



Community development

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Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 1 The process of community development
- 2 The benefits of community development

The community development process

Community development is a process whereby local people and organisations come together to do things that will improve the locality as a place to live and work.

Stages in the community development process

- All individuals and groups in the area should meet to discuss the need for development in the area and agree projects to be considered, e.g. the building of an enterprise centre.

Point to note

A community is a group of people who live and work together and who are dependent on one another.

- A development team or committee is appointed to identify and carry out the projects. Sometimes a Community Development Association is formed.
- The projects identified are researched and realistic goals are set.
- An audit is conducted of all the community's resources and assets that may be used to achieve the objectives set.
- One or two specific projects are decided on and the development team starts working to complete the tasks.
- The assistance of state and other agencies is sought, including advice, training and finance.
- Regular meetings are called to inform the general population on progress.

Top Tip!

Ensure you can outline how the community development process operates.

Benefits of community development

- **New** social and commercial enterprises are set up in the locality.
- Additional **employment** is created.
- The **skills and experience** of the local workforce are improved.
- **Local resources** are exploited to the benefit of the community.
- Increased incomes in the area will **boost the local economy** and create new business opportunities.
- The people of the community **gain confidence** in their ability to do things for themselves and for the community.
- Improvements in the locality **attract more people** to live in the area.
- The community develops a sense of identity and **pride in its own place**.

Agencies that can help community development

- Area Partnership Companies
- City and County Enterprise Boards
- LEADER Programmes

Area Partnership Companies

There are many partnership companies in urban and rural locations in Ireland. They support communities to tackle problems particular to the area. They also provide supports to unemployed people who want to start their own business. They:

- Help with preparation of **business plans**
- Assist with **finance**, providing **grants** and **loan guarantees** to business ventures
- Provide **mentors** to advise and guide new entrepreneurs
- Assist with **marketing** and also the **training of staff**.

City and County Enterprise Boards

There are 35 of these located around Ireland to assist entrepreneurs to start up new small businesses.

- Give **grants** of up to 50% of the cost of a project
- Provide **finance feasibility studies** on a product/service
- Provide **management training**
- Provide **mentors** to advise and guide the entrepreneur

LEADER Rural Development Programme

This is European Union funding for enterprise projects which are supported by local development groups:

- Local tourism development
- Craft-based enterprises
- Marketing of locally produced products
- Improvements to environment and local amenities
- Providing training to support enterprises

How businesses can help community development

- They can provide **employment** for people in the area.
- **Firms spend money** locally, which boosts the local economy.
- Firms **add to the skills base** in the community as workers are trained.

- **Spin-off industry:** If an important supply item is not readily available to a local company, a new business may be set up in the area to produce and supply that item.
- Local **entrepreneurs** reinvest in new businesses and jobs.
- The growth of business often attracts improvements in **infrastructure** that makes the area more attractive to new industries.

Top Tip!

You should be able to discuss how community development benefits business and also how business benefits community development.

Exam question

- 1 (a) Define community development. (10 marks)
- (b) Analyse how local communities and local businesses can benefit from each other's presence in an area. Use an example in each case to illustrate your answer. (2003, 20 marks)

Sample answer

(a)

Community development may be defined as the local people and organisations in an area taking the initiative to increase the level of social and economic activity within the community so that the community can thrive and be an attractive place in which to work and live.

(b)

Local communities can benefit from a business in the area in a number of ways.

Employment

The business will employ a number of staff directly and most of them will be drawn from the local community. It is important that there are good levels of employment if a community is going to prosper. For example, Boliden Tara Mines outside Navan in Co. Meath provides hundreds of jobs for people living in the community.

Infrastructure

The businesses in an area will attract the necessary infrastructure development from the government to allow the firms to trade successfully, and the local community benefits from this infrastructure. In the case of Boliden Tara Mines, they have very good roads and a rail line serving their factory. This is of great benefit to the community and helps in attracting further industry to the town.

Businesses can benefit from the local community in a number of ways.

Employees

The business needs a supply of suitably skilled workers to operate its plant and relies upon the population of the local area for its needs. Workers who live locally are more likely to be on time and to be loyal to their local employer. In Navan, there is a tradition of mining in recent years and the local workers know what is involved in the business. A firm like Boliden Tara Mines benefits greatly from the workforce in the local area.

Goodwill

The local population is very important to local business in terms of its goodwill towards the operation of the firm. It is hard to run a business without causing some discomfort to the neighbouring community, whether through traffic, noise or pollution. The business will appreciate the community making allowances for some discomfort caused by the firm and will try to minimise any problems.

Questions

Higher Level long questions

- 1 Evaluate the importance of local businesses to a community.
- 2 (i) Explain the term 'community development'.
(ii) Evaluate the services provided by County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs).
(2011, 20 marks)
- 3 Discuss how the services provided by one community development organisation in your locality help business enterprises.
(2001, 20 marks)

Key-points!

- Benefits of community development
- How businesses can help community development

Key-definition!

community development: The process of local people and organisations getting together to do things to improve life in their area.