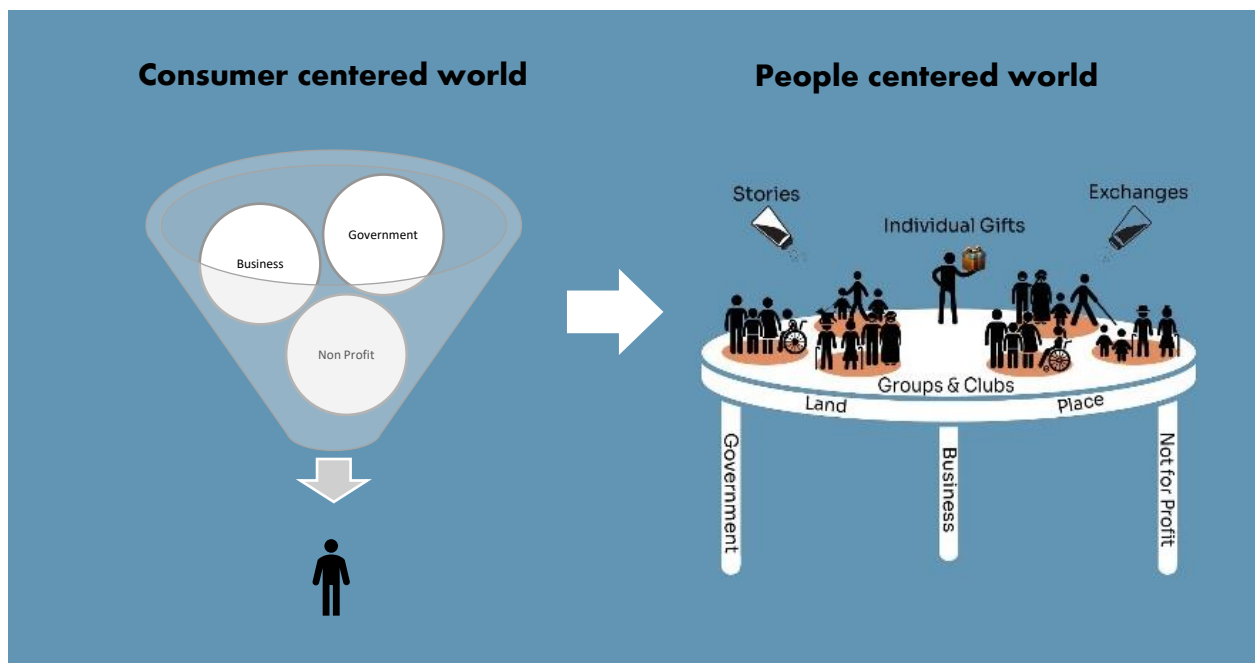


TOOL | ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

“Asset Based Community Development” or ABCD looks for and starts from people’s gifts and strengths (assets). These assets equip people to create local opportunities and respond to needs and challenges in their neighbourhoods. ABCD goes beyond any individual’s gifts or particular group’s strengths to consider how these may come together to create broader changes for the common good within a community.

Where a deficit-based approach starts by identifying needs, asset-based community development identifies and builds upon community strengths. ABCD empowers individuals and groups to come together, with institutions in support when required, to develop their strengths, working together to build on the identified assets of all involved!



VALUES BEHIND ABCD

- **Starts with Gifts:** *Assets and Strengths, not deficits and needs*
- **Nurture Community Led Action:** When people in a community act together, they demonstrate their own power and leadership and can bring about positive change.
- **Build Relationships for Mutual Support:** ABCD believes that relationships are the core of flourishing communities.
- **Include Everyone:** ABCD does not just invite people to the table but builds a new table where everyone has a true place
- **Lead by Stepping Back:** ABCD shines a light on residents' power to contribute to and make decisions in their communities.
- **Value Small:** ABCD values small, grassroots, resident - driven approaches that use stories as the basis for learning, sharing and acting for change.
- **Believe in Possibility:** ABCD is rooted in hope. People in communities, even in extreme situations, can use their gifts to imagine ways to create change.



The ABCD Planning Process

We ask these questions in order:

1. As neighbours, what can we achieve by using our own assets?
2. What can we achieve with our own assets if we get some outside help?
3. What can't we do with our assets that must be done by outsiders?





Starting with the first question is important! Starting with the second or third questions usually results in residents not being strongly involved and less sustainable initiatives.

HOW IS ABCD DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT METHODS?

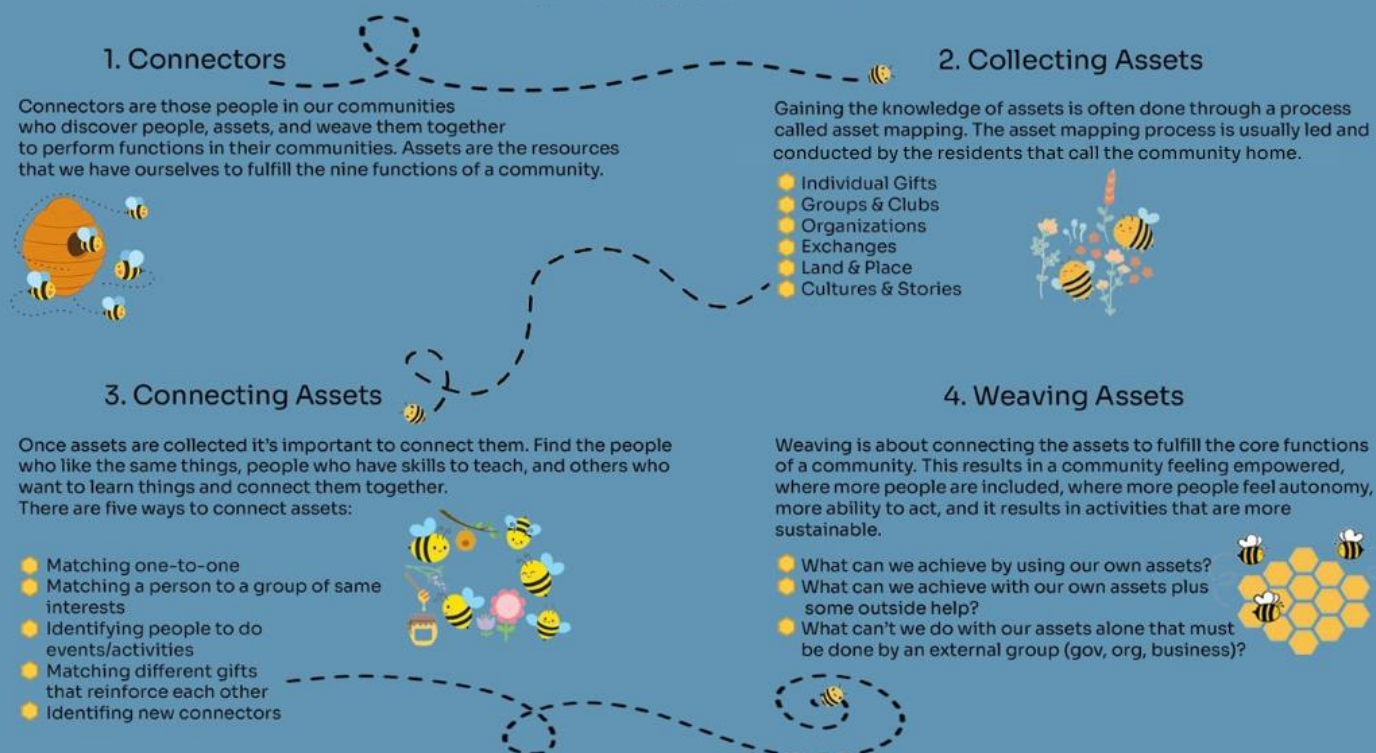
	Deficit Based	Asset-Based
Purpose	Changing community through increased services	Changing community through citizen involvement
Accountability	Leaders are professionals and staff, accountable to institutional stakeholders	Leaders are widening circles of volunteer citizens who are accountable to the community
Role of Assets	Assets are system inputs. Asset mapping is data collection.	Assets are relationships to be discovered and connected. Asset-mapping is self-realization and leadership development.
Resources	Money is the key resource. Falls apart without money.	Relationships are the key resource. Falls apart when money becomes the focus.
Operating Challenge	How do we get people involved?	How do we channel and build on people participation?
System Dynamic	Tends to spread itself thinner over time.	Tends to gain momentum over time.
Evaluation	Success is service outcomes, measured mostly by institutional stakeholders.	Success is capacity, measured mostly by relationships.

Source: Dan Duncan, ABCD Institute Faculty

WHY IS ABCD THE RIGHT CHOICE IN TODAY'S WORLD?

TO	FOR
<p><i>Role: "Expert"</i></p>  <p>Provided to Community (People as recipients)</p>	<p><i>Role: "Expert"</i></p>  <p>Provided for the Community (People as information source)</p>
WITH	BY
<p><i>Role: "Gapper"</i></p>  <p>Provided with the Community (People as Advisors)</p>	<p><i>Role: "Animator"</i></p>  <p>Provided by the Community (ABCD)</p>
Adopted with permission: Cormac Russell, Nurture Development under Creative Commons License	

THE ABCD JOURNEY



When these four elements are features of your community-building effort, it can be said to be an Asset-Based Community Development process. To dive deeper into these four elements, see: [The Four Essential Elements of an ABCD Process](#)