

coalition of **community**boards

Sunshine Coast

Notes made from Workshop - **Community Development methods to strengthen your Group's Membership**

9 Nov 2021 @ Beerwah Hub

The theory and practice of Community Development offers rich possibilities for people who meet together to organise and lead their community group. This workshop will explore with local groups how to bring some of the benefits of community development to your community group. Community development method offers;

- Sustainability - increased member and volunteer involvement in your organisation to help spread the workload
- A stronger sense of ownership and inclusion for members
- A clearer sense of connection and communication for community members to engage with your group/committee.
- Enable a shift in your group that prioritises relationships and valuing to help drive the collective purpose.

Guest Speakers Beckie and Debbie from Beerwah CWA

Participating organisations; Bahai Community Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast Council Grants team, Permaculture Noosa, Buderim Craft Cottage, USC Student Senate – disability and inclusion group, Noosa Council CD team, Currimundi Sports and Recreation Association, Glasshouse Mountain Neighbourhood Centre, Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre, Healthy Ageing Partnership, Nambour Community Centre, Caloundra Community Centre

With Ian, Tina and Mark (SC CoCB)

Introduction question to all participants – what do you value from your group

- Friendship x2
- Chance to give back x2
- Socialising x2
- Connection x3
- Sharing and believing in purpose x2
- Education
- Together making change x2
- Like-mindedness
- Social justice and advocacy
- Making governance sexy

Beerwah CWA Story – Beckie and Debbie

- CWA creed provides a clear purpose & values
- We have shared goals – “family”
- Good leadership – flat structure but clear structure and we make sure **we model what we do**
- Fun and co contribution are important
- Identify member’s skills through conversation and then value those skills
- Recognise change and manage by clear communication. We are also up for experimenting
- Collaborate with other groups / partnerships / meet with community. Local media and FB are part of this
- For recruitment purposes – “powerful casual conversations”
- Gradual entry
- **Relationships / Relational – vital**
- We adjust “the work” (our activities) depending on the resourcing, **we are realistic** that if there is not enough of us with time available then it’s OK opt out.
- Foundational concept is community building, multiple ways in and multiple ways out – connections
- Listening to community members and be opportunistic and open with what we hear.

Useful Community Development Principles that were harvested from the CWA talk

- Values are clear
- Fun & Enthusiasm important
- Inclusive – everyone’s valued
- Collaborate / partnership – important for our work and building connections
- Flexible and organic – purpose
- Group stability and energy – reciprocity
- Diversity – valuing input from variety of people
- **Relationships – it’s all about this**
- Opportunistic and Experimental – to seek new connections
- Reflection (appreciative enquiry), not just doing, review and consider what has happened and what did we learn.

What are the most Pressing challenges for your group?

- Membership maintenance / wellbeing
- Activating existing membership **x 5 responses – the most common by far**
- Spread too thin
 - (1 option – structure up activities to allow innovation, be sure to hold lightly)
- Consumers rather than contributors / active members
 - Group discussion about this brought up following ways to try and address by focussing on;
 - Ownership
 - Empowering
 - Recognising
 - Belonging
 - Ask for input
 - Purposeful fun

- Approach for contribution – be personal
- Being fully inclusive has ‘excluding’ side effects – balance
- Informal ways to connect
- “eat your vegetables” & have fun
- Activating the space
- Communication feedback loops
- Leading from behind

2022 – topics, based on discussion the following topic is a priority for 2022 SC CoCB sessions.

- Understanding Social Capital & Activating Your Membership