



# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL **1** Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

What is Community Development

Mary Peabody



## Learning Objectives

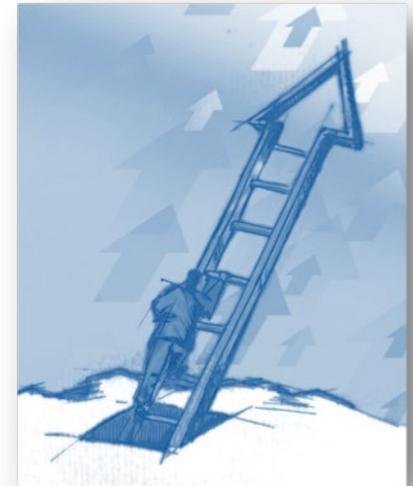
- Define community and explore the underlying assumptions that shape how people relate to community.
- Explore community types.
- Define community development and its role as a process for addressing change in community.
- Link concepts of community and community development to the we do in communities every day.





## Learning Objectives (cont.)

- Develop an understanding of the various roles we can play in communities as facilitators of change.
- Identify the principles that guide the practice of community development process and apply them to working in communities.
- Review the Community Capitals Model
- Identify the community development process.





## Understanding Community

Think about a time when you were an active member of a community.

- How did you know you were part of that community?
- What were the characteristics that made that experience a community experience for you?
- How do you relate to community in your daily life?





## Understanding Community

What is Community?

- Interactions among people for mutual support





## Understanding Community

**Community types include:**

- Communities of Interest
- Communities of Place
- Communities of Practice





## Understanding Community

The context for this training is the community as a whole, as a “unit of analysis” rather than an individual or organization.





## Understanding Community

Community includes three elements:

- Territory or place
- Social organizations or institutions that provide regular interaction among residents
- Social interaction on matters concerning a common interest



Source: Kenneth Wilkinson, 1991



## **Our Places**

**What kind of community do you identify with the most?**

- A. Small, rural community (less than 25K population)**
- B. Small city (25K – 200K)**
- C. Suburban city**
- D. Urban neighborhood**
- E. Large city (greater than 220K)**



## Understanding Community

The way we know community - **our experience with it** and **our understanding of the basic nature of community** - provides a framework for assessing communities and the processes at work in community.





## Community Change

Based on your experiences of working in communities . . .

- What are some of the changing aspects of community where you live or work?
- What do you think are the primary causes of these changes?
- How is your community addressing these changes?





## Community Development

### What is community development?

A planned and organized **process** through which **people** and **communities** learn how they can help themselves.



**Community Development is an organized process through which people work together to achieve community goals.**



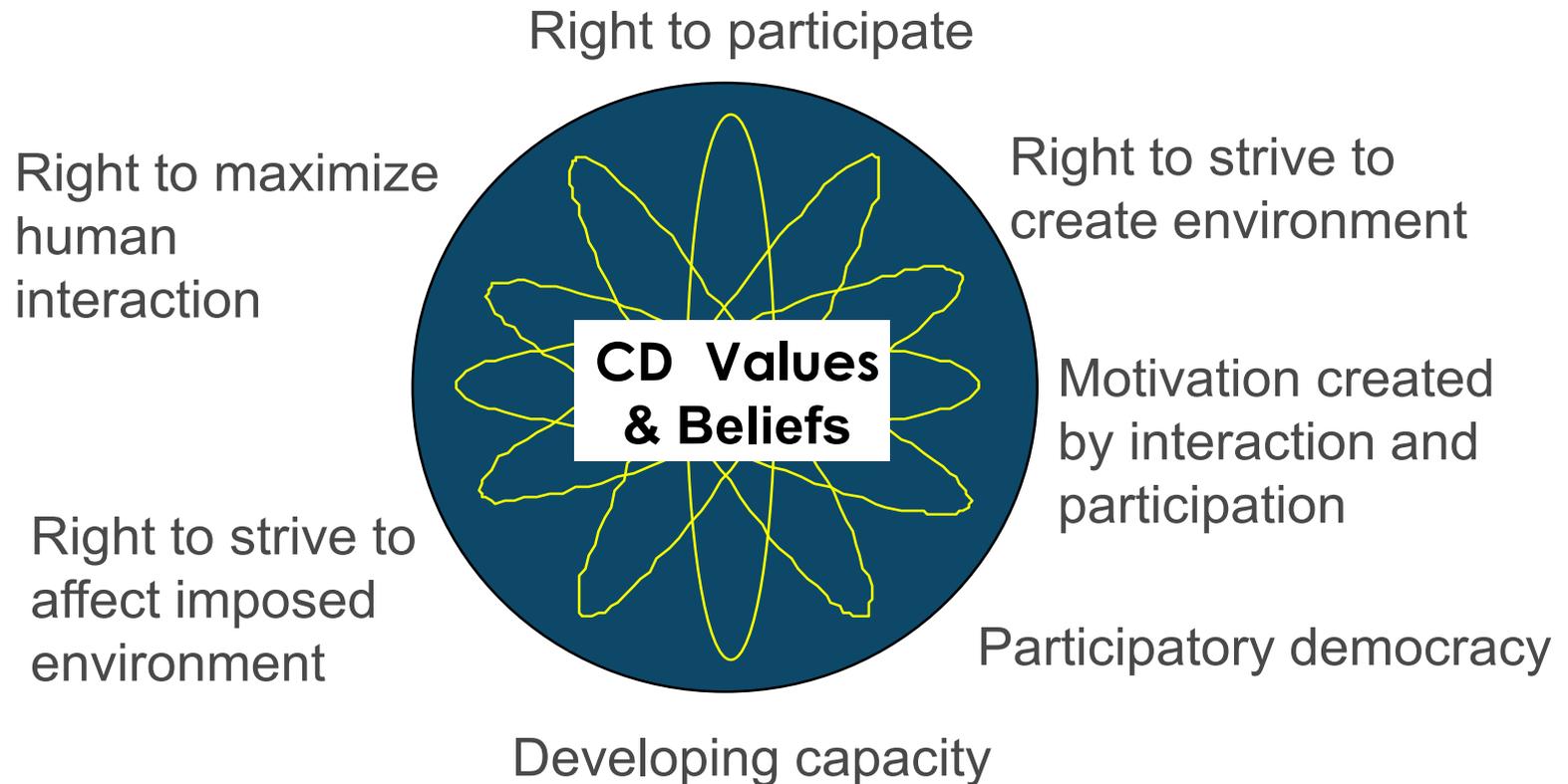
## Community Development

What are the underlying values and assumptions we make when we talk about community and community development?





## Community Development

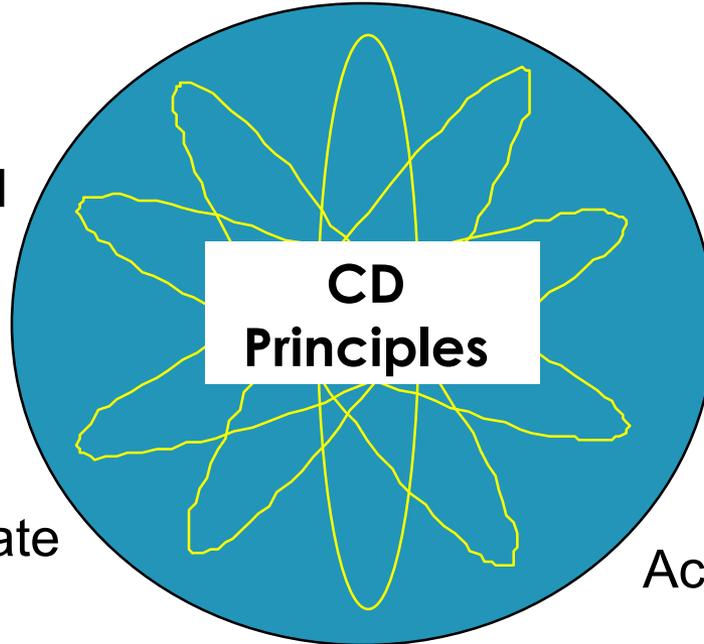




## Community Development

Free and open participation

Right to be heard



Broad representation and increased breadth of perspective

Right to participate

Accurate information

Understanding is basis for change



## Principles of Good Practice

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





## Principles of Good Practice

- **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.
- **Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity** of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.
- **Be open to using the full range of action strategies** to work toward the long term sustainability and well-being of the community.



## Community Interaction

**Community**

**Society**

*Continuum of Community Interaction*



Strong  
Sense of  
Community



Strong  
Sense of the  
Primacy of the  
Individual



## Community Interaction

### How do we know Community?

- The community is something external to us and to be acted on, predicted and managed.
- We are the community and create it through our ongoing processes of interaction.
- Do you consider yourself an insider or outsider in the communities in which you work?

*Source: Domahidy, M. (2003). Using theory to frame community and practice. Journal of the Community Development Society, 34(1), 75-84.*



## **POLL QUESTION!**

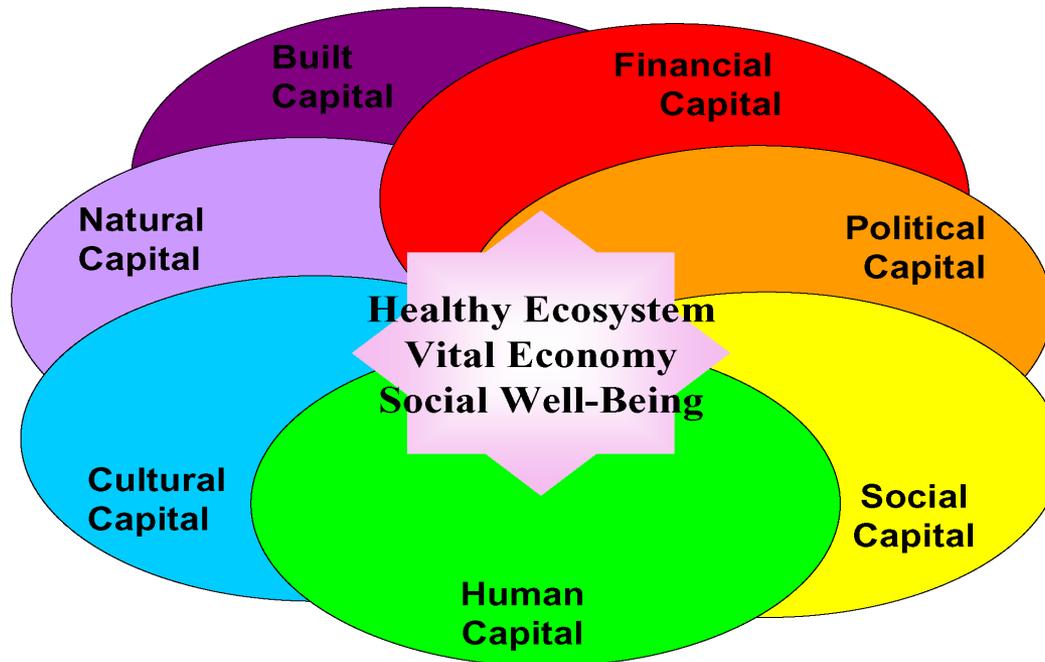
**Think of a project you have worked on in a community. How do you think the community perceived you in that context?**

- A. As an insider, someone who had a stake in what we were doing.**
- B. As a partial insider, someone who lived in the community but was representing an organization.**
- C. As an outsider, someone who doesn't live in the community and only participates in the community because of my position or job.**
- D. As a partial outsider, someone who doesn't live in the community but because of the where I work I am widely viewed as part of the community.**
- E. As a partial outsider, someone who lived in the community but was representing an organization.**



## Community Interaction

### Community Capitals Model



Source: Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan Flora.  
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development,  
Iowa State University, 2004.



## Community Interaction



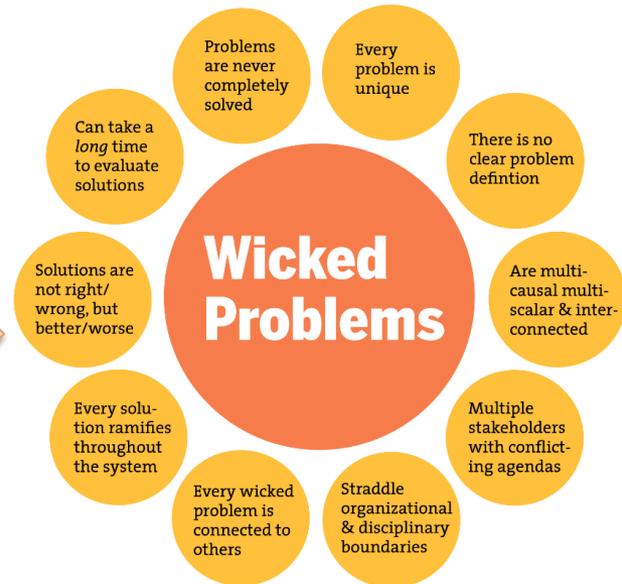


## Reflection Questions

- What communities am I a part of in my everyday life?
- How do I relate to community? Am I an insider or an outsider?
- How do I define community development in my work?
- What are the principles that guide my interactions with people in my community work?



## Finding the Sweet Spot



Based upon Rittel and Webber (1973)

## Defining the problem



## Ground Rules

For our time together we agree to the following: