



PUBLIC ALLIES

Asset-Based National Service: Strengthening Communities Through Service from the Inside Out

AmeriCorps Best Practice Conference

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Asset-Based National Service

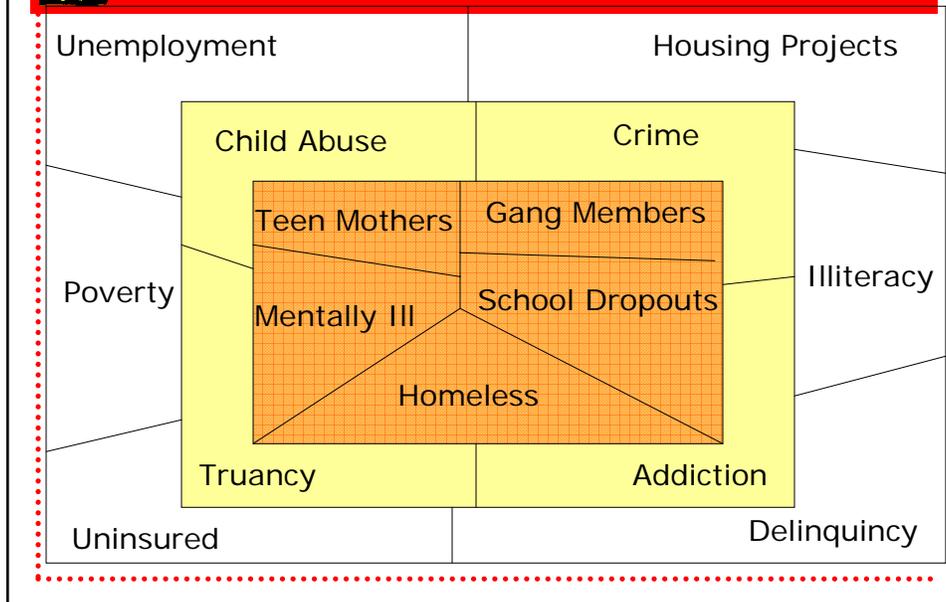
AGENDA

- 1. Shifting from Needs to Assets**
- 2. Overview of Community Assets**
- 3. Applying ABCD to National Service**

Recruitment & Selection
Service Design and Delivery
Member Development
Volunteer Generation, Collaboration and Sustainability



Community Needs Map



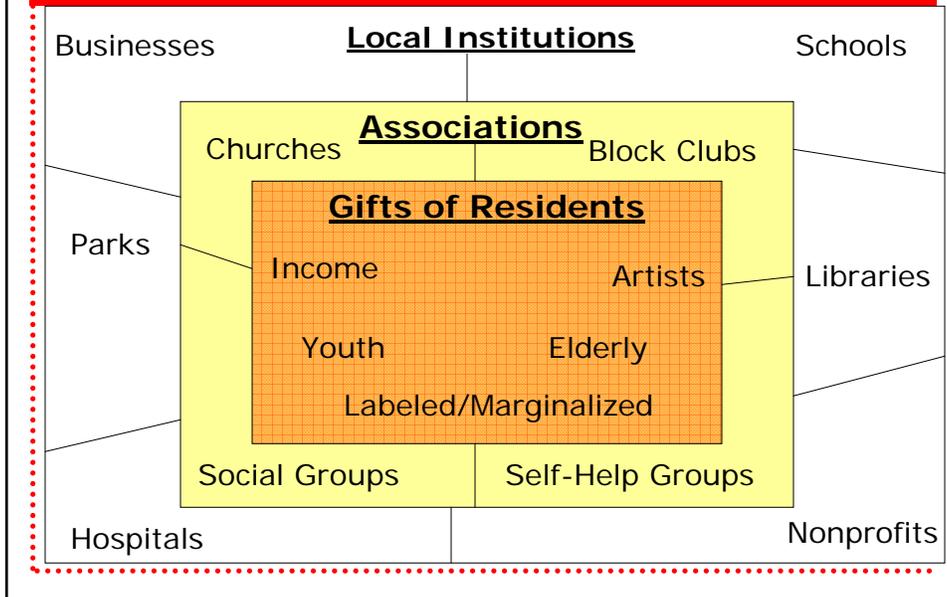
Consequences of Needs Map

- People internalize the labels they are given based on their deficiencies.
- Local relationships are destroyed as people “need” professionals
- Funds are directed at professional helpers, not residents
- Grantmakers create categories for grants that reinforce the needs map.
- Leaders magnify people’s deficiencies to gain power
- Failure is often rewarded and dependency produced
- It creates hopelessness

A New Definition of Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.



Community Asset Map



Needs vs Assets Paradigms

Needs-Based

- Therapeutic vision
- Fragmented Effort
- Funding goes to Service providers
- Highlights problems and needs and ignores strengths and capacities
- Only outsiders can offer real help
- Dependence on the System
- Targets isolated individuals
- Unconcerned about relationships

Asset-Based

- Community vision
- Combined, Systemic Effort
- Dollars to those who know the community
- Highlights the capacities and assets
- Insiders are the key helpers
- Dependence on each other
- Seeks to involve the entire community
- Based on relationship-building

Robert Francis, RYSAP, Bridgeport, CT



Two Solutions, Two Paths

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Needs | • Assets |
| • Services to Meet Needs | • Connect and Contribute |
| • Consumers | • Citizens |
| • Programs are the Answer | • People are the Answer
<i>(a shift in power!)</i> |



Key Assets

1. The Gifts and Talents of Neighborhood Residents
2. Local Associations and Social Capital
3. Local Institutions that support citizen-centered efforts



Community Residents

Two Essential Principles of ABCD

1. Everyone, no exception, has gifts and talents that can benefit communities
2. Everyone should have opportunities to give their gifts

Powerful communities create a place for everyone's gifts – there are no strangers



Social Capital

Social Capital refers to the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them

The more relationships one has in their community, the more likely they are to be employed, volunteer, participate in political and civic activities, and more



Associations

Associations are the vehicles by which we voluntarily come together as friends, neighbors and citizens to learn, share, teach, collaborate, socialize, contribute and act

- Sports Groups
- Church Groups
- Neighborhood Groups
- Block Clubs
- Business Groups
- Political/Activist Groups
- School Groups
- Service Groups
- Mutual Support Groups (AA, etc.)
- Men and Women Groups
- Youth Groups
- Cultural Groups
- Hobby Groups (cooking, reading, gardening, travel)



Institutions

Institutions, including nonprofits, schools, hospitals, and libraries, for example, are assets when:

- a) They open their assets to the community beyond their specific service
- b) They engage neighborhood residents as stakeholders
- c) They relate to and collaborate with other organizations, schools, houses of worship, and businesses that serve the same individuals, families and neighborhood they do



An ABCD Approach

- Identifies and mobilizes the assets of individuals, especially those who are marginalized or “clients” of social services
- Builds relationships among community members, especially those that are mutually supportive
- Gives community members more roles and power in local institutions



ABCD and Service

- Can help address individual and community needs directly, address public issues, provide for the public benefit
- Can place people in positions of “privileged” and “needy”
- Can build relationships among people across various lines of difference
- Can place the interests of the server over the interests of those being served
- Can increase the civic capacity of the individuals serving – knowledge of community and community groups, social capital, and interest in public issues, political involvement
- Can focus on immediate needs versus lasting solutions



Applying ABCD to Service

1. Recruitment and Selection
2. Service Design and Delivery
3. Member Development
4. Volunteer Generation, Collaboration and Sustainability



Recruitment and Selection

- How do you define the criteria for participants?
- How do your materials and messages represent the community and the people you serve?
- Who do you engage in your recruitment process? What groups do you reach out to? Where do you post information?
- Are any people you have served applying to participate in your program? Are there people from the neighborhoods you serve applying to be in your program?
- Do you engage others in your participant selection process and are any of them from the community, neighborhoods or demographic groups you serve?



Service Design and Delivery

- How are you connected to the neighborhood you serve? How do your human and organizational assets support the community beyond your specific service?
- How do you decide where to serve and who to serve? How do you decide which outcomes are most important to pursue?
- Are people from the neighborhood you serve involved at all in the selection and design of service activities?
- Who else works on the same issue or serves the same people you serve and what is your relationship with them?
- How does your service mobilize local assets and foster associational life in the community?



Member Development

- How are members involved in their own and each others' development?
- How are members oriented to the community they serve?
- Who from the community comes in to speak with and facilitate trainings and workshops for members?
- Are members taught community building principles and approaches?
- Are there critical reflection topics members can use to engage in dialogues and learning about themselves, their service and their community?

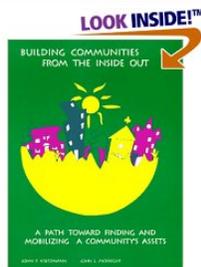


Sustainability

- How do you build relationships with neighborhood businesses, individuals and others to support your projects?
- Where do you seek volunteers? How do you engage them? Are they diverse by race, age, gender, etc.? How do you sustain their service?
- What community organizations do you collaborate with? Do you know or work with the other people or groups who serve the same residents you do?



RESOURCES



*Building Communities from the Inside Out:
A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a
Community's Assets*

by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University: www.northwestern.edu/IPR/abcd.html

The Leadership Practice, a coaching, training and consulting group formed by Public Allies and the ASBC Institute, which is an official training and technical assistance provider for CNCS