



Quality Indicators Related to Personal Development in the a Process of Community Learning and Community Development

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Keywords :

Introduction

Globalization is a challenging times for communities and organizations engaged in community learning and development. Following the 12th Five year plan, community learning was recognized as an approach to working with communities which is practiced by many organizations and agencies. It is increasingly planned and delivered through partnership working based upon community learning strategies and plans (Frones, I, 2007). There is widespread recognition of the major contribution that community learning and development can make to social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning. Community development is exclusively based on understanding the community in-depth. Understanding the community means understanding the needs and processes of the community (Kanaskar, 2013). The indicators to be used to understand the community should be very clear, objective and applicable to respective area, conditions and situation (Kulkarni, 2013 Bossel, 1997). Self evaluation is one of the approach to learn the community for community development. The aim of this paper is to understand and evaluate the community learning and development. This process is based on a set of quality indicators to help to:

- Recognize key strengths of the community
- Identify areas where good quality needs to be maintained
- Where improvement is needed
- Identify priorities for your community learning
- Report on the quality of provision of community learning and development.

It will be of interest to both the main provider of community learning and development and a range of other agencies and voluntary organisations who work in this area. Three basic questions are at the heart of the process of evaluation (Armstrong, 2009).

- How are we doing? _ asks us to consider how we are performing in relation to the aims and objectives we have identified and suggests how self-evaluation can help us.
- How do we know? _ describes the use of quality indicators to measure how we are doing within key areas of provision and indicates reference points for evaluation.
- What are we going to do? _ describes how to report and take forward what we know about standards and quality.

The quality indicators

The set of quality indicators as discussed below provides comprehensive coverage of the key aspects of community learning and development.

How do we use quality indicators in self-evaluation?

These quality indicators can be used to evaluate at four levels

of performance as follows

- 4 *very good* – major strengths
- 3 *good* – strengths outweigh weaknesses
- 2 *fair* – some important weaknesses
- 1 *unsatisfactory* – major weaknesses

An evaluation of *very good* applies to provision characterised, overall, by strengths. An evaluation of *very good* will imply that it is fully appropriate for a provider and its partners to continue its provision without significant adjustment. An evaluation of *good* applies to provision characterised by a number of strengths. There are not weaknesses, but neither singly nor collectively, do they have a significantly adverse impact on the learning experience. An evaluation of *good* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. In most cases it is likely that the partnership's existing processes of planning for improvement will be able to encompass the necessary changes. An evaluation of *fair* applies to provision which may have a number of strengths but also important weaknesses which are sufficient either individually or collectively to diminish the learning experience in significant ways. In general, an evaluation of *fair* will imply the need for specific and planned action on the part of the authority and its partners. An evaluation of *unsatisfactory* applies when there are major weaknesses in provision, requiring urgent remedial action on the part of the provider.

Quality indicators related to Personal development

1. Engagement and support

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- reaching excluded groups and individuals
- promotion of learning opportunities
- information and guidance for learners

Level 4 Illustration

- Staff and volunteers have very productive contact with excluded groups and individuals. Particular effort is made to make contact with these groups and encourage them to participate in learning and development opportunities.
- The community is fully aware of the available learning and development opportunities. Marketing strategies adopted by staff are appropriate to the intended audience.
- Potential participants are provided with effective and high quality information. Staff provide direct guidance support and have very effective systems of referral to and from other appropriate agencies.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 4

Level 2 Illustration

- Staff and volunteers have some contact with excluded

groups and individuals but have limited success in encouraging them to participate in learning and development activities. Staff do not consistently make a particular effort to attract these groups.

- Some sections of the community are aware of the range of learning and development opportunities. Marketing strategies are not consistently effective at reaching the intended audience.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 2

2 Learning opportunities

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- range and relevance
- articulation
- design

It refers to the extent to which the range of learning activities respond to the assessed needs of the community; the relationships between learning activities; and the relevance of the content and organisation of the programme to learners.

Level 4 Illustration

- The range of learning activities responds to almost all priority needs. The diversity of opportunities on offer is very well matched to local circumstances.
- Links between learning activities provide participants with good opportunities for progression.
- The programme as a whole and all learning activities are relevant to the needs of the participants. They are well designed to match the interests and experience of participants.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 4

Level 2 Illustration

- The range of learning opportunities responds to a majority of priority needs but there are important gaps.
- There is insufficient linkage between learning opportunities for participants to progress to other learning opportunities.
- In general, elements of the programme as a whole, and a majority of learning activities, are relevant to the needs of the participants. They are not sufficiently well designed to match the interests and experience of participants.

Quality of provision equivalent to that illustrated would normally be evaluated at Level 2

3 Delivery of learning opportunities

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- staff planning and preparation
- facilitation of learning
- support for learners

It refers to the preparation made by staff prior to engaging with learners, staff inputs to the learning process, and support for learners to participate fully in learning experiences.

Level 4 Illustration

- Planning and preparation are methodical and thorough. They take full account of the characteristics of the participants, the available learning resources and the organisation of the learning situation.
- Staff inputs to learning activities facilitate learning well. They are well-judged, focused and appropriate to the learning needs and styles of the participants. Staff use a variety of methods and alter their approach to suit participants.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 4

Level 2 Illustration

- Some inputs are well judged and appropriate to the learning needs and styles of the participants. Staff use a narrow range of similar approaches with the majority of participants.
- Staff provide some support to the majority of participants. However, they may be unaware of the full range of available specialist support material or equipment and make only limited use of it.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 2

4 The learning experience

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- extent to which the learning environment stimulates and motivates learners
- negotiation of learning activities and outcomes
- responsibility for learning
- variety, challenge and creativity

It refers to the environment in which learning takes place including its fitness for purpose and the processes which contribute to successful learning outcomes.

Level 4 Illustration

- The learning environment is stimulating and challenging. Contexts reflect participants' interests, previous experiences and future development. Participants are motivated to work enthusiastically.
- Staff negotiate the content and organisational details of the learning activity with participants at the outset and through continuing dialogue.
- Staff progressively transfer responsibility for management of their learning to participants.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 4

Level 2 Illustration

- The environment offers limited stimulation and challenge. Contexts generally reflect participants' interests, previous experiences and future development, but one or more of these aspects may be neglected or over-emphasised. Participants are often distracted and lack enthusiasm.
- Staff negotiate the content and organisational details of learning activities on some occasions. They only renegotiate this in a limited way.
- Staff do not transfer responsibility for management of their learning to participants at an early enough stage. Participants have limited ownership of the content and organisation of the learning experience.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 2

5 Assessment as part of learning

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- assessment methods
- arrangements for recording
- use of assessment information

It refers to the methods of assessment, and recording arrangements, which demonstrate success in achieving learning outcomes. It refers to how staff use assessment information to promote achievement, and progression onto further learning.

Level 2 Illustration

- A limited range of assessment procedures is employed. Some of these are inappropriate for assessing progress towards participants' goals.
- Assessment information is recorded but procedures are inadequate in some important respects or unhelpful. A portable record of achievement is awarded to participants

in some learning activities but not systematically.

- Participants occasionally discuss their progress with staff but feedback is irregular. Such feedback as is provided takes insufficient account of the need to acknowledge achievement or to identify next steps in learning. The assessment process is not used fully to encourage participants to reflect on their learning and to think about their next steps.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 2

6 Participant achievement

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- achievement of specific learning outcomes
- achievement of core and life skills
- application of learning in other contexts
- participants' awareness and understanding of their learning

It refers to the effectiveness of the learning process in achieving participants' learning outcomes, including personal development and core skills.

Level 4 Illustration

- Almost all participants achieve their intended learning outcomes.
- Participants demonstrate and report substantive developments in their personal and interpersonal skills, their self-confidence and self-esteem, and their core skills such as working together and problem solving.
- Participants can apply their learning in other contexts. They fully understand the potential for their learning beyond their initial learning environment.

Quality of provision broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would be evaluated at Level 4

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