



ABCD: DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PEOPLE'S ASSETS



Members of the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition, South Africa

ABCD: ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the next hour, we will:

- Cover 'What is ABCD?' - 5min
- Tools used – 5min
- How the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition has used ABCD – 5min
- Values and limitations – 10 min
- World Café-style workshop – 20min
(3 shifts of 6 mins)
- Feedback – 10min



ABCD



- ABCD stands for Asset-based Community Development
- Assets: human, financial, social, natural, physical and technological assets
- Concept: build up and protect asset base
- Connect assets: multiplying effect of 'assets'
(internal and external to community)

Half full or half empty?



Needs-based...



- ❑ Promotes deficit mindset
- ❑ Leaders denigrate communities/play up 'lack'
- ❑ Shift from 'citizens' to 'clients' (loss of incentive to be the producers – “rescue us”/dependency)
- ❑ Deal more with external entities
- ❑ Reinforces notion 'outsiders' are true hope
- ❑ Weakens neighbour-to-neighbour links
- ❑ Donor funding – 'needs filling' = easy results



- **Needs-based approach** tends to prescribe solutions by creating agencies that deliver services to clients.
- **ABCD approach** focuses on empowering citizens to develop creative problem-solving solutions.

ABCD



- Communities cease to view themselves as deprived
- Communities take charge, with confidence
- Communities problem-solve internally
- Competencies and networks are mobilized
- Interconnectivity multiplies the power
- Community action can support government
- Government can financially support communities' = quicker social transformation.

ACBD (continued)...



- Everyone has assets - builds spirit of egalitarianism
- Personal and community relationships viewed as assets
- Better attuned to claim rights
- Positions community in larger scheme (district, province, national etc)
- Leads to sustainable community-driven economic development and collective action
- Ubuntu – I am because you are

ABCD draws on the best of...

- Appreciative enquiry
- Social capital
- Participatory methodologies
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Civil society
- Community economic development & social entrepreneurship
- Rights-based approach – political & human





External agents

- ❑ Leading by stepping back**
- ❑ Local leadership central to sustaining ABCD – formal/informal; group or individual**
- ❑ ABCD is not done to communities by ABCD experts**

Role of external agent's



External agents can assist with...

- **Concepts** — share new ideas and experiences without imposing
- **Capacity** — introduce ABCD tools and participatory methods; link to skills training they identify as needed
- **Capability** — assist with bringing plans to fruition: feasibility strategy, funding, logistics, technology etc
- **Connections** — help facilitate contacts and opportunities (internal and external)
- **Confidence** — allow people to feel the satisfaction of having done it themselves; external agent builds confidence in 'letting go' and exercises critical self-awareness

Tools

- **Story-telling**
- **Transect walks**
- **Asset-mapping**
(inventory and analysis)
- **Head, hand, heart, hip**
(knowledge & skills, resources, social relations, partnerships)
- **Leaky bucket** (what's coming in, what's retained, what's leaking out)
- **Planning and mobilising**

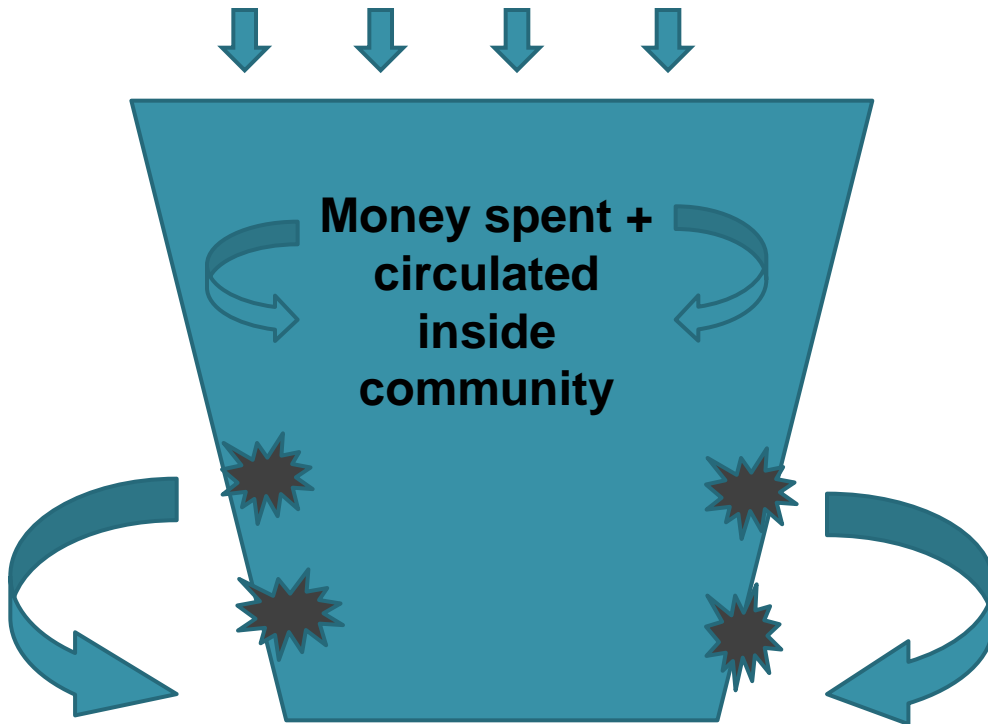




The leaky bucket

(community exercise to name and quantify economic situation and opportunities)

Money coming into a community



Holes/leaks = money spent outside community

(communities can identify opportunities to plug the holes and retain money in the community)

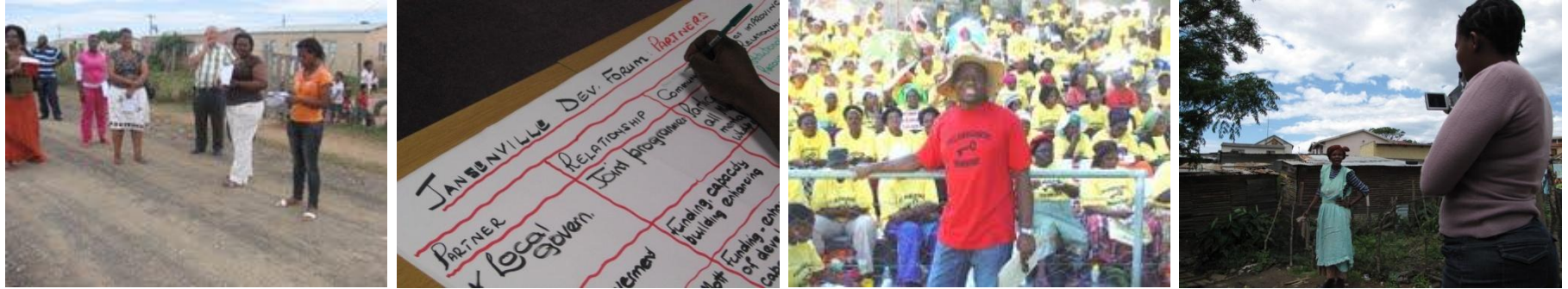


Eastern Cape NGO Coalition

- **Eastern Cape Province (Transkei/Ciskei)**
- **Established 1995**
- **142 members – NGOs/CBOs**
- **Purpose: to enhance members' ability to understand and influence development policy and practice**
- **Programme focus areas of Socio-economic Transformation, Leadership Development, and Learning and Information-sharing.**



What ECNGOC does



- Asset-based community development approach
- Focus/sector group dialogue and debate
- Strengthening civil society involvement in local governance – leadership, community involvement
- Mobilising support, strategic relationships at local/national levels; participation of our members at strategic forums; position papers.
- Organisational development; peer mentoring
- Research, learning events, documenting
- Funding facilitation

ECNGOC and ABCD

- **Coady Institute training**
- **ECNGOC membership endorsement**
- **ABCD course and workshops**
- **Piloting in three communities**
- **Shared learning: ABCD Hub**
- **4-year plan to train 100 ECNGOC members**
- **Excite government and other agencies**



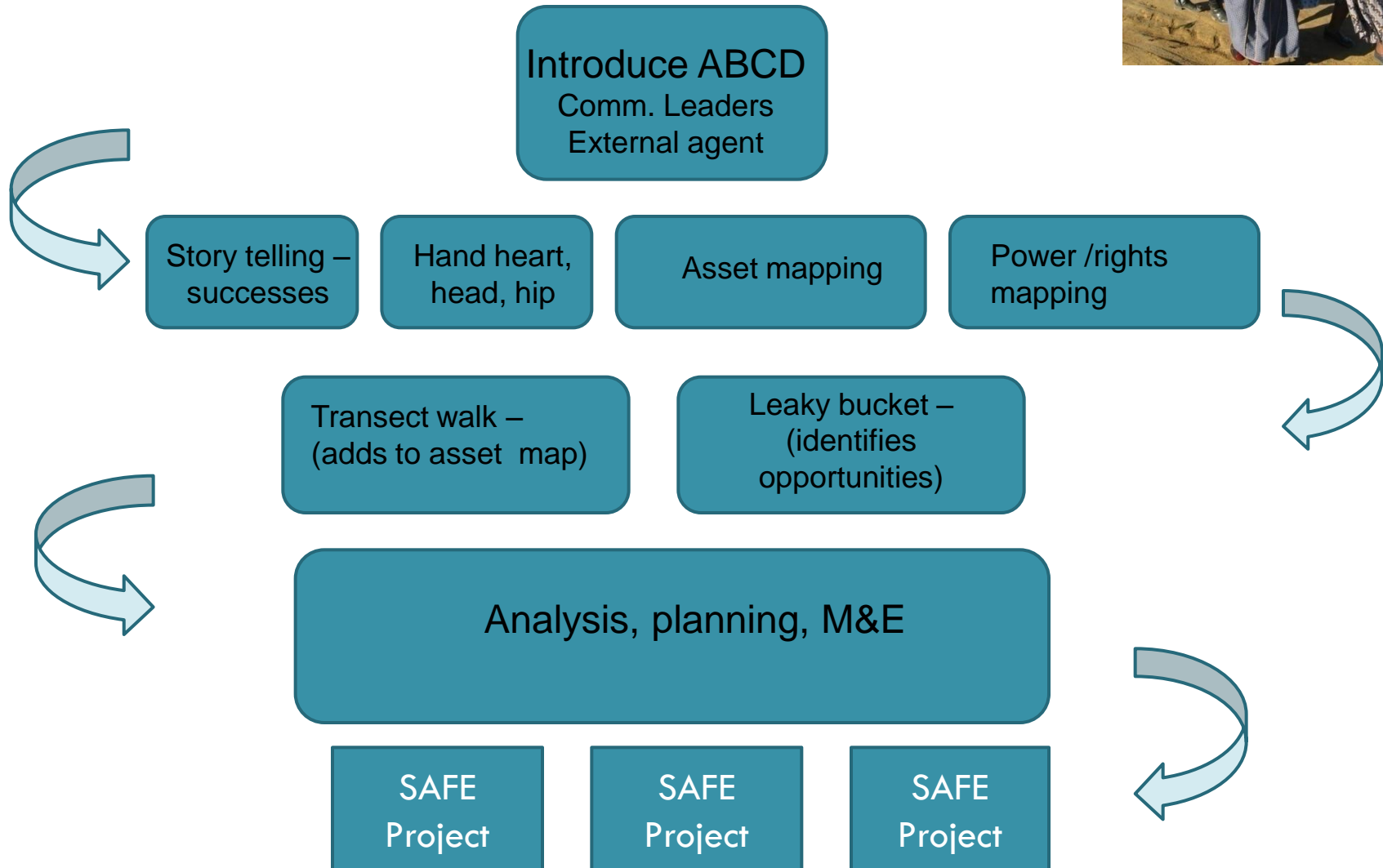
ECNGOC's

Eyabantu Ngabantu model



- Trained ECNGOC member NGOs identify community they work with
- Approach leaders and introduce ABCD
- Leaders (with NGO support) take it to community
- Community meeting: appreciative enquiry (story-telling), mapping (transect walks, asset mapping), linking and mobilising (hand heart hip exercise), economic/opportunity analysis (leaky bucket)

Community meeting: structure



SAFE

- Checking projects are **SAFE**
 - ▣ **SUSTAINABLE** (non-damaging/threatening, but rather enhancing environment in which people live)
 - ▣ **APPROPRIATE** ('right' for that particular time, place, culture, community)
 - ▣ **FEASIBLE** (do-able e.g. access to materials, ability to produce, access to markets etc)
 - ▣ **EMPOWERING** (capable of building confidence, knowledge, skills and improving social capital and livelihoods)

What we've found - 1

- High levels excitement – people see as different approach; they understand the values it espouses

BUT

- Fall back into same pattern: “It’s other people’s responsibility” = NGOs as driver

SOLUTION –need to have high depth of engagement.
It’s a process, not an event.



What we've found - 2

- Not everyone 'gets it' – concept has to be fully grasped and applied mindfully, and not just in community meetings and workshops.
- ABCD is grounded in certain values. Remind people to practice the values they believe in, rather than introduce it as a 'new approach'.



What we've found - 3



- ABCD takes time – challenges NGOs, funders and communities who want results NOW
- ▣ Not ‘a project’ – ABCD is an empowering process of appraisal, analysis and action done by local people themselves.
- ▣ Not a blueprint approach

What we've found - 4

- Vision of communities is limited by limited concepts: 'copy cat' rather than innovative use of assets.
- ▣ Advantage of Leaky Bucket exercise.
- ▣ Technology and communication expand concepts.
- ▣ External agent can introduce but not impose.



What we've found - 5

- It's not just the on-the-ground development agent who has to think differently. The development agency also has to think differently.



**BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDE ARE
MORE IMPORTANT THAN
METHODS AND TOOLS**



Our questions: 1



How ought we, as individuals, think and behave differently using an ABCD approach?

Our questions: 2



How ought our organisations think and behave differently using an ABCD approach?



THANK YOU

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Websites of interest

- www.ecngoc.co.za
- www.coady.stfx.ca
- www.bankofideas.com.au
- <http://www.abcdinstitute.org>
- <http://www.mike-green.org>
- <http://abcdasiapacific.ning.com>
- <http://www.eldis.org>

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