

nurture development  
development • redefined

## Guidesheets



## Guidesheets

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## 12 Domains of People Powered Change

Nurture Development believes there are at least 12 domains where the ability to create a good life for local people is uniquely within the competencies of those local people, not services or systems. That is not to say that services cannot add some value, once citizens and local communities have done what they can do, or that services should be automatically excluded from the domains, but that the starting point within each should always be on people powered change and the skills and interests of local people. As the work unfolds, citizens and communities should remain at the centre. The 12 domains are:

### 1. Health and wellbeing

Our health and wellbeing is mainly determined by the extent to which we are positively connected to each other, our environment and local economic opportunities; as well as through our personal behaviours.

### 2. Safety and security

Increased police presence does not lead to enhanced safety and security in the same way that a connected community can. Neighbours, active social networks and local knowledge all provide for safety as well as reduce fear – which often outstrips actual crime.

### 3. Caring for the environment

Imagine what is possible if people become more intentional and collective about their decisions around transport, heating and lighting their homes, and how they manage their water use and waste.

### 4. Nurturing the local economy

Most enterprises start small and local, in garden sheds, attics and at the kitchen table. In return they become the heart and blood of local economies and one of the most reliable sources of employment for many communities.

### 5. Mindful Food consumption & production

Local food chains and buying food that has been grown locally enhance outcomes in the areas of health, environment and local economic well-being.

### 6. Raising powerful connected children

Children need to believe in themselves, and their families and community. Children do not grow powerful in institutions; their power grows when their gifts are recognised and consequently they become closer to the centre of family and community life.

### 7. Ageing well in place / locale

The type of care required to age well across the life course is the kind that sees both the gifts and needs of older people, in that order. This kind of care is only located within communities that value the contribution of older people and have a central place for them.



## 8. Building communities

Communities grow from inside out, evolving from the place where 'I' live, to the community where 'we' grow. They can only grow through interconnectedness and the deepening of human relationships.

## 9. Civic action for deeper democracy & just society

Civic action for social, environmental and economic justice provides the rudder for keeping governments honest and on track, democracy meaningful, and people engaged in civic life.

## 10. Respond to natural disaster / climate control

Nowhere is people power more apparent than in the face of natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. As human beings, when faced with an unprecedented extreme situation, we dig deep, pull together (self-organise), and respond by building community.

## 11. Lifelong learning & sharing wisdom

Knowledge and wisdom are hatched in the nest of everyday life and more particularly in associational life, not in educational, commercial or professional institutions.

## 12. Changing the world

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*"Change doesn't happen because of how we invest our money. Change happens because of how we invest our human energy, and it always has since we came down from the trees."*

Daniel Taylor – Future Generations<sup>1</sup>

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We have seen moves towards people powered change in recent years with, for example, the steady progress towards personalisation in the social care and health sector; with the growth of community based TimeBanks across the UK; and with the growth in investment for community building programmes from government and other funding sources such as the Big Lottery.

Things are moving in the right direction but we believe that it is both economically and ethically the time to accelerate these changes with the explicit purpose of re-energising communities and the people within them. The role of the Community Builder, with the support of Community Connectors, is to use their gifts and the tools we have developed to enhance, deepen and hasten the change and our relationships with each other.

### Further Reading

- Russell, Cormac (2010) *Twelve Domains of People-Powered Change* Download from [http://peoplepoweredchange.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/12domains\\_ppc.pdf](http://peoplepoweredchange.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/12domains_ppc.pdf)
- PUTNAM, R. D. (2000) *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*, New York, Simon and Schuster.
- RHODES, J. E. (2004) Family, friends, and community: The role of social support in promoting health. IN CAMIC, P. & KNIGHT, S. (Eds.) *Clinical handbook of health psychology: A practical guide to effective interventions*. 2nd ed. OH, US, Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.future.org/Civil-Society>



## What to expect from an ABCD Learning & Development Programme with Nurture Development

Every community and partnership will be different but generally Nurture Development anticipate that learning and development programmes will be committed:

1. To use an ABCD approach to release the inventiveness of communities to create stronger, safer, healthier, happier and more inclusive communities.
2. To reduce institutionalisation by increasing interdependency in community life.
3. To playfully integrate ABCD perspectives, methods and approaches into their day to day practice in a way that respects the realities of the local context. To assist this process Nurture Development and partners have developed a number of practical supports, but our primary offer is to walk with and share in the journey with people. We use practical action, training and mentoring to transfer our practical know-how, and affirm existing practices that promote inclusive citizen-led action. These identify, connect and mobilise individual, associational, and institutional assets and resources and reveal the hidden treasures within communities.
4. To build and strengthen connections between individuals and across associations and institutions thereby increasing community cohesion and reducing isolation.
5. To support local commissioners and partners to discover and enter into effective and respectful relationship with local neighbourhood residents prepared to work with Community Builders and or who want to simply explore ways they can build community themselves. We will then support commissioners in partnership with local communities residents to recruit, train and actively support local Community Builders in the Neighbourhood Learning Sites to ensure the longevity of an ABCD approach and the sustainability of the change achieved.

Due to the nature of Asset-Based Community Development which is an iterative process, it is difficult to pre-determine a timetable for any given Learning & Development effort. We do, however, generally work across 4 core phases of learning and development, all of which overlap with one another. The specific phasing of the work is determined with partners at the outset following an initial review of the current landscape and this is then reviewed throughout.



## Phase 1- Building & maintaining consensus

The early stages of the Learning & Development Process are focussed on developing and strengthening relationships and building consensus amongst key partners. These early stages form the foundations for sustainable change.

Together we will agree the most appropriate precepts and methods of engagement, but generally we expect these to include:

1. Individual & group Learning Conversations with key partners & local stakeholders to map out the most context relevant, and value centred direction of travel for the ABCD Learning & Development effort. This includes supporting partners to work out the most appropriate implementation framework locally and how to select Learning Sites.
2. Investing in practical action, advice and mentoring supports for current leaders working directly in local neighbourhoods, social care, housing, faith communities, recovery movement, business, sport and any other constituencies where interest emerges to support the approach going forward.
3. Co-creating a learning framework & means of telling the emerging story in a way that the people involved can recognise and be happy to share with others.

We will facilitate listening and learning spaces where people can speak openly about the dilemmas they encounter. We have found the following to be successful approaches in consensus building:

- Where there is energy for it, help with the convening of informal '*Leading by Stepping Back*' Communities of Practice where representatives from all interested parties convene regularly to connect, reconnect, share ideas, initiate or build on ideas, share learning and celebrate successes. These should not be 'just another meeting'.
- Being responsive. Which in part will be facilitated through hosting workshops / other events (as appropriate), but more importantly by continuing to model the holding of open welcoming space, for deliberation, and learning that it is grounded in practice.

## Phase 2- Learning & Development

This phase is cross-cutting in that it runs throughout our efforts within the communities we learn with, and within.

While throughout we focus on Asset-Based Community Development, it is nonetheless no more than a lens through which we can support citizens and practitioners to effect more community driven development and to validate and celebrate that which is already happening. This includes rolling workshops/seminar series, one day events, more intense immersion training, development of resource materials and facilitated events, but more importantly, what we provide is intentional listening and support in taking conceptual ideas into applied contexts. It is an ongoing process that is shaped by the knowledge and experience of partners and evolves alongside their development.



### Phase 3- Learning Site development

The nature of this kind of process is that there are no truly distinct phases, the work focuses on the practical development of Learning Sites across communities and within neighbourhoods, and that work is emergent and iterative.

Nurture Development will work with partners to:

- Identify potential **Neighbourhood Learning Sites**.
- Identify local residents.
- Work with partners and Stewardship Groups to **recruit Community Builders**. The recruitment and development of Community Builders is a significant part of this phase. To support this, Nurture Development has used its experience to create a Community Builder Development programme that includes Immersion Training in ABCD, mentoring and multi-media support.

### Phase 4 - Learning/evaluation & sustainability planning

Nurture Development recommends the use of Developmental Evaluation, Stories of Most Significant Change and Realist Evaluation, which supports real-time learning in complex and emergent situations. We will work closely with partners at the outset of work together to develop an Evaluation Strategy and Learning Framework that is genuinely participatory and inclusive of citizens. We are now in a position to offer evaluation/learning frameworks that run alongside our work, which emphasises citizen-led learning and evaluation.

### How long does a Nurture Development ABCD Development Process last?

We anticipate learning and development programmes to operate for a minimum of 18 months, but ideally 2 to 3 years.

### How does Nurture Development support these efforts?

Every learning and development effort will have a dedicated Nurture Development ABCD Guide who will be drawn from our unique team of multi-disciplinary practitioners, and whom each also bring specific areas of experience and know-how in a wide range of areas. These areas include health, social care, housing, inclusion, as well as most centrally ABCD Community Building. You can find information about all of our team at [www.nurturedevelopment.org/aboutus](http://www.nurturedevelopment.org/aboutus).



## What does an ABCD Guide do?

The emphasis of Nurture Development's involvement is on widespread capacity liberation (we believe capacity is there already) relationship development and ensuring citizen-led, enduring change. This usually means the provision of dedicated support over a period of 2-3 days consultancy per month. Within this, Nurture Development ABCD Guides (these are associates of Nurture Development) provide:

1. Support to Stewardship Groups, i.e. local residents who want to weave their community together.
2. Support to Community Builders.
3. Support Community Builders and Connectors to develop asset mapping methodology and sharing of learning is a way that makes sense local and enables local people to shape the learning process..
4. Support to the Leading by Stepping Back Community of Practice.
5. Programme management support linking with the partnership leads.
6. Dedicated ongoing mentoring and coaching alongside ad hoc mentoring and coaching as required (off site and onsite).
7. Support to host organisations to explore how they can use their supportive functions, assets and resources to support and enable community building.
8. Informed support to Community Builders, on tools, techniques, etc, as required including the development of tools if not available.

## What ABCD Guides do NOT do

Everything we do is intended to ensure that the learning and development effort and process is locally owned, citizen-led and sustainable. In essence the ABCD Guide is constantly asking: "what's possible, and who cares?". With that in mind, it is worth noting that:

- Nurture Development ABCD Guides are **not** the Project Managers for these efforts but instead support the local residents, Community Builders and partner practitioners in supporting local invention to become more visible.
- ABCD Guides do not do the community building themselves but support partners to work through the process set out (i.e. find local Stewardship Groups and recruit local Community Builders), provide training and mentoring support to local Community Builders, and work with local partners to ensure genuine community inclusion and the transfer of authority to citizens.
- ABCD Guides do not line manage Community Builders. This is the role of Stewardship Groups [*see Guidesheet: Stewardship Groups*].





## An inventory of the resources we provide

In addition to this Guidesheet, we also provide Guidesheets on the following:

1. 12 Domains of People Powered Change.
2. Asset Mapping.
3. Building Blocks of Community & Learning Conversations.
4. Community Builders.
5. Community Connectors.
6. Recovery & Recovery Capital (for Recovery programmes).
7. Stewardship Groups.
8. Community Building Dynamics & the Artists Pallet.

## Ensuring community involvement from the outset - Getting started

A Nurture Development Learning Site is a neighbourhood where local residents are energised by the idea of weaving their community together. It is a visible and intentional process of community building. It will involve someone or some group of people taking on a community building function and some local people prepared to direct the process and engage in the community building effort.

Nurture Development currently has a number of Learning Sites. They vary from one another and change over time. But our core values and practices centre the work around citizens and their aspirations. Learning Sites are neighbourhoods where intentional action is taken to develop citizen led approaches to building communities of hospitality. They also show that wellbeing is determined by how well strengths are expressed, not by how well needs are addressed.

Nurture Development are approached by people seeking our input. This could be a commissioning body, or possibly a citizen group or leader. When meeting for the first time we introduce enough about ABCD and the approaches it is likely to mean in their place, for them to decide whether and how to proceed. For commissioners etc it means “letting go” and “stepping back,” not supervising and controlling (which they are likely more comfortable with and perhaps even good at. For citizens, it means reaching out and inviting in others. For partners (and other resource groups) it might mean being supportive of the process and joining in as people and organisations with resources. However this must only be initiated by residents so as not to displace or intimidate the citizen centre. For programme professionals and service providers it means being open to what can be done instead of programmes and services. When these “other ways” emerge, they must be willing to show how they might do their work so as to give space and recognition to these rather than trying to adopt or administer them.



An initial two-day introductory workshop is offered to highlight Nurture Development's approach to community building. If, following this, the energy is high and those who attend are keen to continue, we suggest ways the work might proceed. Before Nurture Development enters into an extended contract, we work with those who are keen to take the next steps to ensure that what happens next is genuinely led by, and respectful of, citizens.

We do so by engaging in a further two day workshop with interested communities and practitioners, i.e. with Community Builders and Connectors, or with those who are at least keen on exploring the roles and possibilities they offer in a local neighbourhood context. We spend two days in their neighbourhood, ideally staying overnight in the neighbourhood in question and work our way through the following suggested process:

### Day One - ABCD in Action

1. Describe the crossroads that brought you into this room?
2. Introduction to ABCD early history: 6 Building Blocks [*see Guideseet: The Building Blocks of Community*].
3. Small group discussions.

#### Coffee break

4. The Helpers challenge, exploring the challenges in relationship between citizenship, community, and the agencies.
5. How will you own these challenges? How will you lead by stepping back?
6. Some useful first steps to consider.

#### Lunch

7. ABCD in practice: a story or two in order to illustrate – with implications discussed.
8. A brief account of what a Learning Site might look like.
9. Learning Conversations, some input on the importance of a learning conversation in Community Building Work.
10. Closing the day, with questions to take into the community.
  - What ABCD-like community building do you care about enough to act upon?
  - What practical things do you see yourself doing to advance that interest that you have?
  - Who else, not in this room, would join us if you invited them? What might they bring?
  - Where else is there energy for this kind of work? How can we find even more?



## Day Two - Getting practice-oriented

### 1. Group discussion #1: Mapping our Community Building hopes & capacities.

Learning Conversation centred around the community building gifts of the people in the room: Gifts of the head, heart, hands and feet for community building: what are they? How have you used them in the past, how would you like to use them into the future?

### 2. Group discussion #2: Dilemmas.

- What needs to happen for you to be able to commit 100% to this effort?
- What would sabotage this effort?
- Who really wants this? You? The Council? The community?

### 3. Group discussion #3: Where is the welcome, who are the welcomers?

- Who from the neighbourhood are the connectors that you believe would have a welcome for this sort of effort?
- Who is best placed to invite them into conversation and ask for that welcome to be extended?

### 4. Community Walk #4: Making the invisible, visible.

In pairs, go on a community walk and discover as many hidden treasures in the neighbourhood, to include:

- Bumping spaces.
- Connectors.
- Associations.
- Gift givers and receivers.
- People and places at the edge.

### 5. A few thoughts (from examples above) on how trust develops, or collapses.

### 6. What next: Searching forward for some practice next steps.

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> An introduction to realist evaluation including a downloadable chapter from Pawson and Tilley (1997) (reproduced with permission from the authors) [www.communitymatters.com.au/gpage1.html](http://www.communitymatters.com.au/gpage1.html)



## What is Asset Mapping?

Every community has a tremendous supply of assets and resources that can be used by local residents to build community and enhance their communities. Asset Mapping is one process that helps the community to discover and connect these assets. Asset Mapping is meant to increase local knowledge and allow for more and better connections for possible future action, but it is not in itself an action step, nor indeed a step at all, but a cyclical / recursive process.

Asset Mapping involves generating a map or inventory of the capacities, skills and talents of individuals, associations, organisations, the natural and built environment, and local economy (inclusive of its gift economy). The Asset Mapping process is not about data collection, it is about connecting people to their neighbours and their ecology and economy on the basis of their assets and priorities. It is about collective-realisation, collective-empowerment and *connectorship*.

It is therefore vital that connectors, residents and their associations do the Asset Mapping themselves so that they i) build new relationships, ii) learn more about the contributions and talents of community members, and iii) identify potential linkages between different assets.

Ultimately, the challenge ahead is not simply finding assets (as important as that can be since it widens our awareness of what is all around us) but in discovering ways to receive them and put them to use.

Connectors [*see Guide Sheet: Community Connectors*] are central to the Asset Mapping process and play a key role in identifying the talents and interests of local residents and the potential resources available through local associations. The Asset Mapping process should seek to map the following:

1. Individual Assets – gifts, skills and capacities.
2. Groups and Associations – formal and informal groups and networks.
3. Assets of Local Institutions.
4. Physical resources – e.g. meeting places, unused land and green spaces and economic exchange.
5. Economic resources and moments of exchange of time, good will, etc.
6. Stories, culture and heritage.

Through one to one Learning Conversations, Connectors engage with and talk to their neighbours with the express purposes of finding out:

- What people care about enough to do something about.
- What gifts and talents they would like to contribute to the community.
- What would need to happen for them to join like-minded locals in the community building effort.
- Who else do they know who might be willing to join in.





Example of an Asset Map

## Asset-Based Community Mapping Walk

This exercise will help residents to start building an Asset Map with detailed information about the streets and the people in their neighbourhood. This is not a desk-based exercise, as an Associate you should be out in the neighbourhood with community builders and connectors making discoveries through conversation and observation. It is a good exercise for Community Builders and ND ABCD Guides to complete in the early stages of community building efforts with interested local residents, as it will start to reveal local Community Connectors.

## Some ways of mapping

### Information gathering

While on walkabout and in conversation with others (this could be Community Connectors or local residents) consider the following questions about the different streets in the neighbourhood:

- What needs community attention, distinct from systems attention?
- What obvious assets do we have that we can use to attend to the things that need our community's attention?
- What hidden assets (treasures) do we have that, if we found and connected, would help?

### Begin mapping places and associations

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- Bring everyone together at a central location so that the information gathered can be shared and mapped.
- Facilitate the community to decide how they would like to plot the information. A good place to start is with a large sheet of paper and draw on the main road(s) in the area and a few key landmarks across the neighbourhood that will help to orient people.
- Some use different colour dots (or markers) to plot the '**Bumping Spaces**' - the places where people come together naturally or as part of a group (e.g. school gates). Make sure you get the obvious but also less obvious *e.g. in Cheltenham off the Bath Road, there is a Militaria shop (sells old military stuff). Every Friday morning at 10am the owner, Steve, runs a coffee morning for the 'old boys' who live locally, and they reminisce about the old days.*
- **Plotting local associations** is also key. There is a big difference between learning that someone enjoys singing in the shower, and there's a local choir that is keen to welcome new members, so seeking to have intentional conversations with associations where three or more people - mostly unpaid – gather together to do stuff they care about, from chatting to changing the world. It's useful to use a different colour to map the associations around the bumping spaces (e.g. Pub might have a darts group and poker night, etc.)

### Connectors having Learning Conversations

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Once you've plotted all the associations you know about or can find, think about who might be Community Connectors in and across these groups, and think through how you might be able to involve them.

Agree who will have a Learning Conversation with each of the groups/associations in your community over the coming weeks and invite them to be part of the community building efforts.

Think about neighbours and other local residents who are not connected to existing associations and to begin to have a learning conversation with each of these, asking three questions:

- a. What do you really care about enough to do something about it? Or what's your 'thing'?
- b. What would someone who knows you really well say you are good at? Could you use these in any way to do something about 1 above?
- c. Would you be willing to meet with other people who share your passion if I organised it?

You can then begin to map people's individual skills and interests as well as places, spaces and associations to develop an Asset Map. See **Individual Capacity Inventory** below.

Asset Maps are live at all times: they should not be seen as a final destination that is completed once, but are an on-going process. Community Builders should meet regularly with the Community Connectors they support to 'download' the information being gathered and adapt the map(s) accordingly. The object is not the gathering of data but the making of connections.

Over time you will get to a point where the energy, motivation and connections between people can be brought together in a gathering of one kind or another, e.g. Ideas Fair or cultural festival.



**Having fun and celebrating abundance move community building forward, and remind us all of what we have in common and nourish participants for the work ahead.**

### Reflective Questions

1. Describe / think about the different ways in which Asset Maps can be developed, shared and used.
2. What assets are important to you in your community?
3. What gifts and skills do you bring to your role as a ND Associate?

### Further Reading

- Does Everyone Have a Gift? Excerpt from: *The Active Life*, Parker Palmer (electronic copy available)
- Three Lies about Gifts - How to Use Your Gifts: Debunking the Gifts Myths (electronic copy available)
- From: [http://www.dolifebig.com/2011/09/06/how-to-use-your-gifts-debunking-the-gifts-myths/#.VFGh\\_0tYFBU](http://www.dolifebig.com/2011/09/06/how-to-use-your-gifts-debunking-the-gifts-myths/#.VFGh_0tYFBU)
- Being On-Point: Dancing with our gifts by *Bruce Anderson* (electronic copy available)
- Most Common Questions and Answers about Gifts (Gifts FAQ), 2013. (electronic copy available)

## Individual Capacity Inventory

Through one to one Learning Conversations [*see Guide Sheet: Building blocks of community*], Connectors engage with and talk to their neighbours with the express purposes of finding out;

- What people care about enough to do something about.
- What gifts and talents they would like to contribute to the community.
- What would need to happen for them to join like-minded locals in the community building effort.

Eventually a 'capacity inventory' can be developed, listing these capacities in categories such as 'community-building skills', 'enterprise skills', 'teaching skills', and 'artistic skills'. The following should help in developing an inventory for your programme.

### Introduction

This inventory can be gathered by Connectors holding Learning Conversations with neighbours at various gathering places in the community. The conversation may go as follows:

*"My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What is your name?"*

*Thank you for coming over. Did someone talk to you about what the 'gift exchange' is all about? What do you understand it to be?"*

*We believe that everyone has natural talents and gifts that can be used to benefit the community. I'd like to spend a few minutes talking to you about your gifts and skills."*



## Gifts

Gifts are abilities that we are born with. We may develop them but no one has to teach them to us.

1. What positive qualities do people say you have?
2. Who are the people in your life that you give to? How did you give it to them?
3. When was the last time you shared with someone else? What was it?
4. What do you give that makes you feel good?

## Skills

Sometimes we have talents that we've acquired in everyday life such as cooking and fixing things.

1. What do you enjoy doing?
2. If you could start a business, what would it be?
3. What do you like to do that people would pay you to do?
4. Have you ever made anything? Have you ever fixed anything?

## Dreams

Before you go, I want to take a minute and hear about your dreams – those goals you hope to accomplish.

1. What are your dreams?
2. If you could snap your fingers and be doing anything, what would it be?

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### Hand, Head and Heart Exercise

Pair up with a person you don't know very well. Take a few minutes to think about your assets and then take about five minutes each to share these assets with the other person in three realms of knowing:

#### Gifts of the Hand

Physical skills you possess that you would be willing to teach others. i.e., carpentry, photography, painting, bicycle repair.

#### Gifts of the Head

Knowledge that you have in a particular area like child development, health care, history of the neighbourhood.

#### Gifts of the Heart

What are your passions? What stirs you to action? What would you walk across hot coals for?

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## What is an ABCD Community Builder?

An ABCD Community Builder is a natural connector of people, organisations and resources. They focus on engaging the skills, knowledge and talents of every community member. They also seek out the institutional, associational, physical, economic and cultural resources that are part of every community to a greater or lesser extent. They are very comfortable both encouraging and challenging community leaders and professionals to keep reaching out to bring in the assets and energies of people and resources that are often left out. The core qualities of an ABCD Community Builder are outlined below.

The ABCD Community Builder's main concern is how to empower a wider, equal partnership between residents and the clubs, groups and social networks of their community and the institutions that serve them. They are community weavers, intent on weaving the community together relationship by relationship, strength by strength.

They understand that most communities are places overflowing with strengths. It is their job to issue an invitation to citizens to have conversations with one another about issues that matter to them. These conversations are key because they deepen relationships and lead to actionable change; they focus on what is 'strong' not what is 'wrong'.

## What do ABCD Community Builders actually do?

An ABCD Community Builder spends most of their time circulating in their community, NOT sitting at a desk – usually an 80/20 split.

They spend their time getting to know every aspect of their community and the people in it:

1. Building strong relationships across the community that are independent of agendas other than one that supports community building
2. Identifying and recruiting Community Connectors [*see Guidesheet: Community Connectors*].
3. Supporting others to identify suitable places and times where interested community members can come together to share their gifts, ideas and build their own relationships
4. Convene community members (including local associations and institutions) who are interested in making change happen, and supporting them to do so.

## How do you find them / recruit Community Builders?

Recruiting the right person for the job is one of the most important parts of any community building programme. Nurture Development has created a Community Builder Recruitment Pack that can be tailored to each community and particular partner organisations. Recruitment is usually carried out by the Stewardship Group [*see Guidesheet: Stewardship Groups*].



## Are Community Builders paid?

In most circumstances, yes.

## What are the skills & abilities & characteristics that every Community Builder needs?

1. Asset mapping.
2. Connection.
3. Learning conversations.
4. Appreciative inquiry.
5. Story telling.

## What support does a Community Builder need?

Community Builders will receive mentoring, training and coaching from the Nurture Development Project Guides (as required). In addition, they should be supported on a day to day basis by their Stewardship Group around:

- HR requirements in line with Stewardship Group policy.
- Line management and/or supervision.
- In line with safe working practices, a dependable point of contact within the Stewardship Group during the hours they are working in the community.
- The opportunity to gain peer support from other Community Builders in their area and/or at other Nurture Development Learning Sites.

## Core qualities of a Community Builder

### Relationship builder

They are natural easy going connectors. Before an interview for a job as a Community Builder, the person you'll want to rate highly will be the one who will remember the person at reception, and may even know them by name. More than likely the receptionists will remember them also.

### Peace builder

They are not invested in a conflict or control model of change, they believe in building change from inside out. They see power not as a finite resource but an infinite resource that grows the more people you bring into relationships to build community.



### Not the classic leader

They are excellent motivators, they understand how to motivate people to act on their own terms, and from their own personal agency. They are not controlling or domineering. Theirs is a quiet confidence, but they are always ready to give up their place to a citizen voice since they know the citizen voice matters most.

They will never attend a meeting or speak on behalf of the community. They always attend meetings and events with citizens and promote citizen voice.

### Teacher

They are comfortable teaching practical community building skills, have a good presentation style, and have a convincing public voice, without being loud or brash.

### Critical thinker

They are not mindlessly positive, they understand that life is not always fair and that people are not always as they seem. They factor that in to how they support people to work to their respective strengths. That said they will never stop encouraging people to seek out the assets and resources in communities.

### Focused self-starters

They always hold themselves to account, and accountable to the community. They are organised and systematic in their approach to work, but this is balanced with huge creativity and flexibility.

### Collaborative yet discerning

They do not try to impose collaboration on those who are not ready.

### Challenging and supportive

They are powerful communicators who value listening above all else, and see themselves as the bringers of 'questions' not 'answers'.

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"You have to be seen in the community – if you're there once a month then you're just a 'visitor'." Mike, Health and Happiness, on being a Community Builder.

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### Empowering

They actively work to build agency and understand deeply how dependency builds up. They will never do for another what that a person can do for themselves.

### Reflective

They are deep learners, constantly reflecting on their own practice. They will therefore need a learning circle of thoughtful residents and fellow community builders through which they can unpack their learning and seek on-going feedback and support.



## Results

They care about results but are not obsessive about targets. Instead they are faithful to the principles of Community Building and so keep a watchful eye to ensure that greater numbers of citizens are participating and creating in civic space. They are also watchful of the numbers of labelled people who are contributing their gifts. If those numbers are not increasing they will want to understand why and figure out with their initiating group of residents how to improve on those results.

## Reflective Questions

- Thinking of some of the Community Builders you have known, which particular 'core qualities' did they demonstrate? What other strengths did they bring which made them good at their role?
- What have you learnt from when Community Builders haven't been quite right for the role?
- How would you summarise the purpose of community building?

## Further Reading

- Beyond co-production: Asset Based Community Development, Blog Post, 23.5.14  
<http://blog.nurturedevelopment.org/2014/05/23/beyond-co-production-asset-based-community-development-abcd/>
- The 7 Tactics of Hidden Persuaders, Blog Post, 19.10.14  
[http://abcdeurope.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-7-tactics-of-hidden-persuaders-by-cormac-russell?xq\\_source=activity](http://abcdeurope.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-7-tactics-of-hidden-persuaders-by-cormac-russell?xq_source=activity)



## What is a Community Connector?

Community Connectors are ‘people lovers, who are also loved and trusted’. They know and keep in touch with many people and are able to create and maintain long-lasting friendships. Being a Connector comes naturally to them; which is a good thing, because it is not something that can be taught.

Community Connectors are natural networkers, relationship builders, positive, playful, optimistic, caring and compassionate local people. They are not paid workers and any attempts to turn them into ‘professionals’ should be resisted. Their priceless contribution is connecting people, associations and institutions more widely to the community, and in weaving the community together. But they are also tricksters, they know how to take the king on, and play with power in wonderful creative and sophisticated ways.

According to John McKnight and Peter Block, the **core qualities of Community Connectors** are that they are:

### Well connected

They know a larger number of people than the average person.

### Gift centred

They always see the ‘full half’ in everyone: the passion, skills, talents, & knowledge.

### Trusted

They are widely trusted, have a wealth of trusting relationships and know how to create new trusting relationships.

### Conveners of people

They get an enormous amount of joy from connecting people and bringing them together. They are not interested in leading; they simply know the power of joining people together and believe in the people in their community.

### Information holders

They are naturally able to hold a lot of information about a person, their gifts and the people they know, and bring it to the fore when needed.

### Tour guides

They know their neighbourhood and/or community like the back of their hand. They know the streets, the people and the groups and associations.

## Are Community Connectors paid?

In most circumstances, no. They also tend not to be volunteers in any formal sense.



## How do you find and recruit Connectors?

Community Connectors should be fairly easy to find. Their names will crop up regularly in Learning Conversations [see *Guidesheet: The building blocks of community & Learning Conversations*] and they will usually be present at community events and activities. You probably won't find them at formal meetings as they tend to shy away from these in favour of more spontaneous, informal or fun gatherings.

A good starting point for Community Builders in finding Community Connectors is to think about their own networks; who are the people that bring you together with others and whose energy, imagination and kindness provides the bedrock of your connection? These people are 'connectors'. Their local knowledge and ways of interacting with neighbours, friends and strangers, is a good "fit" with the community culture at work in a given place.

## What are the qualities & skills that every Community Connector needs?

People are identified as Community Connectors because they already possess the qualities they need to make connections. It is a natural part of who they are. Generally a Connectors' gifts include:

- The ability to build trusting relationships.
- The ability to hold vast amounts of information about people and places.
- The ability to share this information where appropriate and connect people to their community.

## What is the connection between Community Builders and Connectors?

Within a community building process it is important for Community Builders to learn (they will learn from each other) with local Community Connectors to:

- Hold intentional Learning Conversation [see *Guidesheet: The building blocks of community & Learning Conversations*]
- Design together a way to capture information about their community in a way that can be shared easily and appropriately between the Community Connector and Builder, and potentially more widely [see *Guidesheet: Asset Mapping*].



## **What support does a Community Connector need?**

Community Connectors are supported by Community Builders. They might:

- Have regular get togethers with the Community Builder.
- Be able to contact their Community Builder by telephone / email during the day (or as appropriate to your process).
- Be given the opportunity to give and receive peer support from other Community Connectors in their area and other areas.

## **How many Community Connectors does a neighbourhood need?**

This will vary from one community to another but it is likely there will be more than you imagine. Ideally, every street, association and institution will have and be aware of a Community Connector. And they will know of one another.

## **Top tips**

Many community building efforts struggle or fail because time is not given to finding Connectors and building and nurturing relationships with them. Community Builders must acknowledge that they alone cannot build a community and that they are unlikely to know as much as a vibrant group of Community Connectors.

You might find that some people do not want to be formally acknowledged as Community Connectors. This will be especially true amongst 'natural connectors' who might have busy lives and a range of commitments. Try to avoid being too rigid in how Community Connectors can be involved in the community building process, remember it's their community, and you're their guest, so be responsive to their style and concerns. Be inviting to a wide range of people and types of local connections.

You will often find that Connectors know other Connectors. Community Builders should create a space for Connectors to come together to understand the community building process they are being asked to support. This will give them the opportunity to discover how they might work with each other to reach out to the wider community, particularly those on the margins.





## Reflective Questions

1. Where would you begin seeking out Connectors in your community or neighbourhood?
2. Can you think of anyone you know already who is a Connector? Make a note of their skills, gifts and qualities that you feel are relevant.

## References and further reading

- Block, Peter & McKnight, John (2010) *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods*; Berrett-Koehler Publishers
- Kretzmann, John & McKnight, John (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A path towards finding and mobilising community assets* -known as 'The Green Book'.



## **The Dynamics of Community Building – The Artist's Palette**

Nurture Development has developed this Guidesheet as a good faith attempt to describe what is essentially an iterative, non-linear process. The purpose of articulating it in this way is dual, firstly to support community building efforts in ND Learning Sites and beyond, and secondly to make explicit key practice moments worth attending to. It offers an emergent framework for community building that is necessarily messy and non-mechanical and is respectful of the ever-changing context from one community to the next.

We have described the process in this Guide sheet **as analogous to artists using palettes of colour.**

**Community Connectors** [see *Guidesheet: Community Connectors*] are the key artists using this palette. The connectors and their neighbours are the creators and inventors, and the Community Builder is the supporter of that creativity/invention. If community connectors were golfers, community builders would be caddies. They are the people in the community holding the palette of colours that can draw the Learning Conversations, building relationships and supporting other local people to develop a picture of the community as a whole. As such, an important prelude to beginning this work in the deepest sense is the presence of a group of local residents who are interested in weaving their community together relationship by relationship who are prepared to support and give active stewardship and help in recruiting at least one or more Community Builder(s).



## It is important not to rush painting the picture

- Just like with a painting, there is no set timeline or pre-set starting point to complete the picture as a whole. Our experience has shown that it takes at least 18 – 24 months for the community to begin to see some coherence or shared meaning in the various sketches that have emerged.
- An artist may concentrate on various aspects in the development of the picture, or on certain colours, and this may take varying amounts of time. Similarly, different practices may take different amounts of time, some much more than others. Finding and supporting connectors, for example, can vary profoundly from one place to the next.
- Try not to plan every detail of the sketches at once, or feel you need to start at any particular point. Remember there is no map, only a compass, so trust your instincts. Each stage will reveal new images about your community, the people within it and the gifts and assets that they are willing to contribute to the community building efforts.
- Just as an artist may need to review the picture and revise it, you - along with the connectors and the wider community - will need to revisit practice efforts time and time again.
- Not every colour on the palette has to be used. The colour mix of every community will be different. You may not need to attend to all practice possibilities.
- An artist's picture is rarely finished or complete. Likewise the process can (and should) be repeated regularly to make sure that the community remains as open and inclusive as possible towards all of its members. Everyone should be able to see their brushstrokes on the canvas.
- In fact, there will likely be more than one canvas. This is not a matter of painting one large or nearly complete picture. Instead, there might reasonably be multiple pictures and thus the need for multiple canvases. These might or might not be complementary. They might also represent important differences and variety in point of view and thus not belong in the same picture.
- Finally - You should always keep an empty canvas and an empty chair at each easel, for new people who are yet to be included; and a genuine welcome for them to shape and reshape the painting.

Given the nuances of this Artist's Palette, Nurture Development **Project Guides** [see *Guidesheet ABCD Offer and Guide*] will provide practice support, advice and mentoring to Community Builders throughout.

**Stewardship Groups** [see *Guidesheet: Stewardship Groups*] are also supported by Nurture Development Project Guides to support communities to work out how they will continue their efforts beyond the scope of the commissioned programme.



## The Dynamic of the Art of Community Building

While it is an iterative and radial process it does have intentionality behind it. We intentionally support local residents to select local paints and encourage local invention, especially when it is not practiced or technocratic. We are not seeking expert brush strokes or to measure people's up against each other. Hence **Community Building is a sequence that:**

1. Starts with the identification, connection, and mobilisation of assets that are local and in community control; putting authority for the invention and production of solutions in the hands of local people, not outside experts.
2. Then progresses to focus on resources that are local but outside of community control. Bringing these resources under democratic community influence is made more possible by virtue of the above starting point.
3. Ultimately powerful, inclusive communities can confidently move towards assets that are outside of community control and proximity when and if they need to. This will not always be easy and hardly conflict-free. Nevertheless, this process enables communities who are often defined as problematic and needy, to build civic muscle and the collective authority as citizens to produce their own solutions using local resources where appropriate, and then to draw in and on external support as needed. This sequence ensures that when outside solutions come they match up with the abundance of community, not it's scarcity.

In contrast, a scarcity mindset would lead us to start and all too often remain at the third stage of the sequence described above. The scarcity perspective would have us believe that the limited, yet most valuable resources exist outside of our communities and in institutions. This is a half-baked truth, and even if it were completely true, liberating those external institutional resources without first liberating local capacities results in top down, bureaucratic solutions that simply do not work and are wasteful.

Notwithstanding, movements like the cooperative movement, transition towns, slow food, home schooling, ecovillage, self-help groups throughout the Global South and endless others, demonstrate that a significant portion of people on the planet still believe that small is beautiful and possible and, ultimately, more effective.

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*"If the artist is one who captures the nuances of experience, then this is whom each of us must become." Peter Block.*

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## Nurture Development Learning and Evaluation Offer

*“Deep, visible curiosity-imbued with respect-will take you a long way.” Prof Jody Kretzmann, Co-Director of the ABCD Institute*

Nurture Development’s approach to evaluation and learning supports real-time learning in complex and emergent situations. We see evaluation and learning as closely linked, capturing learning from what we do (process / outputs) and evaluating what is achieved (change, outcomes and impact). Both are important for us.

Our approach combines participatory self-assessment that takes each context seriously, with a concern to draw out learning that can inform work across a range of settings. We integrate quantitative and qualitative methods in a customised and rigorous evaluation approach.

## Our Approach / How we work

We aim to work together with our clients to develop an Evaluation Strategy and Learning Framework that fits each site. We can advise on how to balance participatory approaches with enlisting external evaluators where this is appropriate. We can also help you access and articulate the existing evidence and experience on ABCD

One of our Associates (who is not directly working on the project / in the learning site) can work with you to design and lead a developmental evaluation over the life of the project or programme, including advising on capacity development for project participants, and the fruitful engagement of external evaluators where necessary.

## Methods and approaches

Nurture Development recommends the use of *Developmental Evaluation* and *Realist Evaluation* which support real time learning and working alongside partners to understand the complex and diverse ways that community building plays out. This combination of methods supports the gathering of evidence to help understand and address emerging issues in context, while supporting cumulative learning across many different places to inform future action

We offer a menu of choices of methods and approaches tailored to each setting, which may include:

- Case studies and complex case comparative methods
- Participatory learning and reflection methods including participatory statistics
- In-depth interviews with key informants
- Stories of most significant change
- Network mapping and analysis



We seek to weave the learning tools chosen for each situation (or case) into the everyday work of a community building project, with a thoughtful balance between the practice tools of community building and the evaluation methods chosen. Understanding the intended users and uses of the evaluation is always a part of informing the evaluation design and implementation so that it fuels learning and improvement and does not remain a paper exercise.

Whichever methods are to be used, they are informed by a **core set of values** which include:

- Genuinely participatory
- Inclusive and respectful of citizens
- Have access to an able local partner as evaluator
- Feature an open minded and independent perspective

## Outcomes of interest

Each context is different, and an important part of any evaluation is embracing and understanding this. Some indicative outcomes that our approach helps to map over time include:

**Community Builders and connectors** - changed roles, activities and efforts;

**Individual residents** - feeling more connected, participating in community efforts, improving skills and confidence

**Communities:** more associations and groups, with increased diverse membership, increased reciprocity and trust, resources in the area brought into use, community capacity to respond increased.

## What can Nurture Development provide?

- Advice and support about developing a learning and evaluation plan appropriate to your ABCD efforts.
- Access to experienced evaluation specialists - Our team includes people with expertise in relevant skills such as qualitative methods, realist evaluation, developmental evaluation, social capital measurement, complex case comparison, participatory learning and reflection.
- Support for residents and those involved in projects to build their everyday evaluation skills
- Concise user friendly communication of evaluation learning and results in a range of appropriate formats.
- Access to a growing body of knowledge and experience based on work in other sites.



## More information

- Most Significant Change Guide <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>
- An introduction to realist evaluation including a downloadable chapter from Pawson and Tilley (1997) [www.communitymatters.com.au/gpage1.html](http://www.communitymatters.com.au/gpage1.html)  
<http://e-mops.ning.com/page/realist-evaluation-introductory-resources>
- **A Brief introduction to Realist Evaluation** (2 pages) by Dr Gill Westhorp. Introduction to Realist evaluation, what makes it distinctive, and key aspects of the approach.  
[www.communitymatters.com.au/RE\\_Intro.doc](http://www.communitymatters.com.au/RE_Intro.doc)
- **Introduction to Realist Evaluation and Realist synthesis - Powerpoint presentation** (29 slides) by Ray Pawson, 2006. [www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk/qmss/documents/NicosiaRaymondPawson.ppt](http://www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk/qmss/documents/NicosiaRaymondPawson.ppt)

## Outline of time commitments for Stories of Significant Change process with Community Builders

Below is a sketch of the time commitments required to do a minimum starter process on using stories of significant change for learning and evaluation around community building.

This is based on the idea that an initial meeting, to gather stories with residents, would illustrate the process for Community Builders (CBs). The process could then be followed up with a CBs meeting to model and reflect on the process together, and then to do more of the same with residents. Similarly, production of a report of that first meeting would illustrate a good way to gather and distill the stories and insights, working with a local illustrator to do so.

From there, the assumption is that Community Builders take the process forward and host a number of subsequent story-sharing meetings over a period, say 12 months.

This is the 'minimum' package because, usually, all sorts of detail about local context, mean that negotiations and adaptations of the process need to be worked out. Our assumption is that the strong CBs would be happy to go with this and deal with the contingencies and adapt once they get the method. Equally, they are better handling a consent process around however the stories may be used -though some illustrated consent forms and discussion of that process would also be part of the capacity development meeting-.

Mentoring is very minimal again in the outline, and would likely expand further, depending on the context. As mentioned above, a lot can be achieved by peers having space/time to reflect together on things, rather than needing external input.



Ultimately, most things can be dealt with among peers with good communication, but there are also learnings from participatory and 'democratic' practice that get forgotten all too easily (rather than this being about 'expertise' as such). So being attached to the process and having an eye on it to chip in every now and then can be useful, but is not always easy to factor into the budgets etc.

Activity	Detail	Time commitment	Days
Introductory communications	Liaison with key staff, community builders on approach Share background information and examples	Approx. 1 days overall depending on number of people involved	1
Initial Story sharing meeting with residents and key community builders	RV facilitate a story sharing event with residents, with support of CBs to share and jointly analyse 4-5 stories 4 hour meeting Illustrator present if possible Record stories for write up	Preparation and delivery of meeting 1 days plus travel time at half rate (.5 -1 day = .25 - .5) <b>1.5 -2 days</b>	<b>1.25 – 1.5 days</b>
Draft report of residents stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribe stories</li> <li>• Edit and write up including key themes</li> <li>• Review and harmonise illustrations</li> <li>• Edit/format report</li> <li>• Share draft report with participants</li> <li>• Incorporate feedback</li> <li>• (CBs liaise with residents individually where necessary)</li> </ul>	<b>Up to 3 days</b> , depending on number of stories and ease of communication with participants	<b>Up to 3 days</b>
Reflection and capacity development meeting with CBs to adopt MSC method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RV design and facilitate session working with CBs</li> <li>• 'Model' process by sharing and analysing stories</li> <li>• Review elements of process and common challenges</li> <li>• Signpost to resources and materials</li> </ul>	Preparation and delivery of meeting 1.5 day Plus travel time (.5-1 half time)	<b>1.75- 2.25 days</b>
Support and mentoring to CBs and staff involved in several additional story-sharing events over 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability on skype/phone/email for answering questions, discussing issues, signposting</li> </ul>	Depending on numbers and needs (4 people x 2 sessions upwards), scheduling, meeting, follow up <b>.5 – 2 days minimum</b>	<b>.5 – 2 days minimum</b>
<b>Total days</b>			<b>7.5 – 9.75</b>
Contingency			<b>1-2 days</b>



## Key assumptions

The following key assumptions reflect some of the above; included the fact that subsequent story events may need capacity of an illustrator and a write to pull them together if none of the CBs have that propensity themselves.

After initial process, Community Builders happy to take the process forward with a mentoring and support from a distance.

Peer reflection and support among Community Builders and connectors invaluable to tailoring and adapting the method and making sure it is relevant for that communities needs

CBs prepared to commit to the necessary communication and dialogue with involved residents on the story process, ideas for (and proper consent process) for sharing and communicating stories more widely

Additional resources for illustration and write up of subsequent story sharing events may be needed if CBs do not have the capacity (same goes for any overall synthesis report)

Stories of change may need some secondary analysis and be complemented by other evaluation methods to be perceived as 'rigorous' in many professional circles.



## What do you mean by 'recovery'?

Recovery is a well-established term within the drug and alcohol field but there remains a level of divergence about what it exactly entails and how it is measured. The debate about the definition touches on some of the most controversial issues within the addictions field, e.g. harm reduction & abstinence. Some of the most commonly used definitions are set out to the right.

Despite the lack of an agreed upon definition there seems to be some agreement about the core components:

- It is a process and not necessarily an end state: This is a personalised process.
- Wellbeing and quality of life: It is a lived experience rather than something diagnosed.
- Hope and aspiration.
- Some measure of community engagement or citizenship.
- Some measure of sobriety.

Whether that measure of sobriety relates directly to abstinence, reduced use or medically supported recovery is something that we believe should be defined by the individual and should be flexible to changes in individual circumstances.

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*'Recovery is the experience (a process and a sustained status) through which individuals, families, and communities impacted by severe alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems utilize internal and external resources to voluntarily resolve these problems, heal the wounds inflicted by AOD-related problems, actively manage their continued vulnerability to such problems, and develop a healthy, productive, and meaningful life.'*  
William White (2007).

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*'Recovery from substance dependence is a voluntarily maintained lifestyle characterised by sobriety, personal health, and citizenship.'*  
Betty Ford Institute Consensus Panel (2007).

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*'The process of recovery from problematic substance use is characterised by voluntarily sustained control over substance use which maximises health and well-being and participation in the rights, roles and responsibilities of society'.* UKDPC Consensus Group (2008).

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## What is 'Recovery Capital'?

If we understand recovery in these terms then we can understand Recovery Capital as the sum of resources that may facilitate the process of recovery.

There is also some variation in the various domains of Recovery Capital. We tend to talk about 3 distinct domains:

1. Personal Recovery Capital (which includes physical and human)
2. Social Recovery Capital
3. Community Recovery Capital (which includes cultural).

## Personal Recovery Capital

Personal Recovery Capital can be defined as the internal resources that someone may or may not possess such as skills, positive health, aspirations, values and hopes, education and intelligence. This is something referred to as Human Recovery Capital.

It may also include external resources that someone possesses such as tangible assets of property and money. This is sometimes referred to as Physical Recovery Capital.

## Social Recovery Capital

Social Recovery Capital is the resources that someone has as a result of their relationships and includes both support from and obligations to groups to which they belong – for example families may provide support but this will often require commitments and obligation from other family members.

## Community Recovery Capital

Community Recovery Capital refers to the resources and assets that someone may or may not have access to in their physical environment, such as employment opportunities, community resources like good transport links, or training and leisure facilities.

It will also include 'Cultural Recovery Capital' such as values, beliefs and attitudes that link to social conformity, and the ability to fit into dominant social behaviours.





## What is a Stewardship Group?

A Stewardship Group is an important part of any community building process. It is, in plain, a group of community weavers who step up and keen to roll up their sleeves and get on with inclusive community building across a community. Each group typically includes:

- ‘Conductors’: local people who support an asset-based community development programme and are in a position to positively champion the approach across the community, e.g. local GPs, community safety officer.
- The Community Builder(s) once recruited.
- The Community Connector(s) once identified.

Significantly, Stewardship Groups ensure that the community building developments hold true to the principles of ABCD, that they are:

- Place-based in focus.
- Emphasise the power of relationships over the power of money and position.
- Committed to social justice.
- Asset-based.
- Promote citizen / community-led action.

## What does a Stewardship Group actually do?

Stewardship Groups are established at the beginning of any community building process to ensure citizen-led action from the earliest stages. Stewardship Groups serve a number of functions:

1. Develop and carry out an appropriate process for recruiting Community Builders (with support from the Nurture Development Project Guide).
2. Do some practical community building.
3. Ensure personal commitment and non-hierarchical accountability between everybody that is involved in the community building effort throughout the process and beyond.
4. Champion the ABCD principles and community building practice through practical action.
5. Address political issues directly and honestly.
6. Develop a legacy plan to make sure the work and outcomes from the ABCD community building programme proliferate and are sustained once contract period ends.



## What does a Stewardship Group NOT do?

In most instances they are not the employers of the Community Builder(s) and as such have no need to set up as a legal entity. They are not the democratic voice of the entire community and, like the Community Builders, must ensure the promotion of citizen voice by constantly broadening their circle of participation.

## How often do Stewardship Groups meet?

Stewardship Groups convene as regularly as they see fit, in a way that makes sense to them. The main thing to encourage is playfulness and a focus on action.

## What support do Stewardship Groups need?

That is for them to decide. Stewardship Groups are supported by the Nurture Development Project Guide and receive mentoring, training and coaching on their terms (or as required).

### Further Reading

- Webinar Coady Citizen-led Development, on Market Creek <https://www.youtube.com/v/CoNPz4O4oXY&feature=youtu.be>
- Gaventa, John and Mathie, Alison (eds) (2014). *Citizen-led Development*. Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.



## The building blocks of community & Learning Conversations

Many models of community building start with a 'needs analysis' that seeks to diagnose problems and identify gaps in a given community or area. This is a deficit approach, looking for what is missing or problematic, and often leads to the assumption that the solution lies in the provision of new or more efficient services.

ABCD is completely different. It starts from the understanding that every community, no matter where it is, has a wealth of assets and resources that lie at the heart of building sustainable and vibrant communities. To help us understand all of the potential assets and resources, we often talk about 6 different categories of assets, which we believe are **the building blocks of a community**:

1. The skills and experience of local residents.
2. The power of local associations.
3. The resources of public, private and non profit institutions.
4. The physical resources of local places.
5. The economic resources of local places.
6. The stories of our lives and evolving communities.

The ABCD approach has been pioneered by Professors John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann of the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University in Chicago. The ABCD Institute, established in 1995 by the Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, is built upon three decades of community development research by Jody Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. The results of their work now span the world and the ABCD Institute spreads its findings on capacity-building community development in two ways:

- a) Through extensive and substantial interactions with community builders.
- b) By producing practical resources and tools for community builders to identify, nurture, and mobilise neighbourhood assets.

The art of community building lies in the ability to engage with and enable local citizens to collectively identify and connect these assets through **Learning Conversations** within trusting relationships.

**Asset Mapping** exercises [see *Guidesheet: Asset Mapping*] are used to mobilise local citizens towards community building activities. It may take time to pinpoint and understand the full range of assets across all of the categories. This is especially true within communities that have been disempowered and blinded to their own gifts and capabilities by the growth of service provision and professionalisation.



## Learning Conversations

Learning Conversations will be key to identifying these assets. Learning Conversations are intentional, relationship building efforts, that help Community Builders and Community Connectors understand the wide range of gifts, talents, resources and passions that exist across their community.

1. When speaking to residents begin by **finding out what they care about enough to act on**; what are the gifts and talents they would like to contribute to the community; what would need to happen for them to join in action with like-minded neighbours. A 'capacity inventory' listing these capacities under categories such as 'community-building skills', 'enterprise skills', 'teaching skills', 'artistic skills' etc. is useful.
2. **Local associations** are the engines of community action in any community because they amplify and multiply individual gifts, and are therefore essential as assets. Most local associations are informal groups of people coming together around a common interest. They are rarely constituted and they may not actively promote themselves, making them hard to find. One way to discover them is to start with a core group of residents and ask them what associations and informal groups they belong to. Once these have been listed, ask the core group to expand the list to include associations they know about. This longer list of associations can then be clustered by type and those associations that are most likely to participate in working together for a common purpose can be identified.
3. **Local institutions** include government agencies, non government agencies and private sector businesses. The assets of these institutions could be the services and programmes they provide, the meeting places they offer, the equipment and other supplies or the contacts they may have. They also have paid or unpaid staff who may provide important links with the wider community.

Revealing gifts to individuals, organisations and communities can be extremely powerful. In every conversation, Community Builders and Connectors have the ability to reorient people and communities to the power they hold to make change happen.

### Further reading

- Cunningham & Mathie (2002) Asset based community development – an overview. Coady International Institute: [www.synergos.org/knowledge/02/abcdoverview.htm](http://www.synergos.org/knowledge/02/abcdoverview.htm)
- McKnight, John (1995), *Careless Society: community and its counterfeits*, Basic Books.
- Block, Peter & McKnight, John (2010) *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods*; Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Kretzmann, John & McKnight, John (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A path towards finding and mobilising community assets*. (Known as *The Green Book*).
- Diers, Jim (2004) *Neighbor Power: Building Community The Seattle Way*, University of Washington Press.

