

Short Guide to ABCD

The art of asking the right
questions

Asset Based Community Development & SBCB: Theory

Deficit Based

- Problems
- Blame
- What's missing
- Scarcity
- Risks
- Needs
- Control-outside in
- Top-down
- Do to
- Passive receivers

Can't do!



Asset Based

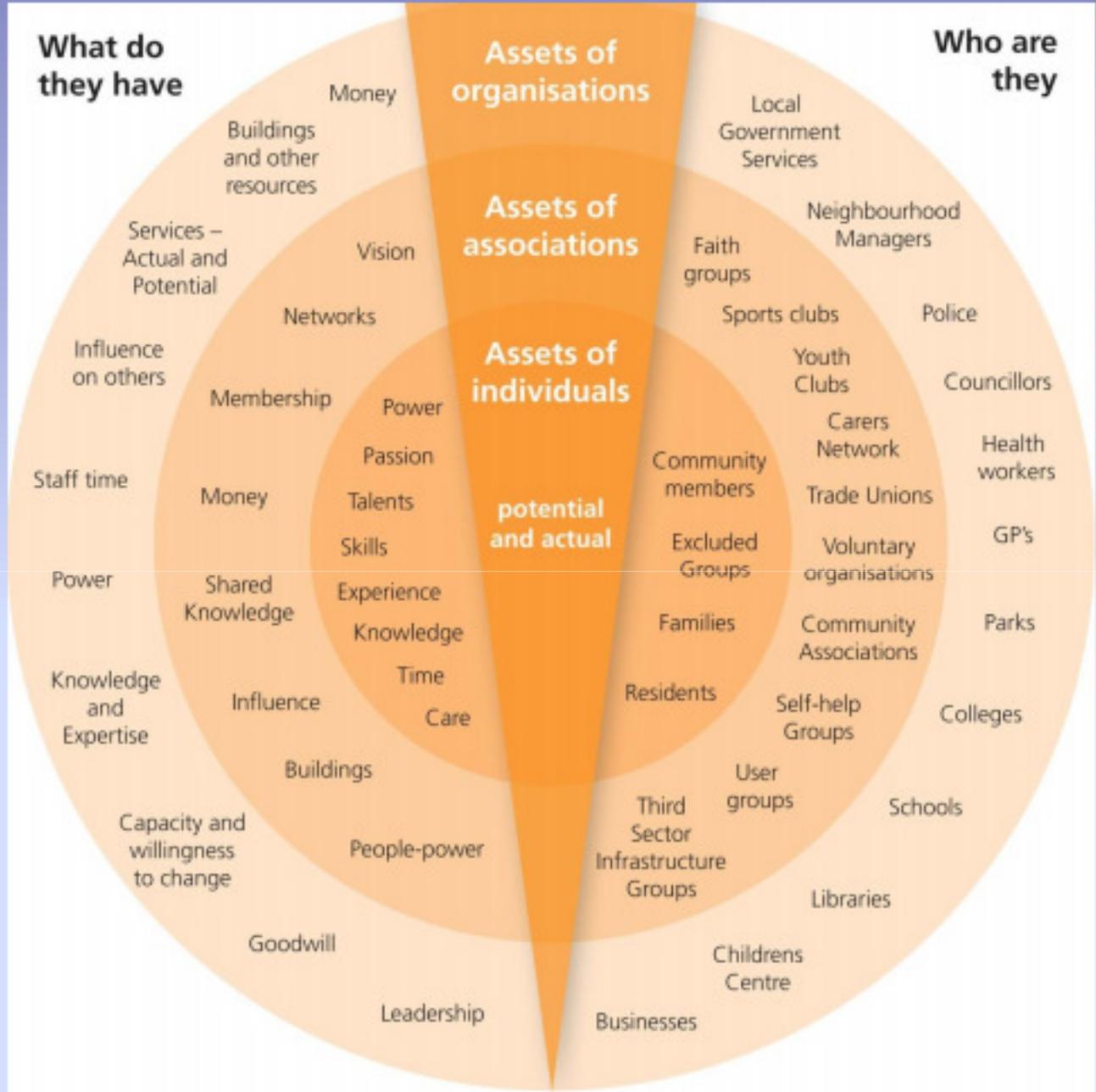
- Possibilities
- Shared ownership
- What's there
- Abundance
- Courageous leadership
- Strengths, capacities, assets
- Lead by stepping back
- Inside-out
- Citizen-led
- Do with, enabling to do
- Active producer & co-producers

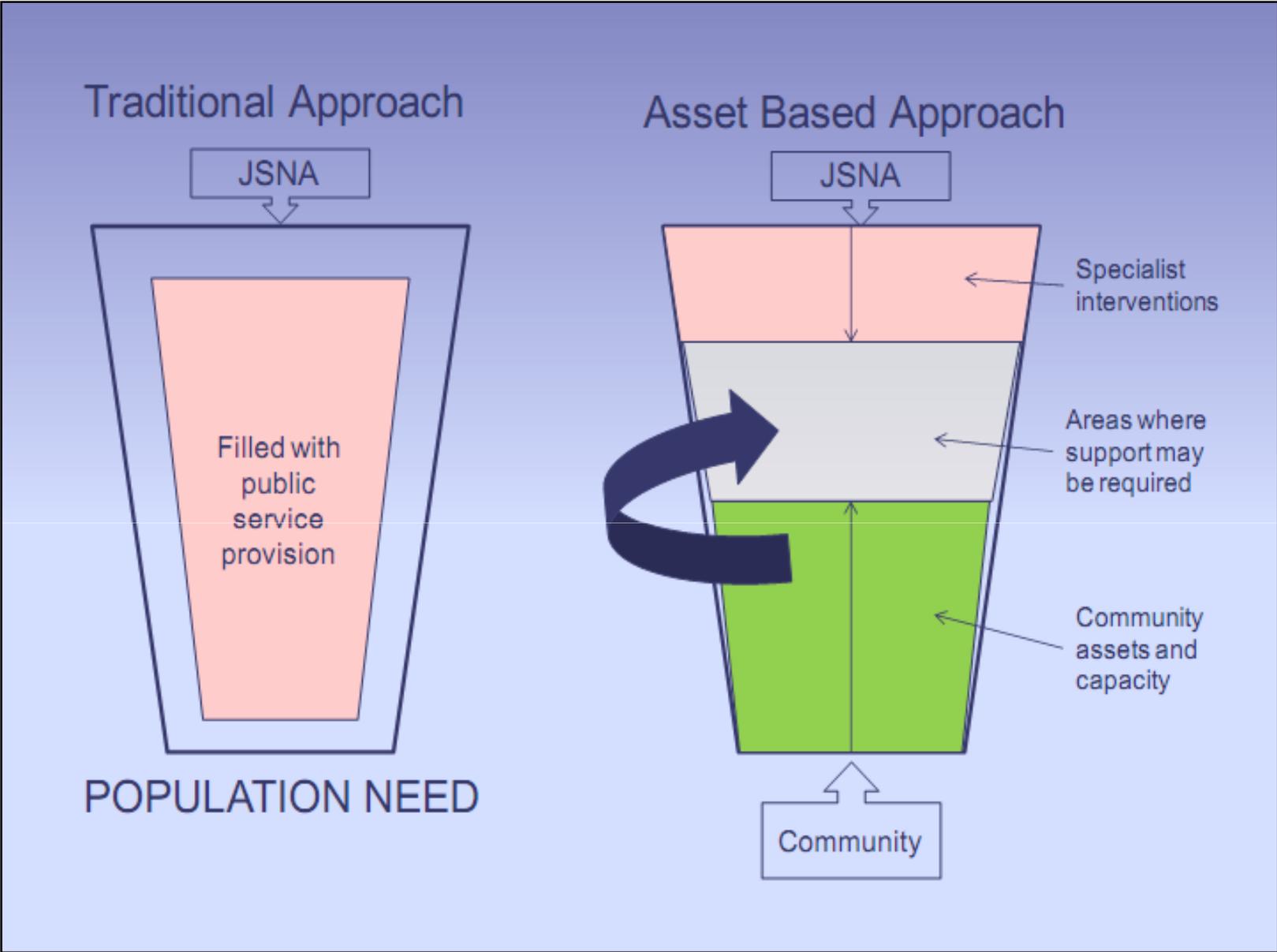
Can do!

@ Cormac Russell, ABCD
Institute, 2013

The New Paradigm for Effective Community Impact – Asset Based

| | Needs/Deficit Based | Asset Based |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Purpose | Changing Community through increased services | Changing Community through citizen involvement |
| Method | Institutional Reform | Citizen-Centered production |
| Accountability | Leaders are professional staff. accountable to institutional stakeholders | Leaders are widening circles of volunteer citizens. Accountable to the community. |
| Significance 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. |
| Production Resource | 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 citizens involved? | How do we channel and build on all this citizen participation? |
| System Dynamic | Tends to spread itself thinner over time. | Tends to snowball over time. |
| Evaluation | Success is service outcomes, measured mostly by institutional stakeholders. | Success is capacity, measured mostly by relationships. |





@ Cormac Russell, ABCD
Institute, 2013

Community Assets - what are they?

- The skills of local residents
- The power of local associations
- The resources of public, private and non-profit institutions
- The physical and economic resources of local places.
- The stories of our lives and of evolving community.

Strength-Based Bill of Rights for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

1.I have the right to be viewed as a person capable of changing, growing and becoming positively connected to my community no matter what types of delinquent behaviour I have committed.

2.I have a right to participation in the selection of services that build on my strengths.

3.I have a right to contribute things I am good at and other strengths in all assessment and diagnostic processes.

4.I have a right to have my resistance viewed as a message that the wrong approach may be being used with me.

5.I have the right to learn from my mistakes and to have support to learn that mistakes don't mean failure. I have the right to view past maladaptive or antisocial behaviours as a lack of skills that I can acquire to change my life for the better.

6.I have the right to experience success and to have support connecting previous successes to future goals.

7.I have the right to have my culture included as a strength and services which honour and respect my cultural beliefs.

8.I have the right to have my gender issues recognised as a source of strength in my identity.

Strengths based Bill of Rights cont.

9. I have the right to be assured that all written and oral, formal and informal communications about me include my strengths as well as needs.
10. I have a right to surpass any treatment goals which have been set too low for me, or to have treatment goals which are different than those generally applied to all youth in the juvenile justice system.
11. I have a right to be served by professionals who view youth positively, and understand that motivating me is related to successfully accessing my strengths.
12. I have a right to have my family involved in my experience in the juvenile justice system in a way that acknowledges and supports our strengths as well as needs. I have a right to stay connected to my family no matter what types of challenges we face.
13. I have the right to be viewed and treated as more than a statistic, stereotype, risk score, diagnosis, label or pathology unit.
14. I have a right to a future free of institutional or systems involvement and to services which most centrally and positively focus on my successful transition from institutions.
15. I have the right to service providers who coordinate their efforts and who share a united philosophy that the key to my success is through my strengths.
16. I have the right to exercise my developmental tasks as an adolescent; to try out new identities; to learn to be accountable and say I'm sorry for the harm I've caused others – all of which is made even more difficult if I'm labelled a "bad kid."
17. I have the right to be viewed and treated as a redeemable resource and a potential leader and success of the future.

(Developed by Laura Burney Nissen, Ph.D., MSW, CAC III, 1998)

Useful Questions for Strength-based Conversations

There are three key questions within any effective learning conversation which move in that direction (Green, Moore & O'Brien, 2007):

- What do you care about enough to act on?
- What do you have to offer?
- What will it take for you to join in action with others who share your interests?

Strength-based Learning Conversations

The work of the Resilience Research Centre^[1] offers an interesting perspective on conducting strength-based learning conversations in their broadest context. Their work documents the complexity of young people's lives when growing up in adverse circumstances.^[1]

The Resilience Research Centre (RRC) brings together leaders in the field of resilience research from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Partners across six continents employ methodologically diverse approaches to the study of how children, youth and families cope with many different kinds of adversity. The RRC's focus is the study of the social and physical ecologies that make resilience more likely to occur. The Centre have designed what they refer to as nine "catalyst" questions aimed at prompting the development of resiliency and engagement in such young people, and understanding positive deviance^[1].

The nine catalyst questions are:

1. What would I need to know to grow up well here?
2. How do you describe people who grow up well here despite the many problems they face?
3. What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?
4. What kinds of things are most challenging for you growing up here?
5. What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?
6. What does being healthy mean to you and others in your family and community?
7. What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?
8. Can you share with me a story about another child who grew up well in this community despite facing many challenges?
9. Can you share a story about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, or outside your home in your community?

^[1] Positive Deviance (PD) is an approach to personal, organisational and cultural change based on the idea that every community or group of people performing a similar function has certain individuals (the "Positive Deviants") whose special attitudes, practices/ strategies/ behaviors enable them to function more effectively than others with the exact same resources and conditions often in spite of significant adversity.

@ Cormac Russell, ABCD
Institute, 2013

Key Motivators to Action

Strength-based conversations recognise that there are three key motivators to action:

- What we want to see happen (our dreams for the future) and are prepared to move towards.
- What we do not want to see happen (our concerns for the future) and are prepared to move away from.
- What we are willing to contribute (our strengths/capacities) to move towards our dreams and in addressing our concerns.

Five Principles of ABCD

ABCD is:

- Relationship Driven
- Asset Based
- Place based
- Citizen driven
- Inclusion

Contact

Cormac Russell

ABCD Faculty Member

cormac@nurturedevelopment.ie