

International Opportunities for CDS: Implications of IACD's Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice

by Huston Gibson, Kansas State University & Caitlin Bletscher, Washington State University

Introduction

This write-up is a summary from our roundtable session held on Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at the Community Development Society (CDS) 50th Anniversary and 51st Annual International Conference (“Coming Home to Cultivate the Future”) in Columbia, Missouri, USA. This session was facilitated by CDS Board Member & International Association of Community Development (IACD) [<https://www.iacdglobal.org/>] Country Correspondent Huston Gibson while Caitlin Bletscher, outgoing CDS Secretary (2017-2019), recorded notes. Roundtable panelists included (in alphabetical order, by first name):

1. Brent Hales, University of Minnesota Extension, past CDS President
2. Cindy Banyai, Southwest Florida Community Foundation, outgoing CDS President (2018-2019), IACD Country Correspondent
3. Connie Loden, The New North, past CDS President, current IACD Board Member
4. Gary Goreham, North Dakota State University, past CDS Board Member, past International Committee Co-Chair
5. Jane Leonard, Growth & Justice, incoming CDS Chair (2019-2020), past CDS President
6. Jim Cavaye, University of Southern Queensland, outgoing CDS Board Member, International Committee Chair

7. Maryam Ahmadian, George Mason University, CDS Board Member, IACD Board Member
8. Paul Lachapelle, Montana State University, past IACD President, past CDS Board Member

Several additional CDS members, including past presidents and board members, were present and engaged in the roundtable discussion. Due to the nature of this collective dialogue potentially being especially pertinent to the entire membership, the session notes are being shared and distributed to CDS membership via the CDS Vanguard. No final action steps were proposed by this session, other than a forum for an open dialog around a timely topic, intended to help with potential subsequent motions and/or actions by CDS leadership and its members. Essentially, the intent behind the roundtable discussion and this corresponding summary is to stimulate interest in possible opportunities and next steps for CDS, the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice (“The Standards”), IACD, and issues around internationalization. Thus, this roundtable assembled a panel of CDS members involved in The Standards conversation with IACD, IACD leadership, CDS leadership, and CDS International Committee to openly discuss possibilities for the CDS regarding our relationship with IACD and The Standards, as well as other related topics of international significance. Knowing that others too are involved and continue to be involved in these and related conversations, as well as the fact that not all members were able to attend this open concurrent session at the CDS Annual Conference in Missouri, we now aim to extend the dialog beyond the room.

Context for the Conversation

At the World Community Development Conference (WCDC) 2018, the International Association of Community Development (IACD) launched the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice (known as “The Standards”) [<http://www.iacdglobal.org/2018/06/08/international-cd-standards-report-endorsed-by-iacd-executive-2/>]. Since which The Standards have been translated into several languages and disseminated around the world. Subsequently, at the 2018 Community Development Society (CDS) Annual Conference Business Meeting, then CDS President Cindy Banyai introduced a motion, which was passed to “support the IACD International Standards Report.” During the roundtable, Caitlin Bletscher, CDS Secretary, provided support and context around the motion, as it was documented and recorded in the CDS Annual Business Meeting minutes. As the individual who initially presented the motion at the Annual Business Meeting, Cindy Banyai, summarized the context of the aforementioned motion, stemming from CDS’s past partnership with IACD, including the promotion and distribution of IACD and the enhancement of international community development.

IACD and CDS Partnership

Paul Lachapelle, past President of IACD (2016-2019), emphasized that there has been reluctance of acceptance of both the definition of community development [<https://www.iacdglobal.org/about/brief-history/>] and the Shared Standards of Practice of International Community Development by CDS and National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP). NACDEP passed IACD’s community development definition as an organization at the 2017 joint NACDEP/CDS Annual Conference in Big Sky, Montana [<https://www.nacdep.net/what-is-community-development->]. Although

CDS Meeting Minutes show that the CDS Board of Directors (BOD) unanimously voted to adopt the same definition at their Fall 2017 BOD Retreat in Detroit, Michigan later that year, after much organizational deliberation, this definition has still not yet been voted on by CDS membership, nor is the definition formally posted to our CDS website. Paul highlighted that there are certain standards that guides the professions (i.e., social work, attorneys, healthcare); community development deserves the same conversation. Therefore, the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice were developed and published, answering the question, “What should guide us as community developers?” During the roundtable workshop, Paul Lachapelle summarized the 2015 MOU between IACD and CDS, which vocalizes to support, advocate, and make a place for one another at events (conferences or otherwise); the MOU encourages the two organizations to serve as allies to the mutual benefit of both organizations. Jane Leonard, incoming Chair of CDS, commented on her previous push for international presence when she was previously President of CDS. She emphasized the need - especially now in the United States of America - to focus on diversity, inclusion, and the better understanding of our world within the field of community development.

CDS International Committee

Gary Gorham and Jim Caveye, Co-Chairs of the CDS International Committee, summarized priorities of the committee to compliment and collaborate with IACD. The CDS International Committee is achieving this through case studies, deliberative discussions on key contemporary topics, position statements, and the adoption of an international community development definition. Jim mentioned that the International Committee would like to host joint (CDS/IACD) conversations on international community development, featuring community

development practice in many countries. Gary emphasized the grand role that the International Committee has played in connecting around the world, with various types of organizations, institutions, and countries.

After these intentional introductory background statements to provide further context of The Standards by specific panelists, the discussion moved to a more open format prompted by pre-determined deliberate questions from Huston Gibson, also allowing for emerging topics to occur; the dialogue was recorded as follows:

International Community Development Standards of Practice

- It was clarified that the motion raised at the 2018 CDS Annual Business Meeting acknowledges the value and supports the framework of The Standards across the discipline.
- A clear distinction was made during the discussion; the framework of The Standards guides people to provide better practice in community development - versus a certification of sorts. However, there is an ongoing exploratory (separate) conversation regarding possible international, baseline certification that is accepting across different boundaries that fit within The Standards.
- Expressed concern was raised about the need to support both the CDS Principles of Good Practice and the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice. Questions about what this might mean (supporting both) were raised; what are the outcomes? Members of CDS expressed their personal challenge in supporting this duality, initially, without knowing the intended outcomes. There was a vocalized

response to this concern, mentioning that The Standards provided a sense of shared values. The nuances of this sentiment were not expanded on.

- Stemming from these raised concerns, there was a distinction that IACD membership was not asked to **adopt** The Standards, but was asked to **approve** The Standards. Therefore, The Standards provide a framework (tool) for common language. Should CDS do the same?

Other key points of discussion which emerged on related topics included:

International Community Development Education

- It was felt that there should be a list of key community development educational programs (specifically higher education) around the world. IACD and CDS should collaboratively write a grant to better understand the ‘status quo’ about community development education worldwide. In this conversation, it was vocalized that some of this work is already happening in a US context.
- IACD and CDS should bring the most prominent speakers to help lead a series of discussions (summits) on international community development education. It was mentioned that the University of the Philippines has the oldest community development program in the world and those individuals need to be at the table and in this discussion.
- It was suggested that once a year, there could be a joint call (from multiple journals within the field) for a special issue on international community development; this opportunity could allow for scholars worldwide to get to know one another and begin collaboration.

Joint IACD/CDS Conferences

- It was stated that it is time for CDS and IACD to host a joint international conference, outside of the United States; this will allow for an opening of the eyes to the global community development arena.
- Concerned was raised about the nature of a joint conference, where the financial component among membership may be challenging; there are ways we could strengthen the MOU between CDS and IACD to allow for this joint conference to take place (i.e., joint membership, membership/registration discounts, and so forth).

Operationalizing the MOU

- It was stated that there needs to be an operationalization of the MOU between CDS and IACD; the question was asked, “What mediates the connection and relationship between CDS and IACD?”
- There was also a question raised between the difference between IACD and CDS; it was clarified that there was a distinction for CDS to partner *with* IACD (not duplicate resources or services). Additionally, IACD requires a member from each continent to serve on its Board of Directors, while CDS does not. Does this make CDS a primarily domestic (US based) organization?

International/Country Chapters

- If we want to head towards joint membership/conferences between CDS and IACD, and increased internationalization overall, perhaps CDS should start establishing country Chapters. This type of benefit then could become institutionalized.

Need for Practitioners in the Conversation on International Community Development

- Considering the wide breadth of community development work, this requires the need to include practitioners into the mapping of international community development (the discipline) globally. With this mapping, as a global discipline, this is a heavy lift; there needs to be some distinction between various components of the interdisciplinary work.

This write-up does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the authors; rather, this summary is meant to capture the conversation had within the roundtable discussion, that day in the room, by the participants present. This roundtable relates directly to the conference theme of “Cultivating the Future” as it discusses future scenarios for CDS, our international agenda, our relationship with IACD, and possible pursuit of the Shared International Standards for Community Development Practice. We (the authors) wish to know more about what you (particularly CDS members not in the room on July 16, 2019) think about these points, topics discussed, and possible steps moving forward. It is the hope of the authors to continue to develop the conversation from this roundtable into possible action forward for the Society and community development overall, to reflect the global, international scope and impact of our field.