Health Promotion and Community Development

In the youth field, health promotion is strongly linked with the work of community development.

Community is not defined purely on location; it is also based on sharing a common identity such as cultural background, gender or sexual preference, and reflects the issues that have disadvantaged individual members or groups within the community. Thus, the notion of community is relevant to young people as a group, especially considering the common issues that bind them.

To provide the necessary skill development for increased health, collective action may be necessary to assist young people take control of their situation. Group education, information sharing, political activism and knowledge of individual rights can be incorporated in work practices to prevent future disempowerment and raise an individual’s personal state of health and well being.

Under this umbrella heading, health is not solely considered as a physical state but as a social, mental, environmental and physical condition, with all citizens maintaining the right of equal access.

Community development work attempts to correct the imbalance of power between groups in society, including those lacking resources and opportunities. While individuals may assist in providing direction for community action, it is group participation that enables it to be successful.

The necessary skills for community development workers in the youth work field include:

- facilitation skills
- organisational skills
- strategy skills
- networking skills
- communication skills
- research skills.