



Asset Based Community Development



www.youcando.org.uk

What is Asset Based Community Development?

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is a different and powerful approach to developing communities and the people within them. It starts from the idea that all communities have the potential to be rich – they all have assets and resources which, uncovered and mobilised, have the power to transform.

This 'glass half full' attitude challenges the embedded deficit approach favoured by many public agencies and encourages people to take an active and proud role in turning their lives and communities around. It provides a space where people can build their confidence and capacity to bring about positive, lasting and sustainable change.

How does it do all that? Supporting and encouraging people to uncover their own potential and those often-hidden resources that are already available to them is transformational. Individual and collective confidence grows, and communities can go on to identify real areas of unmet need. Active and empowered, with their own resources and assets working for them, they are in a stronger position to access additional external resources and to put them to most effective and sustainable use.

Purpose of the Guide

This Guide is for those people in communities who really want to change things for the better, and want to be part of that change. It is also aimed at those professionals in community engagement and development who are committed to ideas of genuine capacity building at community level.

What's in the Guide

There are four main areas of activity:

Topic 1: Starting where people are at

Getting people to identify what they want to do and how they are going to do it. The activities in this section include:

Head, hands, heart - a warm up exercise to get people thinking about what they have to offer.

Asset mapping – a practical way to uncover and share the skills, knowledge, resources and interests of the group and the wider community.

Issues mapping – identifying issues and concerns, their causes and relationships.

Target practice – prioritising issues and opportunities, and planning for action.

Maximising resources - making the most of what you've got.

Problem and solution focused questioning - how to solve problems using effective questioning.

Topic 2: Do it ourselves and bring others with us

Getting people to think about planning, communicating, and running effective organisations and campaigns.

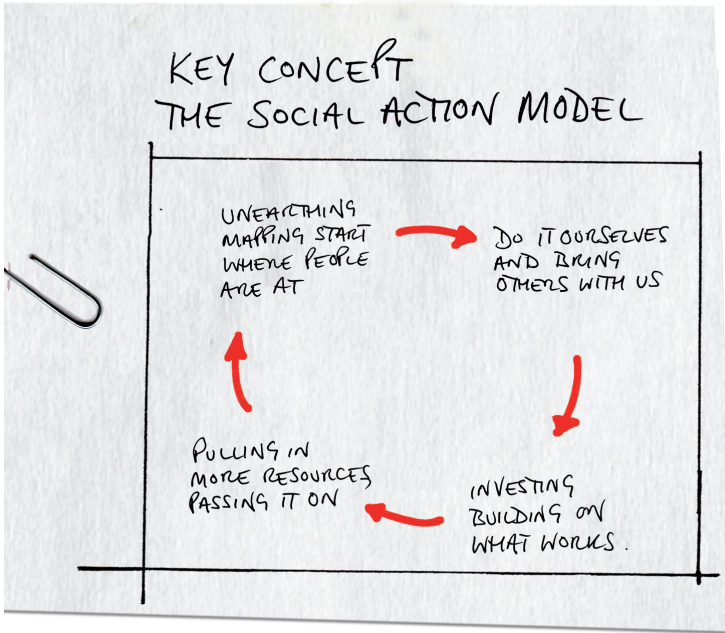
This section includes:

Action planning - Now Soon Later.

Getting your message across -AIDA, Conveyor Belt Cocktail Party.

Key people – identifying and mobilising and influencing key people, power interest matrix, keeping people on board, gaining support from outsiders.





Effective campaigning – a one day workshop that does what it says on the tin.

Topic 3: Building on what we've got

Keeping projects, campaigns and activities going after the initial excitement has faded. This theme links to a number of the other YouCanDo Guides and includes some useful additional material on evaluating what's working:

Monitoring and evaluation – what is it, why do we do it, what can it do for us? A series of workshops and activities.

Coaching – see the YouCanDo guide to Coaching.

Funding and sustainability – see the Funding and Sustainability course within the YouCanDo guide to Keeping Going.

Topic 4: Pulling in more resources, passing it on

This topic is all about increasing the scale of resources and thinking about how it shares what it has learnt with others within and outside the community. Again, it links in with a number of the other YouCanDo guides and includes:

Resource Exchange – a simple and effective way to find and share resources with other community organisations.

Can Do Investment Funds – cash in the community, for the community, by the community. See the YouCanDo guide to Communities Taking Control.

Community Service Agreements – local services delivered by local people; working in partnership with other local groups to deliver public services. Again, see the YouCanDo guide to Communities Taking Control.

Setting up social enterprises and other businesses – see the YouCanDo guide to Community Business.

CASE STUDY

Name:
The African Women's Group

Background:
The African Women's Group – many of them former refugees, or escapees from domestic violence – needed a room to meet in. Their simple request for help finding a venue was the beginning of a growth process that took them through Asset Based Community Development activities and towards a brighter future.

The group went through an Asset Mapping exercise to identify its strengths. It turned out that many members had experience and skills in areas such as health care, research, and using languages. A plan was formed to transform the group into something that could help local women find work.

With a volunteer trainee tutor in place, courses covering a variety of topics sprung up. Women had a chance to learn about IT and childcare. The local Jobcentre got involved, helping the group run courses in CV writing and interview skills. As a result of all this activity, five women found jobs in the area, and three more gained the skills they needed to become community tutors and keep the cycle of learning going. Many others benefited from taking part in the day-to-day running of the group.

Just as important as the new jobs was the increased confidence – both individually and collectively – that members of the group gained while working together.

ATTACH PHOTO

TO PROTECT THEIR IDENTITY WE CANNOT PUBLISH PHOTOS OF THESE WOMEN.