


# Can community development practice survive neoliberalism in Aotearoa New Zealand?

1. [Jenny Aimers\\*](#) and
2. [Peter Walker](#)

1. \*Address for correspondence: Jenny Aimers, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand; email: [jenny.aimers@op.ac.nz](mailto:jenny.aimers@op.ac.nz)

## Abstract

---

This article discusses the development and contested nature of community development practice and the effects of neoliberalism on community development in Aotearoa New Zealand. We describe how community development has been constructed and influenced by the neoliberal environment since the early 1980s. In this country neoliberal policies transformed the community and voluntary sector with community development all but disappearing from successive government's priorities for a number of years. This work is informed by an empirical study that collected 13 in-depth narratives from a range of community development practitioner. We found that community development practice can survive indifference from government policy when practitioners and communities have strong enough convictions about their practice to carry them through lean funding periods. We outline different community development models that have informed and sustained practice and outline the current funding environment.

- © Oxford University Press and *Community Development Journal*. 2015 All rights reserved. For permissions, please email: [journals.permissions@oup.com](mailto:journals.permissions@oup.com)

Community Dev J (2015)doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsv042First published online: November 17, 2015

<http://cdj.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2015/11/17/cdj.bsv042.abstract>