

Asset Based Community-led Development (ABCD)

2 Day Workshop Report for Calabash Trust and Ikhala Trust

24-25 June 2014, 9h00 – 16h00

Joe Slovo Primary School



Facilitators: Carla Collins (Calabash Trust) and Nosimilo Filita (Ikhala Trust)



“Start with what we have, build with what we know”

Programme

Tuesday 24 th :	Welcome and Introductions <u>ABCD OVERVIEW</u> Find your partner Defining ABCD Types of Assets Programme review	<u>ABCD AS A PARADIGM</u> Community A&B Types of poverty Root causes of poverty Ladder of inference Development Industry Close
Wednesday 25 th :	<u>ABCD AS A PRACTICE</u> Check in Mapping individual assets (hand, head, heart) Mapping social assets Mapping physical and natural assets Leaky Bucket Action planning / Way forward Check-out	

A. DAY 1

1. Welcome, Introductions and Purpose

The facilitators welcomed everybody and introduced themselves and their organisations. As an ice-breaker a 'name game' was played to become familiarised with each other. The group consisted of mothers from the Lavela Early Childhood Development Centre at Joe Slovo Primary School, and a group of women who has started their own initiatives in and around Joe Slovo community. Altogether 19 women participated on the 1st day, and 15 women on the 2nd day. The workshop was made possible by the Rein Miedema fund through Calabash Trust, and Ikhala Trust sponsored Nosimilo to co-facilitate and translate with Carla. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce parents and other community members to ABCD as a paradigm and practice, after some community members approached Calabash Trust with regards to starting/strengthening their own initiatives.

2. Find a partner (Appreciative enquiry)

We asked the group to find a partner and share what they are most proud of in their communities, with a second round sharing who inspires them. This set a positive tone for the start of the workshop as it was revealed that a women's support group exist, a women's savings group, a soup kitchen, a crime watch group, as well as household and community gardens. Most women were inspired by a family member, and as the names of celebrities surfaced, one lady mentioned that she is not inspired by celebrities as they might be fake in the limelight and you don't know their whole story, who they really are.

3. Defining Asset Based Community-led Development (ABCD)

We introduced ABCD by defining each term:

- ✦ Assets as “something that we have”, “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”.

ABCD is a way of thinking or seeing, and also an approach development work. 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.

4. Types of Assets

To further the understanding around assets, the group was asked to highlight examples of assets, which were grouped into 5 types of assets:

- ✦ Physical assets: roads, schools
- ✦ Natural assets: water, soil, air, sun, rain
- ✦ Social assets: catering businesses, cleaning services, savings groups, crime watch groups
- ✦ Human assets: gardening, sewing, catering, knitting, crocheting, cooking, baking, beadwork, cleaning, caring work
- ✦ Financial assets: cash, savings, businesses

It was 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! The idea of viewing things through a positive lense was demonstrated by a glass filled halfway with water, and asked whether they see the glass as half empty or half full. In this group most saw the glass as half full! In ABCD we look at the glass half full, in other words what we have to work with instead of what we don't have.

5. Community A&B

To further emphasize the lense through which we view the world (positive vs negative), the group was split in two, each with different descriptions of a community, and asked to imagine that they lived there and to explain how it made them feel to live in this community.

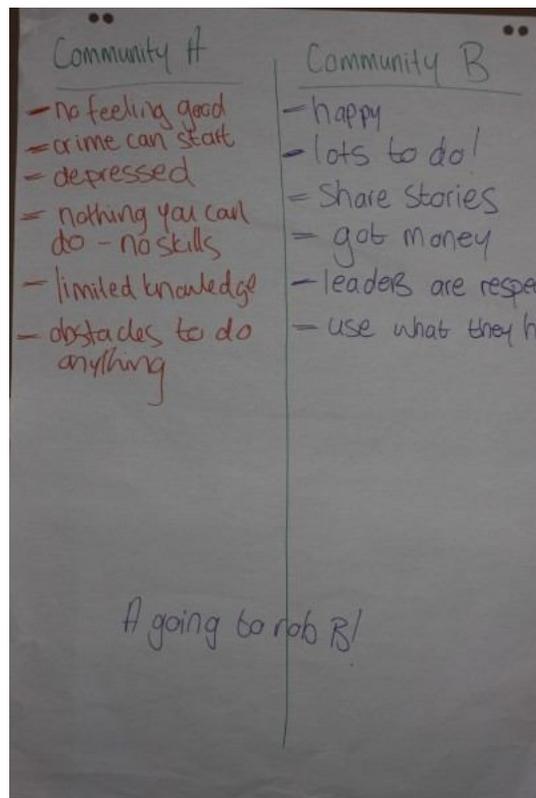
Community A: “You visited a community and noticed a lot of people standing around with nothing to do. Most people have little or no formal schooling and lack skills. Adults are unemployed and dependant on welfare grants. Children do



not have recreational facilities and there is no pre-school. There are a few community leaders and little capacity to manage large scale programmes."

Community A did not feel good, depressed, as crime could start, there was nothing people could do, people have no skills and limited knowledge. There are obstacles to do everything. It was also jokingly added that they would rob community A!

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."



Community 2 felt happy, there is a lot to do, they share stories, they have money, leaders are respected and they use what they have.

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.

6. Types of poverty

The group was asked what it meant to be poor. As they started naming things, three types of poverties were introduced:

- ✦ Poverty of mind
- ✦ Poverty of spirit
- ✦ Poverty of stomach

For many in the group it is usually an eye opener as they only think of 'poverty of stomach' when they think of 'poor'. One lady mentioned an example of a friend of hers living in 'town' (PE 'white suburbs') that, when she wants to have a good time and fill her 'spirit', she visits the township! Many people feel 'richer' after this discussion when they realise they can enrich their own mind and spirit to overcome poverty of stomach.

7. Root causes of poverty

To further the discussion, 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. One has to get to the roots. After group work, this was the feedback:

Group 1

People are unemployed due to a lack of skills and education. There is lack of motivation as people do come up with good ideas but get a negative response from others that demoralise them, therefore people do not to pursue what they wanted. There is lack of confidence and people do not want to get out of their comfort zone and ask for help.

Group 2

Most times we do not want to use what we have, e.g. our gifts to free us from poverty. We could get together and buy sewing machines, make clothes to sell, start vegetable gardens and sell vegetables, but we just wait on government to do things for us. As we have made the first step by coming to this workshop, we just need to work together, share ideas and skills to defeat poverty.



Group 3

Education: Our parents do not have money because they lack skills and knowledge.

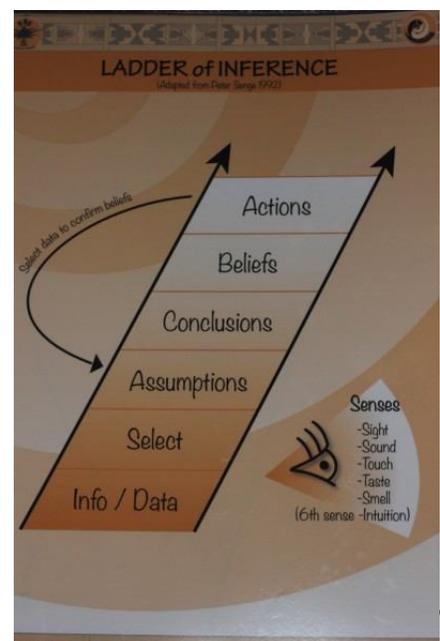
Corruption: Those who know better steal ideas from others and use it as their own. Officials need to take money to where it is supposed to go. We also need to share ideas in order to defeat poverty.

8. Ladder of inference

To illustrate this tool, the story of Nokwanda was used, where Nokwanda goes for a job interview as an administrator: she sounded very distracted on the phone when the appointment was made, arrived late with dirty fingernails and smelling of tobacco smoke.

The group was asked whether they would employ Nokwanda if they were the employer.

Some assumed she had been to a tavern. Some would give her a chance to explain herself, others would not.



The group was then asked if they would change their minds if they were to be told that Nokwanda is a foster mother with four children and sat next to a smoker in the taxi who bruised her arm when she confronted him.

It was explained that we must be aware of not 'jumping up our ladders' and make inferences about Nokwanda which might or might not be true. We should get all the facts before drawing conclusions around our assumptions (looking at the different positions on the ladder).

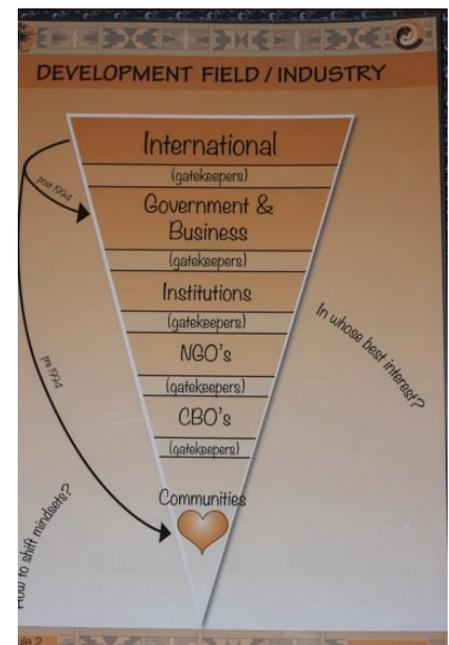
This is important when engaging in development work. Initiatives are often started based on limited information around problems and needs, where assumptions are easily made and assets not taken into account. When doing planning around ideas, it is therefore important to get all the information (not only one-sided needs assessment), so no skewed assumptions are acted upon.

9. Development Industry

The 'Development Industry' was described with regards to the different role players in the industry. Many in the group thought that government and business are they key role players, and were not aware of the influence international organisations and multi-national companies have in the development industry.

Most in the group were also unaware of gatekeepers and gappers in between these levels, either keeping information and resources to themselves, or sharing.

The group agreed that revolution tends to come from 'the bottom' (communities) as 'those who feel it know it' and are more likely to be driven to change their lives for the better. People at other levels are more comfortable and don't necessarily want change. The group also agreed that bulk of the resources are at the 'top', and in spite of some good intentions has encouraged dependency and inequality, with most resources going to 'experts' meeting community needs. The question comes: 'in whose best interests' in the development field if the bulk of resources and influences are not with the communities it claims to serve.



B. DAY 2

1. Check-in

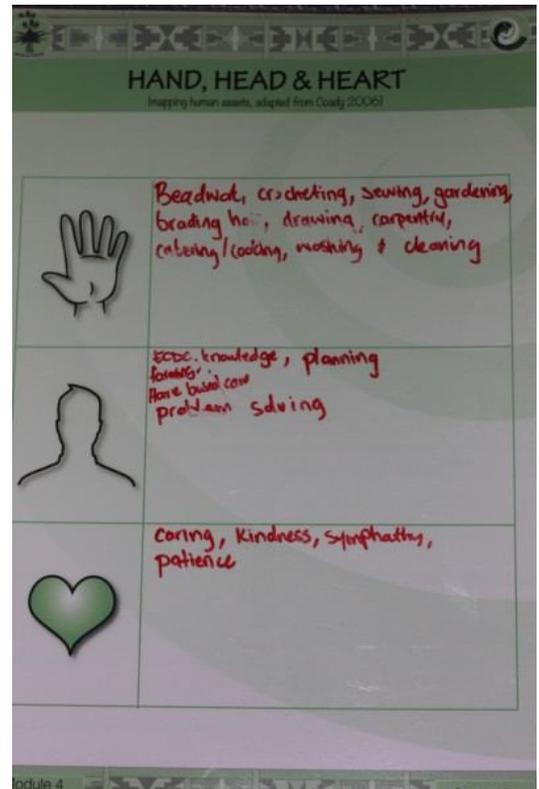
The next morning we checked in by asking the group to share how they felt after attending Day 1. We found this useful to gauge whether the group understood and enjoyed the workshop. Some responses were as follows:

- One told her husband who encouraged her to come back the next day so she could share with others.
- For some the ladder of inference stood out as it had personal relevance. The story of Nokwanda also stood out and some shared it with their families the previous night. Many had fun with it with their families.
- One mentioned that the poverty of spirit is full in the township, and not in town (her friend living in town comes to the township to enjoy herself!)
- Some realised the importance of working with others and not in isolation.

- Some wanted the workshop to be longer than 2 days (to learn more and it keeps them busy).
- Some were motivated to start beadwork and sewing again, as well as work with reeds to make mats.
- Some enjoyed the development industry as they often don't think further than their community or country, so it was good to see the connection within the bigger scheme of things and be aware of systems.
- Togetherness is key – social capital.

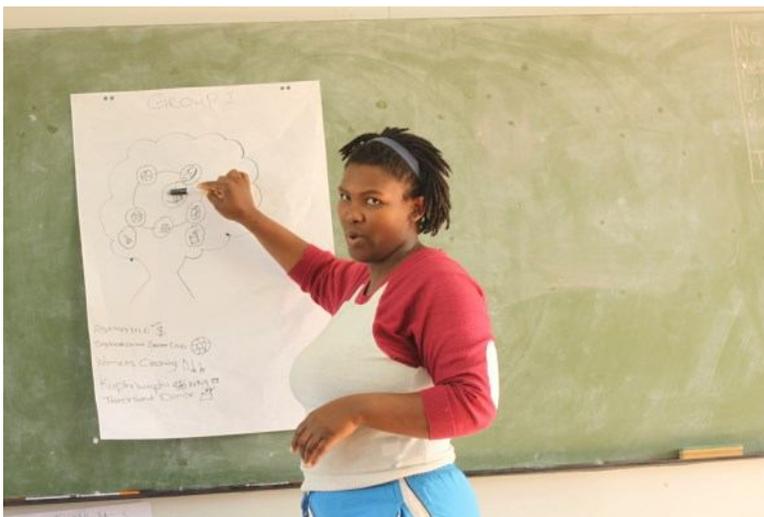
2. Mapping individual assets

We then moved straight into mapping the 5 different assets, starting with human (individual) assets. The group was asked to give examples of something they can do with their hands, things they know and can do with their heads (mind), and emotional qualities they have with their hearts. This tool helps with appreciating oneself. The exercise was difficult for one lady in particular at first, as she felt she had no assets or skills to offer. As the group helped her to unpack her skills according to her hands, head and heart, she realised that a lack of formal education and training does not mean you know nothing and have nothing to offer. She realised she could do much more than anticipated at first. Another lady had difficulty separating the head from the heart and it was explained that the important part is to acknowledge that one has assets in order to use them, as the other assets are linked with one another.



3. Mapping social assets

Social assets were then mapped according to the different extensions the women lived in.



At first it was difficult for the participants to do this exercise as most of them do not belong to organizations. It was then explained to them that they need to think about organizations or associations that are in their community and look at the relationship. There were also two ladies coming from a church organization who found it difficult to do the mapping as they were unaware of what is happening around the church. They were then asked to join other groups, but also informed of the importance of knowing what is

going on around in our communities to find ways to possibly work together.

The 3 groups tried to illustrate what social assets exist in their communities, and matched relationships according to their size and what they do. For example, a soup kitchen serving the clinic, parents serving soup who have kids at the Pre-school etc. This was not really accurate as they were not part of these associations or organizations but they understood the tool. The group working in the church said they would go back to find out more about other organizations close to the church and check possible relationships.

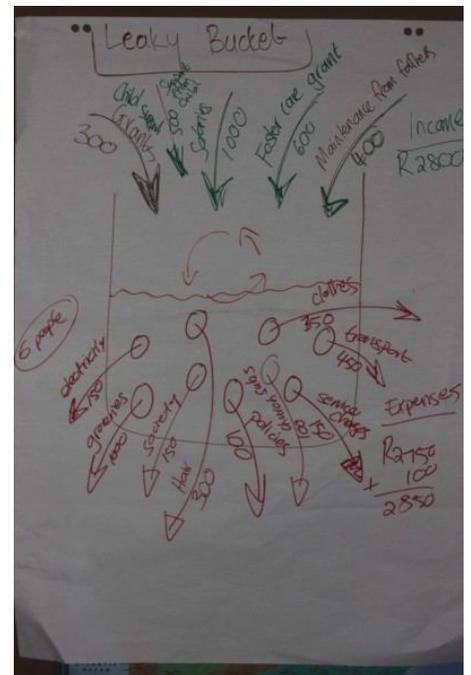
4. Mapping physical and natural assets

As with the social assets, physical and natural assets were also mapped. They found this exercise easy as they were giving a picture of their own communities. It was further explained that this tool is to assist them to discover assets that they can use as the community to better their lives.



5. Leaky bucket

Mapping the financial assets through the leaky bucket was, as usual, an eye opener for the group. The tool was demonstrated after which everyone did a leaky bucket for their own households. The idea of a local economy was explained and also finding ways to plug the leaks. Although the group felt a bit stressed after looking at their own leaky buckets, they were reminded of the other assets (human, social, physical and natural) that are also in their buckets that can be converted to cash if necessary, and encouraged to manage finances carefully.



6. Way forward

To close the day and workshop, we debriefed a bit on a way forward, as ideas from the group surfaced throughout the workshop. Some of these included a car wash, which after looking at the community assets it was established that a few car washes already exist. Catering was mentioned, as well as buying, growing and selling indigenous chickens (they already knew of contacts). An idea that created the most excitement was a local bakery for community members, as everybody eats bread every day. The group wanted to stay united as support for one another to not lose motivation

after the workshop. Support was already demonstrated by the group when a girl mentioned that she felt motivated, but did not know what to do – the group offered to include her in the ideas and help her find something she enjoys doing.

Calabash Trust and Ikhala Trust offered support, not necessarily monetary, but with advice and networking, and will be in contact with the group to see how processes unfold.

References

- ✦ Cunningham, C. Mathie, A. 2009. Mobilising Assets for Community Driven Development: Participant Manual. Coady International Institute.
- ✦ Ninnette E. 2013. Asset Based and Citizen Led Development: Ikhala Trust Training Course.

