

# Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Workshop

14-17 October 2013, 13h00 – 16h30

Emzomncane Primary School

Refreshing and Evaluating



*Facilitators: Carla Collins and Ntshantsha Madinda*

*“Work with what you know, build with what you have”*

### **Programme**

<b>Monday:</b>	Welcome and Introductions Appreciative Enquiry Defining Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) 5 Types of Assets Most Significant Changes since the ABCD/Permaculture process started
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Types of poverty Root causes of poverty Ted Talk: William Kamkwamba
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Difficulties in participating and value added in the ABCD/Permaculture process Community A and B Video: Voices in Harmony
<b>Thursday:</b>	Reactive vs Responsive Development Way forward

### **Welcome and Introductions**

The facilitator welcomed everybody and introduced herself and her co-facilitator. As an ice-breaker a “name game” was played to become familiarised with each other. The group consisted of ladies who have been working with Calabash Trust and the schools since we first started with our ABCD/Permaculture Schools pilot project, therefore some were familiar with ABCD already, other ladies joined throughout our working time at WB Tshume and Emzomncane, and others we met for the first time. Altogether about 15 people participated in the workshop, all women. It was explained that the workshop was to refresh previous and introduce new ABCD principles and tools, as well as to evaluate part of the ABCD/Permaculture pilot process thus far.

### **Find a partner - Appreciative Enquiry**

The group was asked to find a partner wearing a similar colour to them and discuss what they are most proud of in their lives. This set a positive tone for the start of the workshop as everybody shared their skills, activities they are involved in and stories about their families. Most feedback included being proud of their home gardens, being able to use their hands for sewing, knitting and beading, and having a kind heart by volunteering at soup kitchens and assisting the elderly and disabled in their communities.

### **Defining Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)**

We introduced ABCD by defining each term:

- ✦ Assets as “something that we have”, “being able to make something out of nothing”, “something of value that we have that adds quality to our life”.
- ✦ A base as a “foundation” or “home”.
- ✦ Community as “togetherness and sharing”.

- ✦ Development as “making things better”, “empowerment, growth, improvement”.

It was explained that the asset based approach is different from the needs based approach, and we therefore start with what we have and build with what we know, instead of what we don't have.

## 5 Types of Assets

To further the understanding around assets, the group was asked to highlight what they thought their assets are which we then grouped into 5 types:

- ✦ Physical assets: plastic for recycling, paper for gardening, schools
- ✦ Natural assets: manure, water, soil, grass (for mulch), air, sun, rain (weather)
- ✦ Social assets: burial societies, catering businesses, cleaning services, tradition and culture
- ✦ Human assets: doing gardening, sewing, catering, knitting, crocheting, cooking, baking, beadwork, cleaning, caring work
- ✦ Financial assets: cash, savings, businesses.

The group emphasized the natural and physical assets, and also mentioned that permaculture is an effective way to combine the 5 types of assets. Most of the human assets were already identified during the first ‘find your partner’ activity. It was also explained that financial assets are merely a converter that is used to obtain the other assets, but have no meaning on its own as you cannot eat or wear money!



## Most Significant Changes since the ABCD/Permaculture process started

The first question as part of the evaluation with the group was ‘what the most significant changes were at the school and in their lives since the process started’. Feedback included:

- ✦ There are beautiful gardens at the schools.
- ✦ Different kinds of trees are planted.
- ✦ Children are getting quality education.
- ✦ More people are starting to gain interest in gardening.
- ✦ People are managing to beat hunger/poverty at their homes by growing their own gardens.
- ✦ People are learning how to fertilise soil, plough, use a spade etc.
- ✦ People are learning how to make things for



themselves – using sewing machines, how to play with land to make decorations and designs.

- ✦ People are able to sell what they sew and plough.
- ✦ The wider community are noticing changes at schools – people comment that “now school is neat, there are gutters and jojo tanks, and they eat vegetables at the schools.”
- ✦ Parents are cleaning at the school.

## Types of poverty

The following day, after recapping on the discussion around assets, the group was asked what it meant to be poor. As they started naming things, three types of poverties were introduced:

- ✦ Poverty of mind: lack of knowledge and education
- ✦ Poverty of spirit: lack of strong values – vulnerable children, crime, prostitution
- ✦ Poverty of stomach: lack of nutritious meals, hunger (burden on mothers), more expenses than income, children leaving home because of not having enough, no jobs, unemployment

A lively discussion followed around poverty of mind and spirit – with a strong mind and spirit, poverty of stomach could be overcome. This seemed to shift something in the group and even though we were discussing poverty, people seemed excited to suggest solutions.

## Root causes of poverty

We decided to take it a step further. An analogy of a tree was used to ask the group what they thought the root causes of poverty were. It was explained that if you cut the leaves and branches they grow back therefore they are not the cause but rather a symptom of poverty; therefore we have to get to the roots. Some group members discussed the root causes and also started suggesting possible solutions.

*Root causes of poverty* according to the group:

Laziness, carelessness, lack of respect - all examples led back to the root causes being poverties of mind and spirit that need to be cultivated.

*Solutions* according to the group:

Not to accept we are beggars, take things seriously, seek knowledge and skills, have vision and dreams, have persistence, don't be easily discouraged, focus on what you believe, learn to do things your self, do not be choosy or particular, do recycling of papers, cans, and plastics etc.

## Ted Talk: William Kamkwamba

The Ted Talk of William Kamkwamba from Malawi reiterated all previous discussions around using your assets – what you have, and what you know – to improve your life. As well as fostering a strong mind and spirit to ensure we are looked after physically. Feedback from the group included:



- ✦ Being lazy won't bring you anywhere, go to get knowledge.
- ✦ Using rubbish to make something to add value – recycling is important.
- ✦ Encourage people to wake up and do things for themselves.
- ✦ Acquire skills by yourself.
- ✦ Don't underestimate yourself – especially if you dropped out of school.
- ✦ Poverty cannot be a stumbling block.
- ✦ Don't expect quick results but be persistent, it takes time.

### Difficulties in participating and value added in the ABCD/Permaculture process



The second part of evaluating, the group was asked 'what makes it difficult for them to participate in the group work, and how do they feel rewarded by being involved'. Feedback included:

What makes it difficult to participate is jealousy, people getting irritated, people not valuing each other's efforts, being lazy to do and think, and being too dependant.

They do however feel rewarded by working with people, which is valuable, communicating and networking, assisting other people without expecting anything in return, gaining more knowledge and skills, learning how to be independent, learning ways of beating poverty and growing their own food, keeping the bodies and mind active, making use of soil to get healthy food.

### Community A and B

To link the discussions on assets and poverty, the group was split in two, each with different descriptions of a community (positive and negative), and asked to imagine that they lived there and to explain how it made them feel to live in this community.

#### *Community A*

"You visited a community and noticed a lot of people standing around with nothing to do. Most people have little or no formal schooling and lack skills. Adults are unemployed and dependant on welfare grants. Children do not have recreational facilities and there is no pre-school. There are a few community leaders and little capacity to manage large scale programmes."

**Group 1** felt the place was messy, there is no future for children, poverty all the way, we have nothing and we don't take any initiatives, there is dependency on outsiders.

## Community B

"You visited a community and noticed it is vibrant. People are friendly and seem close knit. People have taught themselves a range of skills like building, sewing, brick making, beadwork, leatherwork, weaving, candle making, catering, carpentry, welding and mechanic work. Schooling is mostly informal with families and friends exchanging knowledge and skills. The community is located in a mountainous area. Children spend most of their time outdoors. Some parents home school their children. Some community leaders are proactive and well respected. There have been many successful initiatives."

**Group 2** felt happy, there is education for children, parents are employed, no poverty, they live in heaven, children are getting knowledge.

The group was then told that it is actually the same community, just viewed through different 'lenses' - positive and negative. It was a reminder that we choose to see the glass half full or half empty, which again links to strong minds and spirits to view our lives and communities through a positive lense.

### Video: Voices in Harmony

The group enjoyed the video because it consisted of communities in their own country, most speaking their own language that they could identify with, local examples of people doing things for themselves. Feedback from this video was very similar to feedback mentioned above.

### Reactive vs responsive development

A lady in the group was asked to gently push the facilitator around, where the facilitator was being reactive, always moving in the direction being pushed into. In the second round the facilitator was responsive, and stood strong or moved away as the lady tried to push. This example was used to emphasize the importance of owning a developmental process, to be prepared and ready. The group was then asked to discuss a way forward.

### Way forward:

*How can you use what you have and what we spoke of in the workshop?*

- ✦ Expand the gardens.
- ✦ Release Grade 3 and up into the garden to teach them about gardening.
- ✦ Plant more vegetables, fruit trees and herbs.
- ✦ Sell to the school and community.
- ✦ Supply vegetables to orphanage homes and home based care centres.
- ✦ Visit and supply clinics with spinach.
- ✦ Get chickens to sell eggs and do beadwork.
- ✦ Care for elder, home based care and teach others the skills.



- ✦ Learn more about sewing, knitting, crocheting, and beading.

*How can we overcome group dynamic and challenges mentioned in the workshop?*

- ✦ Come to the school everyday and don't skip because it leads to laziness
- ✦ Encourage one another, love one another, be united, be willing to help one another
- ✦ Change of attitude, always be positive, don't be easily discouraged
- ✦ To have goals

It was then discussed that business training would take place two weeks after this workshop, of which the report will also follow.

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### **References**

- ✦ Cunningham, C. Mathie, A. 2009. Mobilising Assets for Community Driven Development: Participant Manual. Coady International Institute.
- ✦ Ninnette E. 2011. Asset Based and Citizen Led Development: Ikhala Trust Training Course.

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