

Gender and Development

Community Change Project Model

**What is the Community Change Methodology?**

**Community Change** is a ***transformational*** rather than an educational approach to change. It works at both the individual and community level. The **Community Change** approach proposes that positive behavior change can happen where people talk openly to each other in a safe environment.

The **Community Change** approach depends on creating opportunities for open communication within communities and at different levels of society, including people of different ages, sexes, minority groups, disabled and vulnerable groups. The focus is on mobilizing different community groups to create positive changes in the community and in society.

With **Community Change**, the participants become the leaders of a change process in which they uncover the issues that most concern them. It helps empower them to identify and carry out changes related to different aspects of their long-held values and customs.

**Community Change** has been successful because it is based on recognizing that community members have the capacity to change, to create knowledge, and sustain hope even as they face challenging or difficult situations. **Community Change** helps communities take action and identify partners and resources to overcome their problems.

Another important aspect of **Community Change** is that it reinforces each community’s capacity and possibility to generate and transfer knowledge and lessons learned to other communities. Once begun, this process of transfer repeats itself, from community to community, as well as among a growing group of people skilled in implementing and facilitating the process. In this way, **Community Change** opens the possibility of contributing to protection, education, health and other development challenges at a regional or national scale.

Facilitators can help strengthen a community’s capacities by using the tools and approaches proposed in this manual. The tools are based on values and principles of inclusion, teamwork, and partnerships. They respect and trust communities’ insights, knowledge, interest, and desire for change. The group discussions are interactive and participatory. They follow a structured process of observing, reflecting, questioning and making decisions together for change.

***Values and Principles of the Community Change Model:***

* **Believing in the communities’ capacity** to identify and carry out their own changes.
* **Being sensitive** to people’s experiences and using local resources and competencies in the change process.
* **Respecting** people’s differences, as well as showing trust and respect for each other.
* **Working** by invitation and with the informed consent of everyone involved.
* **Using community conversations as spaces** for sharing openly, co-learning, building partnerships, and generating knowledge.
* **Using facilitation skills** **and participatory approaches** to create a space for listening, inclusion, agreement, shared commitment, expression of concerns, etc.
* **Supporting team formation** at an organizational and community level.
* **Transformation** of individual values, attitudes and practices as closely linked to the transformation of collective values, attitudes and practices.
* **Respect of the rights and dignity** of those living in vulnerable conditions or in situations of exclusion or stigma.
* **Equal gender** opportunity and gender sensitivity.
* **Respect of human rights principles** of equality, non-violence and non-discrimination.

In general, the **Community Change** methodology promotes relationships of trust as well as the dignity of individuals and families. Facilitators and participants are expected to show compassion, acceptance and accountability towards each other, while avoiding stigmatization, coercion, and violence.

**C. The Six Stages of the Community Change Process**

The **Community Change** process is made up of six stages, as shown in the following circle diagram:

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