

## Empowering people, where do we need put the investment?

Community empowerment or empowerment, in general, is about enabling people and communities to have control over their lives, their futures and the services or activities that contribute to their well being and prosperity.

Empowering people and communities takes time, effort, money. It also takes the will to change on the part of people, services-providers at the front line, and their managers.

Empowerment workers need to figure out:

- a) *what* are they trying to achieve with their people? Is the answer more participation? Changed behaviour? A change in how a service or facility is run? and
- b) *where* to put in time and resources.

The box below defines community empowerment more closely and enables the practitioner to reflect on what type of empowerment they want to see happen.

'People' here means citizens, services-users or customers as they are the beneficiaries of public services.

Empowerment as:

### PARTICIPATING

- People using a service or doing things that enable them to flourish
- People getting involved in influencing, campaigning and trying to change things
- People running activities that is community activities or local services

### LEARNING

- People learning skills and gaining knowledge that enables them to do whatever they want to do

### INFLUENCING

- People having a say in decisions that affect them and being involved in public services (whether they are run by public authorities, the third sector or companies)

### DECIDING

- People deciding what public and community services should look like, how they should be run and what they should do

### OWNING

- People taking roles in community owned and run services and activities

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