The Competent Practitioner Framework

About this guide

This guide has been produced by the CLD Standards Council Scotland, the professional body for people who work and volunteer in Community Learning and Development in Scotland. Contact information is available on Page 16.

The information in this booklet is primarily aimed at current and prospective CLD practitioners, students or volunteers. It sets out the CLD values, competences and ethics that are applied in professional practice.

What is Community Learning and Development (CLD)?

Community Learning and Development is a field of professional practice that enables people and communities to identify their individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about positive change. CLD uses a range of formal and informal methods of learning and social development with individuals and groups in their communities. CLD programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. Through working in these ways, CLD extends the reach of democracy. CLD is a value-based practice bound by a code of ethics.

Values and principles (see full description of the Values on page 4)

- Self –determination

- Inclusion

- Empowerment

- Working collaboratively

- Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity

Ethics (see full description of the Code of Ethics on page 14)

Primary client	Confidentiality
Social context	Co-operation
Equity	Professional Learning
Empowerment	Self-awareness
Duty of Care	Boundaries
Transparency	Self-care

The Purpose of the Competences and framework

The Competent Practitioner Framework has been developed by the CLD Standards Council Scotland. It is not a checklist to be completed, rather it is a tool to help develop practice. It can be used to:

- build capacity for effective partnership working
- enable outcome focused practice
- link the academic and practice worlds effectively
- link professional development to learner aspirations

The Framework brings together the knowledge, skills, and organisational and personal characteristics that make up competence in CLD.

The elements of the Competent Practitioner Framework

The framework consists of 3 elements, illustrated in the diagram above:-
- Competent and critically reflective practitioner – Page 5
- Five Key Attributes – Page 6
- Seven Competences – Page 7

The Competence Practitioner Framework is used in conjunction with the Values and Code of Ethics.

Values of CLD

Fundamental to the practice of CLD across all of its settings are the values: -

Self-determination respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.

Inclusion valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice.

Empowerment increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/or collective action.

Working collaboratively maximising collaborative working relationships with the many agencies which contribute to CLD and/or which CLD contributes to, including collaborative work with participants, learners and communities.

Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.

Competent and critically reflective CLD practitioners

Competent CLD practitioners will ensure that their work supports social change and social justice and is based on the values of CLD. Their approach is collaborative, anti-discriminatory and equalities-focused and they work with diverse individuals, communities of place or interest and organisations to achieve change. They can influence or lead people, understanding when this is or is not appropriate.

Central to their practice is challenging discrimination and its consequences and working with individuals and communities to shape learning and development activities that enhance their quality of life and sphere of influence. They have good interpersonal and listening skills and their practice demonstrates that they value and respect the knowledge, experience and aspirations of those involved. They will initiate, develop and maintain relationships with local people and groups and work with people using:

- non-formal contact;
- informal support; and
- informal and formal learning and development opportunities

Competent CLD practitioners will also have self-management skills that are appropriate to the level at which they are practising. While these are not detailed in the competences, they are covered through the SCQF framework and National Occupational Standards.

CLD practitioners need to be clear about the intention of any intervention they undertake, how it will support social change and how it relates to the outcomes they want to achieve.

Critically reflective CLD practitioners

CLD practitioners are aware of their values and principles and critically reflect on their practice and experience so that they integrate their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes and use these effectively in their work. They use self-assessment, participative processes and evidence of the impact of their work to plan and manage their activities.

As a reflective practitioner you take responsibility for your own learning and seek to develop your skills, knowledge and key attributes. You are able to choose the practice role that is suitable to the situation.

Knowledge and understanding

Training, theory and practice provide the basis of acquiring new knowledge and growing understanding

CLD values and principles

The values and principles of CLD are fundamental in ensuring both the social justice outcomes of CLD and the skills needed and the processes chosen. These are:

> Self-determination
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> Inclusion
>
> Empowerment
>
> Working collaboratively
>
> Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity

Attitude and behaviour

Personal development in the form of focus, self-management, effective communication and presentation, responsibility and accountability, the ability to influence and to deal with complexity, change and diversity and self-development of practitioners in a range of relationships and partnerships

Skills and processes

Interpersonal and listening skills and the ability to negotiate with and influence people where appropriate are essential. As is the ability to initiate, develop and maintain relationships with other professionals and with local people and groups and work with people using:

- non-formal contact;
- informal support, and
- informal and formal learning and development opportunities

Reflection and action

So that you integrate your knowledge, skills, values and attitudes with your experience and use self-assessment, participative processes and evidence of the impact of your work to plan and manage your activities and identify your learning and development needs.

Competence A: Know and understand the community in which we work

Purpose: so that practitioners can work with individuals and communities to identify and plan action based on knowledge of some of the internal and external influences at work.

Context: understanding the context within which our work takes place will be based upon our knowledge of social, political and wider environmental influences on communities. Competent CLD practitioners are aware of the relevant global and local factors that impact on the community with which they work.

As a competent practitioner with an understanding of the community/ environment in which you work, you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

- A1. conduct an external community/environment assessment, considering the political, economic and social context of the community;

- A2. investigate internal views and information relating to the area within which you work;

- A3. critically analyse internal and external factors impacting on individuals and communities;

- A4. identify needs, assets and opportunities using relevant information and evidence;

- A5. involve other stakeholders in identifying and agreeing needs and local priorities;

- A6. evidence an awareness of challenges relating to barriers to participation within the local community/environment;

- A7. ascertain conflicting needs and demands.

Competence B: Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups

Purpose: so that people's ability and opportunities to work together are enhanced.

Context: CLD is built upon the interactions between people, be they community members, activists or those working with organisations offering support. These relationships provide the basis to support learning and engage people in action to support change within their communities.

As a competent practitioner able to build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups, you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

B1.   seek out and engage with individuals, groups and communities;

B2.   practise in different roles, such as facilitating, supporting, leading, advocating, that are appropriate to the work in which you are involved;

B3.   use informal dialogue in individual relationships and within groups;

B4.   use different styles and forms of communication including electronic channels

B5.   handle challenges and opportunities constructively;

B6.   understand and deal with the underlying dynamics at work within relationships and groups;

B7.   work towards the resolution of conflict;

B8.   recognise the power dynamic and action needed to equalise power relationships in decision making;

B9.   facilitate endings for individual and group relationships where appropriate.

Competence C: Provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts

Purpose: so that people can identify and achieve their individual and collective goals.

Context: CLD is based on providing learning and development opportunities that are accessible and responsive to individual and community priorities. These opportunities create personal and community benefits such as improving self-confidence and skills and enhancing employment opportunities, as well as supporting health and well-being, community regeneration and individual and community activity.

As a competent practitioner able to provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

C1. provide education and development opportunities that are developed in dialogue with individuals and communities;

C2. generate learning opportunities that will stimulate personal and community change;

C3. tackle barriers to participation;

C4. develop, design and deliver learner-centred programmes;

C5. take advantage of learning and development opportunities in everyday situations;

C6. use appropriate methods, techniques and digital technologies.

C7. support progression and transition;

C8. use appropriately targeted methods (including electronic channels) to promote learning and development opportunities.

Competence D: Facilitate and promote community empowerment

Purpose: so that people can take individual and collective action to bring about change.

Context: CLD practice is built on critical analysis of internal and external factors that influence individual and community priorities and has a distinctive role in working with people to take action to identify and influence decisions that impact on the quality of individual and community life.

As a competent practitioner able to facilitate and promote community empowerment you will be able to demonstrate that you can support individuals, groups and communities to:

D1.   analyse and understand power dynamics and decision-making processes;

D2.   use community action as a means to achieve change;

D3.   be inclusive and involve the wider community;

D4.   interact within and across communities;

D5.   participate in decision-making structures and processes;

D6.   campaign for change;

D7.   identify and manage community assets.

Competence E: Organise and manage resources

Purpose: so that individuals, communities and organisations can achieve effective management of community assets and resources, services and organisations.

Context: CLD practitioners need to understand the culture of organisations, the responsibilities of those involved and how organisation and management styles, practices and governance relate to sustainable organisations.

As a competent practitioner with an understanding of planning, organising and managing resources you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

E1.   develop and plan programmes and project activities;

E2.   manage and monitor programmes and project activities;

E3.   promote and manage a culture based on equality;

E4.   organise, deploy and monitor resources effectively;

E5.   recruit, manage and support people (staff, volunteers);

E6.   identify and access funding/resources including any physical or human resource that support the community learning and development process. This could include technical equipment and digital technologies (including hardware, online tools and apps)

E7.   understand and manage risk;

E8.   interpret and apply relevant legislation

Competence F: Develop and support collaborative working

Purpose: so that people can enhance decision making and collaborative activities that impact on the quality of life of individuals and communities.

Context: CLD practitioners need to understand, recognise and value the benefits of collaboration and build appropriate and effective alliances, networks and other forms of working together.

As a competent practitioner able to develop and support collaborative working you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

F1. develop and support collaborative working within your own organisation;

F2. initiate collaborative working with relevant organisations;

F3. participate in partnership and collaborative working;

F4. support community participation in partnership and collaborative working using appropriate styles and forms of communication including electronic channels;

F5. clarify and articulate the role of your own organisation and that of others;

F6. negotiate and agree roles in collaborative and joint work, taking a leadership role where appropriate;

F7. identify, put in place or provide appropriate training and development opportunities for collaborative working;

F8. challenge and be challenged on issues undermining effective partnership working, being aware of tensions and conflicts;

F9. manage the ending of collaborative and joint relationships.

Competence G: Evaluate and inform practice

Purpose: so that robust evidence can sustain, inform, influence and change policy and practice.

Context: Competent CLD practitioners require to build evidence-based practice based on an appreciation of the value of research and evaluation. They need a knowledge of the methods and techniques commonly used and an understanding of the current issues and challenges in evaluation, quality assurance and performance measurement in CLD.

As a competent practitioner with an ability to evaluate and inform practice you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

G1. understand the differences between research, evaluation and associated concepts;

G2. employ appropriate tools, frameworks and methodologies in the evaluation of practice;

G3. draw on evaluation findings to inform your own practice;

G4. use participative evaluative processes;

G5. promote and support community led research and evaluation;

G6. analyse policy, research and evaluation evidence;

G7. learn from other perspectives and challenge your own assumptions;

G8. interpret and use evidence related to outcomes and impact;

G9. present evidence to a range of audiences using appropriate tools and digital technologies.

Code of Ethics for Community Learning and Development (CLD)

Ethics are often described as the standards of behaviour that govern the conduct of an individual or the members of a profession. This Code has a central role in defining and communicating what CLD work is. Together with the widely-agreed values and principles and the Competence Framework, it provides the foundation for improving standards in CLD and for strengthening the identity of CLD as a profession. One of the criteria for registration as a member of the CLD Standards Council is a commitment to the Code. It sets out ethical principles and is deliberately expressed in positive terms to describe what we do.

Context

"Community learning and development (CLD) is learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods."

"We see [CLD] as empowering people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and their communities through learning."

Ref: Working and Learning Together (2004) and Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (2012)

1. Primary client

Our primary client (our 'constituent') is the individual, group or community with whom we engage.

We will ensure that the interests of the constituents we work with are at the centre of everything we do in our work. We will not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations or others, personally, politically or professionally, at the expense of our constituents.

2. Social context

Our work is not limited to facilitating change within individuals, but extends to their social context and environment. It recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people.

3. Equity

Our work promotes equality of opportunity and outcome. Our practice is equitable and inclusive.

4. Empowerment

We seek to enhance constituents' capacity for positive action by:

- enabling them to clarify and pursue their chosen priorities

  - building skills of decision-making, engagement and co-operation

  - making power relations open and clear

  - supporting constituents in holding those with power accountable

  - facilitating disengagement from the professional relationship.

Our starting point is that constituents are capable of assessing and acting on their interests.

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5. Duty of Care

We will avoid exposing our constituents to the likelihood of harm and/or detriment to their wellbeing.

6. Transparency

Engagement with the young person, adult learner or community, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. Potential conflicts of interest will be openly declared.

7. Confidentiality

We will respect confidentiality in relation to information provided by constituents. We will make constituents aware of limits to this confidentiality and, wherever possible, will consult with them before any disclosure. When we need to decide whether or not to disclose information we will use professional judgement, taking account of both the principle of maintaining confidentiality and of our duty of care. We will ensure that this judgement is professionally defensible.

8. Co-operation

We will actively seek to co-operate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our constituents.

9. Professional Learning

In order to improve our capacity to meet our obligations to constituents, we will work reflectively, identifying, using and sharing information, resources, skills, knowledge and practices with colleagues and others.

10. Self-awareness

We should be conscious of our own values and interests, and approach cultural and other difference respectfully. While the need to challenge may arise, we must try first to understand.

11. Boundaries

The CLD professional relationship is intentionally limited in order to protect the constituent, the practitioner and the purpose of our work. These limits should be clarified, established and maintained. The relationship must be based on mutual trust and must not involve abuse of the constituent / practitioner relationship.

12. Self-care

We will work to ensure CLD practice is consistent with the safety, health and wellbeing of CLD practitioners.

How can I find out more

Our i-develop service, www.i-develop-cld.org.uk , has many resources for learning more about the competences in the E-Learning Centre area. You will need to login to i-develop to access the E-Learning area.

All Registered Members and Registered Associate Members of the CLD Standards Council have an account on i-develop. Please contact us on the email below if you have lost your i-develop account login information.

If you do not have an i-develop account you can create one from the option on the front page.

For more information on the CLD Standards Council and our activities, please see our website:

www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

Or contact us at -

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