

Community

Shared Understandings

Here are some shared understandings of ‘community’ curated through our Living Glossary workshops with our community of practice. These can be used as starting points in your work and projects.

Community is:

- 1) A group that share a characteristic, an interest or geography
- 2) Organisms that share real and imagined spaces, identities, interests, challenges and/or resources
- 3) A dynamic group with interactions and feedbacks that share time, space, characteristics and interests. The group is not exclusive and can be human and non-human
- 4) Elements, organisms and groups that share a common cause, identity, sense of belonging and integration
- 5) A dynamic group of individuals with similar interests who have chosen [not been forced] to come together physically or interact in some other way

Further Reading

- Jewkes, R., & Murcott, A. (1996). Meanings of community. *Social Science & Medicine*, 43(4), 555–563.
- Bradshaw, T. K. (2008). The post-place community: Contributions to the debate about the definition of community. *Community Development*, 39(1), 5–16.
- Patel, S. S., Rogers, M. B., Amlôt, R., & Rubin, G. J. (2017). What do we mean by “community resilience”? A systematic literature review of how it is defined in the literature. *PLoS Currents*, 9
- Thomsen, D. C., Smith, T. F., Carter, R. W., & Mayes, G. (2009). Defining community: Understanding the meaning of “the community” in coastal zone management. *Journal of Coastal Research*, SI 56

Etymology

Community stems from the **Latin** *communitās* meaning joint ownership or shared nature, based on *communis* meaning common. It entered **Old French** as *communité*, meaning association or body of people. In **Anglo-Norman**, it also referred to a nation, town, or religious society. Over time, it came to mean a group of people living together with shared interests or identity. (Source: Oxford English Dictionary)