

***Building on Assets
and
Mobilizing for Collective Action***

Community Guide

**John C. Allen, Ph. D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Cooperative Extension
Sam M. Cordes, Ph. D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Smith Covey, NRCS-National
Randy Gunn, South Central Nebraska RC&D
Dorlene Hicks, NRCS South Central Region
Lacey Madden, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, CARI
Kathie Starkweather, NRCS Northern Plains Region**

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Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI)
58 Filley Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0947
Phone: 402-472-1772, 800-328-2851
Fax: 402-472-0688
Web site: <http://cari.unl.edu>
Email: unl-cari@unl.edu

Additional information can be found at the Center for Applied Rural Innovation Web site listed above.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introduction: Who We Are and What We Are About	1
The Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI)	1
A. Use of This Document	1
B. Key Document Terms	2
I. Overview - Getting Started	4
A. Two Paths/Views/Approaches	4
B. Community Questions: Organization, Readiness and Commitment	5
C. Asset-Based Community Development	5
D. Local “Table” of People	6
E. Asset Inventory Strategies	8
F. Building Relationships When Identifying Assets	9
II. Asset Identification and Inventories: Tools 1-6	10
Mapping Assets	10
Tool 1: Create a Community-Wide Individual Skills/Assets Inventory	10
Tool 2: Create a Community-Wide Associational Assets Inventory	11
Tool 3: Create a Community-Wide Institutional Assets Inventory	12
Tool 4: Create Community-Wide Natural Resources/Assets Inventories	13
Tool 5: Create Economic Linkages and Business Assets Inventories	13
Tool 6: Create a Community-Wide Previous Efforts Assets Inventory	14
III. Community Vision and Mobilization: A Plan of Action	15
A. A Shared Community Vision and a Commitment to Action Planning	16
B. Involving the Whole Community - Areas to Maintain and Areas for Growth, Tool 6	16
C. Mobilizing to Build a Stronger Community	16
D. Evaluation - Community Action Activities Inventory, Tool 7	17
E. Time line Options for the Approach	18
IV. Developing an Action Plan	20
V. Community Celebration	21
VI. Appendices	23
Appendix “A” - Inventory and Action Tools 1-7	24
Appendix “B” - Reference and Resources	39



Center for Applied Rural Innovation

Building on the Strengths of Rural Communities

Purpose: With a focus on strengthening Nebraska communities, the University of Nebraska’s Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI) educates and assists people and communities in rural areas in a manner that contributes to quality of life.

CARI works with communities, building on local community assets, to help meet their objectives, whether they emphasize growth, sustainable development or some other aspect of community life.

This document, “Vitalizing Communities: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action,” is one tool utilized by CARI in providing assistance to people and communities in rural areas of Nebraska.

Staff: The staff of CARI are an interdisciplinary team of talented professionals strongly committed to CARI’s mission.

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A. Use of This Document

This document should be used as a “guide” for communities to build from the inside out, utilizing existing assets. This approach will occur over a period of time, which will vary from community to community, depending upon community readiness, commitment and time available for community members to do the work.

As with any guide, this document provides information and guidance in an organized, structured and systematic way. We make no apologies for that, but we also worry that it may unintentionally stifle creativity and innovation. Additionally, each community is unique—with its own unique history, culture and local flavor. Communities that use this guide should view it as a launching pad, but after the launch a local guidance system takes over. Some communities may have good reason to skip certain steps or to reorder the sequence of steps in this guide. This type of flexibility is not only possible, it is expected!

Holistic vs. specific issues—Given limited resources, some communities may want to use this approach for mapping issues of interests.

This community guide document is organized into four sections and an appendix of tools for implementation.

- Section I, “Overview–Getting Started,” gives a summary of the asset-based approach, provides information as to what is needed to utilize this approach, and gives the community direction to decide whether or not to proceed with this approach.
- Section II, “Tools 1-5,” describes the steps necessary to develop and complete various community asset inventories and provides examples for each asset area.
- Section III, “Community Vision and Mobilization,” describes a plan of action for moving the community towards its vision of vitalization, based upon the community’s assets, as inventoried.
- Section IV, “Celebration,” emphasizes the importance of celebrating community successes and provides examples of what and how to celebrate.
- Appendix A, “Inventory and Action Tools,” provides a set of suggested “tools” to be utilized by the community when implementing this approach.

B. Key Document Terms

The following terms are used often throughout this document. A brief interpretation is given for each term according to its use in this document.

<u>Community</u>	- neighborhood, town, city, county, regions, area, tribe, culture, ethnic or faith-based group of people as identified by its members; a community of “good character” is caring, kind, trusting, fair, responsible and displays good citizenship.
<u>Asset</u>	- “community treasures”; the positive strengths, qualities, merits, benefits, virtues, commodities and character imbedded in a community.
<u>Skill</u>	- the gift an individual has gained through experience, education and/or knowledge that is passed on to other individuals.
<u>Asset Inventory</u>	- a method for gathering information about the gifts and talents of a community’s individual associations, institutions, and natural resources.

<u>Asset Map</u>	- a visual path that displays a community's positive capacities and assets.
<u>Individual</u>	- person belonging to a community, group of relatives, or other people who have capabilities, abilities and gifts.
<u>Association</u>	- a formal or informal group of community people working together often as volunteers to generate collective action. (Examples: 4-H, Scouts, YMCA/YWCA, United Way, Red Cross, neighborhood association, county fair....)
<u>Institution</u>	- a formalized and structured organization that does not typically rely on voluntary commitment of the individuals involved. (Examples: school, church, government agency, hospital, law enforcement, city council....)
<u>Economic</u>	- represents monetary conditions of a community and its people.
<u>"Table" of people</u>	- made up of community individuals and representatives of community associations, institutions, and businesses who form the foundation for community work.
<u>Relationship</u>	- a bond that is formed through identifying, connecting and establishing a friendly alliance built on trust, strengths, and assets.
<u>Mobilize</u>	- to accomplish community goals by energizing and activating community strengths and assets.
<u>Vision</u>	- the positive image of what the community "wants" to be; provides insight, inspiration and revelation to help accomplish community goals
<u>Evaluation</u>	- a review and appraisal of community activities, which is completed by the community in order to provide a measurement for community success.

I. Overview - Getting Started

A. Two Paths/Views/Approaches

Asset mapping is a philosophy pioneered by John P. Kretzman and John L. McKnight in their book, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, (Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 1993). The authors identify two different paths for supporting communities. The first path focuses on a community's needs, deficiencies, and problems. The second is quite different in that it begins with a clear commitment to discovering a community's capacities and assets.

<u>Traditional Path</u>	<u>Alternative Path</u>
Based on: Needs	Based on: Assets
Goal: Institutional change	Goal: Building communities
Conversation: Problems & concerns	Conversation: Gifts and dreams
Change agent: Power	Change agent: Relationship
View of individual: Consumer, client	View of individual: Producer, owner
Needs based on community problems: Unemployment, gangs, truancy, broken families, housing shortage, crime, child abuse, illiteracy, welfare, lead poisoning, dropouts, etc.	Assets based on community "treasures": Youth, elderly, artists, churches, schools, businesses, parks, libraries, cultural groups, community colleges, clubs, hospitals, farms, ranches, etc.

Our approach, "Vitalizing Communities: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action," Alternative Path, focuses on the positive assets the community's individuals, associations, institutions, and economy. Focusing on community problems conveys negative images of the community, and residents begin to accept these images as the only guide to the reality of their lives. Focusing on positive asset components will help build the community, giving residents hope and a positive vision for themselves.

NOTE: *Most of this community guide publication is devoted to how community assets can be inventoried.*

B. Community Questions: Organization, Readiness and Commitment

CAUTION: *The approach of inventorying community assets is of little value if the community is not organized and ready for action.*

Specifically, the approach presented in the document assumes the following:

- The community can *organize* itself to move forward with the approach,
- The community is *ready* to move forward with this approach, and
- The community is *committed* to change once assets have been inventoried.

If the community is not sure that it meets these criteria, interested community members should ask and answer the following questions.

Community Questions:

- How is the community organized?
- Who are the organized groups/individuals in the community?
- Are all members of the community aware of this revitalization effort?
- Who is ready to move forward, revitalizing community strengths?
- Is the community ready for change?
- Will there be opposition to this effort? If so, can it be managed or overcome?
- Who will assume the leadership, as a support base, to make changes?
- When will the process begin?

A final and very important question has to do with the scope of this effort. Specifically, this guide is written from the standpoint of a holistic approach to community mobilization and development. We feel this is the ideal approach, but it also takes considerable resources to inventory assets across all dimensions of community life. If such a comprehensive undertaking is not possible, the community may choose to focus on a particular sector or dimension of community life, or on inventorying the assets associate with a particular issue. Examples could include health care, transportation, or workforce development.

By answering these questions, a community can determine if it is ready to commit and move forward, *vitalizing community strengths, building on community assets, and mobilizing for collective action.*

C. Asset-Based Community Development

Every community can identify things it does not have (needs), and things it does have (assets). A strong community is built upon identifying, and then mobilizing, its assets. This development work starts with a “treasure hunt.”

This treasure hunt will show the community that it has many assets in individuals and families, local associations, local institutions of non-profits and government, and local

business assets. Additionally, every community has natural resources of space and physical resources. Recognizing that these assets exist, the community asks the question, “What do we, the community, have?”

Building a stronger community is about bringing these various assets into relationship with one another. When assets are connected, their capacities can be enhanced.

Fundamentally, community building is about relationships among people. Mobilizing assets for collective action requires organizing relationships within a community.

D. Local “Table” of People

A local group of people is needed to organize the community asset inventory approach, and to provide leadership for follow-up and sustainability as the community moves forward implementing change. The following four organization questions must be answered by a community group to “mobilize” the asset approach:

- 1) What do we want to do? (vision and purpose)
- 2) What do we have to do it with? (assets)
- 3) Who or what can get it done? (individuals, associations, institutions, businesses)
- 4) How do we get them to do it? (relationships, community mobilizing)

The best vehicle for answering these questions and for doing the work is a local “table” of *individuals* from the community and representatives from community *associations* and *institutions* who, together, organize the community so it is better connected to mobilize and contribute assets. This local “table” of people forms the foundation for community work. The members of the “table” are committed to the same vision and purpose and create a vehicle to carry forward the work. Local residents, associations, schools and churches are the inner circle of decision makers. Local businesses, local government, local non-profits, and outside resources are part of a second circle of supporters.

The local “table” can consist of 7 to 30 diverse individuals, representing the community geographically and demographically. Other individuals could be included in special task groups, provide leadership for specific activities, or help with other community mobilization activities.

The following is a checklist of individuals who might represent the community as members of the local “table” of people. The list is comprehensive but not necessarily inclusive.

Local “Table” of People Potential Members Checklist ✓

- Parents
- Youth
- Health Care People
- Office People
- Construction People
- Maintenance People
- Food Service People
- Child Care People
- Transportation People
- Repair People
- Sales People
- Musicians
- Artists
- Farm People
- Ranch People
- Agricultural Organization People
- Cultural Group Representatives
- Church Representatives
- School Representatives
- Community College Representatives
- Bank Savings and Loan People
- Law Enforcement People
- Manufacturing Representatives
- Retail Business People
- Media People
- Legal System Representatives
- People with Disabilities
- Public Housing Representatives
- Welfare Service People
- Youth Group Representatives
- Charitable Group Representatives
- City Government Representatives
- County Government Representatives
- Tribal Government Representatives
- Parks People
- Library People
- Cooperative Extension Representatives
- Employment Service Representatives
- Business Organization People
- Service Association People
- Financial Institution Representatives
- Civic Event Coordinators

E. Asset Inventory Strategies

Community Capacity as Community Capital

“Capacity (Asset) Inventories” provide a mechanism to gather information about the *individuals, associations and institutions*, and about resources, wealth and dollars generated by *the local economy and business assets*. These community gifts, talents and dollars generated can also be thought of as “community capital.” According to Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan L. Flora, “Rural Communities, Legacy and Change” (1992), the term “capital” is often used to mean money—for example, the money needed to start a new business. Flora goes on to say, “Money is not always capital, nor is capital simply money. Capital can be defined as resources capable of producing other resources. We often think of capital goods, land, or financial capital. Human capital is a type of community capital that refers to the knowledge, skills and talents brought to any activity by people.”

Strategies for identifying “community capital” can be identified in the form of capacity/asset inventory. This document will identify the following types of asset inventories.

1. Individual Assets Inventory

Every person has many gifts such as civic interests, artistic abilities, teaching skills, and enterprise experience and ability. The key to capacity/asset inventories is remembering that it is about individuals and relationships, not data.

2. Association Assets Inventory

Associations are groups of citizens working together to generate collective action. They can be formal or informal. Examples of associations are United Way, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, AARP, Chamber of Commerce, and Rural Grange.

3. Institutional Assets Inventory

Institutions are formalized and structured organizations that do not typically rely on voluntary commitment of the individuals involved. Examples of institutions are schools, churches, hospitals, and government agencies.

4. Natural Resources Asset Inventory

Natural resources are an integral part of a community’s future. This inventory recognizes the contribution natural resources make as an asset if they are recognized and capitalized. Examples of natural resources are lakes, rivers, trees, coal and fish.

5. Local Economic Linkages and Business Assets

Strong economic linkages within the local economy are an important asset for the community. For example, if businesses buy all their supplies and hire all their employees from within the local community, then the local linkages are strong and this is an asset for the community. Similarly, if individuals, associations, and institutions consistently patronize local vendors for their needs, then this aspect of the community economic linkage is strong, and should be thought of as an important asset for the community. Conversely, if these linkages are weak, they can be changed and strengthened. Inventorying the strengths and weaknesses of these linkages and finding

“missed opportunities” is an important aspect of community building.

Businesses can be interviewed about local purchasing, local hiring, local banking, local youth training, local volunteer efforts by staff, and local investment. Dollars generated by local business activities can be assets contributing to the local economy. A local business assets inventory provides information about the business economy of a community.

6. Previous Efforts Assets Inventory

Many communities have participated in previous community activities which may have included: community planning, economic development, program and service development, community visioning, and other community involvement activities.

The asset inventory areas listed above are described in more detail in Section II, “Asset Identification and Inventories,” in this document.

F. Building Relationships When Identifying Assets

Community building is finally about relationships, relationships, and more relationships!! Gifts and assets must be identified, connected, and contributed. Asset-based community development is simply a call to remember what we already know about care and democracy. Real health, prosperity, and well being comes through people and relationships.

Building strong relationships among community individuals, associations, institutions, and businesses is an important step when venturing down the path of community building. It is important to identify community “finders,” “developers,” and the “strangers within.”

Who are the strangers in the community? Young people, older residents, quiet, reserved, and unrecognized people are often overlooked as community assets. A community that locates and mobilizes the gifts and contributions of strangers in its midst is a community that welcomes the contributions of all its members.

Who are the finders and developers in the community? These are the leaders of the community. Finders have a positive vision and can “find” assets in the community needed to mobilize and move the community forward. Developers lead the community development effort, mobilizing the capacity identified by the finders. Finding the capacity finders and community development leaders is a crucial step on the path of community building.

II. Asset Identification and Inventories: Tools 1-6

Mapping Assets

As previously stated, the first step for inventorying assets is to collect information about the designated asset areas. This process will produce many lists of assets in various areas. When these lists of assets are gathered, it will be helpful to compile these lists by different groups such as youth groups, schools, artists, businesses, etc. A variety of community assets maps can be made. Assets maps may include the “local institution” groups discovered, lists of local individual talents and skills, and/or the flow of economic dollars to and from the community. Asset maps can also integrate, for example, the areas of individuals, associations, and institutions, all on one map to give a big picture of the areas of assets in the community.

Examples of a community assets map, a community business linkages map, and a community economic linkage map are illustrated in the appendices of this document.

As previously stated, “capacity inventories” are a way to gather information about the gifts and talents of *individuals*, *associations* and *institutions*, and about dollars generated by *local business assets*. There are tools to identify a community’s capacities and natural resources through the creation of asset inventories. Six of these tools are discussed in this section:

- Tool 1: Individual Assets Inventory**
- Tool 2: Associational Assets Inventory**
- Tool 3: Institutional Assets Inventory**
- Tool 4: Natural Resources Inventory**
- Tool 5: Economic Linkages and Business Assets Inventory**
- Tool 6: Previous Efforts Inventory**

Sample tools are located in the appendices of this document. The following sections provide a description of these five asset inventory areas and provide information in utilizing the asset inventory tools.

Tool 1: Create a Community-Wide Individual Skills/Assets Inventory

Every person has many gifts such as civic interests, artistic abilities, teaching skills, and enterprise experience and ability. Gifts that are not given are not gifts. A strong development organization identifies gifts and provides a vehicle for them to be given. The “Local Table of People” should ask:

- What are the gifts of our individuals?

- Where do we plug them into our community?

Capacity/asset inventories of individuals can be used in many ways. One important use is for economic purposes to create new enterprises, to connect skilled residents to employers, for new employment, and to identify market gaps through consumer spending data.

Capacity/asset inventories can also be used for community building purposes to create an “individual skills bank,” to institute a “learning exchange,” to connect residents to local associations for care and mutual aid, and to mobilize cultural and artistic skills. The key to capacity/asset inventories is remembering it is **about people and relationships, not data**. The primary result is that people are more connected for any purpose. Inventories are basically used in two ways: a) for a personal connection, and b) for a pool of talent to address an issue.

Three steps are needed to inventory the skills/assets of community residents.

- 1) First, develop a list of skills (similar to Tools 1A and 1B located Appendix A). Students or other volunteers can hand deliver and pick up the inventory forms throughout the community.
- 2) Second, translate the skills and map the inventory of assets.
- 3) Third, publicize the inventory map of assets.

The goal is to make connections among people, and to develop a local “treasure chest” for community and economic development. This “treasure chest” of identified individual skills/assets can provide a base for the development of community capital. Although the list may not be inclusive, it provides a starting point for identifying individual assets in the community.

Tool 1A in Appendix A provides an example of this Individual Skills/Assets Inventory.

Individuals in a community are often involved in organized activities with community associations and/or institutions. It is also important to have an inventory of the skills and assets of individuals involved in these activities.

Tool 1B in the Appendices provides a sample Individual Community Skills/Assets Inventory.

Tool 2: Create a Community-wide Associational Assets Inventory

Associations are groups of citizens working together in a collective action. They can be formal or informal. Associations include business organizations such as the local chamber of commerce; charitable groups and drives such as United Way; youth groups such as 4-H, and Scouts; and civic events such as art fairs and 4th of July celebrations. Associations include voluntary organizations of people in every community where people come together as a group to act on issues.

Associations offer them a great power of organized relationships that can be mobilized for action. They are characterized by consensus, care, and citizens’ power. Unfortunately, associations are usually not fully recognized as resources/assets to community building.

Utilize newspapers, directories, and other printed sources when identifying local associations and association representatives. Associations can also be discovered through personal (individual) interviews and/or telephone surveys. The Local Table of People should ask each association:

- What do you do now?
- What do you do that helps people other than members of your organization?
- What are you willing to do that you are not doing?

Associations can have a much larger role in community building. The local Table of People should ask, “How can this association and asset contribute to the community vision and purpose?”

Three steps are needed to inventory community associations assets.

- 1) Develop an instrument to collect information about the community associations, their missions, contact individuals, and resources.
- 2) Compile this information and map the inventory of assets.
- 3) Publicize the inventory map of assets.

Tool 2 in the appendices provides a sample of this Asset Associational Inventory.

Tool 3: Create a Community-wide Institutional Assets Inventory

Institutions are a formalized and structured organization that does not typically rely on voluntary commitment of the individuals involved. Traditional community institutions might include schools, churches, hospitals, clinics, county government, law enforcement, fire and rescue, human service agencies, etc.

Institutions have a much larger possibility. For example, hospitals offer a community much outside of helping sick people get well. Institutions think more like fortresses than community treasure chests. Non-profits or government can be interviewed about local hiring, local purchasing, training local people (especially youth), local investment, local control of the institution, and leveraging outside resources.

The key question to ask institutions is: “How can your institution increase service to the community?”

Three steps are necessary to inventory the assets of community institutions:

- 1) Develop an instrument to collect information about the community institutions, their purpose, contact individuals, and resources.
- 2) Compile this information and map the inventory of assets.
- 3) Publicize the inventory map of assets.

Tool 3 in the appendices provides a sample of this Institutional Asset Inventory.

Tool 4: Natural Resources Assets and Inventory

Natural resources are an important asset to communities. Communities were organized around and near natural resource assets. These assets play an important role in a county's future.

Three steps are necessary to inventory the natural resources assets

- 1) Develop an instrument to collect information about community's natural resources.
- 2) Compile this information and map inventory of assets
- 3) Publicize the inventory map of assets

Tool 4 in the Appendices provides a sample Natural Resources Inventory

Tool 5: Create Economic Linkages and Business Assets Inventories

Local businesses are assets. For example, banks are a source of local investment capital. More generally, businesses provide a variety of goods and services to local residents; they provide jobs; they pay taxes; and they often are links to larger regional and national economies.

These businesses also have "backward linkages" throughout the local economy. By hiring local residents and purchasing non-labor supplies and inputs from other local vendors and businesses, they create additional economic activity.

Just as it is important where local businesses hire their workers and purchase their other supplies and inputs, it is also important where community residents, local associations and institutions purchase their goods and services. If they choose to shop and spend their dollars outside the local community, a significant amount of "economic linkage" and related job creation has been lost.

It is important to inventory these assets: local businesses, including their hiring and purchasing patterns; and the spending patterns of local residents, associations and institutions.

Developing a Local Business Assets Inventory involves the following steps:

- 1) Develop an instrument to collect information about local businesses, their type of business, and contact person.
- 2) Compile this information and map the inventory of assets.
- 3) Publicize the inventory map of assets.

Tool 5A in Appendix A provides a sample of this Local Business Assets Inventory.

Developing a Local Business Linkages Inventory involves the following steps:

- 1) Develop a survey instrument for gathering local business information.
- 2) Identify the business sectors of your local economy by type of business. Ask the questions: Do businesses tend to hire local residents? Why or why not? Do businesses tend to purchase other non-labor supplies and inputs locally? Why or why not?
- 3) Identify the data source of this economic information (for easy updating of information).

Tool 5B in the appendices provides a sample of this Local Business Linkages Inventory.

Developing an Economic Linkage Inventory for individuals, associations and institutions involves the following steps:

- 1) Develop a survey instrument for gathering purchasing information from community residents, associations and institutions.
- 2) Develop a list of the type of goods purchased by local individuals, associations and institutions.
- 3) Ask what percentage of goods and services are purchased locally and what percentage of goods and services are purchased outside the community.

Tool 5C in the appendices provides a sample of this Community Purchasing Economic Flow Inventory.

Tool 6: Create a Community-wide Previous Efforts Assets Inventory

Most communities have participated in previous community processes or activities that may have included: community planning, economic development, program and service development, community visioning and other community involvement activities. The results of these experiences are important assets because of the information collected and the experiences shared by community individuals. When this collected information and these experiences are documented, they will provide an important component when mapping community assets.

Three steps are needed to inventory the assets of previous community efforts:

- 1) Develop an instrument to collect information about previous community planning, community development, and other community-wide involvement efforts and projects.
- 2) Compile this information and map the inventory of assets.
- 3) Publicize the inventory map of assets.

Tool 6 in the appendices provides a sample tool for identifying the assets of previous community efforts and activities.

III. Community Vision and Mobilization: A Plan of Action

A. A Shared Community Vision and A Commitment To Action Planning

Community Questions:

1. Who are “we,” the people in the community? Can we identify ourselves?
2. What are the things that “we” value the most? What are our beliefs?
3. What do “we” want our community to look like in 5, 10 or 20 years from now?

These are simple but compelling questions which challenge the community building process. Without community identity, a set of values and beliefs, and a shared vision, vitalizing and building the community is very difficult to sustain.

A process of community-based planning provides the vehicle for defining and developing a shared community vision. A plan of action based on community assets will give direction to making the vision a reality. To be successful, a community must be committed to a process. That process or approach involves the following commitments:

- Commitment 1: *Commit to identifying community assets.*
Avoid the temptation to begin with a traditional “needs survey.” Begin and follow through with asset identification. Asset commitment will provide much promise and positive potential.
- Commitment 2: *Commit to convening and expanding a “table” of people.*
A community’s building process and results will be limited if the table is limited. An expanded community planning table should include many diverse participants that may not be recognized as community leaders.
- Commitment 3: *Commit to move from planning to action.*
A planning process is often completed and “left on the shelf.” A community’s process must be thought as “in the present,” something that will happen, beginning today and continue into the future.
- Commitment 4: *Commit to action activities for community sustainability.*
Action activities are “things that really happen,” not just plans written on paper. Community people doing community things, on a continuing basis, will help to provide sustainability.

B. Involving the Whole Community: Identifying Areas to Maintain and Areas for Growth, Tool 6

When the local “table” of Community People has been established, and when the community assets have been mapped, conduct a community meeting. Present the asset maps and inventories. Identify leadership for each area to maintain and for each growth opportunity.

Tool 6 in Appendix A provides a sample tool for identifying community and economic development opportunities.

C. Mobilizing To Build A Stronger Community

In a strong community, both the economic and social or non-economic dimensions of the community are strong and thriving.

In a strong local economy local people are working, local people own businesses, local people purchase from local stores, local people and businesses invest in the community, and dollars and energy re-circulate within the connections among the people in the community. The following are considerations for the local “table” of people when serving as a *Local Development Partnership*. These considerations may be viewed as a Time line of activities needed in order to mobilize the community.

Considerations for mobilizing the community:

- Complete the six areas of mapping community assets.
- Mobilize the capacities of local individuals. Invite all community individuals, and involve as many as possible in the process or approach.
- Mobilize local associations. Encourage collaborative efforts to generate collective action. Utilize volunteers effectively and efficiently with purpose and intended outcomes that make a difference.
- Mobilize local non-economic institutions such as hospitals, police stations, churches, schools, parks, libraries, etc. These institutions can agree to be part of the local economy with local hiring, purchasing, job training, encouraging new local businesses to develop as vendors, skills training in the community, local banking and investments, developing credit unions, developing physical resources, and attracting external resources and investments.
- Mobilize the capacities of local business. When local business assets and their activities have been mapped, they can be connected to the community economy in terms of local hiring, local purchasing, training youth, local banking, local volunteer involvement, market development, and business growth.

- Mobilize consumer expenditures. Discover *what* people buy, *where* they buy it, and *why*. The purpose of this information is to develop strategies for recirculating and multiplying the local impact of consumer spending. Mobilizing consumer capacity means connecting local buyers and sellers, developing new businesses and new products in existing businesses, as well as raising the awareness to “buy locally.”
- Develop a local capital formation vehicle. This is a locally resident-controlled way to finance business start-ups and business development. Examples would be: microloans, Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP), a community foundation, etc.
- Complete a gap analysis. One stage of asset-based planning is a gap analysis, which examines the assets available locally and the optimum assets necessary to ensure successful development. External resources may often fill that void. State, federal and philanthropic organizations often have resources to fill gaps in local community endeavors.
- Mobilize outside resources. In the traditional approach to community development, attention is usually focused on trying to attract grants, businesses, jobs and other resources into the community. These are often important and desirable strategies, but it is important they be considered at the proper time and within the proper context. In general, considering outside resources should come as the last step in the approach. Only when a community has inventoried and mobilized its own resources, should it turn to the outside to consider filling “the gap.” At that time it will have a much clearer picture of where it is going, exactly what gaps exist, and how it can access outside resources without becoming dependent upon such resources and without being considered a “charity case.”

These action steps for mobilizing the community are somewhat limited to the economic domain. It is also important for communities to invest in creating and mobilizing action steps in the non-economic areas of community development.

D. Evaluation - Community Action and Activities Inventory

Just as it is important to develop inventories of assets, it is also important to keep inventories of activities about the community moving forward as it builds on its assets. This traditionally has been called “tracking” or “monitoring” of a community project. Community action, vitalizing a community’s individual, associational, institutional, and economic linkages and business assets, can be recorded using the following steps:

- 1) Record the type of activity, who is responsible, when the activity took place, and what happened that made a difference.
- 2) Review and publically display this Evaluation of Community Actions Inventory on a regular basis.

Tool 7 in Appendix A provides a sample for a Community Action Activities Inventory.

E. Time line Options for the Approach

When the community decides to move forward, a Time line should be developed for the approach. It is necessary to identify an estimated time when each task will begin and end. The actual time it takes to go through the approach depends on how often the local “Table” of people can meet and the initiative of the community. A simple Time line can be developed by the local “Table” of people if they are familiar with the approach summary, the asset inventory strategies, and the considerations for mobilizing the community. A Time line should have a list of tasks/activities with projected beginning and ending dates for each task/activity.

The following Time line options can be used as indicated or **modified** to meet the specific needs of the community. The sequential order can be modified if necessary; it is recommended, however, that a community not skip any steps completely if they want to maximize the greatest impact of effective change for the community.

Time line Option A:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Day 1	Invite facilitator to give presentation of the approach to community members.
Week 1	Community members decide whether or not to utilize the approach.
Month 1	Community organizes a local “Table” people.
Month 1	The entire community is made aware of the approach being utilized and the local Table is identified.
Month 2	Asset groups are identified and inventories are developed.
Month 3	Asset inventories are mapped and publicized.
Month 3	Economic flow of local business assets and community purchases are mapped and publicized.
Month 4	The community affirms its vision and commitment.
Month 4	The community identifies areas to maintain and areas for growth.
Months 4-12	An action plan is developed and the community is mobilized toward making change, identifying leadership responsible for all areas.
Months 4-12	An evaluation tool is developed and utilized to record the activities of the community during revitalization.
Months 4-12	Celebration takes place throughout the entire revitalization approach.

Time line Option B:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Day 1	Community members are aware of the approach and have identified an existing community group to act at the local “table” to begin moving forward.
Week 1	The local table meets and consults with a facilitator to discuss a Time line.
Month 1	Previous efforts have provided much information. This information is compiled and asset inventories are updated with current information from the identified community asset groups.
Month 2	Asset inventories are mapped and publicized.

- Month 2 Economic flow maps are updated with current information from local businesses and community families. These maps are also publicized.
- Month 2 The community reaffirms its vision and commitment, and identifies areas to maintain and new areas for growth.
- Month 3 An existing action plan is modified to emphasize change built on community assets, identifying existing and new leadership responsible for all areas.
- Month 4 A community celebration takes place as a “kick-off” to mobilize community individuals, associations, institutions and businesses toward new areas of growth.
- Months 4-12 An evaluation tool is utilized to record activities as the community maintains many of its assets and expands assets in other areas creating positive growth and change.
- Months 4-12 Celebration takes place throughout the entire revitalization approach.

If a Time line is followed during the approach set forth in this document, a community will have a greater chance of being successful in implementing change through “*vitalizing their community, building on assets, and mobilizing for collective action.*”

IV. Developing an Action Plan

Phase I - Collection and Analysis

Step 1-Identify Problems and Opportunities

Identify resource problems, opportunities, and concerns in the planning area.

Step 2-Determine Objectives

Identify and document the client's objectives.

Step 3-Inventory Resources

Inventory the natural resources and their condition, and the economic and social considerations related to the resources. This includes on-site and related off-site conditions.

Step 4-Analyze Resource Data

Analyze the resource information gathered in planning step three to clearly define the natural resource conditions, along with economic and social issues related to the resources. This includes problems and opportunities.

Phase II - Decision Support

Step 5-Formulate Alternatives

Formulate alternatives that will achieve the client's objectives, solve natural resource problems, and take advantage of opportunities to improve or protect resource conditions.

Step 6-Evaluate Alternatives

Evaluate the alternatives to determine their effects in addressing the client's objectives and the natural resource problems and opportunities. Evaluate the projected effects on social, economic, and ecological concerns. Special attention must be given to those ecological values protected by law or Executive Order.

Step 7-Make Decisions

The client selects the alternative(s) and works with the planner to schedule conservation system and practice implementation. The planner prepares the necessary documentation.

Phase III - Application and Evaluation

Step 8-Implement the Plan

The client implements the selected alternative(s). The planner provides encouragement to the client for continued implementation.

Step 9-Evaluate the Plan

Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan as it is implemented and make adjustments as needed.

V. Community Celebration

Celebrating the community moving forward to make change, no matter how large or small the celebration, can be a catalyst to add momentum toward reaching the community vision. Do celebrate community success. It is important for the overall health of a community, and it can “make a difference!”

Celebrating the Similarities and Differences of Individuals

The diversity of individuals in a community is an asset itself. Different people have different ideas and different approaches. Exploring differences often uncovers similarities among different individuals. These similarities and differences can increase community awareness of the variety of assets and solutions available to meet the community’s needs. Celebrate similarities and differences!

Celebrating the Community’s Willingness to Move Forward

Change is often difficult for many people. Change is sometimes viewed as fear of the unknown. When a community bonds together to create and face change, the strength in numbers helps to overcome any fear of change. When a community is willing to move forward, making changes built on its own assets, this is a good move. Celebrate the community willingness to move forward!

Celebrating Relationships

When the community comes together to create change, discovering similarities and differences among its individuals, relationships are cultivated and new discoveries are made about each other. These new discoveries and relationships are what helps to bond a community together during times of change. Celebrate new and sustained relationships throughout the community!

Celebrating the Community’s Assets and the Display of Asset Maps

Many individuals and communities have typically and historically followed the traditional path of discussing problems and concerns. An emphasis on assets, gifts, and community treasures may be a new and different approach. Celebrate community assets as they are discovered and/or rediscovered! Proudly display community assets and celebrate their visibility!

Celebrating a Community Vision and Plan of Action

A community vision is more than a dream. A vision can be very real and seen as happening not only the future, but in the present as well. A plan of action, when activated or mobilized, can move this vision to current reality. Celebrate community vision and plan of action, now and in the future!

Celebrating Community Success

Emphasizing and enhancing the positive can often, by its own action, eliminate the

negative. All positive action should be viewed as success, no matter how great or small. A new business in the community, providing local access of goods for families, is a success. A smile on a face and a “good morning” greeting is a success. Recognize and celebrate all community successes!

Community Celebrations

Community celebrations should be fun and involve individuals, families, associations, institutions and businesses. Community celebrations can be on a large scale and involve much planning, or community celebrations can be spontaneous, recognizing a small amount of individual success.

Examples of Community Celebrations:

County fairs, youth festivals, senior festivals, family festivals, business grand openings, recognition of community citizenship, cultural fairs and events, health fairs, community dances, soup suppers, fish fries, school events and other community-wide activities that bring people together.

VI. Appendices

Section	Page
Appendix “A” - Inventory and Action Tools 1-7	24
Tool 1A - Individual Skills/Assets Inventory	24
Tool 1B - Individual Community Skills/Assets Inventory	26
Tool 2 - Associational Assets Inventory	27
Tool 3 - Institutional Assets Inventory	28
Tool 4 - Natural Resource Assets	29
Tool 5 - Local Business Assets Inventory	31
Tool 5B - Local Business Linkages Inventory	32
Tool 5C - Local Economic Linkage Inventory	33
Tool 6 - Previous Community Efforts Assets Inventory	34
Tool 7A - Community and Economic Development Opportunities	35
Tool 7B - Community Action Activities Inventory - Evaluation	36
- Community Assets Inventory Map	37
- Community Economic Flow Map	38
Appendix “B”	
References and Resources	39

APPENDIX "A" - Inventory and Action Tools 1-7

Individual Skills/Assets Inventory ✓ Inventory Tool 1A

Name _____ Phone _____ Date _____

Health

- Caring for the Elderly
- Caring for the Mentally Ill
- Caring for the Sick
- Caring for Disabled People
- EMT or Emergency First Aid
- Nursing Experience
- Nutrition
- Exercise

Office

- Typing (wpm____)
- Taking Phone Messages
- Writing Business Letters
- Receiving Phone Orders
- Operating Switchboard
- Bookkeeping
- Computer Information Entry
- Computer Word Processing
- Other _____

Child Care

- Infant Care (0-1 yr.)
- Child Care (1-6 yrs.)
- Adolescent Care (7-13 yrs.)
- Taking Kids on Field Trips
- Preschool Care

Construction & Repair

- Painting
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Carpentry
- Brick and Masonry
- Wall Papering
- Furniture Repairs
- Locksmith or Lock Repairs
- Building Garages
- Drywalling and Taping
- Cabinetmaking
- Welding and Soldering
- Concrete Work
- Heating & Cooling Systems
- Flooring & Carpeting
- Roofing
- Other _____

Maintenance

- Floor Cleaning/Refinishing
- Carpet Cleaning
- Household Cleaning
- Lawn Mowing and Yard Work
- Gardening
- Tree & Shrubbery Care
- Other _____

Food

- Catering
- Preparing for Many People
- Serving to Many People
- Operating Commercial Equip.
- Baking
- Meat Cutting & Preparation
- Bartending

Transportation

- Driving a Car
- Driving a Van
- Driving a Bus
- Driving a Tractor-Trailer
- Driving a Commercial Truck
- Operating Farm Equipment
- Driving Emergency Vehicles

Supervision

- Writing Reports
- Filling out Forms
- Working with a Budget
- Recording of Activities
- Writing Proposals or Grants
- Planning Projects
- Supervising Projects
- Other

Individual Skills Inventory ✓ Tool 1A (page 2)

Equipment & Machinery

- Radio, TV, VCR Repair
- Small Appliance Repair
- Auto/Van Repair
- Truck/Bus Repair
- Farm Equipment Repair
- Operating a Forklift
- Household Equipment Repair
- Washer/Dryer Repair
- Operating a Crane
- Small Engine Repair
- Jewelry/Watch Repair
- Other _____

Sales

- Cash Register Operation
- Selling Products Wholesale
- Selling Products Retail
- Selling Services
- Phone Sales or Service
- Other _____

Arts

- Drawing or Painting
- Singing
- Playing an Instrument
- Dancing
- Acting
- Other _____

Security

- Guarding Property
- Armed Guard
- Crowd Control
- Alarms & Security Systems
- Firefighting
- Law Enforcement
- Other _____

Personal Care

- Sewing
- Knitting or Crocheting
- Hair Cutting & Styling
- Massage Therapy
- Other _____

Other

- Furniture/Equipment Moving
- Sports Organizing/Coaching
- Recreation Supervision
- Community Surveys
- Committee Organizing
- Committee Chairperson
- Meeting Facilitator
- Foreign Language _____
- Local Community Historian
- Cultural Historian
- Real Estate Appraiser
- _____

Priority Skills

1. What three skills do you think you do best?

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____

2. Which of all your skills are good enough that other people would hire you to do them?

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____

3. Which skills would you most like to teach?

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____

4. Which skills would you most like to learn?

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____

Individual Community Skills/Assets Inventory ✓ Inventory Tool 1B

Name _____

Phone _____

Date _____

For Individuals: Have you ever organized or participated in any of the following community activities? If yes, place a check mark in the box provided.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-H Clubs
<input type="checkbox"/> Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
<input type="checkbox"/> Church Fundraiser
<input type="checkbox"/> Bingo
<input type="checkbox"/> School-Parent Associations
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Teams
<input type="checkbox"/> Camp Trips for Youth
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Trips
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Community Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Campaigns
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood/Block Clubs
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Yard/Rummage Sales
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Gardens
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Associations
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Clubs
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts Organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Clubs or Organizations |
|---|--|

Look at this list again. Which of these activities would you be willing to participate in as part of Building Your Community? List the top three and any others.

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Others: _____

Natural Resources/Assets Inventory✓ Inventory Tool 4

Community _____ Date _____ Page ____ of ____

Cultural Resources

- Prehistoric Indian Pot
- An arrowhead
- A Pueblo Ruin
- An Indian Campsite
- A Victorian House
- Historic mining town
- Other _____

Water Resources

- Wetlands
- Coastlines
- Lakes
- Streams
- Rivers
- Ponds
- Drinking Water
- Bogs or Fens
- Water Falls
- Tides
- Estuaries
- Hot Springs
- Aquifers
- Glaciers
- Irrigation canal
- A Dam
- Other _____

Forestry

- Forests
- Prairie
- Shrublands
- Crops
- Vineyards
- Ranches
- Farms
- Wildflowers
- Rose gardens
- Greenhouses
- Herbariums
- Arboretum
- Endangered Species
- Vegetables/Truck Farms
- Fruits/Orchards
- Wild berries/nuts
- Mushrooms
- Turf production
- Timber production
- Plants
- Agroforestry
- Erosion
- Types of soil
- Conservation tillage
- Agriculture Ecology
- Fossil Resource Potential
- Other _____

Land and Mineral Resources

- Coal
- Oil
- Other Minerals
- Gemstones
- Sand/Gravel deposits
- Dunes
- Cliffs
- Caves
- Canyons
- Hills
- Floodplains
- Buttes/plateaus
- Lava flows
- Salt/mud flats
- Rock
- Sinkholes
- Thermal Energy
- Wind Energy
- Solar Energy
- Mountains
- State Soil
- Prime Farmland
- Clay
- Salt
- Fossils

Other _____

Animal Resources

- Insects
- Song Birds
- Waterfowl
- Shorebirds
- Owls, Hawks, Eagles
- Game Birds
- Prairie Dog Colonies
- American Bison
- Furbearing mammals
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Fish
- Marine life (urchins, anemones, coral, etc.)
- Farm/Ranch Animals
- Fish Hatcheries
- Big Game Animals
- Endangered Species

Recreation Resources

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Birdwatching
- Canoeing
- Surfing
- Water Skiing
- Snow Skiing
- Spelunking (caving)
- Hiking
- Rock/fossil collecting
- Astronomy
- Refuges

Examples

ecological, historical, archeological, prehistoric, campsites, old homesteads, trees, trails,

Previous Efforts Assets Inventory✓ Inventory Tool 6

Community _____ Date _____ Page ___ of ___

Previous Effort/Activity	Resulting Information/Action	Who was Involved & When
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Examples
community planning, community economic development, program and service development, community visioning, and other community development/involvement activities...

Community and Economic Development Opportunities ✓ Action Tool 7A

Community _____ Date _____ Page ___ of ___

A community commits to action activities, identifying leadership for each area to maintain, and for each area of growth opportunities.

Areas to Maintain

Leadership Responsible

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

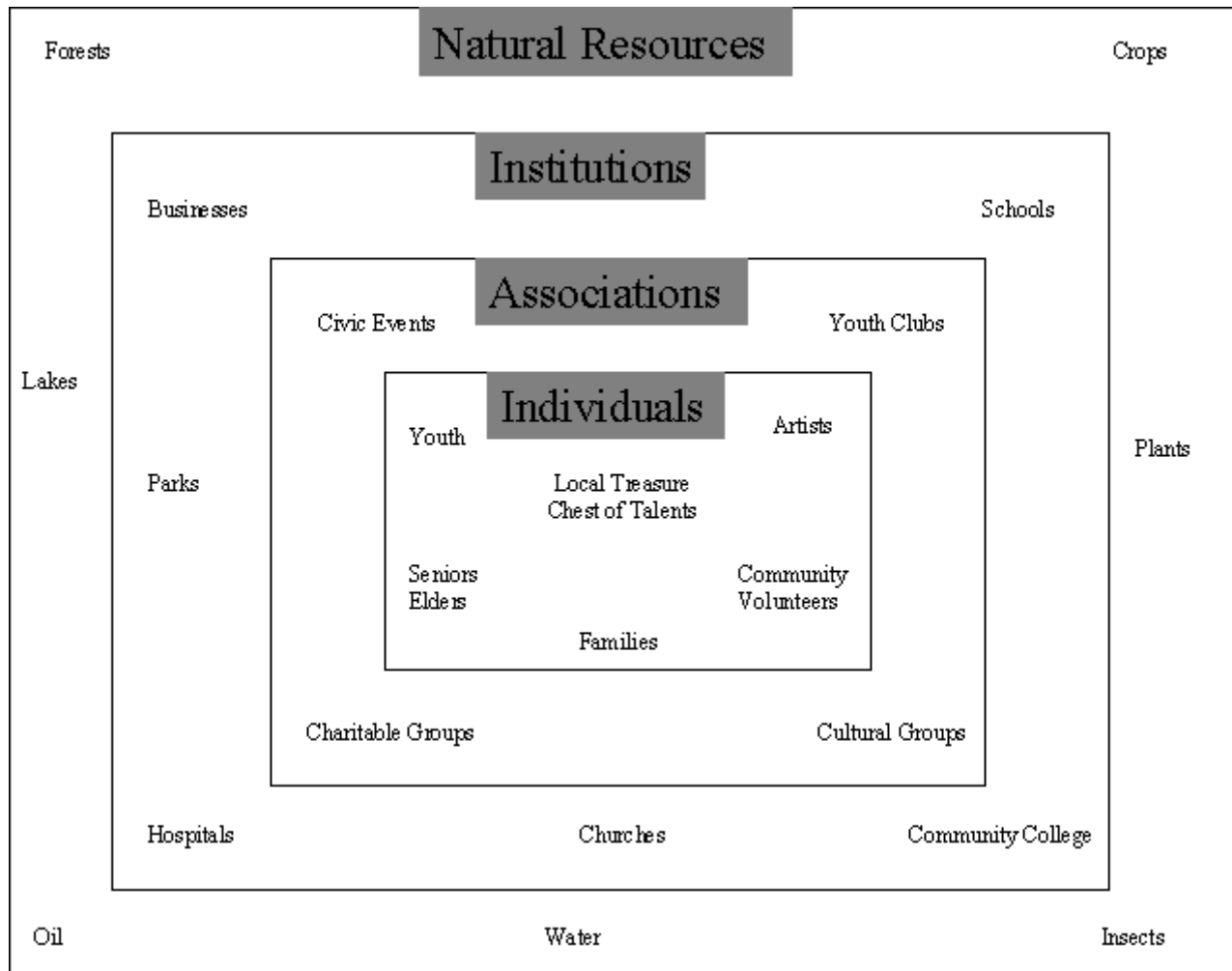
Growth Opportunities

Leadership Responsible

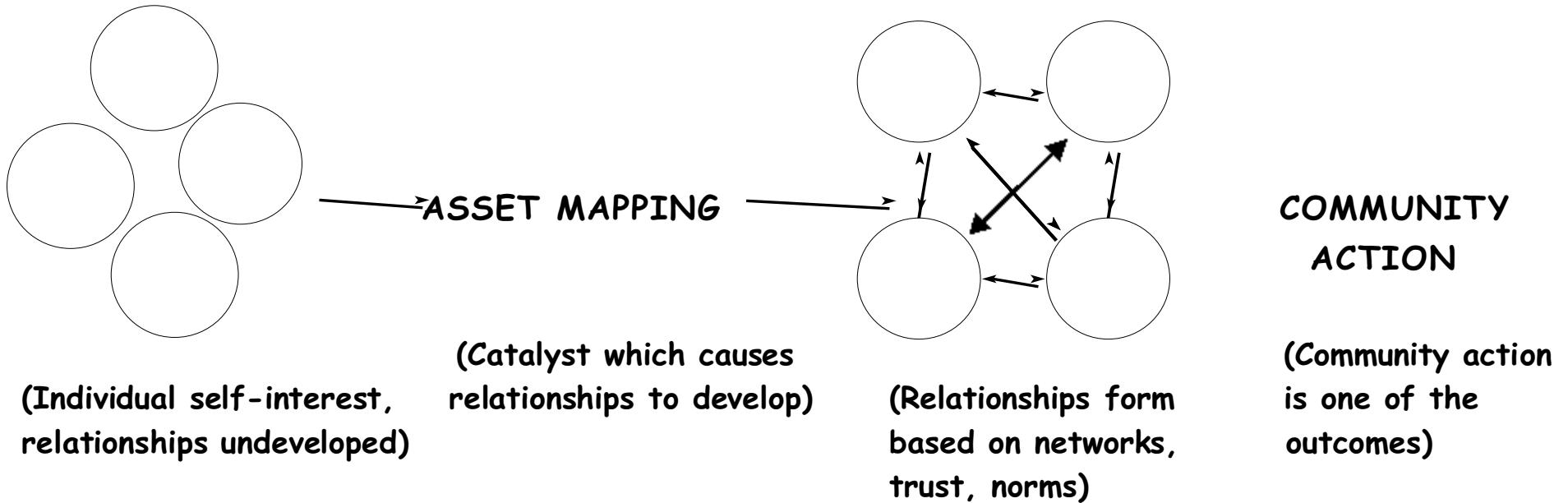
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

“Community Assets Map”

When asset inventories are completed, the assets can be “mapped” to show asset areas and/or groups. The following example is a map of asset areas for individuals, associations, and institutions. Names of businesses, schools, youth groups, etc., could be listed on large community asset maps; or there can be several various maps with many lists.



OUTCOMES -- ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



One of the strengths of asset based community development is its ability to serve as a catalyst to relationship building. As people begin to identify what they can bring to the community in the form of their own strengths and gifts, and others learn about it, relationship building occurs and connections are made. As stated in the material, relationship is the change agent when ABCD is used. Relationship building strengthens community, and as people get to know one another in this context they are more likely to work together for positive community change. The diagram above (left) represents community members before the change agent of ABCD is introduced; people are not connected to each other. Once the model is introduced and applied, relationship development begins. The arrows in the second diagram represent connections and networks that have formed as a result of the introduction of the ABCD model. Connections are now made where there were none before, and the community is strengthened by it. Positive community action is one of the outcomes of applying the model.

Appendix “B” - References and Resources

References

- Flora, Comelia Butler, Jan L. Flora, Jacqueline D. Spears, and Louis E. Swanson. 1992. *Rural Communities: Legacy & Change*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Hart, Jeff G. 1996. *Nebraska Partners In Planning, 1996-1998*. Lincoln: Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.
- McKnight, John L. and John P. Kretzmann. 1993. *Building Communities From the Inside Out*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.
- United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. Area wide Conservation Planning. Instructor Manual. January 1999. National Employee Development Center.

Resources and Notes:

- Bureau of Reclamation (www.usbr.gov)
- U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (www.blm.gov)
- Ecosystem Valuation, The Big Picture (www.ecosystemvaluation.org/big_picture.htm)
- Conservation Technology Information Center (www.ctic.purdue.edu)
- USDA Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (www.fws.gov)
- Natural Resource Conservation (www.state.tn.us/environment/natural.htm)
- Illinois Natural Resources Geospatial Data Clearinghouse (www.isgs.uiuc.edu/nsdihome/webdocs/st-list.html)
- Natural Resources Management Program (www.nrm.or.id)