Building Communities from the Inside Out: Drawing Upon Community Assets to Overcome Poverty

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“The impetus for action within a community evolves from the relationships between individuals within a geographic setting”

(Kauffman, Harold, “Toward an Interactional Conception of Community.” Social Forces, 1959)

When the field of interaction is strengthened & focused within the community setting, public good functions develop & the community is in a position to better manage their resources.
“The substance of community is social interaction.”


A) Community is an emergent phenomena.
B) Two types of fields of interaction exist within a community.
   1) Social field-within social fields individuals pursue self interest.
   2) Community field-cuts across social fields-the actions in this field serve to coordinate other functions.
Asset Based Community Development: The Theoretical Support

“Social Capital (includes) those features of social organization which facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit enhancing a community’s ability to benefit from investments and physical and human capital”


The concept of Social Capital links to shared visions and mobilization.
Figure 1: Relationship Between Individual Interest, Social Fields, Community Fields & the Development of Social Capital

- Locality-based Collective Action
- Networks, Norms, Trust, Reciprocity
- Community Field
- Density of Acquaintanceship
- Social Field
- Individual Self Interest
- Social Field
Before Personally

After Personally
Before Professionally

After Professionally

![Diagram showing network before and after changes](image-url)
Network Cliques Time 1
Network Cliques Time 2
# Projects Funded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Reap</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>livestock</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>crops</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>education/technology</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Bio-Stimulant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheat Particle Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4-H Kids to D.C.</td>
<td>$1,650.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Farmers Banquet Speaker</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hay Coop</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legumes in CRP to enhance grazing</td>
<td>$1,500.00-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,500.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student Internship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leadership Town A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Members to Covey Training</td>
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## Projects Funded…..continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearing houses for excess Alfalfa</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hay Coop</td>
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<td>U.S. Ag Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town A Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers Day Golf</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Rhythms Project</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
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<td>Community Garden</td>
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<td>Women’s Marketing</td>
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<td>PolyPay Sheep Alliance</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
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</table>
Presumed Relationship Between Networks & Decision Making

Density of Relationships

Individual

Collective

Action
Asset-Based
Community Development

A - ASSET
B - BASED
C - COMMUNITY
D - DEVELOPMENT
Asset-Based Community Development

- Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a concept pioneered by John P. Kretzman & John L. McKnight.
- ABCD - very different philosophical base from more “traditional” approach to community development.
- Foundation for the “traditional” approach is identifying a community’s needs, deficiencies & problems.
- Foundation for ABCD is an exciting journey of discovering a community’s capacities & assets.
- There are other differences between the traditional & the ABCD approach.
## Asset-Based Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis:</th>
<th>Traditional Path 1</th>
<th>Alternative Path 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal:</td>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversation:</td>
<td>Institutional Change</td>
<td>Building Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change Agent:</td>
<td>Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Gifts &amp; Dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of Individual:</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer, Client</td>
<td>Producer, Owner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Needs

Needs based on community

- Unemployment, gangs, truancy, broken families, housing shortage, crime, child abuse, illiteracy, welfare, dropouts, etc.

### Assets

Assets based on community

- Youth, elderly, artists, churches, schools, businesses, parks, libraries, cultural groups, community colleges, clubs, hospitals, farms, ranches, etc.
Asset-Based Community Development

• The ABCD approach sees the community as a “treasure chest” to be built upon. Resources from outside the community (e.g., external grants) should be used only as a last resort in order to fill “gaps.”

• Asset mapping and asset mobilization are very different concepts.

• Asset mapping is an inventory of the community’s treasure chest. In the process of this inventorying, important relationships are developed. However, asset mapping is NOT an action step.
Asset-Based Community Development

• Asset mobilization IS an action step. Mobilizing assets for collective action requires organizing and harnessing the relationships that exist within the community.

• There are at least six important categories of assets within any community: the assets of individuals, the assets of associations, the assets of institutions, economic linkages and business assets, the natural resources and previous processes and plans for community and economic development.

• A holistic ABCD approach is inclusive and includes all five categories of assets. This is ideal; however, in some cases, the community may not be able or willing to undertake such a comprehensive approach.
A + C = D

Assets + Community = Development Initiatives

• Greene County, Tennessee
  – Livestock Cooperative
• Trinity County, California
  – Trinity Kids First Collaboration
  – Hyampom University
• Arthur, Nebraska
  – Wolf Den Grocery Store
Building Community from the Inside Out:

- Draws on all assets
- Provides opportunities for new economies to emerge
- Provides opportunities for the poor
Contact Information

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