Guiding the Work of a Changing and Diverse Field

The Updated Community Development Principles of Good Practice

Community Development Society

Presenters

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Origins of the Principles

- CDS launched in 1969 at a University of Missouri conference and was primarily a university led association

- A Code of Ethics for Community Development was presented in spring of 1984

  - Nine items originally proposed (mostly dos and don'ts)

  - Launched a dialogue on ethics in the field

  - Led to the Principles of Good Practice the following year

    - Community developers were expected to commit to six practice guidelines

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Principles of Good Practice (1985)

(1) Promote active and representative citizen participation so that community members can meaningfully influence decisions that effect their lives.

(2) Engage community members in problem diagnosis so that those affected may adequately understand the causes of their situation.

(3) Help community leaders understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact associated with alternative solutions to the problem.

(4) Assist community members in designing and implementing a plan to solve agreed upon problems by emphasizing shared leadership and active citizen participation in that process.

(5) Disengage from any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged segments of a community.

(6) Actively work to increase leadership capacity (skills, confidence, and aspirations) in the community development process.

First Revision (1999 – 2000)

- 2-year deliberative process to review the principles and recommend revisions

- Concerns about the language

  - Is the language still relevant to the times?

  - More internationalization of the organization led Members to question whether the principles were written in a way that was relevant beyond North America

  - Debate about whether the principles should challenge community developers about the goals of their work

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Principles of Good Practice (2000)

(1) Promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives.

(2) Engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action.

(3) Incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process; and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community.

(4) Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.

(5) Be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well being of the community.

Second Revision (2020 – 2023)

- Ad hoc committee created in August 2020 to:

  o Align principles better with contemporary concerns about social, economic, and environmental justice

  o Balance professional roles with self-organized community action

  o Reduce overlaps across principles while maintaining comprehensive coverage of substantive content

  o Ensure many opportunities for Member feedback, input, and deliberation

  o Make recommendations to the CDS Board of Directors for adoption

Second Revision (2020 – 2023)

- 3-year deliberative process
  - August 2020, revision committee created
    - 6+ months of committee drafting and dialogue
    - Detailed tracking of iterative changes resulting in eight principles
  - First round of Member feedback
    - 2021 conference concurrent session
    - 2022 virtual survey
  - Second round of Member feedback
    - 2022 conference broader session
  - Third round of Member feedback
    - 2023 conference wordsmithing and feedback station

2023 Annual Business Meeting

- Ratification by the Membership
- Adoption by the Board (in quorum)

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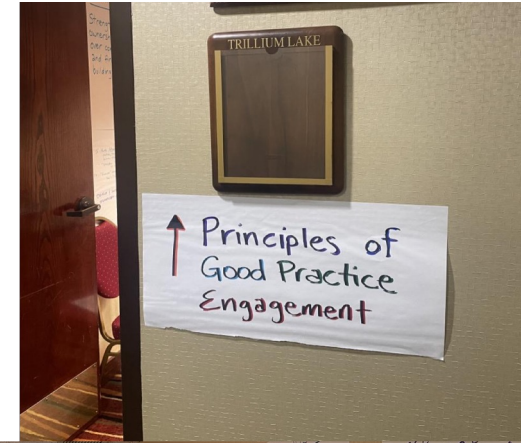
Principles of Good Practice (2023)

- **Co-Learning.** Engage in mutual learning and capacity building among professionals and community members through reflective practice, experiential knowledge, professional development, and scholarship.

- **Collaboration.** Bridge boundaries of place, sector, discipline, identity, and interest to integrate diverse perspectives and resources in shared decision-making and co-creation.

- **Community-Driven Practice.** Center those most directly impacted in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of community initiatives, policies, programs, and research that affect their lives.

- **Community Power.** Respect the ability of community members to develop and sustain a strong self-image, create shared power, and think and do for themselves.

- **Dignity within Diversity.** Practice and foster cultural humility, nonjudgmental listening, and accountability for any harm done.

- **Economic Autonomy.** Strengthen local ownership and stewardship of community assets and wealth building opportunities.

- **Social Justice.** Identify, resist, and dismantle systems of oppression experienced by both historically marginalized groups and emerging social identities.

- **Sustainability.** Practice and foster careful deliberation of the cultural, social, economic, and environmental impacts of actions and inactions over time.

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Questions/Discussion

Thank you!