empowerment is an unprecedented opportunity for community development, a discipline with the skills, analysis, methods and experience to engender community empowerment at its very core. Yet for community development to lead the way in this move towards social change, it will itself need major development in order to help address the scale of current policy expectations.

The original *Community Development Challenge* report* posed a dual challenge: to government, local government and other agencies to make better use of community development to achieve empowerment; and to the community development occupation to raise its sights and increase its demonstrable effectiveness.

Community development principles are fundamental to the major issues of our times – social justice and sustainability. But its practice is often limited to local projects and fails to reach its transformative

* CDF, CDX, FCDL and CD2 Working Group (2006) *The Community Development Challenge*, London: Department of Communities and Local Government. Available in hard copy from CDF and downloadable from www.cdf.org.uk

potential in a wider collective context. Where conditions have been favourable, however, it has played a major role in movements for change. For instance, the credit union movement as an anti-poverty strategy began as local community development projects which reached out, supporting and training other communities across the UK, linking with the worldwide credit union movement which aims to eliminate loan sharks and develop local economies.

The government's empowerment objectives are focused on a particular measure: an increase in the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality. This has been designated as the core indicator of empowerment, both at local and national level in England, within the local government performance framework for 2008–11 (National Indicator (NI) 4).† NI 4 links community development purposes for the first time into the main management framework for local and national government. However, the aims of community development are much more far reaching than can be captured in this single indicator.

Aspects of community development method, particularly strengthening community groups, have spread through their practical usefulness to workers in health, education, safety, youth, faith and support for the role of local councillors. But most community development literature lacks material on strategic issues and questions of infrastructure, issues which are crucial to achieving a more universal impact. How can community development be funded, deployed, managed and evaluated across the whole population of a local authority? How can peripheral approaches be integrated into a highly skilled holistic approach? How can community development approaches most effectively be mainstreamed? This series of reports begin to explore these key questions.

In its first report (see * above), the Community Development Challenge group set out the basic values and principles of community development, with a practical definition, examples of outcomes, discussion of dilemmas, and recommendations on how to raise its visibility and effectiveness to a higher level. In the further work reported here the group looks in more detail at the strategic developments that need to be addressed to achieve this improvement. We hope subsequently to

† See www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator

address the matter of how community development is being and should be used in relation to social issues such as health, safety, housing and sustainable development.

Community development has traditionally focused on intensive work with small clusters of exceptionally motivated activists. Sometimes the cumulative effect of these has amounted to a huge impact, for example within the anti-racist, anti-poverty, women's and peace movements, and in green, gay and lesbian and disability lobbies – movements that have changed life as we see it. Large numbers of people have also benefited indirectly from the activities of small groups, through acquisition of new amenities, through negotiated improvements in public services, through a raised level of social capital and community cohesion in the local community. But most people and even most public agencies would be unaware of the development work behind these improvements.

In order to construct effective local engagement strategies it is important that local authorities and their partners, including communities themselves, draw deeply from the well of community development principles and experience. We hope that this small series of studies will open the door to aspects of this experience which have hitherto been largely in the shadows.

Gabriel Chanan and Margaret Ledwith
for the Community Development Challenge Working Group

Community Development Foundation (CDF)

CDF is a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development in England and across the UK. Our mission is to lead community development analysis and strategy to empower people to influence decisions that affect their lives.

CDF's key aim is to spread ways of building engaged, cohesive and stronger communities and a more effective community sector. We work with government departments, regional and local public agencies and the community and voluntary sectors. We also operate at a European and international level.

We are a non-departmental public body sponsored by Communities and Local Government (CLG) and a charity registered in England and Wales and recognised in Scotland.

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1 Introduction

The *Community Development Challenge*[1] report explores a range of issues and challenges facing contemporary community development in the context of the actual and potential role that community development (CD) can play in helping government achieve greater community involvement and empowerment. The report identifies a range of challenges that national and local government and other public services must address if they are going to make the best use of CD. The report also identifies a range of issues that must be addressed by the CD profession.

One of the key challenges is ensuring the provision of consistent, high quality management, support and professional development of community development practitioners (CDWs) while ensuring that CD is at the centre of the local community empowerment agenda.

These are considerable challenges. *Community Development Challenge* states that 'Community development must be managed to the highest standard' but there is virtually no literature on the subject. A quick search of Amazon UK lists 5,923 books with community development in the title, but a similar search for books on 'managing community development' produced only six titles, most of which are out of print. The important exception is *Managing Community Practice*.[2] This book (and its recently published companion publication, *Critical Community Practice*[3]) explores what is particular about managing CD and what might be meant by 'highest standards' in managing CD.[4]

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1 CDF, CDX, FCDL and CD2 Working Group (2006) *The Community Development Challenge*: London, Department of Communities and Local Government

2 Sarah Banks, Hugh Butcher, Paul Henderson and Jim Robertson (2003) *Managing Community Practice, Principles, and Policies and Programmes*: Bristol, Policy Press: *'The term "community practice" is used to encompass a range of practice that is broader than community development or community work … in recognition of the fact that a range of professional practitioners and self-managed community groups were adopting community work approaches or methods to engage with communities as part of their jobs'*, p. 2)

3 Hugh Butcher, Sarah Banks, Paul Henderson with Jim Robertson (2007) *Critical Community Practice*: Bristol, Policy Press

4 There are, of course a number of publications on the management of public services and the community and voluntary sectors, that contain a wealth of insight and advice that any person involved in managing CD will find useful. Notably Mike Hudson (1999) *Managing Without Profit. The art of managing third-sector organizations*: London, Directory of Social Change

However, this lack of published literature also offers a great opportunity to the field, because the highest standards can begin to be defined by people who are actively involved in the management of CD.

In defining 'the highest standards' the managers who have contributed to the development of this report also set us a challenge. They made it clear that they did not want a general report that simply outlines the issues, lists some key points and then makes a few general recommendations. They wanted something that provides managers and organisations with practical advice, information, ideas and examples that can be used to help improve management practice within a coherent framework. This report seeks to meet this challenge.

2 The participants and their work

This report is based on an extended 'conversation' with more than 30 people involved in or with an interest in managing community development (CD). The conversation took place in 17 interviews, two seminars attended by approximately 25 people and questionnaires completed by 12 people, along with numerous emails and informal telephone conversations.

The participants are involved in a wide range of teams spread across the country. Table 1 overleaf provides an overview.

Participants were identified through the author's contacts, national CD organisations (Community Development Exchange, Federation of Community Development Learning and the Community Development Foundation) and regional CD networks, and by asking managers to suggest other people who might be contacted.

What the managers do

The managers involved in this project have a variety of job titles and responsibilities; some have a senior strategic role; others are operational. Most are responsible for managing practitioners whilst contributing to their organisation's wider strategic issues, such as policy development and implementation, managing complex projects, working with senior colleagues and politicians, other organisations and partnerships such as local strategic partnerships (LSPs). A manager in a voluntary organisation said:

> 'A large part of my work is to be the conduit between managing the governing strategy of the organisation and staff delivery at a neighbourhood level. I also play a role in helping shape strategy and policy in partnerships such as the LSP, maintaining relationships with the policymakers and so on. Of course I also do quite a lot of fundraising. I also do a fair bit of training of the trust staff and running the WICO (Working in Community Organisations) training course.'

Table 1: The participants

Job title	Team size and role	Sector and location
CD manager	Manages 14 CD practitioners as part of a citywide CD unit	Local authority *North East*
Deputy community manager	Manages eight staff Team works with communities of identity and interest	Local authority *South East*
Children's services manager	CD project working with churches to develop services	Part of a national charity *Based in London*
Principal CD coordinator	Section head of a large unit consisting of CD team, voluntary sector development, funding and grants team Community cohesion, community safety in neighbourhoods	Local authority-based *Midlands*
Team leader	CD team, working in several neighbourhoods	Local authority *North West*
Director of regeneration	Overseeing regeneration team and a CD team	Housing association *South East*
Manager	Neighbourhood based CD and youth work project	Community sector *South East*
Director	Citywide project Managing projects and individual workers undertaking CD in neighbourhoods	Voluntary sector *South East*
Community development manager	Overseeing neighbourhood CD	New Deal in the Communities Project
Principal officer (voluntary sector)	Overseeing CD (staff), voluntary sector support and development and EU funded projects	County council *West*
Others	Consultant, former head of county council CD unit in the North West, writer, extensive work on management issues, co-author *Managing Community Practice* Consultant, former worker with the management development unit, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), head of a council for voluntary service Tutor and consultant on foundation degree in CD	

The background and training of some of the managers is described below.

Managers' backgrounds and training

The background, experience and training of the managers involved in the project varied. A number had been managers for ten years or more, whilst others had done the job for one or two years. The majority had been managers for three to five years.

Around 50% of participants had experience in CD practice. Others had backgrounds in fundraising, voluntary sector development work and sports development.

Only four managers had postgraduate management training. Some had other forms of management qualification such as an NVQ4.

All the managers had attended specialist short courses and workshops such as supervision and performance management. Most training had been in-house but some managers had also undertaken training to develop specific skills such as coaching and neurolinguistic programming (NLP).

What the teams do

The Community Development Challenge proposes a definition of CD in the form of 'six progressive components'.[5] We used these, with slightly adapted wording, as a way of assessing the amount of common ground in the work of the CD teams managed by our respondents.

Participants were asked to estimate the extent they believed their teams were involved in the six components. Their responses are summarised in Table 2 overleaf. An average of 68% said they were involved 'a lot' in the six components and 23% 'sometimes'.

Participants were also asked to quantify on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being virtually none and 10 being 100%), the extent of their team's involvement

5 CDF, CDX, FCDL and CD2 Working Group (2006) *The Community Development Challenge*: London, Department of Communities and Local Government, p. 17

Table 2: Extent to which teams were involved in six CD components[6]

Activity	A lot	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Working with communities in recognising common concerns about local and public issues and helping the community work together under their own control	57%	32%	9%	2%
Helping people work together on community issues through developing and supporting community groups and projects	84%	14%	3%	
Supporting community groups and individuals	68%	24%	8%	
Values of equity, inclusiveness, participation and cooperation	89%	9%	3%	
Empowering people and organisations to influence and transform public policy and services	70%	27%	7%	
Advising and informing public authorities on community perspectives and assisting them to strengthen communities and work in genuine partnership with them	45%	33%	15%	6%
Average	68%	23%	7%	1%

in 'classic CD work', meaning direct work with residents at neighbourhood level. The average was 6.5, suggesting that more than half of their team's work was concerned with hands-on work with community groups. Finally, managers were asked if they thought their teams were doing more, less, or the same amount of classic CD work as in the past. Only one said less. Several thought things were more or less the same and some felt they were doing more. So whilst there was a fairly high level of common ground in terms of the types of activity that constituted CD, the specific tasks and settings were very varied, see box opposite.

6 Please note all percentages have been rounded up or down.

What the teams do

- A project based in two mixed housing estates, which is a registered charity managed by a management committee of local people. The project undertakes generic CD and detached youth work and runs an IT project.
- A housing association team, employing CD staff, specialist training staff and overseeing regeneration.
- A local authority team that undertakes CD with communities of identity, particularly black and minority ethnic (BME) and new arrival communities.
- A county council team with responsibility for undertaking CD in a large and diffuse county of isolated villages and hamlets and larger market towns.
- A citywide charity, managed by a management committee that oversees a number of long and short-term neighbourhood CD projects.
- Several local authority CD teams based within the chief executive's office have close links with regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. They are involved in neighbourhood work, communities of identity and advising and assisting on community engagement and related activities.
- A team based within a leading national charity undertakes CD work with 'predominantly black' church groups to provide activities and services for families, children and young people.

Why these authorities and agencies?

For this study we sought participants from local authorities and other agencies with significant CD teams. Community development tends to take place in a minority of local authority areas; some teams are deployed by local authorities and others by the community and voluntary sector

or other public bodies.[7] But it is a significant minority that employ a CD approach, including a number of major urban authorities. Our sample is therefore not by any means representative of authorities and localities across the country but, rather, indicative of how CD is practised and managed in areas where it has a significant presence. Our expectation is that, with the introduction of stronger government policies on community engagement, involvement and empowerment, particularly with the advent of the new local government performance framework in 2008, there will be much wider recognition of the need to deploy CD throughout the country. The experience of areas with a substantial track record of CD will therefore be of rapidly growing interest.

However, this begs the question of why CD is well established in some areas and not in others. Not having the capacity to carry out an historical survey within this study, we simply raised this question with our respondents. The following tentative picture comes from a mixture of their views and incidental insights from other aspects of this report.

Support for CD does not seem to be related to political party strategies and ideology: the same political party that supports CD in one area may be wary of it in another, or may increase resources in one area and reduce them in another. This seems to be particularly true of Labour and the Conservatives, but perhaps less so with the Liberal Democrats, who have a more established commitment to participation. It would be a useful exercise to commission a report on national and local party political attitudes to CD.

In some areas CD has never been supported, whilst in others it has been closed down, at least as an activity provided by the local authority (for example, in Bradford, Sheffield and Brighton and Hove). The extent to which the 'savings' made have been used to support voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to provide CD is debatable. There is also a feeling within the field that, in many areas, CD is in decline. However, as we shall see in this report, this is not always the case. A majority of the teams (from all sectors) involved in this report

7 Andrew Glen, Paul Henderson, Jayne Humm, Helen Meszaros and Maire Gaffney (2004) *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK*: London, Community Development Foundation/Community Development Exchange.

say they continue to receive active and explicit support from senior managers and politicians and feel they play a central and valued role.

Reasons for continued support

So what are the factors behind the continued support for CD in these areas? There does not appear to be a single reason, but rather a combination of factors:

- historical
- political
- work of team
- champions in powerful positions
- the way national policies are interpreted, particularly in relation to community involvement
- how the local authority, other public services and the local VCS relate to each other.

A number of the areas described in this report have had some kind of CD teams and projects operating for many years – in some cases for around 30 years . In some areas prime responsibility for delivering CD has changed from the local authority to the VCS. But in other areas there has been considerable organisational continuity. It also seems to be the case that, in these circumstances, there has also been a continuity of staff (practitioners and managers).

Some managers said that they had no idea when or why CD had started in their area:

> 'I have no idea. There has been a CDW [community development work] service for many years. The original motivations for supporting CD are now lost.'

A number said that CD had been established by social services departments in the late 1970s to mid 1980s, the explicit role being the development of, or recruiting and supporting volunteers for, preventive services such as lunch clubs for older people. In the mid 1980s the reasons for establishing or reviving CD teams began to change. The

reasons for the renewed support of CD in some areas relate to dominant social, political and economic (employment) issues during the period, such as a response to the widespread urban riots (or uprisings), high unemployment rates and concern over the impact of the destruction of the economic underpinning of many areas' communities such as steel making, coal mining and ship building.

However, some of the participants from areas where there has been long-term support for CD argue that, whilst the combination of the political, social and economic factors, along with the national and local government response to these issues played a central role, a key factor was (and continues to be) the existence of well-placed champions (most often a senior manager). These champions were (and are) able to argue that CD could and should play a role in helping the local authority or organisation:

> 'You have to remember that by this time the people motivated by many of the political and ideological passions of the 60s were getting jobs at a pretty senior level. Also people from this generation had begun to make an impact on local politics, indeed some of them were ex-CD people. This remains the case today of course.'

The findings of the 2004 *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK*[8] indicate that a diversity of sectors and organisations employ CD workers (voluntary sector, 53.4%; public sector, 41.5%; private sector, 1%; other, 4.1%). There does not seem to be a clear pattern relating to who delivers CD. In some areas it is mostly the local authority and in others the voluntary sector. In many areas it is a combination of the two. What is interesting is that there sometimes seems to be a rough division of labour, where the local authority team provides generic CD support and the voluntary sector works with communities of interest and in capacity building work – or vice versa.

However, for the managers, the existence of political and/or senior management champions is not enough. It also requires a particular 'reading' by the CD managers and key stakeholders of government and local policies. For example, one manager said of his local authority:

8 Andrew Glen, Paul Henderson, Jayne Humm, Helen Meszaros and Maire Gaffney (2004) *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK*: London, Community Development Foundation/Community Development Exchange.

> 'Key stakeholders, particularly some senior managers, have seen that CD is an important part of social inclusion, that our home is in the local authority which means that CD is recognised by other senior managers as part of the LA and not a maverick add-on.'

Another said:

> 'for me what has been key is the ability to articulate the link between the benefits of community work and changing national and local policies.'

Several CD managers also cited the importance of developing and maintaining a high reputation for their work:

> 'Champions will soon stop being champions if your work is not up to scratch, that's part of the deal. Good work and the evidence of good work mean a lot. Don't take your champions for granted, but keep feeding them information, the evidence and arguments. We try to involve them in our forward thinking around what the team should be doing, what the local issues are, and the role of the team and the policy horizon stuff.'

> 'The community will only give you the support you need if you are under threat, if they feel they are really going to lose something. They will only feel this if they get the best from us.'

Whilst all these factors are important, continued support for CD in a particular area rests on the shoulders of the CD teams, particularly the managers. The teams that appear to have most successfully embedded themselves into the 'psyche' of the local authority, the LSP and other arenas are those that recognise that effective CD must take place at both a local and a strategic level. And a key success factor in working at the strategic level is planning and implementing a well thought through external communications strategy, based on gathering information about the impact and quality of the work taking place at a local level.

The key message for managers is therefore: increase your support base by developing more champions and, at the same time, support, nurture and water those you already have.

3 Managers' motivations and attitudes

'Community development values should be enshrined in the way we manage.'

This quote is typical of what many managers say should underpin the management of community development (CD). Phrases such as using a 'people centred approach' and that managers should be 'collaborative and supportive' constantly recur. Management styles should 'give people freedom to work in their own way' and not be too 'directive and controlling' but 'enable staff to come up with their own solutions'. Managers also believe they must 'keep an eye on the bigger picture', and 'set and maintain boundaries and standards', and be 'hands on' when necessary. The following statements sum up their approaches:

'I aim to be collaborative; the strategy is designed to get the best from my very experienced staff. It's really based on the same principles as my work in practice and the strategic stuff. If people have their own ideas they'll tend to work harder at it than if something's imposed by me. But it is important to make things very clear and spelt out.'

'My style is to be strong but motivational, inclusive but questioning, rather than directive. We develop things together and I'm very people-centred. I can be hands on but only when required, however I do want to know what is going on.'

Some managers describe themselves as 'leaders' rather than managers, as they believe this more accurately describes their approach:

'I don't like the term manager but prefer leadership. It's an important distinction. It is important to be clear about the difference between leadership and management. Management involves overseeing systems, budgets, being in charge in a pretty centralised way. Leadership is shaping how the team works and the direction it is moving in, it's a more inclusive approach.'

Some respondents saw the development of a leadership approach as part of their commitment to the values and principles of CD:

'The manager needs to be a model and not feel they have to hold everything themselves. They need to have the courage to enable people to share grievances at team meetings. In this way they can be dealt with as a team problem where people collectively sort out the problem – that is of course a key CD principle.'

Generic management and community development – differences and similarities

A common view within the CD world is that only people with experience and knowledge of CD can manage CD.

Managers were asked two questions relating to this issue:

1 'Can only someone with experience/knowledge of CD manage it?' *(Interview)*

2 'In what ways do you think best practice in managing community development differs from best practice in being a manager in other public fields?' *(Questionnaire)*

Some said CD experience is not necessary but you do need particular skills and an appropriate attitude:

'No, but they have to be really good at managing change and uncertainty, they have a lot of skills and knowledge in managing people in a facilitative way and a good knowledge of CD. I think people from a social work background, that type of thing will find it difficult, they come with an individual casework paradigm so they find it hard to see things in a CD way.'

'No I don't believe this to be the case, it's about the approach and passion, who decides what and in whose interests. It's an arrogant position to state that only people with experience in CD can manage it, and quite unhelpful.'

'No, a lot of it's about common sense, a lot in management is about valuing people, good executive and strategic managers don't have to be experts on the task or role, the good skills or management and leadership is about setting the vision and getting the best from people.'

However some felt that only people with a background in CD can properly manage it:

> 'From my own experience, when managed by someone with no CD experience it felt that they weren't able to manage my work. For example, anything that I suggested would be given the go-ahead which meant I was often over-stretched and unable to receive practical support around the delivery. I had no sense of having a detailed discussion of the real dilemmas I was facing. She was not much use in helping me make a decision on what to do next. At this point it was necessary for me to have external supervision. On the other hand, to turn your question around, a good style of CD manager is a good style of manager – that is someone with a strong background in managing CD should make a very good all-round manager.'

> 'Managing CD is different from other types of management, particularly in managing the interface between people working to do their best for the community, but who must also work with councillors, who, in their own different way also want to do their best for the community. Managing CD is deeply complex, so training is needed in helping people deal with complexity and developing their language.'

Some were unsure:

> 'On second thoughts maybe not many people could manage CD without some CD training, I'm not sure, certainly people who have CD experience aren't necessarily that good at managing CD, people who have not been involved in practice for a very long time lose touch, the feel for it, so in the Trust we have developed a policy, partly through necessity it has to be said, but also because this is what I learnt at Goldsmiths, where the senior workers involved in managing, including myself, have to do one day a week CD practice work. It keeps us in touch with the issues in communities and helps cut across the strict line-manager relationship. It makes it easier to help support staff involved in difficult and complex work.'

On the other hand, some felt that experience and knowledge of CD has a lot to offer 'generic' management:

> 'I'm not convinced there is a difference – perhaps only that CD managers should be setting the standard for good manager practice generally.'

Whether they believe a good manager comes from a community development background or not, it is clear from their views that managers believe that having knowledge and experience of community development is important. A good community development manager must also have a range of core skills and abilities:

- being able to deal effectively with change and uncertainty
- ability to manage people in a facilitative way
- having a passion about the work
- valuing people and being able to draw out the best from them
- helping staff make their own decisions
- dealing well with complexity
- taking a lead in setting the vision for the team.

4 Context, challenges and responses

This chapter deals with issues and challenges identified by managers for managing their environment – the following chapter deals with issues and challenges around managing the team and practice.

The main environmental challenges and issues are:

- the potential impact of government policies, particularly community engagement
- the organisational and strategic 'fit' of community development (CD) at a local level
- team members' and managers' relationship with key stakeholders, particularly politicians and senior managers
- key stakeholders' understanding of CD as an approach and practice
- the evaluation and measurement of the impact of CD
- budgets and finances.

These issues and challenges are deeply connected. However, understanding how they relate to impact on each other requires thinking of CD as a whole, that is to say using a 'systems' approach: 'Systems thinking looks at the whole, and the parts, and the connections between the parts, studying the whole in order to understand the parts.' [9]

Figure 1, pp. 18 and 19, maps some of the main elements that form the context and environment within which CD practice and management takes place.

- **Column A**, an adaptation of the diagram used in the *Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD) Handbook*,[10] describes the vision and aims of CD. An important feature is that the aims of achieving a 'healthy community', a 'strengthened community' and the 'quality

9 Joseph O'Connor and Ian McDermott (1997) *The Art of Systems Thinking: Essential skills for creative problem solving*: London, Thorsons

10 Alan Barr and Stuart Hashagen (2000) *ABCD Handbook: A framework for evaluating community development*: London, CDF

of life dimensions' are shared in government policy. The lower part of the column (shaded in grey) indicates the main areas of work that are generally considered as those where CD activity takes place.

- **Column B** describes the 'policy context' within which most CD teams operate. Again the grey shaded sections show the main areas of work generally considered to be those where CD takes place.
- **Column C** summarises the decision-making, governance and accountability structures within which CD teams function. Note that this does not show the structural location of teams, which may be part of a local authority, the voluntary or community sector or another public service such as health.
- **Column D** sketches the respective areas of responsibility of the community development workers (CDWs) and the manager within a team.

This work is often shared with, for example, youth workers, health development staff and community learning practitioners. It is also important to bear in mind that sometimes these workers as well as the CDWs may also act as 'organisational change agents', for example by helping develop local schools into extended schools.

Whilst Figure 1 gives an indication of some of the core building blocks that define the 'community development system', it does not show the complexity of individual and organisational relationships within the system. There is not a single element without a complex and dynamic relationship between people. The relationships within the spheres of activity traditionally associated with CD practice (shaded in grey) are just as complex as anywhere else in the model. At any one time a CDW may be working with:

- members of the community and community activists
- other practitioners and professionals, such as youth workers and police officers
- service providers, such as schools and housing offices
- service managers and local politicians.

Also, at first sight it might appear that the realm of the CDW and the manager function in two distinct spheres – the CDW working with

Figure 1: A contextual map for 'managing community development to the highest standards'

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">A B C D</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Overall aims of social/economic policy and the CD contribution</td><td>Policies, relationships, work</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">A HEALTHY COMMUNITY</td><td rowspan="4">POLICY and STRATEGY
Working with policies, strategic issues and plans
Turning government strategies and plans into local strategy and plans</td><td rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Liveable</td><td>Sustainable</td><td>Equitable</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shared wealth</td><td>Caring community</td><td>Creative community</td><td>Citizens' community</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">QUALITY OF LIFE DIMENSIONS</td><td rowspan="3">STRUCTURAL
Working with service development and change</td><td rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Personal empowerment
(working with individuals)</td><td>Positive action
(working with people to define issues)</td><td>Community organisation
(supporting and developing community organisations)</td><td>Participation and involvement
(linking community organisations with others and planning and decision making process)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT DIMENSIONS</td><td>'CAPACITY BUILDING'
'Community empowerment'</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Element A:
ABCD PYRAMID:
WHAT CD IS and IS FOR</td><td>Element B:
ENVIRONMENT and STRUCTURE</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	Coordinating decision-making, implementation structures and environment	**Roles and responsibilities of the CD team**			**Team, management and CDW activities**
	Government policies and regions	CDW	Manager	Team	Roles and responsibilities • Leadership • Policy development • Implementation plans • Accountability (downward and upwards) • Planning • Evaluation • Communications, relationship building and maintenance • Skills and learning • Coordination • Resources • Professional and personal support • Problem solving • Dealing with crises
	LA and larger public organisations (including VCS) partnerships, etc.				
	Neighbourhood fora, etc.				
	Community organisations and groups				
	Element C: APPROACHES, WORK, RELATIONSHIPS	**Element D: RESPONSIBILITIES and THE CD TEAM**			

local people and services and the manager overseeing operations and engaging in strategic issues. But a diagram is not able to show the complex, dialectical relationship between the work of the CDW and the wider strategic issues relating to policy, strategy, decision-making and the way organisations function. The nature of community development work means that the CDW will be constantly engaged in the interaction between the community and strategic issues. For example:

- Working with the community to get issues that concern them recognised at a strategic level in order to improve or develop services, access resources, or to seek major structural or environmental change
- Being engaged in helping develop more participative planning and decision making structures at a local and sometimes strategic level
- Working closely with a wide range of operational and sometimes senior managers and politicians to address such issues as community safety, community cohesion, stock transfers and so on.

Thus to be effective, CD teams have a shared responsibility to work at both the practice and the strategic level. The manager and the fieldworker have different roles but they come together in the team. It suggests that CD managers manage their teams within the context of a series of closely interlinked issues and challenges.

This is the context within which the managers also identified a number of strategic challenges and issues of particular concern:

- The potential impact of government policies, particularly 'community engagement'.
- The organisational and strategic fit of community development at a local level.
- Stakeholders' understanding of the role of community development.
- The impact of political and organisational change.
- Budgets and finance.
- Communicating the work and the impact of the work and promoting community development.
- The need for evidence of the effectiveness and impact of their work: evaluation, monitoring and assessment.

The potential impact of government policies, particularly 'community engagement'

The opening of *The Community Development Challenge* asks: 'How can people rise to the challenge and opportunities presented by the government's increasing emphasis on community engagement?'

'Engaging communities' is a key feature of the government's approach, and *The Community Development Challenge* report argues that it will only work if underpinned by CD. Yet many people involved in CD are concerned that community engagement is understood too superficially, and that this could have a negative impact on CD. This is because:

- externally imposed targets and priorities relating to community engagement may skew the work of CD teams
- team priorities and work programmes will increasingly be defined top down – by senior managers, politicians and partnerships – rather than 'bottom up', by local communities
- already limited funding may be redirected from CD to community engagement programmes
- CD teams may increasingly be required to undertake community engagement at the expense of CD or reorganised into 'community engagement teams'.

However, it seems that, at least for the managers involved in this project, the impact of the community engagement agenda is mixed. Participants were asked if community engagement has had a negative or positive impact on their work. Whilst managers remain concerned about the possible long-term impact, a number said that currently the impact was generally positive. One said: 'The impact has been positive. We are more able to make sure communities and CD is a priority.' Another had benefited from the community engagement agenda because:

> 'It has enabled those who want to support CD in the LA to fund it. So we accept that we may have to do community engagement but this is also about doing CD anyway, people who we employ are called CD workers, this is what they do and we make no bones about it. There is, I think, an explicit as well a simple understanding

between people and us in the LSP and LAA [local area agreement] that this is the score.'

Some managers say that community engagement has enabled them to develop a persuasive case that CD can play an important strategic role in helping public services and partnerships meet their goals and obligations. Some teams have also benefited from further funding. Community engagement has also provided an opportunity for strategically placed 'friends and allies' to support and argue from a position of strength on the value of CD.

The position of the community development team in the wider organisation

Some managers feel their role and work is unrecognised and under-valued within the wider organisation:

'A big problem is continuously battling a corporate understanding about the value of CD. It can be challenging, and not all directorates or departments necessarily understand our role.'

The 'fit' within local government and partnership structures has an important impact on the work of a CD team, particularly if based in a local authority. It consists of three elements:

- The structural placing of the CD team within the wider organisation and formal and informal perceptions of the team's role.
- The form and quality of formal and informal relationships between the managers, team members and stakeholders.
- Stakeholders' understanding of the role of CD in the context of local and national policies, programmes and priorities.

Managers from every sector say it is important that the work of their teams has a recognised and valued strategic role within the wider planning and decision-making process:

'It's important to ensure the right links are made from our grass roots service delivery to the strategic direction and formalising on council services and policies, i.e. to develop links with neighbourhood managers, the LSP support team and so on.'

For local authority based teams, the formal location of the team within the wider organisational structure is important. A team may well have a formal strategic role but remain isolated if not located in an appropriate directorate:

> 'Whilst we had an official strategic role for the whole of the council, we had all kinds of problems … other services did not accept us as corporate because we were in the social services department.'

The following vignette describes the impact on a CD team when it was moved to the chief executive's office.

Case study

Moving the community development team to the chief executive's office

'Before we were moved to the chief executive's office our team was not taken very seriously, we were left to get on with it, always on the periphery and never having an input into the larger plans and strategies that have a direct impact on the communities we are working with. We were seen as a service provider. Sometimes we were asked to do stuff that we did not feel was appropriate but a lot of the time we were simply ignored. This was demoralising for the staff and the managers, we simply did not feel valued and it was hard for us to understand our role. But being moved to the chief executive's office meant we are seen as having a much more legitimate policy and strategic function, we are still doing our neighbourhood CD work, but in the wider context of council policies and strategies, it's no longer seen and felt as a peripheral activity. We are also seen as having a much more legitimate role in working with other organisations and the LSP and so on. We can bring things together at a strategic level that takes forward CD. It also means we are able to put our case across more effectively, people look to us as the experts, the people who know about CD and working with communities.'

Stakeholders' understanding of the role of community development

Possibly the most important of the three 'fit' elements is the stakeholders' understanding of the role of CD in the context of local and national policies, strategies, priorities and political points of view.

Stakeholders' understanding of the role of CD and the work of the team is affected by:

- the wider policy context and how it is formally interpreted, for example through the local authority and the LSP
- an understanding of the basic principles and practice of CD
- the work and achievements of the team: not only what the team is doing and how it is doing it, but also perceptions of the quality and competences of the team, individual team members and the manager
- individuals' perspectives ('allies and enemies').

Whether based within a local authority, the voluntary sector or a housing association, the challenge for all managers is to get CD understood and valued as a practice within the wider organisation and by key stakeholders. However, as the following vignette shows, this can be a daunting task.

Case study

Managing community development in a New Deal for Communities programme

This case study exemplifies a number of the issues and challenges explored in this section. Whilst the team was based in a New Deal for Communities (NDC) project, the issues and challenges it faced could apply to many teams, especially those located within larger organisations.

> 'Many of the internal issues and difficulties we faced were a direct consequence of the lack of common ground and agreement of CD definitions and principles between our team and the core manager of the NDC

programme. The project outputs and outcomes were difficult to gear towards a true reflection of the work [of the CD team] and they were not considered in the kind of depth that illustrated a common purpose or a direction that reduced tensions between the project and the NDC core manager. In effect, the team was marginalised. When workers advocated or expressed residents' concerns, core managers often saw this as 'trouble making' – rather than an illustration of the need for them to 'listen' and respond openly. It wasn't always clear whether the CDWs were agents of the programme or the community. At times the … workers were criticised for being too 'passionate' about their work, and when critical of some aspects of the NDC programme, they were charged with being 'unprofessional'.

'Much of my time as a manager was spent mediating between the project's resident groups and the core manager. A great deal of time was spent either justifying approaches or developing ways that the programme could understand the impact and positive nature of community development support.'

Local strategic partnerships

With the publication of the local government White Paper[11], LSPs are playing an increasingly significant role, as they have responsibility for producing the local community strategy and the local area agreements (LAAs) that specify overarching priorities and targets to be met by the local authority and other public services.

Whilst the LSPs are required to involve communities and the VCS in the policy development and decision-making process, it is not specified how this should happen. It is left largely up to the LSPs (and therefore mainly the local authority) to decide how local people and

11 Department of Communities and Local Government (2006) *Strong and Prosperous Communities: The local government White Paper*: Norwich, HMSO

organisations are to be involved. Consequently an LSP can have a positive or negative (but rarely neutral) impact on CD in terms of funding, priorities and the role of CD in supporting local people.

Because of the growing importance of LSPs, managers were asked:

> 'On a scale of 1 to 10 where would put your relationship with the LSP?' and 'Are you happy with this position or would you prefer to be closer or further away from the LSP – and why?'

On the first question the managers gave an average score of 8. The highest was 10 and the lowest 3. Over half said their relationship with their LSP is higher than 5. Over half also said they are happy with the relationship at this level but some said they'd like to have a closer relationship. One manager said:

> 'We are unhappy with this [relationship] and would prefer to be much closer. There's an expectation that the VCS will engage with the LSP but they aren't really in a shape to do this and the council does not really take the LSP seriously so it isolates the VCS. The White Paper may force the council to work better with local partners – that would be great.'

Some managers said a close relationship with the LSP had brought mutual benefits. For example a manager of a voluntary sector-based, citywide CD organisation said:

> 'I guess it's the best it's ever been. Some of the members [of the LSP] see what we are doing as being very good and it's valued, they can see the results of doing good work. Also we are one of the most visible things they fund, they can see we are having an effect.'

Another said:

> 'We are happy with this situation, it's really important that we have a close relationship. It enables us to influence the culture of organisations. Although there are a lot of closed organisational cultures this is changing. Every action of the LSP should have CD targets.'

However, managers also said it was important to maintain a 'healthy distance' with LSPs:

> 'We are close to things but not too close. We get the support we need from them.'

The impact of political and organisational change

Organisational and political change is a constant in public, community and voluntary sector services. Recent local government elections have meant a change in political administration for many local authorities. Consequently several managers involved in this project faced an uncertain future, a manager of a medium sized LA team said :

> 'We are facing lot of uncertainty as we are in the process of changing political leadership of the council. In the past we were well supported by the last administration, now I'm not so sure … the new leader has a slogan of 'better and cheaper'; it may mean cuts. They certainly seem cooler about CD.'

Support, or otherwise, for CD is not necessarily related to specific political parties. For example the local authority quoted above has recently changed from a Labour administration to a shared Conservative and Liberal Democratic one. However, a manager in another local authority that has changed from a Labour to a Conservative administration said:

> 'Yes, I feel confident about the future for CD in the area at the moment. This is because of the funding and national policy, but also because of a change in the local political regime'.

Another said:

> 'The change in our fortunes came when we were put at the centre of things and this came about when the Lib Dems took over control from a Labour administration that had been running things forever.'

Managers may be least happy when there is no overall political control:

> 'We're in a local authority with an administration with no overall control, resulting in no strong direction for CD or cohesion issues.'

Funding

Nearly all the managers were concerned about their longer-term funding. A typical comment was:

> 'Being a non-statutory service in a climate of shrinking local authority budgets may affect us in the longer term.'

Short-term funding is a particular concern for VCS based organisations:

> 'Funding, of course, is a big one; everything is short term so we are always on a bit of a treadmill. There are quite a few key programmes coming to an end, but nothing has been put in their place, the government spending review has been put back so there is a space between stuff ending and stuff beginning, this is going to cause many of us serious problems quite soon.'

Views on the impact community engagement may have on the future funding of CD were mixed. Some managers were concerned about the possible longer-term implications, but others felt that community engagement might provide further resources:

> 'The implementation of the new communities bill, the duty to involve, inform and consult, will help protect us regarding financial and budget pressures.'

But as this quote points out, financial uncertainty has an impact on the work and morale of individual teams:

> 'I'm not sure local authorities, the government and funders really understand the impact that uncertainty over future funding and short-term funding regimes can have on the work of the team, what it means is uncertainty, a difficulty in long-term planning, people worrying about their future, making it hard to maintain focus and a positive team atmosphere. It is hard to retain or recruit skilled staff and this inevitably has a negative impact on the quality of our work.'

Future prospects for CD

Managers were asked 'Do you think CD has a positive future in your area/city?' On the whole they seemed pretty positive.

> 'Yes I think it does, my feeling is that the stuff coming from government, the commission on cohesion as well, promotes CD. The White Paper also helps reinforce things. We have not yet got hard targets to make it a statutory requirement, but still, there is a national emphasis. We have always had CD in Southampton. It's an established approach and the

push from national government helps this.'

'Yes, at the moment it does, because of the funding, national policy and a change in the local political regime.'

'Yes I do, there is a big role for CD, and the community in Lincolnshire is really changing. We have the city and 12 towns, plus numerous villages and hamlets. We have many new arrivals from Portugal and Poland who are settling down and forming their own communities, although the Poles remain quite transient. This is a big challenge.'

'Yes – it feels like things have got better and more positive than a few years ago. A lot is happening, work on the CD Challenge, Firm Foundations, etc. means that there is more recognition of CD but it is balanced against the pull taking us away from this.'

'Yes it probably has, I'm a little worried about the council and its approach, but overall we are moving in the right direction.'

'A very positive shift, the development of some really good partnerships, for example extended schools, where we have strongly supported local head teachers. There's a lot more interest in working in partnership, but there is a long way to go. Power remains a key question, but I think we are having a very positive impact, the community really is having an impact on services and the way things are done. I think the government rhetoric is beginning to have an impact; we have very supportive councillors who are supportive of our local action plan. We have one advantage in that we are not so dependent on council funding but people see us as providing good quality practice. However funding is always an issue, and it seems that the role of CD work in enabling other agencies, the local authority etc. to meet their targets is often overlooked. A good example is the imminent end of NRF [Neighbourhood Renewal Fund], which currently fully

(continued overleaf)

funds the community development department. Without the CD work many of the structures within the community will no longer be supported, structures which are utilised by a wealth of different organisations to consult with the community and meet their own targets.'

However others had a rather more pessimistic view:

'I don't know. When the government produced the neighbourhood renewal stuff, I was in tears of joy, at last a commitment to CD, but I have become increasingly disillusioned.'

Communications and promotion

One of the key messages arising from the discussions is the central importance of a well-planned communications strategy. This is important because:

'Getting colleagues and elected members to appreciate what CDWs do is necessary for corporate cohesion and shared vision, not only of CD but the overall approach of the council to communities and the development of services.'

On its own a communications strategy is meaningless unless it is underpinned by two essential components:

- CD practice must be good enough to be worth communicating to others
- the recognition that a central part of CD practice must include gathering evidence of the impact of the work.

The following shows the effect that bringing these two elements together can have.

Case study

Community development team in a medium size city

'When the new political administration took over, they said they were keen on CD. But, to be frank, the CD unit at the time did not have a great reputation. It had been badly managed and organised for too long, the workers were not getting good supervision and there was little or no sense of direction. Some of the workers had been working with the same groups for years. The image of the average CD worker in the council was, I think, along the lines of someone who went into a community centre, spent the morning drinking coffee and chatting to some people and not doing much more. This might have been an unfair image but it was a prevalent one. So when we were moved to the chief executive's office we were told, you have 12 months to get things sorted out. So we worked really hard on getting things right. These were, making sure all the CD practitioners had good quality line management and regular supervision, that we had a basic set of professional standards (based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS)), and making sure we had a team programme. Also that each CDW also had their own work programmes that specified what they were doing, with clear targets. Finally we instituted a robust recording and evaluation system to track the work and the impact so we could feed this back to the workers and the team and the wider organisation. But a key part of this work was making sure that we communicated what we were doing through briefings, meetings, newsletters and so on. We even made a DVD promoting and explaining our work.'

Promoting community development and communicating the work of the team

People who are involved in CD often say that publicity is important but that they are poor at communicating their work. One of the aims of our project was to identify examples of successful promotion of CD. Interviewees were asked:

> 'On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 not at all, 10 perfect) how well do you think you and your team has been in promoting/developing an understanding of CD values, practices and processes?'

The average rating was 7; the highest was 11(!) and the lowest 5.

Managers are agreed that promoting the work of their teams is important, but some teams seem better at this than others:

> 'We aren't good at promoting what we do; we stand back and let the group get the glory in its own success. So one thing I would say is, in parallel with the group, you also need to get some glory and attention for what you are doing. But this kind of work is what some CDWs find hard. For example I've noticed it myself, a team member writes a really good press release about a group or event or something and makes no mention of us.'

Others have been more successful:

> 'We are doing a marvellous job, we won the team of the year award this year, and people appreciate what CD is achieving. We have focused a lot on telling people how good we are and what we do. We have thought hard about how we promote ourselves and we make sure service managers know what we are doing; we also try and get them involved through stuff like Together We Can[12]. We constantly reiterate what capacity building and so on is about.'

12 Together We Can is the government campaign to bring government and people closer together, encouraging public bodies to do more to enable people to influence local decisions. It is led by Communities and Local Government and is closely linked to the Local Government White Paper's aim of giving local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. See http://togetherwecan.direct.gov.uk

Examples of promoting understanding of the work of a CD team

Making contact with new senior managers

One team makes sure new senior managers are invited to CD events, where local people have a chance to say something about what the CD team has done and its impact on them and the community. This has had a profound impact on senior people, particularly as it comes from local people rather than the team.

Using public relations or news departments

A local authority manager always asks someone from the council's PR department to attend the monthly team meeting for 20 minutes or so, when they discuss 'good new stories' about their work. This then gets fed into the council's newsletters and website and is distributed as press releases to the local media. The local papers often use these stories and the CD team is usually mentioned:

> 'It makes the council look good and us look good so everyone's happy.'

Going for awards

> 'CD has been on the sidelines for too long so we are also committed as a team to applying for awards to draw attention to what communities can achieve with CD support – we make sure we enter everything to get recognition of the really good work we are doing, and it has worked!'

However:

> 'The greatest and most convincing form of PR for any team is doing really good, high quality and consistent work. People see it, the local elected members, service providers and so on, local people; they will all talk about it. Local people will comment how their area is getting better and they will talk about the community worker, they'll say to others if she or he is doing a good or poor job. You can't underestimate the impact of people talking has, on the way you are perceived.'

Key features of an effective communications strategy

A good communications strategy will be comprehensive, covering all aspects of internal and external information sharing. It will seek to meet the information needs of the individual stakeholders, rather than trying a 'one size fits all' approach.

A good communications strategy will not only cover plans related to published information in printed or electronic form – such as emails and websites – but will also include face to face briefing sessions and presentations, relationships with the PR department (if one exists) and the development of team protocols and guidelines on contact with the mass media, writing press releases, what awards and prizes to go for, and dealing with crises and emergencies.

Finally, the strategy will take into account informal forms of communication.

A well planned and detailed communications strategy is not a luxury or a peripheral add-on to the work of a CD team. A communications strategy provides the glue between practice at a local level and the organisational and strategic functions of the team. Publicly funded CD teams have a duty to communicate their work and they ignore this responsibility at their peril. If people do not know about the work and impact of the team and do not understand the role of the team in the context of wider strategies and policies, CD teams and practitioners should not be surprised if they then are not supported or understood.

The need for evidence of effectiveness and impact: evaluation, monitoring and assessment

A dominant issue for many managers is the need to provide evidence of the impact of CD and its values through evaluation and impact measures. Managers believe that such measures form the key to the longer-term future of CD, partly because they counter externally imposed measures that do not relate to CD outcomes. A common criticism made by the managers involved in this project was that:

> 'Too much evaluation is not evaluation but ticking boxes [but] some CD teams are as prone to this as LSPs and so on.'

Another said:

> 'We really do need to get to grips with this evaluation and measuring change stuff, it's key. We know that the externally imposed measures rarely say anything and they also skew the way people think about things and it may well impact on the way we work. It's our job to start countering this stuff. We need to say this is the difference we make and here is the evidence, this is why you need to support what we're doing with the evidence. If we don't do it no one else will.'

The use of outcome measures is a way of promoting understanding and confidence in the efficacy of CD. Some CD teams have begun to develop effective ways of evaluating and measuring their work and use this information to inform key stakeholders about the team's impact, develop team and individual work programmes, measure progress and improve practice.

The field research for this study was conducted shortly before the introduction of the new Local Government Performance Framework (published by CLG, November 2007) that includes government-approved indicators of community empowerment, community cohesion, volunteering and other issues relevant to CD objectives. Information on these measures will be collected by or for local authorities, and they form part of the menu from which local area agreement (LAA) priorities will be chosen. These indicators were therefore not available for discussion at the time of our field interviews and seminars but are now an important new factor in the context for CD, and will need to be taken into account in any future approach to evaluation of CD in England.

The advice of the Community Development Foundation (which was involved in developing these measures[13]) is that CD evaluation should include reference to local authority figures on these measures, and use of the same measures at neighbourhood and group level, wherever possible. These indicators will now accumulate wide evidence beyond

13 See Gabriel Chanan (2004) *Measures of Community*: London, CDF; Gabriel Chanan (2005) *Searching for Solid Foundations*: London, ODPM

what CD teams could expect to collect on their own (or could pay for). Since they will be based on household surveys carried out systematically and independently they will also provide more objective evidence of the state of participation of the local population as a whole than can be obtained through project self-evaluation frameworks such as ABCD and LEAP.

Whilst we have seen that managers are wary of indicators 'imposed from above', it will be important to look afresh at the value of these indicators as they have been drawn from the CD field itself, and using them in a positive way offers huge possibilities for overcoming scepticism about CD from councillors, other services and funders, and for setting CD fieldwork against a background of systematic evidence far beyond the scope of most CD teams to collect for themselves.

At the same time, these indicators are very limited compared with what one would want to know in order to evaluate a local project in depth, so it will always be necessary to use other measures as well.

Here we examine three case studies where evaluation and impact assessment have played a central part in the work of teams, covering reflection, learning and communication. The case study organisations are:

- **CANDL**. Church and Neighbourhood Development in London is a small team, which is part of the national charity Barnardo's. The project works with churches to help them develop services for children, young people and parents.
- **CONEC**. Community Outreach for North and East Colchester is a small CD project managed by a management committee. The project undertakes neighbourhood CD work on a new housing estate.
- **Stockport Community Development Team**. Stockport CD Team, part of Stockport Council, is a medium-sized team that is involved in neighbourhood work, with communities of identity and in community learning.

Case study
CANDL

Simon Vincent from CANDL said *'The structure we developed grew organically and now forms the glue that holds everything together.'*

For CANDL the key to its effective structure is its commitment to developing itself as a 'learning organisation'.

The organisation's work programme is developed through an annual planning and reviewing cycle consisting of:

- annual strategy days
- project year plans
- annual report and business planning
- three-monthly individual staff work programme meetings
- annual planning revisions
- quarterly review of major targets.

Closely linked to this process is a feedback and evaluation system. This maintains close links between clients (the churches) and the organisation and provides feedback that informs the planning and reviewing mechanism. It also informs individual workers' supervision and learning. The formal client/organisation relationship is based on:

- 'client initial assessments', where the needs of the church group are discussed and agreed
- the development of a six-month 'learning agreement' between the group and the individual CANDL worker, which specifies the work that will take place
- regular reviews with the client to ensure learning objectives are being met, or whether they should be changed
- 'client reviews' at end of six months, where the learning agreement is reviewed and feedback is given on the quality and effectiveness of the work and whether further work is required.

Annual strategy days

CANDL organises an annual three-day review and programme development meeting.

> 'The annual strategy days are really important, this is where we review our work, look at what lessons we have learnt and what we should be doing in the future. A lot is expected of the team members, they are asked to prepare reports about their work, including any issues or problems they have encountered, lessons they have learnt and ideas about what needs to be done differently.'

Team building and meetings

CANDL also organises an annual 'retreat' day, where broader issues about the vision and aims of the organisation, what keeps people motivated and what they would like to learn is discussed.

The organisation has two types of team meetings: monthly business meetings and 'circle times'. At the business meeting information is shared and matters such as housekeeping are dealt with. Circle times play an important role in the life of the team, 'they are where most of our learning and reflection takes place, where issues and policies are discussed'. Chairing is rotated between team members. The meetings sometimes deal with an individual member's particular problem or project.

Client review process

The aim of the client review process is to provide constant feedback between the client, the individual worker and CANDL as a whole. After an initial assessment of the learning needs of the group or individual, a programme is produced outlining the main objectives and methods to be used.

There are regular reviews between CANDL and the church group, where any necessary changes are agreed. At the end of six months or on completion of the agreement the project worker organises a meeting with the manager and the client where the work is evaluated.

The information is then fed back to the individual worker during supervision and to the whole team at the planning and review sessions.

Case study
CONEC

The philosophy behind CONEC's approach to evaluation, monitoring and the measurement of impact is similar to CANDL's:

> 'Our aim was to develop something that is systematic and integrated but flexible. We wanted to develop a range of tools that fuse together our work programme with our core values, the way we meet and communicate and with the everyday work of the project.'

Feedback and evaluation

CONEC has developed a feedback questionnaire that is sent to local groups and residents with which it works. The questionnaire is designed to get detailed feedback on the quality of the work and what needs to be improved.

Questions include:

- Has your CD worker helped you with the following?
  - — Completing funding applications
  - — Finding out about different funding sources
- How useful has your CD worker been in helping you manage events?
  - — Marketing
  - — Monitoring and evaluating the event
- How useful has your CD worker been in helping you run your group effectively?
  - — Running meetings
  - — Attracting new members
  - — Planning for the future.

These questions are scored from 0 to 5.

The sheet includes questions asking how the CONEC worker helped the organisation/resident and how their input might be improved.

Management, planning, reporting, learning and review systems

The information from the questionnaires feeds into the organisation's 'meeting system', based on two starting points:

- a core set of five values
- a work programme that outlines priorities and intended outcomes

Values

The core values of the project are:

1. Employing a creative approach to deliver sustainable projects that are accessible, transparent and where change is well managed.
2. Managing CD input using core values of objectivity, diplomacy, enabling and active listening.
3. An exceptional level of performance in quality and delivery of CD work by being targeted and thoroughly prepared.
4. Valuing feedback as critical to the success of CONEC's CD input. Using well monitored processes in all aspects of practice, both in personal development and in strategic [project] planning.
5. To be team-centred.

The work programme

The work programme lists broad targets such as promoting community involvement in the decision-making process or developing a youth forum.

The five values are used constantly to improve CD practice and delivery. The work programme and the values are integrated into supervision and team meetings.

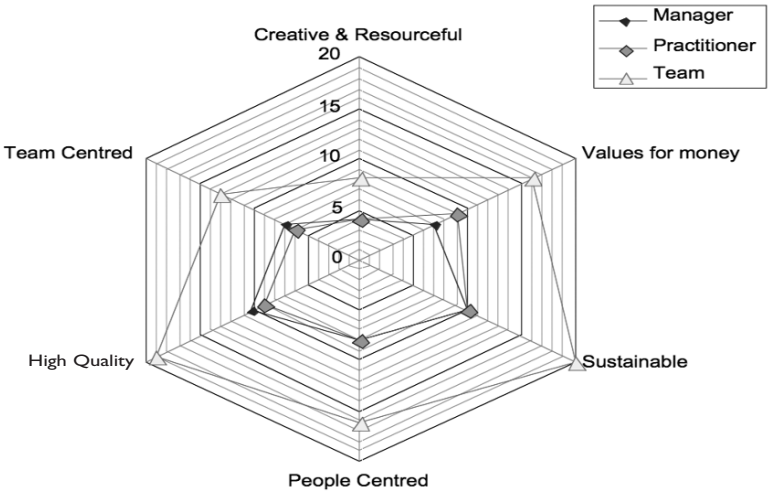
Reporting systems and reviewing progress

The work programme and reporting system underpin team discussions and supervision. A detailed progress report is presented to the management board each month. Each item of work listed in the team plan is reported using three columns:

- Project and target
- Progress
- Next steps.

Values and learning and developing quality

The project workers are committed to constant learning and developing the quality of CONEC's services. At each team meeting each worker goes though their work and discusses issues and strategies. They also discuss what they have learned in their practice. Learning points are listed on an Excel spreadsheet and converted to a radar diagram, which tracks what they have learned both individually and as a team, measured against the organisation's core values. The system is simple and clear and it is easy to see the areas where they need to undertake more learning, as in the example below.



The nearer to the edge for each of the values, the better the learning. In the example above, the CONEC workers have achieved and learned a lot in relation to achieving 'High Quality' work and supporting groups to become 'Sustainable', but are quite weak on being 'Team Centred' and 'Creative & Resourceful'.

Case study
Stockport

The Stockport Community Development Team manager has done a lot of work on developing effective evaluation, much of it based around the ABCD framework.[14] This has been developed as an internal tool and as a way of promoting CD and establishing agreed standards within a citywide CD strategy. Here Nick Beddow describes how the team adapted ABCD to meet its own needs.

> 'My original idea of manager was to see myself as team facilitator, basing the approach on CD practice and principles – modelling a team approach. But there were very few guides when I started off – the CD books seemed to offer only the ABCD model, a forbiddingly scientific approach to CD planning and evaluation ... I wanted to find a way of managing in an empowering way, helping the CD workers and communities become leaders of themselves … I started looking at ABCD again, and boiled it down to ordinary language, and started using it with workers to help them plan the next steps in their work with communities, asking ourselves 'what are the current strengths and weaknesses in the community from the point of view of ABCD? What needs to be our future focus … Does the group need more opportunities for personal empowerment, does it need to become more inclusive, better organised, or have better links with other communities and influential people?
>
> 'We brought together the four ABCD key elements of community empowerment to guide our planning for every piece of work, asking ourselves questions such as "what's missing in this community group?" ABCD really helped in planning, although it was still difficult to see how to use it for participatory evaluation with communities because it was

14 Alan Barr and Stuart Hashagen (2000) *ABCD Handbook*: London, CDF. ABCD was developed to provide a framework for the evaluation of community development work.

so highbrow. But we needed to evaluate the work to prove its impact to the non-CD world, so we tried to translate ABCD outcomes into a series of human outcomes from CD, based on communities' feelings about progress … The types of indicator questions we came up with included:

- Are people feeling more trust in the council and other partners?
- Are community group members feeling more trust in each other?
- Are community groups welcoming to all residents who might wish to be involved? Do all members feel welcomed?
- Do communities feel they have ownership over what is being done?
- Do they feel they have the right support from agencies, etc.?

'We wanted to capture CD as being as much about building good relationships and community morale, guiding interactions between people. It's about people, not just tasks and targets. So ABCD helped define what we meant by empowerment. It also gave people an insight into why things take so long. We used the ABCD approach as a PowerPoint for councillors and senior managers and local people, to share the understanding of what CD is attempting to do, helping communities become empowered. Our ABCD indicators also influenced other departments and teams as they began to include similar questions to measure their work with communities; in effect, ABCD became a Trojan horse for the values and principles of CD – if you measured in the way we suggested, you had to base it on CD values and principles, e.g. is this activity truly empowering people, tackling prejudice, building a strong and independent community?'

An important feature of the work of the teams in all three case studies is that they are based on a 'systems' approach in the development of their evaluation and measurement of impact strategy:

- Evaluation is not an add on, but is integrated into everything the teams do: planning, reviews, learning, practice development and communications.
- The projects involve the groups and individuals they are working with in defining what needs to be done and how success will be measured.
- Each team has developed a system that meets their needs and culture and one has adapted an external system – ABCD – to meet its own needs.
- Each team continually reviews and adapts its evaluation systems.

Relationships with local politicians and others

Whilst the formal position of a team in the wider organisation can be important for local authority based teams and others in large organisations, the development of good relationships with senior stakeholders is essential for all CD teams and managers:

> 'When you think about it the absolute central feature of doing community development is relationships. Building and nurturing relationships with people so there is trust, and at least a degree of understanding. It is about building relationships not just with members of the community, but within the team, with colleagues and with the people who make the decisions and hold the purse strings. Whilst the manager sets the scene and takes the lead, it is the responsibility of everyone in the team to develop and nurture these relationships.'

Such relationships are often complex. Managers and team members work and communicate with the same people (the stakeholders) in formal and informal settings, on a one-to-one basis and as part of larger events or meetings. Similarly, these stakeholders constantly communicate with each other.

Managers from all sectors are particularly concerned about the challenge of establishing and maintaining good relationships with politicians. This can be a challenge:

> 'Sometimes they [the elected members] lack an understanding – the challenge is to try to educate them. Sometimes elected members feel they can direct the work of the CD worker at a local level. Occasionally an elected member may also try to interfere with the work of a local group. Finally we have to sometimes manage councillors' expectations – we only have so much capacity.'

The relationship that a manager or CD worker has with a politician has little to do with party affiliation, but is related to the perceptions the elected member has of the CD worker's/manager's role and legitimacy in the community. Some elected members are antagonistic to CD for political or ideological reasons whilst others can be enthusiastic champions of CD for the same reason.

However, a key factor shaping stakeholders' views is where there is a legacy of poor relationships between them and CD practitioners and managers:

> 'CD has not always had the best image, we are trying to move away from this, we are trying to avoid the old conflict that often arose between CD workers and their managers, politicians and senior people and so on. That is to say workers who are in the business of challenging the status quo may only see things as a conflict and this comes through ... It's nonsense of course, but has been prevalent in the past; it has not done CD any favours.'

Managers may also feel critical of elected members:

> 'The electorate and the CDWs may think of a particular elected member differently. Thus the electorate might respect an elected member, but they may be thought of as a pain by CDWs … [the councillor] getting resources etc. for their ward, but not using CD principles.'

One local authority team works closely with the members' support team:

> 'The members' support team now understands what CD is about, and in turn is able to advise members. In turn the CDWs and team manager get good tips on how to deal with and "manage" the politicians. Both teams discuss tactics for dealing with a particular problem or issue.'

Table 3 opposite outlines some of the main challenges in working with local politicians and some actions taken to address the challenges. Whatever the action, the underlying principle is that:

> 'CD managers need to know how to promote cultural change, foster understanding of why things are and aren't working. They need to reach the hearts and minds of people in statutory agencies. Speaking to and lobbying councillors is part of the manager's role.'

Limitations and opportunities

As we have seen, CD operates within a complex and challenging policy and organisational environment. As Figure 1 shows we can no longer think about and discuss CD in isolation, as something that simply takes place in local communities. CD is equally concerned with strategic issues. It is a complex interplay between the local and the strategic that impacts on how communities are involved in the constantly evolving decision making and planning process. The key challenge for CD managers and practitioners is their ability to join up neighbourhood CD work with the wider context of policy and organisational change and development.

Of course, managers and teams cannot control the external environment but they can have an impact on it. A number have found ways of working within these systems to continue to undertake and promote classic, generic CD work successfully. A key element in the success of these teams has been the development of coherent, interlocking systems of evaluation and communication, along with clear protocols on such matters as working with local politicians and other stakeholders. For the teams described in this chapter, evaluation forms the foundation for everything the team does, providing credible information for external communications, underpinning reflective practice and learning, and forming the basis for future planning and review.

The other side of this coin is the level of understanding and support that senior managers and politicians have of the role of CD. As we have seen, this can be very mixed, particularly where there is little consistency in terms of party political support for CD. Whilst it is supported by a particular political party in one area, it may be opposed by the same party in another. This is equally true of the structural location

Table 3: Working with politicians

People attending our two consultation seminars[15] listed a number of actions that could be taken to improve the relationship between local politicians, the team and individual workers.

Challenge	Action
Ensure that councillors and stakeholders understand the practical value of CD work, and the role of the CD team in doing it	• Providing quarterly, six-monthly and annual reports that describe the distance the groups in particular wards have travelled • It is important that the CDW works closely with their ward councillor, to let councillors know what they are doing, and to know what they are thinking
There is a need to develop allies within an area such as councillors, officers and local VCS people	• Thinking in advance where the CD worker can be most effective, and thinking strategically about which networks or fora they actively participate in • It is important to focus on collaborative working. CDWs can't do CD on their own. To be effective they must work with councillors and with other professionals as well as with the community activists
Communicating with councillors	• Avoid conflict with councillors where possible. If there are disagreements, explore what the issues are and then reflect back in CD terms

15 As part of the research and consultation process for this report two seminars, one in London and the other in Stockport, were held.

of local authority CD teams as well as the role they are expected to play. However, those teams with a clear strategic and neighbourhood/community role, which are also located at the strategic core of the organisation (for example the Chief Executive's Office), or those voluntary sector teams that have a good relationship with their LSP, tend to have a greater degree of self confidence and a clearer sense of their role than those that do not.

Furthermore as we have seen, being located 'at the centre of things' has a positive impact on CD practice as staff feel that their work is recognised and valued by the wider organisation.

Being located within the strategic centre of an organisation also, crucially, offers CD teams the opportunity to make an important contribution to empowering communities as they engage in helping with policy and organisational change and development at a strategic as well as local level – a contribution that will have a direct impact on how community empowerment is developed in an area.

CD remains precarious, subject to political whim and financial and policy changes. Managers' and teams' ability to maintain effective relationships and to communicate what they do and the impact they are having in a language and form that is credible and understood by key stakeholders such as politicians and senior managers, is central to CD continuing to have a strategic as well as local impact.

5 Managing the team

Issues and challenges

Whilst external factors have an important impact on teams and the way they function, the work environment also impacts on the work of individual staff. Managers involved in this project have identified a number of issues they believe are particularly important:

- the development and maintenance of professional practice
- work programme planning, evaluation and review
- team meetings and supervision.

Specific issues were also mentioned.

- time management and work planning
- stress
- dealing with crises and conflicts
- dealing with a problematic worker
- management committees
- working with national CD organisations
- management training and professional support.

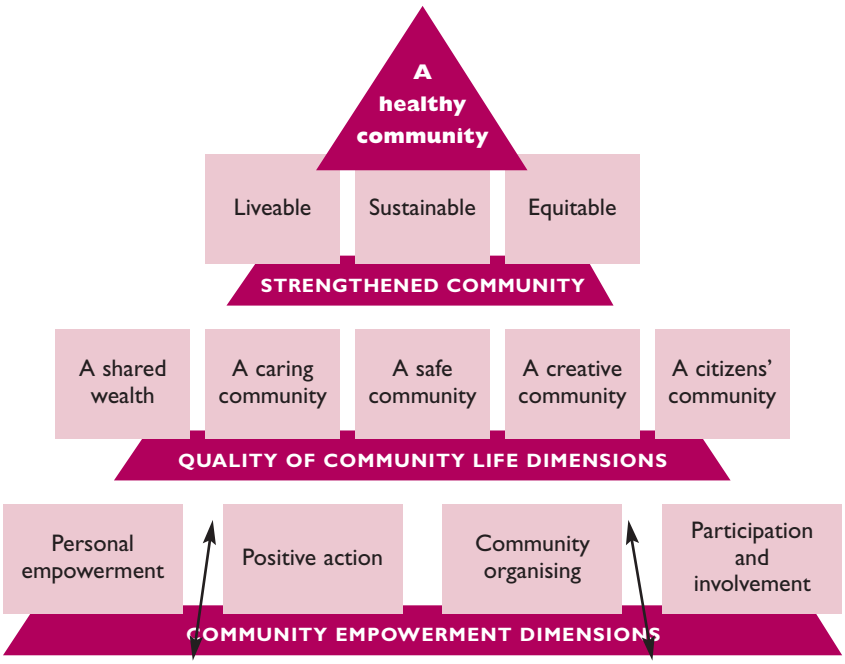
Before these issues are discussed in detail, by way of a backcloth we explore briefly what community development (CD) workers do, the dimensions of community development, qualities and approach of CDWs to the work, and professional boundaries.

What community development workers do

The 'six progressive elements' of CD outlined on pages 5 and 6 indicate the main areas of activity for community development workers (CDWs). However, they do not give a sense of the multi-dimensional nature of the work or the types of skills required.

The 'community development dimensions' that form the basis of the ABCD evaluation framework provide a helpful overview of the areas of work a CDW will commonly be engaged in and are described in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2: ABCD – Dimensions of community development



Extracted from Barr, A. and Hashagen, S. (2000) *ABCD Handbook: A framework for evaluating community development*: London, CDF

The bottom row of the ABCD pyramid describes the area of activity that a CDW will be involved with in a community:

Personal empowerment

CD workers work with individuals, they encourage them to be involved in the community and help them develop self-confidence, knowledge and skills.

Positive action

A primary role is to support and encourage positive action within a community. Examples include accessing resources, tackling issues

(continued)

such as improving facilities for children and young people, community cohesion and improving service delivery.

Community organising

Developing and supporting community groups and organisations is a core part of CD. Community organisations provide a huge range of activities and service, such as lunch clubs for older people, after school clubs and youth groups, and many groups represent common interests and concerns such as dealing with community safety issues. Some community groups employ their own CD workers.

Participation and involvement

A key aim of CD is to support communities to access and be engaged in the political/decision-making process. Formal and informal networks such as LSPs are playing an increasingly important role. Some LSPs also employ CD staff.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Community Development, summarised in the box overleaf, define in more detail the range of activities and the standards required in CD practice. However, neither NOS nor ABCD cover working at a strategic level, for example with, or within, local authorities or other public service institutions, which is a key aspect of strategy and practice. They do not therefore encompass the whole systems approach that this study has found to be so important. It is to be hoped that this major omission will be rectified in the current review of the NOS.

The NOS define a framework of good practice in the way people work, based on the functions of their job or role, and describe the standards, knowledge and skills required to carry out specific tasks. However, the current standards have a weakness, in that they are almost exclusively about fieldwork. They have little to say about management, working within institutions and inter-agency work, which, as this study shows, constitute a large and necessary segment of CD. It is to be hoped that this will also be rectified in current review.

The UK Workforce Hub – the standard-setting body for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) – has developed sector-specific standards for a number of activities including fundraising and the management

of volunteers and working with trustees. There is also a range of more generic cross-sector NOS available covering functions such as administration, management and leadership available from the Workforce Hub. These standards are important because, for the first time, they seek to define best practice in CD work and what is reasonable to expect, depending on the experience training and role of the worker.

The Federation of Community Development Learning (FCDL) is currently developing a 'National Occupational Standards in Community Development Employers' Pack' that is intended to offer comprehensive advice and information on how the standards may be used to help in the management of CD. The pack will include advice on drawing up job descriptions, developing individual and team training plans, using the standards as an aid to supervision and advising specialist community practice staff such as community health workers.

National Occupational Standards in Community Development

The FDCL has played a key role in developing these standards. They are based on two principles.

1 Community development must be based on five fundamental values:
   - social justice
   - self-determination
   - working and learning together
   - sustainable communities
   - participation.

2 The development of best practice depends on 'reflective practice', where the worker, manager or team constantly examine their practice and actions against the values and adjust and develop their practice accordingly.

Reflective practice is defined as:

- identifying and reflecting on your own practice, knowledge and values
- reviewing your own practice, knowledge and values
- evaluating and developing your own practice
- identifying and taking action to meet your own learning and developmental needs
- reviewing and meeting your own learning and developmental needs.

The standards state that CD practice has six 'key roles':

A Developing working relationships with communities and organisations.

B Encouraging people to work and learn from each other.

C Working with people in communities to plan for effective change and to take collective action.

D Working with people in communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation.

E Developing community organisations.

F Reflecting and developing their own practice and role.

The standards have four levels that relate to the qualifications structure of the Scottish National Vocational Qualifications (SNVQ) and the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Level 1 representing 'entry level' CD work and level 4 very experienced CDWs. They reflect increased responsibility and the move from helping out with a group, through working across groups to taking a strategic approach to CD.

Fieldworkers' attitudes

An effective CD practitioner is someone who can function effectively in all four dimensions of the ABCD framework. However, underpinning these skills and approaches is the ability of the worker to communicate and establish strong and effective working relationships with a wide range of people:

> 'The success of their [the community practitioners'] work, and the efficiency of their transactions with individuals, groups and organisations depends greatly on their personality, energy, stamina and skills. Their capacity to be effective is significantly mediated through the power of their personality. Such power is contingent, in turn on the development of trust, confidence and affinity between the community practitioner and the network of people and agencies with whom they are working.' [16]

CD work attracts people who are deeply motivated by CD values, have considerable self-drive, are happy to work on their own and enjoy a challenge. This presents its own management challenge:

> 'To be a good CD worker you have to be a bit stroppy. After all, not taking no for an answer is a pretty essential prerequisite of being good at the job. They also tend not to be that good at gelling as a team member – after all, they have to like working on their own a lot. But it does mean you need to have a particular approach to managing them. They need a fair bit of freedom and professional power in their jobs. This can make it hard to manage them.'

Professional boundaries

The nature of the work and the personality of the worker may mean that there are occasions when CD workers may find it difficult to maintain professional boundaries. Boundary issues may include over-identification with communities:

> 'My alarm bells ring when CD workers start saying things like "my community" and "my groups". In my view the worker is in danger

16 Sarah Banks, Hugh Butcher, Paul Henderson and Jim Robertson (2003) *Managing Community Practice, Principles, and Policies and Programmes*: Bristol, Policy Press, p. 66

of over identifying with the community they work in. It's also dishonest, the community is not "theirs"; they work there by invitation (of the community). I think this thinking and behaviour actually disempowers the community as well. It shows a real lack of respect of the community or understanding of what the role of the community development work is.' [17]

Other issues include:

- treating others, such as senior managers and politicians, as the 'enemy'.
- not recognising that they represent the organisation that employs them.
- over-identification with one part of the community (a particular ethnic group, age group or gender).
- not recognising their own power, influence or role ('Bad community workers are the ones who refuse to recognise their own power within the communities in which they work.')
- acting as if they are a spokesperson for the community, and failing to maintain a distinct boundary between their professional and personal life:

  'I was pretty new to management; there was a worker who believed that the community should be able to contact her at any time. So she gave out her home and private mobile number as a matter of course. So she was phoned up all the time, day and night, at weekends and on her holiday. Not surprisingly it damaged her relationship with her family and she became extremely stressed and ill. I think we both learned a hard lesson.'
- discussing their personal issues and problems with community members.
- being unable to say 'no'.
- accumulating large amounts of time off in lieu (TOIL).

17 This example is quoted from an earlier set of interviews undertaken in 2005 on behalf of Community Development Foundation

Issues in managing community development staff

During the interviews managers were asked what they thought was the hardest thing about managing CD. Several mentioned managing staff:

> 'Managing community development workers is a bit like herding cats; they all want to go their own way and certainly don't want to be herded!'

Thus the nature of the work and the nature of the people who are attracted to the work means that, at times, CDWs are not necessarily the easiest people to manage:

> 'CD workers can be a bolshy lot, but then I'm from a CD background and am bolshy too. I like being challenged, people coming up with ideas we can work out together. With the right systems and by making sure we learn and problem-solve together, this bolshiness becomes a positive.'

However, another manager said:

> 'It's easy to manage a CD team, as the people are very motivated, and have a wide range of skills; they are very organised and very creative. They are people who will get on with things.'

To summarise, the management of CD staff presents a number of issues, because:

- of their working environment
- they usually work on their own
- they frequently work long and unsocial hours
- they must deal with competing demands
- they may have to work with communities where there is a lot of tension
- they have a heavy and sometimes complex workload.

To be effective, CD staff must:

- have a wide range of skills and flexibility of approach
- be able to work with multi-layered tasks

- be good networkers
- have strong communication skills
- be good at project management and development
- be able to use their own judgement
- maintain and develop professional practice and impact
- be effective at maintaining professional boundaries
- be able to work independently.

A manager summed up the challenge:

> 'You need to start at the beginning. Why are we here, what do we want to achieve and how would we achieve it? The vision thing, if you like. But, on its own, this is not enough, you also need to do the same in terms of the work, that is how people should do things, what we think we mean by professional standards and practice. The occupational standards have helped quite a lot in this. It has provided a useful platform for discussion and measurement.'

For these managers, the starting point is the development, support and protection of team members through the development of a strong, collective understanding of what the team understands by professional standards and practice. The challenge for managers is to develop a model that will achieve this.

Performance management

The performance management model (overleaf) dominates public service management and is becoming increasingly popular in the VCS. Most managers in this project use this model.

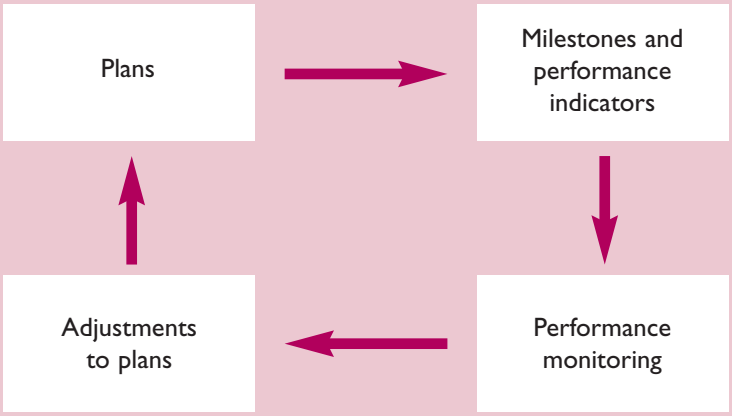
Performance management provides a useful framework for planning, reviewing and evaluating progress. It also forms the basis for supervising and supporting team members. The challenge is to develop plans that are appropriate to CD processes and values and to devise benchmarks and indicators that measure progress that relates to CD outcomes:

> 'It's important to have an annual service plan that in turn informs team plans and individual CDW work objectives. We quarterly

Performance management model

Performance management is based on the development of work programmes with measurable results. It starts with strategic planning and the end point is a better knowledge of how effectiveness can be improved. The idea behind performance management is that it helps people at each level to understand how they are doing and how they should subsequently adjust their plans within the wider organisation.

The performance management cycle



Advocates maintain the model holds people accountable for their work in a more structured and systematic way.

In larger organisations the model tends to have a pyramidal structure of plans, with the corporate strategic plan at the peak, then divisional or departmental plans, through to team or unit plans and finally individual work plans. In theory the work of every element in the structure is geared towards achieving the overall targets outlined in the strategic plan.

Teams and staff also have personal development plans. These plans include the support and learning needed to help staff to meet the work programmes targets.

(From: Mike Hudson (1999) *Managing Without Profit: the art of managing third sector organizations*: London, Directory of Social Change, p. 174)

review and re-prioritise as appropriate. In this way the manager ensures there's a fit within the local, regional and national strategies, and ensures information is readily available to showcase the work of the team. This plan also helps prevent CDWs and managers from being diverted, and supports them in saying no.'

Case study

Performance management in action

Brighton and Hove Trust for Developing Communities

'I try to make things pretty structured around the programme; because of this we can allow so much flexibility and freedom. Each worker produces an annual work programme on what they are meant to be achieving, supervision then relates to the work programmes and how people are progressing. We try to be businesslike re the policies and procedures of the organisation, maintaining paper records and so on … I get the person I am supervising to write the meetings notes. This means that they write the stuff down in a way that suits them. It also helps them remember what we discussed and agreed. We both have to agree that the notes are an accurate record at the end of the meeting. The work programmes are developed by the individual workers in partnership with the local representatives group [LRG], this is a sort of neighbourhood reference group that the practitioners report to in each of their areas. The LRGs devise the priorities and what needs to be done and they have to agree the local work programme.

'A key for me is to have a clearly defined and agreed model or set of CD stages, for example how a group forms and develops, against which progress is measured and next steps planned. We need to be very clear about the CD basics, to get the nuts and bolts right before moving on to the next step … it's important to praise people not just focus on the negatives.'

Some managers were critical of the performance management model:

> 'The emphasis on performance management tends to focus on what has not worked rather than what has and there is a disincentive for people using more innovative management approaches such as those informed by CD principles and practice.'

Managers are concerned that the hierarchical structure of large organisations means that senior management will seek to impose inappropriate priorities and measures on the team's work programme.

Others were critical of the model because of the impact it might have on the management of staff:

> 'Performance management always has at its centre a sense of failure and this creates a background of anxiety. This is a challenge for people using a CD approach in their management because of the pressure to think within a performance management framework.'

Case study

An alternative to performance management

Stockport and Investors in Excellence

'We were inspected in 2002; we came out with a good rating, but decided to go for Investors in Excellence anyway. We worked closely with Susan Hall from Investors in Excellence. The core of the programme is to measure your work and management against five "enablers" and five "results".

'The five enablers are:

- Leadership
- People
- Process
- Partnerships and resources
- Policy and strategy.

'The five results are:

- People
- Customers/communities
- Society
- Key performance results
- Analysis – being honest with yourself.

'The self-analysis is done at team meetings, via talking. It's about how people feel about the questions. The system constantly challenges you to be as good as you can be. But what's really important is the "training" bit of the work, what people do and how that small bit contributes to the bigger bits.

'Investors in Excellence has helped me define what the highest standards in managing CD are. This does not mean that we are not constantly faced with challenges and dilemmas, for example the role of the CD team in working with communities over stock transfer. But one of the ways of doing this is by having a really good, open, community consultation process where the community list their top ten needs. We jointly develop this with the CD workers, the people running our community buildings, the PCT [primary care trust] and the CVS [council for voluntary service].'

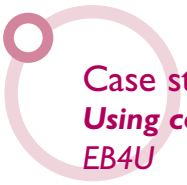
Despite these concerns, in many cases managers have been able to adapt performance management to meet their needs, although they continue to struggle with the development of appropriate indicators.

'It's important not to get too fixated on these targets as residents all too frequently change their view on what needs to be done as they begin to really think about the problems and issues, and start to understand the possible options. So it may be useful to plan for the measurement of possible "tangential outputs and outcomes"; to develop an audit trail of the quality of the process as opposed to the predicted outcomes. This is, of course a real challenge because unless you really know what is wanted from the start how can you

measure how effective you have been? I guess one way is to plan around all possible options or another is to develop "process targets" that measure the development of the group in terms of skills, confidence, independence and sustainability. However I don't think process targets should replace more conventional targets, but be integrated with them.'

As we have seen, by seeking to involve community members and community groups in the planning and review process of the team and individual work programmes, several teams have begun to turn the planning and reviewing process on its head.

Others have developed a 'contract' system: the worker and the groups or individuals they are working with develop an agreement that stipulates the work to be done with the group and success measures. The contract is reviewed on a regular basis and changed if necessary. It also forms the basis of discussion during supervision.



Case study

Using contracts

EB4U

'We developed a series of monitoring and checklists that we use with groups. We found it a good tool in terms of helping define the end product, but it was quite a formal process. It did help in terms of project development and targets, where groups are, how they are functioning, the issues they face, funding and links with infrastructural support and networks. We used them to inform reports and as a way of informing our monitoring and to reassure people that we had a strategic plan. We did the work with groups so we shared ownership. The agreements were formalised into a kind of contract. Some staff and group members had some difficulties with the process as they felt it was bureaucratic, but in the end they came round as it informed them about their work and achievement. They said that they had not realised what they did and what they were achieving.

> 'The use of the contracts … informed the monthly work plans that we discussed in supervision. It helped people focus on what they were doing. It became quite a central feature of supervision in the end.'

As we have seen with the Stockport case study (page 42) several managers use the ABCD evaluation model, some in tandem with the NOS:

> 'We also use ABCD but we have found that you sometimes need to do some preliminary capacity building with the group prior to introducing it. It's been a good tool for workers to see how progress is being made, it's better than a tasks list that you tick off, a much more open way of doing things.'

Other have had a less positive experience:

> 'We do use the National Occupational Standards, they form a core set of our values. We did have a go at ABCD initially but it's very complex, it was not a good experience really.'

Inevitably, particularly within large and complex structures such as local authorities, there will be a tendency to agree priorities and impose targets and measures that are inappropriate for CD practice and processes. Managers have met the challenge by working hard to develop indicators that match CD processes. The key has been to work with local communities and community organisations to develop the work programmes, appropriate indicators and the review process. The Brighton and Hove Trust for Developing Communities does this by working with neighbourhood local representatives groups, Stockport through using the ABCD model with local communities and CANDL and EB4U through a contract system.

These approaches have also:

- helped reinforce lines of accountability between the CD team and the local community
- helped teams develop work programmes and targets
- begun to create a credible and robust structure for gathering evidence of impact

- begun to develop robust arguments, supported by evidence of what communities say they want
- provided evidence of the efficacy and impact of CD to local authorities and LSPs
- developed stakeholder understanding of CD values and processes
- offered the opportunity to begin turning the strategic planning system on its head.

Team meetings and supervision

> 'The hardest thing about managing CD is managing people, so you need to be people-centred. It is important to know how people are developing, how they feel. This needs to be brought out into the open because if people are unhappy it will impact on everything.'

For these managers, team meetings and regular supervision or one-to-one meetings played a major role in the effective management of their teams. Of central importance was the development of a meeting and supervisory framework that encouraged team learning and reflective practice.

As we have seen from the CANDL and CONEC case studies, some managers have developed a framework where each meeting has a specific role such as sharing information, reporting on progress, celebrating success, undertaking joint problem solving, developing and reviewing work programmes, training, learning and team relationships:

> 'We organise regular practice training sessions, where we focus on the work and how it is done. These often act as a vehicle for peer support, for example someone might raise the question of how to engage people in representing their area at a citywide level. We also organise direct training at the meetings … we think it's really important to constantly help people think about their work and to develop their skills. We originally tried to incorporate the training bit as part of our ordinary team meeting, but it invariably fell off the agenda, so we now organise it as a separate thing. The issues for training might be brought forward by a worker saying "I have a problem with such and such – can we bring it up at a meeting to explore more?".'

Planning and integrating team meetings and events

'The way we organise our meetings is really important to team building. For me it is the one side of management that has a clear connection with CD practice.

'For example we have team days that examine dilemmas. Our discussions often start from personal feelings, "What is the thing most motivating people?" – "What's the real stuff, how do we learn from each other, how can we support each other?" We want to understand how we relate to others, how we see ourselves.

'We also look at the ideas behind high-performing teams, not just to examine ourselves but to analyse our work with communities – how do we help communities become stronger and more effective teams?

'We regularly hold team sessions where we undertake SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats] and PEST [political, economic, social, and technological] analysis to see where we are going, like a ship – is everyone still on board? Finding out how people are feeling is vital. What are we doing to keep the ship going? Is anyone overboard? What rocks and sharks are out there? Where's the good wind blowing from etc.?

'You need to understand all these things as a team to keep a sense of direction and shared analysis of where we are.'

In both the CANDL and CONEC cases learning has a central place within the team meetings:

'We are quite systematic and think it important to have the team look at learning from things – what have we learned from our actions? This is hard to keep going because of the pressure of work, but it is important to do, especially to turn mistakes into learning. If something goes wrong, to disentangle it we do it differently next time, although this can be difficult to maintain in a hierarchical situation like the council's.'

Some teams have developed a 'devolved leadership' approach to organising and running their team meetings. As can be seen in the box below it is an approach that closely relates to CD values and processes. In this model team meetings and supervision provide the structure through which devolved leadership takes place.

Devolved leadership

A number of managers had found a strategy of 'devolved leadership' has worked well for them and their team:

> 'A good starting point for a manager is not to feel you have to know everything and do everything and not show your doubts and uncertainties to the rest of the team, but recognise that everyone in the team has experience and expertise in all sorts of things. Then the trick really, is to organise things so you get a team that is "more than the sum of its parts".'

So devolved leadership is an admission that a manager, no matter how skilled, experienced or knowledgeable they might be, can't be an expert in everything, and is certainly not in charge of everything no matter how controlling they are. It is a style of leadership that recognises the reality of the situation.

The aim of devolved leadership is that the problems, the future direction and development of the team are seen as the joint responsibility of everyone in the team. This is not easy: both managers and team members have to do things in new ways, and everyone must be able to accept being challenged and questioned:

> 'I found a good way of starting the process was by sharing issues I might not normally share. For example I set up team meetings where team members were asked to look at issues such as the development of a job description without me being present. I also started working with team members to think about the wider context of their work, for example different team members were asked to lead discussions on different reports from CDX [Community Development

Exchange] and CDF and so on. We then spent time discussing them and the implications. We use the CD Challenge in this way, it is good for team building.'

Devolved leadership seeks to get the best from every member of the team:

'We start by recognising the expertise of individual team members, that they have expertise in different aspects of the work such as fundraising, managing community buildings, equalities, working with people with disabilities and so on. We provide extra training in these areas if they want it, they then can become a resource for the team and for the community. We also ask different individuals or groups of individuals to have lead responsibility for developing a particular policy or strategy, drafting a particular part of the work programme or developing a critique of the way we currently do things such as our work on equalities.'

For these managers the trick in running and organising successful team meetings was to think about their role and purpose, not cramming everything into a single meeting. Some teams had spent a lot of time and energy developing systematic meeting structures that encouraged devolved planning and decision-making.

Supervision

Most managers held monthly supervision meetings or one-to-ones. Managers tended to structure these meetings in a similar way, with the intention of providing support, sharing information and helping the worker develop strategies in response to issues and problems:

'We have a procedure, a standard from where we can look at the issues, where management does not set the agenda in isolation, and staff members are able to raise any issues and share in the agenda:

- look at the issues and work programme
- issues arising from the appraisals
- training and development needs

- health and safety
- team relationships.

All these elements go to form a well-structured process that allows focus during supervision. It's important to structure things thoughtfully and well otherwise there is always the danger of just having a general chat.'

But describing the content of a supervision meeting does not convey any sense of the approach managers believe is most useful. So they were asked what they understood by the phrase 'a successful supervision session'. This is a typical response:

'For me successful supervision is about someone reaching an understanding of something, people feeling more enthusiastic about something than when they went in. Also that people understand systems better, about why we place so much importance on systems and the importance of planning and reviewing work.'

Case study
Supervision

'We meet every two months and I try to use a coaching approach … coaching is about enabling people to identify their own issues and come up with their own solutions. I tend to be less structured than is advised in the management books, but that does not mean I don't have a structure. A typical session will focus on how things are going, a list of the work the individual is doing and an update on each item. The staff member has a chance to focus on what their ideas, issues and problems are; we explore the issues and the options available. There is a strong emphasis in supervision on development.

'A successful session, for me … is to get a clear understanding of the work being done and progress being made that is up to date and then any issues that have been discussed with a clear way forward. For staff, that they have not got too many tasks, a chance to update, to bring me up to speed, feel they know what they are doing and are clear about

> how to get to the right track. That they feel supported. One-to-ones are about them – you offer the person the space to talk, I don't believe it's about interrogating a person about targets, but about how they are feeling, the issues they are facing etc. … Something I'd say to someone who is new to supervision is, "don't do all the talking", but carefully ask questions. In this way you will begin to notice things. The key is for them to tell me stuff, and then I may offer some guidance. The hardest thing in supervision is getting people to open up – not everyone is as forthcoming as others and I don't think it's good to seem to be trying to prise stuff out of people. So not being too directive, listening to people, taking in what they say and clarifying points. But if someone does not like or respond to this style I'll start using pre-prepared questions.'

For these managers the most important element of supervision is an open dialogue, where the manager encourages and assists the worker to reflect on their practice. This can only take place if the worker feels he or she can be open about their concerns and that errors or mistakes will be used as an opportunity for learning and development:

> 'In our one-to-ones we go through the work of course, but also the feedback from our monthly development sessions; this feeds into our practice as well. Sometimes we explore different attitudes to change, using Belbin or Myers-Briggs[18] [psychometric testing], for example. This work helps us develop a good understanding of the way people [including the CDW] sometimes come across in different situations. I try to bring a coaching approach to the way I supervise people. It's a challenge as it's sometimes easy as a manager to drift away from practice, which is, of course, key to coaching someone in their work. Also in coaching you need an intimate knowledge of what someone is doing.'

18 Meredith Belbin developed a battery of widely used psychometric tests aimed at identifying participants' core personality traits, intellectual styles and behaviours: see www.belbin.com. Myers-Briggs is also a widely used typology of 'personality types' used as the basis for psychometric testing: see www.myersbriggs.org

Coaching

> 'Coaching is not telling people what to do: it's giving them a chance to examine what they are doing in the light of their intentions.'[19]

A coach is a person who supports people (clients) to achieve their goals, with goal setting, encouragement and questions. Coaches rarely offer advice, but try to energise the coachee to solve the issue. Typically, a coach helps clients to find their own solutions, by asking questions that give them insight into their situations. A coach holds a client accountable, so if a client agrees to achieve a goal, a coach will help motivate them to complete their plan.

However coaching is not always goal or problem focused. Coaching is often about helping people examine their values and how they go about things.

Coaching is a learning process. A coach may use inquiry, reflection, requests and discussion to help clients identify personal and/or business and/or relationship goals and develop strategies, relationships and action plans intended to achieve those goals. A coach provides a place for clients to be held accountable to themselves by monitoring the client's progress towards implementation of their action plans. Together they evolve and modify the plan to best suit the client's needs and environmental relationships.

Clients are responsible for their own achievements and success. The client takes action and the coach may assist, but never leads or does more than the client. Coaching is not counselling, therapy or consulting. These are different skill sets and approaches to change may be adjunct skills and professions.

Adapted, with assistance from Wendy Jago, from Wikipedia article http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coaching

19 James Flaherty (1999) *Coaching: Evoking excellence in others*. London, Butterworth Heinemann

Some managers also use CD tools in supervision sessions as an aid to reflection and problem-solving. These tools help the worker 'step out of the problem' and develop an oversight of the issues. They include:

- drawing a rich picture
- developing a mind map
- using participative appraisal tools
- using a whiteboard or flipchart to 'draw' the problem.

CD frequently involves the worker working unsocial hours. CDWs usually work on their own and the work can be complex and stressful. Without adequate and appropriate support this can have an impact on the worker's professional and personal life and health.

Supervision should provide a confidential space where the CDW is able to reflect on their practice, learn from successes and mistakes and discuss work and personal issues of greatest concern to them. The role of the manager is to assist the CDW to reflect, and to work out his or her own solutions to issues. Whilst some managers use a coaching or an NLP approach, most base their approach on the values and approaches they used as CD practitioners.

For all the managers the work programme forms the basis for supervision. But managers must avoid overemphasising targets. Such a negative, 'deficit approach' compromises CD practice and prevents reflective practice from taking place.

Specific issues in management

Managers are also concerned with:

- time management and work planning
- stress and relationships (community, team, personal)
- dealing with crises and conflict
- dealing with poor performance and problematic staff
- recruitment
- management committees

- working with national CD organisations
- management training, support and development.

Time management and work planning

Time and workload management can be a challenge.

> 'Some of my CDWs seem to have a complete inability to say no to anyone, they feel that they must always respond positively to requests, and then find themselves overwhelmed with work and commitments, so it's really important, for the sake of the worker, to keep tabs on what they are doing and what they are promising.'

There are of course many other pressures. For example, as we have seen, some politicians pressure CDWs and teams to work on a particular pet project or issue. There is the perennial problem of public and voluntary sector organisations' inadequate resources to meet a huge demand. Managers have a legal responsibility regarding protecting the health and welfare of their staff, which can be affected by an over-demanding workload. Some managers have found that the development of a detailed work programme can form a powerful basis for managing workloads and protecting staff from unreasonable demands:

> 'The CDW's own work programme can really help protect the person from being overloaded either because they are tempted to take too much on or because other agencies or politicians want them to get involved in one of their pet projects. There has to be a very good reason why something in the programme should be dropped in order to add something new. The worker or the agency or whoever has to have the arguments.'

Stress and relationships

> 'We need to understand the need for social and management support for CD workers. This is key because CD workers work in isolation and work unusual hours.'

Again, managers say a well thought through work programme, coupled with the development of effective team meetings and good quality supervision is key to reducing the stress of the work. Managers also emphasise

the importance of establishing clear ground rules and protocols to help protect the CDW, for example by not allowing them to accumulate more than two days' TOIL per month, or taking on too much work. Staff should also be able to access confidential counselling support.

Dealing with crises and conflict

Conflict and crises in communities takes different forms; neighbours fall out or tensions and conflicts develop between different sections of the community. There are times when a CDW or team may be involved in a major crisis such as flooding, or in community safety issues such as terrorism. The following case study shows that, in these circumstances, it is important to ensure there are well thought through mechanisms providing direction and support for staff.

Case study
Action following terrorist bombings

'After the bombings I immediately pulled together a team of people in the area. We did an intensive briefing every 24 hours and met every three days to review how things were going. We developed a strong relationship with the police, acting as a bit of a bridge between them and the community. It was important that all of us understood what each other were doing, particularly what the CD workers were doing.

'There is a very high concentration of mosques in the area with a strong Wahhabi presence, a very traditional and conservative religious community. As well as two of the London tube bombers coming from the area, the school involved in the sacking of the veiled teacher is a local school. There are also 100 per cent white areas with very high deprivation within the Muslim areas, and there has been conflict between South Asian and Kurdish men.

'As soon as anything like this happens, a meeting is organised, then the workers meet key people in the community, for example a women's group will meet and feed into the media positive images, such as Asian women who are football coaches.

'We have a very mixed team, including Muslim CDWs, but we are aware that some in the community may see the CDWs as somehow being spies. We are very honest about the CDW's role, we make sure the CDW is valued and trusted in the area and make sure they are there and seen all the time. But we are clear with the community that criminal activities will be reported.

'We work with locally elected members, many of whom are Asian, for example one of our innovations was to base one of our CDWs in an elected member's house during a time of tension. We believe it is important to us to keep members informed and that we have regular discussions with them. We also make sure, when political issues arise, that they bat stuff straight up to us. But this can cause problems as some people in the white communities may think we only work with Asians … When there are tensions we make sure that local people are invited to the important meetings.

'We do a lot of work with the community and police, so the police are now much more sensitive to community needs and issues in the area. For example, through CDW support we were able to get the police to change their cordons during a terrorist raid. This was on a Friday and the cordons were forcing people to walk a long way to the mosque. We were able to get the police to talk to local people and agree a scheme so people could get to the mosques more easily. This is a key role for us, the CDWs feeding into the police about these and similar issues all the time.

'Senior officers also come to talk to us at times of tension, so we have a constant review of how the area is policed so, at the last counter-terrorism action, local people said they felt better about the police response and the way they did things.'

Supporting the CDWs

'Of course we ought to be better in how we support our CDWs. We have a 24-hour contact system so a manager can be contacted at any time, and we also have a strict limit on TOIL and do not allow anyone to accumulate more than two days a month. We make sure that staff have a chance to offload with a manager, and organise peer support on how they are feeling.

> 'There is also a 24-hour phone counselling service available and face-to-face counselling if it's needed. I think we could improve things by having more specialist stress counselling, a more focused service. We could also be better at picking up on staff training at major times of tension.
>
> 'People in the teams have said they do find it very stressful but also they have found what we provide and organise is helpful, for example the way the managers are there and can provide support. In fact I can't think of a time when any staff member has had to take sick leave because of stress. I think this is because the CDWs are able to say if they are finding things stressful and painful.'

This manager strongly believes that CD has an important role to play in resolving these issues. For her the key is:

- providing extremely robust and systematic support for the CD practitioners involved or caught up in this work
- close liaison with all the agencies, community leaders and activities involved
- not getting caught up in the 'moment' and not allowing the work of the team to be deflected by such crises (dealing with the crisis but still doing the day to day work), and maintaining good CD principles and practice.

Poor performance and problematic staff

Sometimes an individual practitioner fails to do a satisfactory job and the manager must take action to address the issue. Participants have found the NOS helpful in these situations as they form a level of practice against which the worker is required to operate. They also provide a template against which evidence of improvement or otherwise can be judged.

However, dealing with and supporting problematic workers should not be seen in isolation but should be part of an overall approach that begins with the appointment and probation process and continues with work based on learning and reflective practice, good quality training and appropriate support and direction.

Dealing with problematic workers

'My approach is that it's about the whole package which needs to be well thought through and implemented, from before the person is employed ... (with) all the processes that one would expect to be in place in a learning organisation that focuses on reflective practice … The importance of going through a recruitment process that has a clear and realistic job description and person specification and that in the probationary period there are meetings which are well planned by both worker and the manager and not cancelled at the last minute. To involve the new worker in all the planning meetings, support and supervision sessions and appraisals, and opportunities to be involved in, for example, action learning sets and access to training. If it comes to a problematic situation then the whole process of examining capacity and disciplinary procedures needs to be robust and totally clear and followed precisely. Ultimately if all the processes have been gone through to establish that the worker is not doing the job as required, then transferring or sacking them is what needs to happen. It is important to be clear that community work is about aiming for consistently high standards in delivering the work and not about keeping folk in post just because they are there.'

With thanks to Yvonne Rivers, consultant and trainer

Despite good quality support and supervision there are times when stronger action must be taken:

> 'I felt out of my depth in trying to deal with someone who was causing all sorts of problems. It was beginning to be pretty clear even during the probationary period that it was not working; basically she refused to be managed. But I did not have the nerve to do something drastic and simply get rid of her. The long-term negative consequences for the community, the reputation of the team, her own reputation and mine were serious. It's a cloud that hung around for years and almost destroyed all the good stuff we had been doing. One poor CD worker can have this impact and, as I learned, it is important it is dealt with properly and promptly.'

Some managers working in larger organisations have found that their HR department's advice and guidelines sometimes run counter to what they believe should be done:

> 'Sometimes you have to face down the HR department. For example I had a worker who was patently not up to the job and was a disaster not only for himself, but the team and the community he was working with. HR said that we should not sack the person, but I felt things were so bad that I would take the consequence if there was any.'

Case study

Remedying poor performance

Sometimes, as this case study shows, an entire team may, for many reasons, require strong and decisive action to improve the quality of the work.

> 'We needed to be very tough, especially during the probationary period, and have the courage of our convictions and get rid of people who were clearly not up to the job. When I took over the CD team I found that the team had been previously badly managed for a long time. In effect workers had not been managed and supported in any way. There was no time-recording, people had been working with the same group for years with no visible sign of progress. There was a lot of work to do to change things. For example we introduced the National Occupational Standards to define our expectations about practice, we made sure everyone had work programmes and insisted on proper recording of work, we also trained the line managers in supervision skills and made sure the staff had regular one-to-ones. Whilst most people in the team welcomed the changes as they really wanted a better sense of direction and support … some resented the changes, refused to change and had to be removed from the job. It was very tough for everyone but now the service is valued and recognised.'

Recruitment

A significant concern is the difficulty of recruiting good quality staff. There is a shortage of skilled and experienced CDWs and recruitment through national advertising does not work well:

> 'Adverts in the *Guardian* cost a fortune – £3,000 to £5,000 being pretty standard. You are lucky if you get three or so interviewable people and even luckier if one is appointable – there is a huge shortage of experienced and good CDWs around.'

Some managers have tried advertising locally, in the media, community newsletters, temples and community organisations, recruiting for potential:

> 'We try to 'grow' our own CDWs; many of our team come from community groups we work with. ESF [European Social Fund] money has helped a lot in this because it means we can be more flexible in the way we recruit local people, creating a new grade for new CDWs.'

Another said:

> 'We try to employ local people and this policy has close connections with an "entry level" training programme called WICO (Working in Community Organisations). This provides good quality, practical training in CD skills.'

Other organisations, such as New Deal for Communities projects involved in this study, have developed apprenticeship schemes.

Managers are also concerned that the usual way of appointing workers does not work:

> 'The traditional interview system is not an effective way of identifying who will be good in the job, particularly their potential. People who are good at making presentations don't necessarily make good CDWs.'

As an alternative:

> 'I have found that a good way of recruiting managers and CDWs is the use of scenarios rather than presentations. For example "what do you do if you have two staff activists at loggerheads with each other … how do you deal with this?" It helps you find out what people's

attitudes are. You need to ask probing questions about CD by presenting people with dilemmas. Do people recognise that there is a dilemma?'

Some managers feel it is important to think about the balance of skills and temperaments needed within the team when recruiting. They seek to recruit both on skills and what the candidates bring to the team. Recruiting in this way raises important questions in relation to equalities, but some managers claim they have succeeded through careful attention to the job description and person specification and the use of psychometric testing and other methods.

Current government policies are making more and more demands on CDWs and teams, requiring a skilled and professional response. The recruitment of experienced CD staff is a growing problem. Some teams have successfully addressed this problem by developing their own training programmes; this option is not available to everyone, as it requires training resources and skills to develop. The lack of a formal, national CD training programme has continuing consequences for the availability of newly qualified staff.

6 Management of community development through management committees

Many of the issues, challenges and responses explored in this report are relevant to CD managers in all sectors. However, managers of voluntary and community sector (VCS) based teams have identified a number of issues of particular concern to them, in particular:

- developing clear lines of accountability between the management committee, the managers and staff
- developing and supporting the capacity of the management committee to manage.

The following case study identifies some of the main issues and some helpful approaches.

Case study

Management committee issues

'I think our management committee [MC] is pretty typical; the project is based in a large estate and the management committee is made of local people and others, such as funders, local government people and a couple of councillors. Over the years we have tried to make sure that it is clear that it is the residents who are in charge, they are the elected trustees and legally responsible for everything. So the trustees are the only people allowed to vote, something we do for every major decision. This helps reinforce the message. But of course the professionals and the politicians can still dominate – after all, their professional life is about being self-confident, sharing opinions and arguing their case.

'I support and develop the capacity of the management committee so it can manage effectively. I find that people

have a tendency to focus on the detail of things rather than talking about the bigger picture. I suppose this is where people feel most comfortable. Some MC members don't seem to understand the concept of lines of accountability. Some don't understand that they should not go directly to a team member if there is a problem. So it's really important to get members to understand about the CD processes and practice. Of course some of the LA people and councillors are just as bad, they think the rules don't apply to them and a little chat to a worker or me will get them what they want.

'Over the years we have worked hard to sort these problems out … Instead of setting up little working parties to draft proposals and policies, when we need to do something, we use PA [participative appraisal] tools. We also try to organise the management committee meetings as a policy development and joint problem-solving events.

'We also have regular away days where team members and the management committee get together. Half the time is about horizon scanning and developing and refining our long-term vision and plans and then we focus on particular issues. For example we spent half a day looking at the accountability issue using the 'multiple perspectives' exercise in Peter Senge's book.[20] The exercise involves everyone sitting around a table, you write a problem on a card as a question and put it in the centre of the table, you then hand out cards with a job title or role on them, for example CD worker, manager, MC chair, trustee, funders, councillor, head of council's CD Unit, politician and so on, and that person has to write about the problem and possible solutions from the perspective of the person on the card. We use this exercise a lot – it helps people understand issues from different perspectives. The results of this exercise form the basis for our protocols.'

20 Peter M. Senge (2000) *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: The art and practice of the learning organisation*: London, Random House

A number of managers said they had found the NCVO publication *The Good Governance Action Plan for Voluntary Organisations* helpful.[21] The booklet contains a series of detailed questionnaires for management committee members, on issues such as trustee recruitment, decision-making, external relations, codes of practice and lines of accountability. The answers to the questions identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and give guidance to develop ideas on what needs to be done.

Working with national CD organisations

Throughout the development of this report participants touched on the role of the main national organisations directly concerned with CD:

- Community Development Exchange (CDX)
- Community Development Foundation (CDF)
- Federation of Community Development Learning (FCDL).

They felt the organisations do a valuable job, in particular the work of the Federation in developing the National Occupational Standards (NOS), and CDF for developing the ABCD Evaluation Framework. One manager said:

> 'A good way of beginning to share issues and so help team members think about the wider context of their work is to use reports from CDX and CDF etc. and spend a couple of hours discussing them and the implications.'

However some managers had a number of criticisms. One said:

> 'The nationals should be promoting CD as a profession. They [the national organisations] complain that all sorts of people are getting up and claiming they are doing CD, but they seem nervous about staking a claim that we are a profession. If we did that we would have more control and could begin to argue from a position of strength about our role, what CD practice is about and so on. We need to follow the play workers for example. Play work is now taken

21 Sandy Adirondack (2000) *The Good Governance Action Plan for Voluntary Organisations*: London, NCVO p. 273

more seriously because people involved in the work demanded to be properly recognised as a profession.'

Another said:

'I know the nationals have a tough job, they are underfunded and overworked. But I worry about the air of negativity that seems sometimes to surround them. Maybe that's just me. They can be a bit reactive and defensive though so it's good to see them developing CD Challenge. We desperately need to do some serious thinking about the role of the nationals, the issue of CD as a profession and our role in the wider scheme of things. New thinking is needed and it would be great if we could find a way of bringing the main stakeholders together – the nationals, key people from the Community Empowerment Division in the DCLG [Department of Communities and Local Government], a minister or two and some practitioners and managers, and use a whole systems approach to get people to share and really think about what the issues are and what needs to be done.'

Finally, the managers felt the national CD organisations should take a lead in developing more services, support and information for people involved in managing CD, including:

- making sure that commitments concerned with the management of CD are taken forward
- organising a management conference – to launch this report and discuss how things might be taken forward
- establishing an electronic network or forum where managers can share information, debate issues and organise events
- developing a national framework for the training of new CD managers.
- organising regular conferences and seminars on managing CD
- developing pilot training exploring how CD values and processes can be better integrated into the management of CD teams
- undertaking and evaluating evaluation models – with case studies to show how they perform – and training and advice on their development and implementation.

They also said the national organisations need to accept that CD is a profession in its own right and take a lead on professionalising CD.

Managers' training, support and development

Participants also came up with a number of suggestions and recommendations relating to their needs:

Training and support

- Developing an experimental course where the most progressive ideas relating to generic management are examined to see how they might help in the management of CD.
- Exploring the practical issues involved in the management of equality and diversity work.

Meetings

- Creating the opportunity for managers to meet and bring teams together to explore what they are doing well and what they are not doing so well and compare notes and approaches to address challenges at a local level.
- Setting up regional meetings of workers and managers to compare and contrast experiences and approaches.
- Developing opportunities for CD managers to get informal and peer support, networking, mentoring and shadowing.
- Undertaking research into the training needs of CD managers and creating a strategy to develop:
  - day courses
  - a website-based service to provide educational materials and share evaluation results.

Other issues

- It would be useful to compare person specifications for community workers across the country to pull out the particular requirements of a CDW and a CD manager.

- Undertake an audit of interview questions and scenarios as a way of identifying the key skills people are looking for, and sharing this so as to inform national common practice. This would help define an agreed professional sense of what quality work means.

7 Conclusions

The managers involved in this project face some major challenges in relation to the impact of policies and political and organisational change and funding. A key challenge is maintaining effective working relationships with powerful stakeholders. For these managers a way to ensure the future of CD was by developing credible evaluation and impact assessment measures that could be used to improve and develop practice and inform senior stakeholders of the effectiveness of CD as an approach and practice.

Whilst the managers were concerned about the possible impact of policy, political and organisational change and funding, they generally felt optimistic about the future of CD in their area. Much of this optimism was due to the hard work and positive actions that they and their teams had taken to meet these challenges.

Impact of community engagement

Despite concerns, the community engagement agenda, for these managers, has had a generally positive impact. As a result of community engagement policies the managers have been able to:

- argue that CD has an important strategic role
- access extra funding
- develop closer relationships with senior managers and politicians sympathetic to CD in their own and other organisations.

Community development fit

There are a number of issues related to how CD fits within local government and partnership structures. They include:

- how a CD team is located in a wider organisation
- the organisational understanding of the role of the team

- the form and quality of the relationships between the managers, CD workers and key stakeholders
- stakeholders' understanding of CD's role in the context of national and local policies and strategies.

Some teams have benefited from being moved to a central position in their organisation. They feel their work is more valued and better understood. This has helped improve their morale and the quality of the work. These teams are also able to play an enhanced role in developing and implementing policies and strategies. However, despite these strides, they still have constantly to explain and persuade colleagues and stakeholders of the importance and role of CD.

Of equal importance for many is the quality of relationships between stakeholders and CD teams. Managers continue to be concerned about the sometimes fraught relationship with politicians and the possible consequent long-term damage. Politicians' attitudes to CD have little to do with party affiliation and more with individual views, assumptions about roles, legitimacy and accountability and opinions shaped by previous history. However, the enhanced role of ward councillors proposed in the 2006 Local Government White Paper means that it is increasingly important that managers address the issue.

For many managers the most important element of 'fit' is stakeholders' understanding of the role of CD in the context of current government policies and priorities. Gaining formal recognition and a strategic role is only half the battle. CD managers must continue to promote an understanding of the role and impact of CD as widely as possible. The development of strong formal and informal relationships, backed up by high quality work and an effective communications strategy, is key.

Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) in particular exemplify the challenge as they become increasingly powerful. Whilst there is concern about their impact on CD, it appears that CD managers have largely been able to develop successful strategies to work with LSPs.

Organisational and political change

Organisational and political change is inevitable. CD is sometimes vulnerable because it:

- is not a statutory service
- is not always understood or supported by politicians and senior managers
- has a legacy of poor practice and relationships in some areas.

Some CD teams in this project therefore face an uncertain future although others have benefited from recent political changes. Local political support is not necessarily related to party policy. CD often suffers most when there is no overall political control in a local authority. In such cases CD can become a political football, there is a lack of central direction and purpose and constant uncertainty.

Acquiring and communicating evidence of effectiveness and impact

Managers believe that evaluation and the measurement of impact is important for three reasons:

- to counter externally imposed measures that do not relate to CD outcomes
- to use the information gained to promote an understanding of, and confidence in, CD
- to use in planning work programmes, measuring progress and improving practice.

Budgets and finance

Managers are concerned about long-term funding. Some local authority-based teams rely on short-term funding but voluntary and community sector teams face the greatest challenge as they rely on support from charitable trusts, local authorities, local strategic partnerships, the EU and other changeable sources. Despite this, even those organisations that rely wholly on short-term funding are relatively optimistic about the future. They feel that the government is beginning to recognise and support CD.

A key factor in developing an effective response to managing the external strategic environment is a well-thought through and innovative com-

munications strategy. This should not only cover the production and dissemination of written or electronic forms of information, but should also be used for informing and working with politicians, developing good working relationships with PR departments and members' support teams (where they exist) and applying for internal and external awards.

However, the most important aspect of communications is what people say to each other about the CD team. A manager might not be able to control what is said, but can control the quality of the work of the team.

Evaluation, monitoring and assessing impact

A substantial part of this section of chapter 4 was devoted to examining three case studies describing how managers developed their own evaluation and feedback systems. Although the systems were different, they had some key factors in common. Most importantly they all ensured that evaluation was integrated into every aspect of the team's work and that the communities and groups they were working with had been involved in setting targets and agreeing success and change indicators. The information gained by these teams had a credibility and robustness that formed a powerful basis for communicating with stakeholders and developing counter-arguments to inappropriate targets and outcome measures.

The context for evaluation and assessment of impact will be affected by the introduction of the new Local Government Performance Framework, including indicators on empowerment, cohesion, volunteering and other factors relevant to CD. Managers will need to take account of these and could benefit from relating them to their own methods of evaluation.

8 A framework for managing community development to the highest standards

The main purpose of this report has been to begin to define 'managing community development to the highest standards'. Another aim has been to provide practical advice, information, ideas and examples that can be used to help improve management practice. The people involved in this project have provided a wealth of ideas, insights and experiences about the main issues and challenges they face in the management of community development (CD) and what they have found works.

This report lays the foundations for taking forward the six actions recommended in *The Community Development Challenge*:

- Models for practice should cover six fundamental components of CD and make use of the National Occupational Standards (NOS).
- A management guide to CD should be developed, taking account of the varied contexts in which CD workers (CDWs) are employed, including situations where there is little CD management expertise.
- Management training modules should be developed for CD team leaders within local authorities, housing associations, the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and other agencies and projects.
- Norms should be established for CD units and practitioners to collect, as a routine part of their work, evidence of input and impact using recognised criteria, distinguishing CD input and the value added by CD, and relating to the relevant indicators in performance management frameworks.
- Visioning, benchmarking and self-evaluation systems such as Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD) and Learning, Evaluation, Action and Planning (LEAP) should be widely used.
- Best practice models and case studies should be drawn together and disseminated.

Key messages

There is a strong consensus amongst participants that the management of CD should be underpinned by CD values. The approach should be people-centred, collaborative and supportive. Some managers prefer to be described as a leader rather than manager because they believe it more closely exemplifies their approach. This view is supported by the limited literature available.

The strategic and policy environment of CD and the nature and context of CD practice present a range of issues and challenges requiring a particular management response. An important message is that a systems approach to the management of CD is required. A key finding is that the conventional way of thinking of CD practice as being an activity that takes place solely in neighbourhoods or with communities of identity is too limited. CD takes place at a strategic as well as neighbourhood level. CD practitioners and managers play different roles but both are involved in CD practice and strategy. It is the manager's role to bring these two elements together so that the team has a collective responsibility for taking CD forward.

Participants identified six issues of particular concern:

- the potential impact of government policies and strategies, particularly 'community engagement'.
- the 'community development fit' within local government and local strategic partnerships.
- the impact of political and organisational change.
- working with powerful stakeholders, such as local politicians and senior managers.
- the need to acquire and communicate evidence of the effectiveness and impact of CD.
- long-term funding.

There is much concern within the CD world that government policies and priorities, particularly the community engagement agenda and the growing power of local strategic partnerships (LSPs), threaten the future of generic CD. Workers feel that some LSPs and local authorities

have a narrow interpretation of policy initiatives and that this, coupled with a crude, top-down approach, makes CD practice impossible. Clearly, further research is required to see if these fears are justified.

Despite these concerns, the impact of current trends on the managers involved in this project seems to have been positive. The community engagement agenda has helped provide CD with a renewed status in the eyes of local authorities and LSPs, and some teams have taken on an increasingly important strategic role, whilst continuing to undertake CD practice. However, it is important to remember that we have been studying an unrepresentative sample, consisting of managers of larger or better established CD teams. The findings are therefore indicative of what is possible, not what is typical.

A key factor for local authority-based teams is their ability to benefit from government legislation and LSPs to gain recognition for their role in the wider organisation. Centrally located CD teams with a clearly defined and understood role have succeeded because of their hard work in arguing the case for CD over the years. They have developed a wide range of senior partners and supporters in their own and other organisations, backed up by high quality, effective fieldwork, the accumulation of evidence of impact and careful attention to internal and external communications.

Another key finding is the importance of developing effective evaluation systems. Evaluation is important because it:

- provides the basis for reflective practice within the team
- underpins the team's communications strategy
- develops closer links between the community and service users and the team
- provides robust evidence to senior stakeholders of the value of CD.

However as the case studies on pages 37–43 show, to be effective, managers and teams need to take a systems approach and think about how to integrate the processes of agreeing the measures, acquiring the information, learning from it and sharing it with others.

Whilst external, strategic factors have a central impact on the work of CD teams and the way they function, the fieldwork environment and

the nature of the work also impact on the individual worker and the team. Managers must be aware of this if they are to provide effective support and supervision.

One factor that concerns many practitioners and managers is the debate about whether someone without practice experience and knowledge of CD can properly manage it (see page 13). Although some people feel that the environment and nature of CD work is so integral to practice and the issues faced by practitioners that someone could not manage them without this knowledge and experience, not all participants share this view. In practice, CD managers will continue to be appointed who have little or no knowledge of CD. A central argument in this report is that, whilst it might be better to have a manager with a background in CD, what is equally important is their management style. Someone with a lot of practical experience will not necessarily be a good manager, but someone with good management skills, who uses the right approach and style may manage CD effectively if they are prepared to take on board its distinctive functions and values.

The basic qualities needed to be an effective community development worker (CDW) are summed up well by Hugh Butcher:

> 'The success of [community practitioners'] work, and the efficiency of their transactions with individuals, groups and organisations depend greatly on their personality, energy, stamina and skills, and their capacity to be effective is significantly mediated through the power of their personality. Such power is contingent, in turn, on the development of trust, confidence and affinity between the community practitioner and the network of people and agencies with whom they are working.'[22]

An effective CD practitioner:

- needs to have a deep commitment to the values and aims of CD
- needs to be independent, tenacious, good at multi-tasking
- needs good communication and relationship-building skills
- must like working on their own.

22 Sarah Banks, Hugh Butcher, Paul Henderson and Jim Robertson (2003) *Managing Community Practice, Principles, and Policies and Programmes*: Bristol, Policy Press, p. 66

On occasion the nature of the work and the worker may mean there are issues relating to maintaining professional boundaries. Certainly managers say that CD staff are not always the easiest people to manage. As Butcher points out[23], they do not respond well to conventional top-down, 'command and control' approaches to management.

The performance management model (see box, page 58) so popular with many local authorities and organisations in the VCS has resulted in a more systematic and structured approach to planning, the development of milestones and indicators, performance monitoring and reviewing of teams and individual work plans. However, some organisations have an over-bureaucratic, top-down approach in applying the model, resulting in the imposition of inappropriate priorities and targets. Furthermore, whilst it is important to pay attention to targets and milestones, an overemphasis leads to a deficit and an overly negative approach to management that does not help workers reflect and learn from their practice.

Another important finding is the benefit of involving communities and community organisations in developing work programmes, identifying targets and evaluating progress and change.

The use of community/team contracts seems to have worked particularly well for some teams, as has the use of ABCD.

Team meetings and supervision are important for all the participants, and they are committed to developing training and learning within their teams, seeking to incorporate this into their team meeting structures. Those managers that have employed a systems approach in the development of their team meetings and supervisory structure seem to have had the greatest success in embedding learning into the culture of their teams. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that these teams have also put most thought into the process of evaluating and measuring the impact of their work.

A number of the organisations in this report are also working towards a more 'devolved leadership' (see box, page 66) form of management that recognises and values individual team members' expertise, encourages joint problem solving and involves the team in developing protocols, strategies and systems.

23 Sarah Banks, Hugh Butcher, Paul Henderson and Jim Robertson (2003) *Managing Community Practice, Principles, and Policies and Programmes*: Bristol, Policy Press, p. 58

For many managers supervision and one-to-ones are central to the management of individual workers. These give staff the opportunity to focus on their work and practice, they can be helped to develop strategies and think about their training and developmental needs and are able to discuss professional and sometimes personal issues. All the managers highlighted the importance of playing a collaborative and supportive role that emphasises reflection in supervision. The task of the manager is to enable the worker to develop his or her own answers to issues. Managers trained in coaching say this approach can be particularly helpful. A number also talk about the values of the NOS in providing a framework for supervision discussions, particularly in assisting in reflective practice.

As well as these general challenges, managers identified a number of specific issues, including time management, work planning and dealing with stress. However, managers believe that the development and imposition of basic ground-rules, of well thought through work programmes, good quality team meetings and peer support and effective supervision can do a lot to deal with these.

The case study on page 73 emphasises the importance of developing detailed plans and ensuring that protocols are in place in the event of a major crisis or emergency within the community, and give the strong message that such plans should be based on sound CD values and approaches.

The approach described by Yvonne Rivers (see box, page 76) provides a package of clarity of roles and work, protocols, effective team-working and supervision. A strong emphasis on collaboration, learning and skills development will help in all these circumstances but particularly in the development of best CD practice. Unfortunately a staff member will sometimes fail to provide a professional or satisfactory service. The managers found the NOS helped in working with a problematic worker or even (as in the case study on page 77) a whole team. However a manager is likely at some stage in their career to be confronted with the task of removing a worker from their post. This is never going to be easy, and it is, as one manager points out, essential to do it decisively and quickly.

Many of the issues, challenges and approaches discussed in this report apply equally to all sectors. But managers working for the VCS identified

several challenges particular to them. The case study on page 80 explores the issues and responses from the perspective of a neighbourhood based community sector project and the innovative actions taken to address the issues. Managers in the sector have also found some of the resources provided by NCVO and other organisations to be useful.

The recruitment of experienced CD staff is proving to be a challenge. Advertising in the national media is expensive and rarely seems to work. Given the shortage, managers are increasingly recruiting to potential rather than actual experience and skills. However, in such cases training and support is essential – something that may be beyond the scope of the average CD team and will require a more collective effort by a number of CD organisations operating in a particular area.

The NOS and the ABCD framework have been referred to throughout this report. They clearly have had a positive impact on CD practice and management. Many of the managers welcome the role of the national CD organisations in providing advice, information and support, but they have suggestions on what else these organisations should be doing.

One manager said:

> 'I think the nationals tend to be reactive rather than proactive, maybe the Community Development Challenge is a sign that this is changing, they certainly need to take a more active lead on some key issues.'

A number of managers, for example, felt that the national CD organisations must take the initiative and campaign to have CD recognised as a profession, as a matter of urgency.

Others feel that it is time that the national organisations organised a debate amongst all stakeholders, including the government, on a number of issues, including professionalism, the roles and relationships of the three national organisations, and the future role of CD.

An overall structure

> 'The community practitioners' employing organisation would, in a very real sense, be trying to plan and move forward in a strategic way with one arm tied behind its back if it did not involve both the communities who are its prime beneficiaries and its raison d'être, as

well as its front-line workers. Wide involvement in the process of strategic thinking and decision-making is clearly necessary.'[24]

Throughout this report reference has been made to the importance of developing teams as learning organisations and the advantages of employing a 'devolved leadership' approach in CD. The following elements form a learning organisation:

- **Organisational culture:** the development of an outwardly oriented team culture with a 'learning mindset' that emphasises the continual development of individuals and the team and where reflective practice forms a core element of the culture.
- **Organisational processes:** where planning, review, the development of policies is shared within the team. Where the processes within the team, such as meetings, encourage review and generate new ideas and learning.
- **Organisational structure:** should be fairly flat and non-hierarchical, incorporating devolved decision-making within a commitment to the achievement of agreed goals.

Defining a learning organisation

Hugh Butcher and Jim Robertson define a learning organisation as:

> 'An organisation that supports and rewards its members for undertaking continual professional development can certainly claim, in an important sense, to be a learning organisation'[25]

According to Peter Senge,[26] a learning organisation operates according to five key disciplines:

(continued overleaf)

24 Sarah Banks, Hugh Butcher, Paul Henderson and Jim Robertson (2003) *Managing Community Practice, Principles, and Policies and Programmes*: Bristol, Policy Press, p. 76

25 Ibid, p. 94

26 Peter M. Senge (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*: London, Random House, pp. 6–13

- **Systems thinking:** analysing and managing organisational dynamics in holistic and systematic terms. Seeing the interrelationships and patterns of change rather than snapshots.
- **Building shared vision:** powerful learning occurs when people are highly committed to accomplishing things that matter deeply to them in concert with their peers.
- **Team learning:** encouraging collaboration and energy flow between people and ideas; teams can be synergistic – Ideas spark off ideas.
- **Building personal mastery:** individual learning does not guarantee organisational learning but without it no organisational learning can take place. Learning organisations provide their members with continuing opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Mental models:** the influence of 'taken for granted' ways of seeing things and patterns of thought are recognised and are exposed to critical examination.

The framework

Table 4 opposite presents 17 elements comprising a framework for managing CD 'to the highest standards'. The elements have been inferred from the discussions and examples in this report. There are three columns: the first describes the element, the second provides an argument and evidence for its importance and the third provides further information or other details.

This report argues that, whilst any one of the actions described in the framework will help in the management of CD, the use of several, or all, combined with treating the team or unit as a learning organisation, will go a long way towards the goal of managing CD to the highest possible standards.

Table 4: The Framework

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
1 CD should be managed according to CD values	• Matches the views of managers and workers	*Supported in Banks et al. (2003) (see footnote 2)*
2 Systems approach required	• Because of the complex and interlocked nature of the policy, organisational and working environment within which CD must function • Need to integrate neighbourhood and community practice with strategic practice • The team is where this takes place	*System approach, the systematic development of management/team functions so that they relate to and complement each other*
3 A detailed communications strategy is a key part of any team plan	• Informs key stakeholders about what you are doing • Provides evidence of effective practice and progress • Develops a better understanding of the CD approach • Maintains relationships	*Plan must contain details of how key stakeholders' information needs will be met* • Members of the community • Community activists • Ward politicians • Senior members • Senior managers • LSP • Management committee members and officers *Plan should contain strategies relating to each medium, including written, electronic and spoken. Working with PR departments and local media* *Going for awards*

(continued overleaf)

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
4 The most effective way of promoting CD is through high quality work	• It's what you're paid to do • It's what is required by CD values • It's the most effective advert for CD. Informal conversations are the most powerful form of communications. Good quality work will be talked about	• Importance of National Occupational Standards (but see also point 15) • Reflective practice • Evaluation • Team learning
5 Good quality evaluation is the cornerstone of effective management and practice	• Underpins learning • Reflective practice • Underpins communications strategy • Enables team and worker to adjust plans (what is and isn't working) • Provides evidence of effectiveness to stakeholders • Develops closer links with the community • Underpins CD targets • Guards against imposition of inappropriate targets and milestones	• First consult relevant indicators in new Local Government Performance Framework • Development of supplementary indicators with community groups and team • Include 'tangential output' or process indicators • Ensure indicators regularly examined in team meeting and supervision
6 Good quality evaluation requires a systematic approach	• Ensures it is embedded into team practice and culture and is not just an 'add on' • Makes best use of limited time • Helps integrate team meetings with supervision, team plans and long-term aims and goals	• A 'systems' approach means looking at the way the team works and functions as a whole and in the context of its parent organisation and partners. A system where each element relates to and impacts on the other • Helps manager and team take an overview and plan accordingly

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
7 CD is a combination of what takes place in the working environment and the nature of the CD worker, plus the need to work within the strategic environment that defines the management approach required	• CD operates within the strategic as well as the community sphere • The issues and challenges emanating from community environment, the nature of practice and policy and structural issues have an equal impact on a team's ability to take CD forward • In order to begin to empower communities, strategic and structural change is required. This must come from both the top and the bottom	• The challenge for managers is ensuring that these two spheres are understood by the whole team and that everyone has a role in taking each element forward • This can be achieved by providing the necessary space, tools and structures
8 Having the right style and approach is as important as a manager having experience and knowledge of CD practice	• Whilst it is better to employ a manager with CD skills and experience it is not always possible	• Managers have a responsibility to become familiar with the values and practice of CD and the issues and challenges faced by practitioners
9 The framework provided by the performance management model can be a useful basis for the management of CD teams	• Many teams have found the structure of planning, targets, review and adaptation useful • In many cases teams have been able to adapt the model to meet their own needs • The model has provided a systematic structure that enables teams and practitioners to reflect on progress and practice	• There are models that better match CD practices and values, but performance management tends to dominate the approach used by most local authorities and by many organisations in the VCS • Managers and teams must avoid an overemphasis on meeting targets and therefore taking a 'deficit' approach to managing practitioners • It is important to ensure that the evaluation and monitoring systems used in a team reflect the CD process and that there is strong evidence

(continued overleaf)

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
10 Communities and groups must have the opportunity to play a key role in working with individual practitioners and the team in developing work programmes, establishing targets and agreeing measures of change and progress	• Teams that have done this attest to the benefits accruing from the approach: — closer links with communities — paper trail of evidence of impact — information on practice as well as impact • The process has other benefits including clarity re lines of accountability	• Team/group contracts seem to work well • On a larger scale some teams have established neighbourhood reference groups of local activists and providers that play a role in agreeing priorities, targets and work, and feed back information on progress and impact • Adaptation of the ABCD model has proved useful in helping communities and teams think about and identify targets and milestones
11 Team meetings need to be systematically planned	• Managers have found that trying to do everything in a team meeting does not work. Inevitably training and learning tends to get crowded out by information giving and administrative issues • The most effective team meetings are those that are focused on a particular purpose and designed to encourage collaboration	• Team meetings form the backbone for a more devolved approach to decision-making • They require careful planning and constant review by whole team

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
12 Supervision should be designed to encourage reflective practice	• A key role of a manager is to encourage staff to reflect and to develop their own solutions to problems and challenges • The development of high quality practice is essential. This can only come through a reflection and learning process • An important role of the manager is to encourage this to take place within the agreed work programme and actions • Reflective practice is a core feature of the National Occupation Standards (NOS)	• Supervision requires a well thought through structure • It must be regular • A coaching approach can be very useful • The coaching and reflective practice process is not a soft option; it asks tough questions requiring thought through answers. The worker is accountable for carrying out the agreed actions and reporting on progress to the manager in subsequent supervision meetings
13 It is important that teams have protocols and plans in place in case of community crises or emergencies	• This is important in order to avoid a reactive response where CD values and processes are ignored or forgotten about in the need to 'do something quickly' • Managers have a responsibility for the health and welfare of staff • Robust plans ensure that staff are supported and protected	• Through devolved leadership, the whole team can be involved in developing and reviewing clearly understood and jointly owned plans, based on the collective experience and wisdom of the team • The CD team will continue to work in an area after the crisis is over. It will have to work with the community to address the long-term legacy • Crises often require services to communicate and work together more closely than usual. They will form strong views about the quality of workers and the CD approach as they observe it first hand

(continued overleaf)

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
14 An employment package needs to be developed	• As a number of case studies show, a poor or unprofessional service can be directly related to poor management practice • Providing good quality management, support and development requires a systematic response where each element relates to the other	• The development of a learning organisation that focuses on reflective practice • Recruitment process with clear and realistic job description and person specification • Thought through probationary period with regular, planned, meetings, involving the new worker in all planning meetings, providing support through supervision, appraisals, access to training and, if available, action learning sets
15 The NOS should underpin the culture, practice and learning of the team but should be expanded or modified to include material on management, strategy and working in and with institutions	• The report consistently shows the impact of NOS in supporting and developing individual team members and turning around teams • The NOS form the basis of the supervisory relationship and learning • They provide the basis for well understood standards which staff can be required to work towards and measured against • Additional points are needed to cover management and strategic levels of CD	• The introduction of the standards must be carefully planned and the whole team must be involved in order to explore the issues, implications and limitations, and devise ways of implementing them in team learning and individual development

The elements: lessons from the managers	Why: evidence and arguments	Notes
(continued)		
16 Problematic and failing workers must be provided with the opportunity to address the issues and improve their professional practice, but managers must be prepared to take decisive and hard decisions when necessary	• Previous poor management practice may be the causal factor, which can be addressed through good quality support and management • Not taking action can cause a great deal of long-lasting harm to the worker, the team and the community	• NOS have proved invaluable in helping 'turn around' workers or teams (see point 15) • Workers must have access to appropriate support such as counselling and training • Managers must be clear about their expectations • If no improvement is made the manager must take decisive action to remove the worker, through re-deploying or dismissing them • It is important that managers follow the correct procedures as defined by the employing organisations and the law
17 Managers should consider advertising locally and recruiting staff 'to their potential'	• There is a shortage of experienced and skilled CDWs so advertising nationally is often a waste of time and money • Some managers have a policy of recruiting local people who have the potential of becoming effective CDWs but have little experience or knowledge of the profession	• The recruitment process must be carefully planned • Good quality training and support must be provided such as an apprenticeship scheme or 'entry level training' such as the WICO (Working in Community Organisations) course in Sussex

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