

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP, AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

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(paper forthcoming)



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The Coady International Institute

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Established
in 1959

Emerged out
of “the
Antigonish
Movement” in
the 1920’s



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The Antigonish Movement (1920s-1940s)

- Joined the methods of adult education and economic cooperation,
- Vision for strengthened democracy
 - *Begin with economic where the interest is keenest*



"In a democracy people don't sit in the social and economic bleachers; they all play the game." Moses M. Coady



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The context

- *Public sector is shrinking, private sector is expanding*
People have to organize to “meet the market together”
- *Previous responsibilities of the state are being privatised*
People have to engage directly with the market and pay for service, or organize for mutual self help, sometimes with state or NGO support.
- *The “Social Economy” is expanding (with new MBOs):*
 - ▣ *Social and environmental outcomes are considered as important as economic outcomes; principles of collective action, mutualism and the common good are being revived*

Asset-based community development (ABCD)

Asset-based citizen-led development (ABCD)

- ABCD: a brief description
- ABCD uptake around the world
- Critiques
- Its alignment with horizontal citizenship
- Its contribution to economic citizenship
- Relevance to current crises

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)



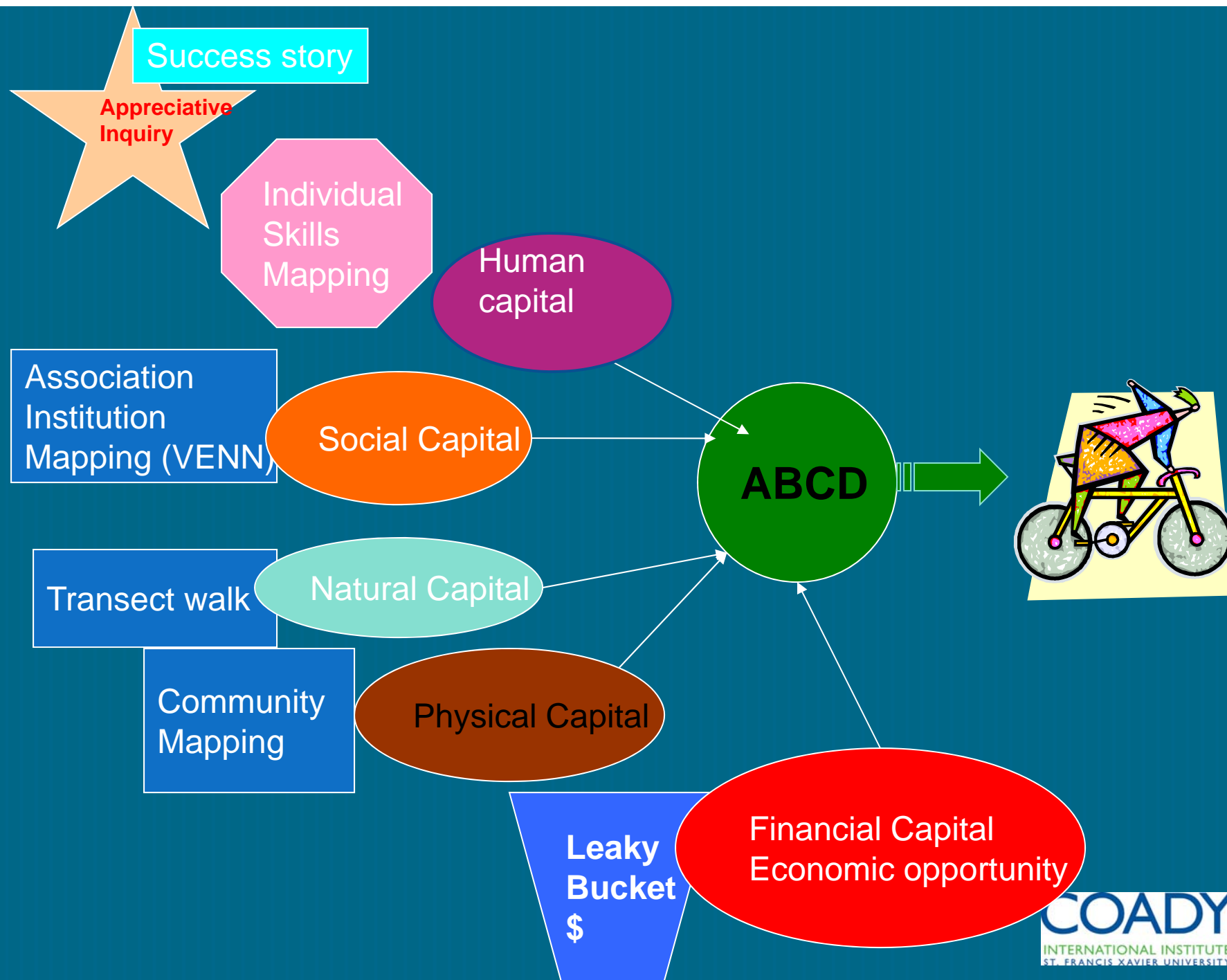
ABCD focuses on the **half full** part of the glass where the **strengths, capacities and assets** of the community lie.



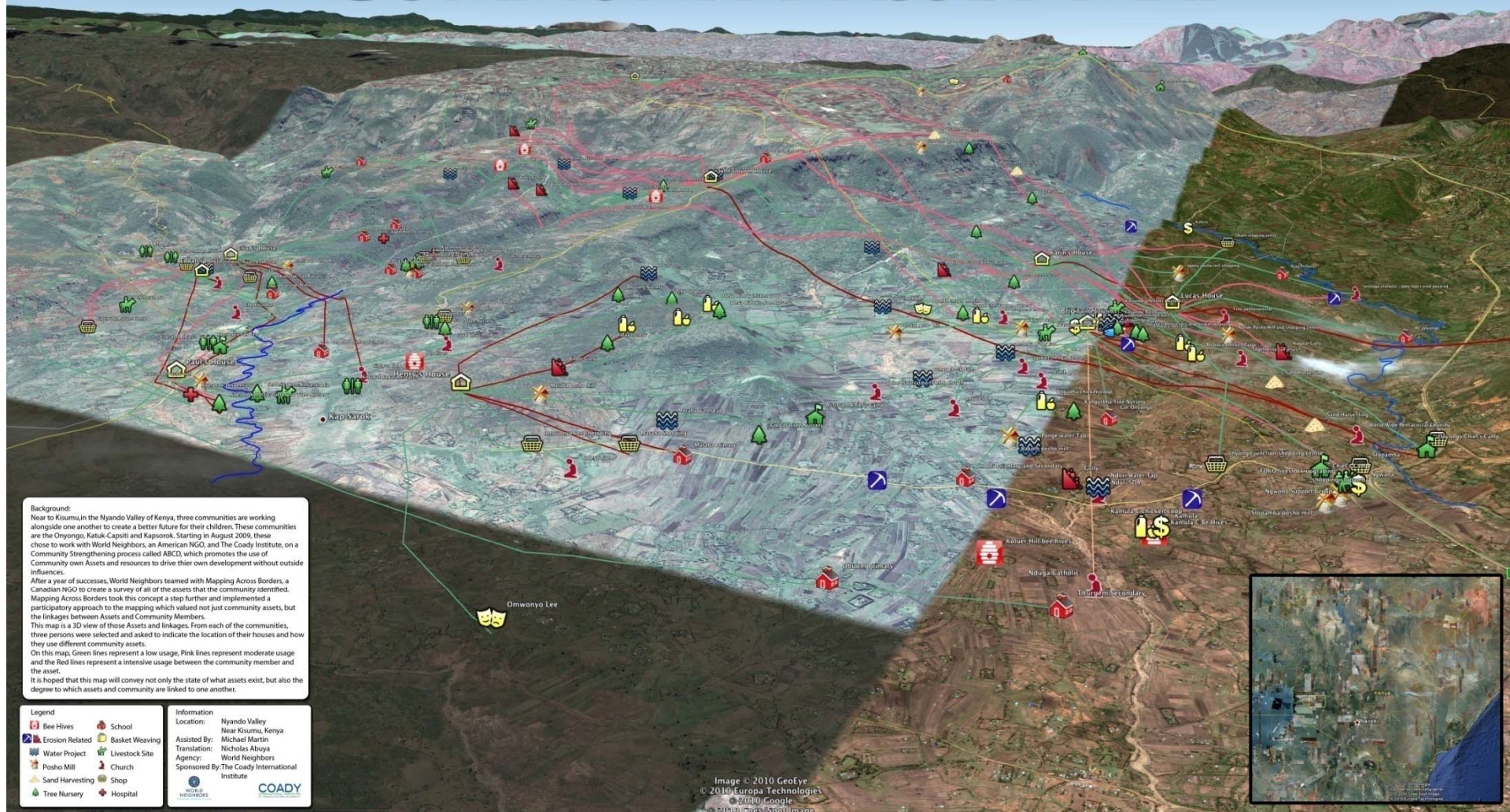
A suite of tools for identifying different kinds of **assets**

- **Stories of success**
- Individual skills and strengths
- **Associations and Institutions** , including
- Connections through the diaspora
- Natural resources
- Physical infrastructure
- Financial resources
- Economic opportunity





NYANDO VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSET MAP



An “Aha!” moment



Its not mapping, its organizing

Its not a blueprint but a set of principles that informs process and methods



Finding the low hanging fruit



What opportunities do you see right now that you could do with only the assets you have mapped?



Phases



1. Organizing and Mobilizing: “Low hanging fruit”

Increased savings, increased women’s participation; collaboration on collective ventures, individual ventures

2. Overcoming “Red Lines”

External investment to match local inputs and leverage additional support. Value chains work. New MBOs.

3. Sustaining the Process: Some formalization necessary

4. Influencing Policy: Modeling success.

Enabling Environment

Institutionalizing CDD

On Tap, not on Top

ABCD meets
Commercial Solutions

Low Hanging Fruit

Active economic
citizens building
collaborative networks

Outsiders as partners and
investors

Community as Clients

Outsider as Drivers

Producing livelihood, producing community: Tongantongan, Philippines



Sustainable farming practices, farmer technical innovation

Producing livelihood, producing community: Tongantongan, Philippines



Farmers as managers and
researchers

Producing livelihood, producing community: Tongantongan



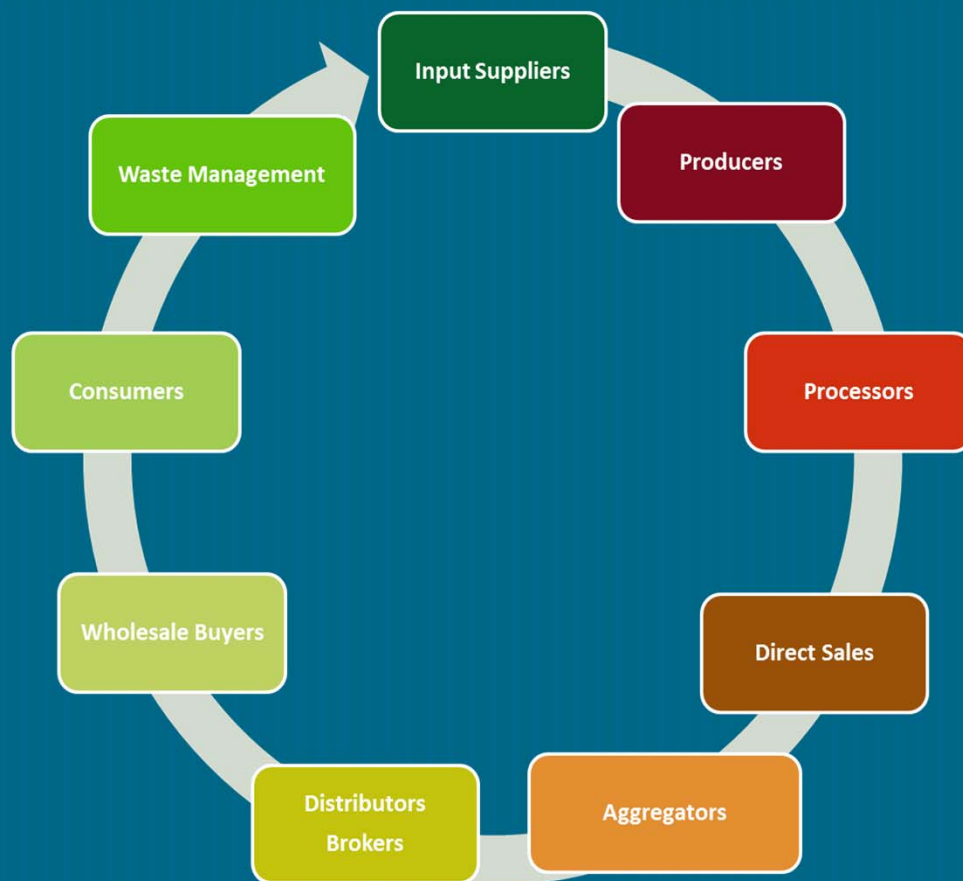
Reinvigorating and adapting traditional associations, building linkages with institutions – the “best” of 31 barangays



Leveraging external assets



Developing value chains

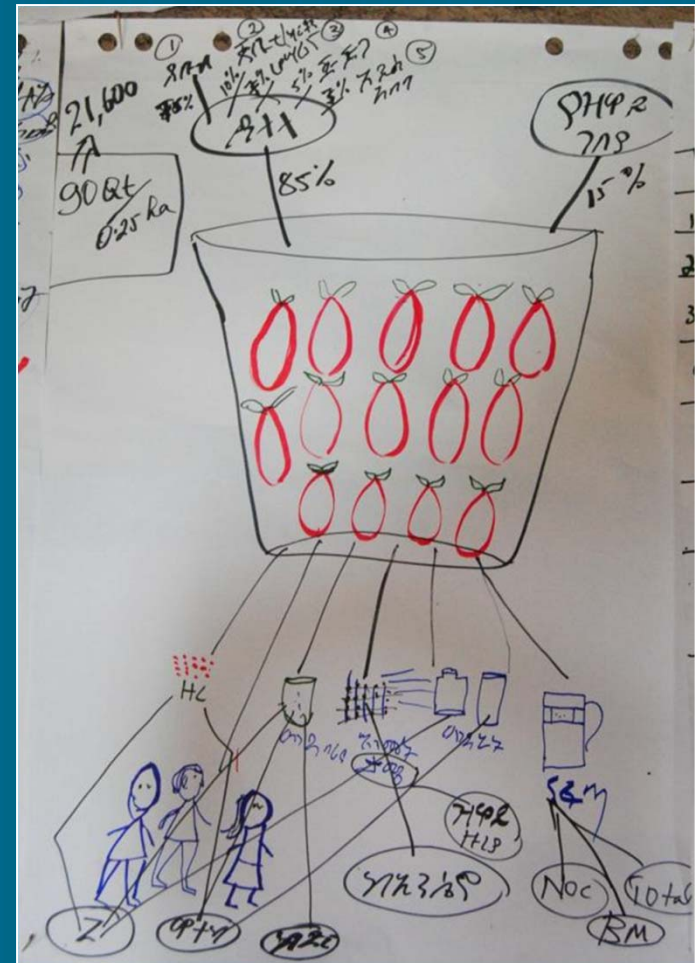


- Products
- Money
- Relationships/networks

□ Not just transactional but transformational:

- Whose value?
- Who retains value?
- Are relationships based on mutuality?

Generating a simplified value chain



Assets (social, physical, natural, human, and financial)...

-are resources for making livelihoods and coping with life's setbacks
-provide us with a sense of identity and meaningful engagement with the world
-provide us with the capacity to act
-motivate us to get involved as citizens or entrepreneurs

Bebbington, 1999

☐and so create agents of development

and producers of development

- This shift [towards asset-based thinking] involves, first of all a reconceptualisation of neighbourhood as a locus of production as well as consumption. ...With this shift comes a parallel reorientation of strategy—from organizing confrontation over service distribution to organizing confrontation over production and the resources necessary to produce (McKnight, 1996: 157)

(Asset-based) Citizen-led development

Alison Mathie,
UNISA
reference,
March 2010

From Clients to Citizens

Communities changing the course
of their own development

Edited by Alison Mathie and Gordon Cunningham



- Unlocking hidden and undervalued assets
- Transforming attitudes and behaviours of “outsiders”
- Stimulating capacity to act as economic and political citizens
- Mobilizing assets, including rights of citizenship
- Identifying opportunity for “agency” within current structures, while pushing for removal of structural constraints.

ABCD uptake around the world: Literature survey (20+)



Uptake around the world

ABCD to what end?

Activating community “agency” for mutual responsibility, social inclusion, community building

Activating citizen-led development for “co-production” with (i) local government as an alternative to centralized state delivery systems, and (ii) with other actors in partnership

Activating economic self-reliance and entrepreneurship, community resilience –solidarity and community economies

Uptake around the world

ABCD to what end?	Applications
Activating community “agency” for mutual responsibility, social inclusion, community building	<i>Citizens organizing to (re)build community:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New immigrants organizing: Minneapolis, USA. (Sheehan, 2009)• People with disabilities, US, Canada, Vietnam (Green et al., 2006; Etmanski, 1996, 2000; Ngung, 2012)• Low income neighbourhoods, and rural communities Canada (Pell, 2006), US (ABCD Institute; Kuhre and Rice, 1990)• Post conflict: Inclusive Communities Program, Solomon Islands (Dureau, 2012)

ABCD to what end?

Activating citizen-led development for “co-production” with (i) local government as an alternative to centralized state delivery systems, and (ii) with other actors in partnership

Applications

Citizens co-producing services

South Africa

- Department of Social Development (Coady Institute)
- NGOs and Community Foundations) (Coady Institute and Ikhala Trust, 2013)
- Philanthropic Foundations supporting internalization of ABCD principles in NGO sector (Mott Foundation)
- Universities: Community Engagement education at National Metropolitan University.

Brazil

- City Hall, Curitiba, Brazil: ABCD and public health delivery systems (+Pastoral de Crianca and United way)(Neumann et al.)

Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea:

- Strength Based approaches to working with Self Help Groups and Local Government (Matrix Consulting, 2010)

Canada

- Community engagement in education: CAFÉ, Calgary

UK

- Co-production of health care services, UK (Foote, 2012), Australia (Boyd, Hayes et al., 2008)

“New generation community foundations” : communities mobilizing/pooling assets internally and using as leverage for external support (Hodgson et al. 2012)

ABCD to what end?

Activating economic self-reliance and entrepreneurship, community resilience

- Transition from State to Market economy (Vietnam)
- “State capitalism” (Ethiopia)
- “Development State” (South Africa)
- Liberalization (India, Philippines)

Themes:

- Participation in the mainstream economy as owners of production
- “Meeting the market together”
- Challenges to dominant economic paradigm.
- Promoting local economy: linking producers to consumers
- Solidarity economy

Applications

Citizens collaborating to access the mainstream economy

Examples:

- Value chains in local and regional markets –**Ethiopia** (Ghore, Henson, 2012)
- ABCD and organic agriculture for local consumption and export: Mindanao, **Philippines** (Mathie, 2009)
- ABCD to promote savings, gradual asset accumulation, **Kenya** (Mathie, 2009)
- ABCD and CBNRM, **Vietnam** (Teo and Vinh -ref) , **Ethiopia** (Oxfam)
- ABCD + Youth run service cooperatives under new (liberalized) coop legislation (**Vietnam**)
- ABCD+ rural livelihood promotion, **South Africa**
- ABCD +Micro franchise and SME initiatives, **South Africa**

Communities/Citizens identifying ways to “take back the economy” preserve diverse economic livelihood strategies

Examples:

- Rural transformation in **Philippines** for community owned social enterprise (Gibson-Graham, ; Cahill, Gibson, MacKay, and Cahill)
- ABCD at SEARSOLIN, **Philippines** (Mathie, 2009, Bona, 2008)
- ABCD to stimulate local economy – linking producers to consumers through membership of SEWA , **India** (SEWA, 2010)
- Community Gardens, La Trobe, **Australia** (Cameron, 2012)
- Value Chains work generally (Rural Action, ACEnet, **US**)

Uptake around the world

ABCD to what end?	Applications
Co-option?	Mining companies in Canada Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, South Africa Micro-franchising, South Africa?

Critiques/concerns

- *It is not altogether surprising that approaches built on economic discourses (i.e. assets and capital) gain popularity within policy frameworks shaped by neo-liberalism, and could therefore easily be dismissed as products of their time.Certainly, these approaches throw up all the ideological tensions and polemics we now expect within neo-liberal policy frameworks – the more benign communitarian discourses that replace a focus on social justice; the agenda of self-reliance that challenges more structural responses; and the individualism and competition that contrast with collective action as a basis for social change ...*
- *....Yet to reject Asset Based approaches for these reasons would be simplistic and overlook their radical possibilities.*

□ *Ingrid Burkett, 2011.*

Where does ABCD sit in the context of current development debates?

- Aid effectiveness:
 - ▣ Sachs v. Easterly: Global planners v Local searchers
- Economic paradigm:
 - ▣ immanent global capitalism v diverse economies
- Citizen-engagement:
 - ▣ Rights v. responsibilities of citizenship
- Community identity:
 - ▣ Community as illusion v. Community as core expression of solidarity

Communities and Donors: Towards a shared experience

Ideally both the role of communities and donors evolves over time as the shared experience of development both *empowers* the community and *transforms* the donor

“Citizens”
Options and
Opportunities

Community

“Clients”
Needs and
Requests

BY

WITH

FOR

Collaborative

Co-creative

Coercive

Catalytic

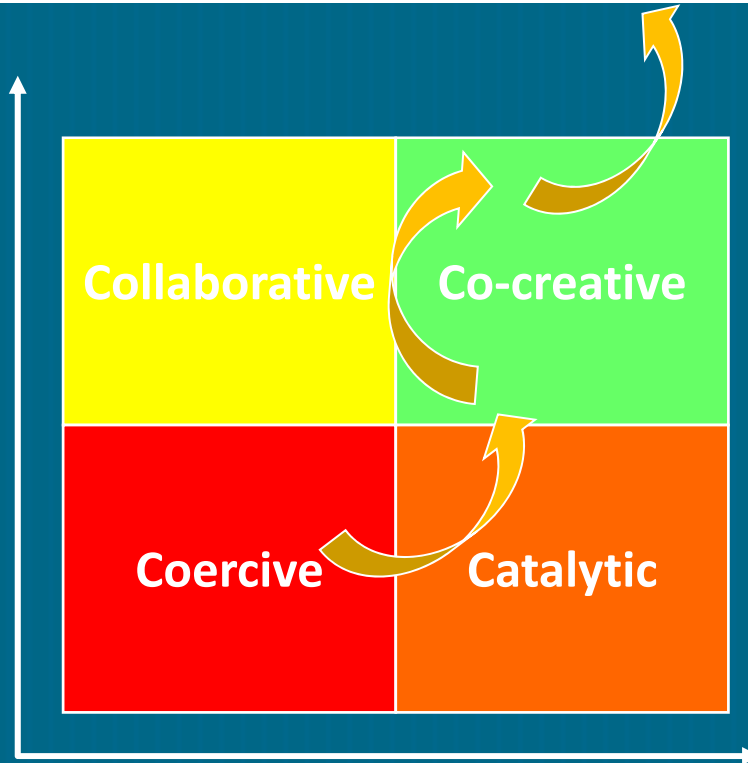
“Charitable
Giver”

Unilateral Requirements
and Demands

Donor

“Change
Facilitator”

Shared and Mutual
Expectations



Economic paradigm

- Making markets work for the poor in a global economy?

and/or

- Building entrepreneurial capacity and solidarity to maintain informal (“diverse”) sources of livelihood in local economies
- A conservation economy

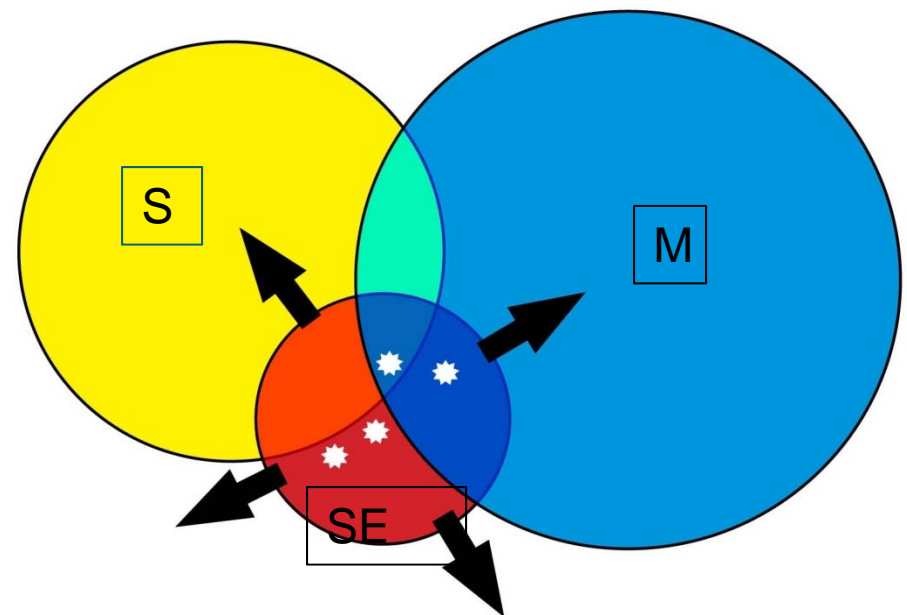


Figure 2: Location of Social Innovation at the Interstices of State, Market, Civil Society

“a piecing together of something new out of scavenged parts originally intended for some other purpose”.

Dimensions of Citizenship

- **Horizontal:** Active citizenship through local community engagement – volunteering, “acting out of civic duty”, membership of local associations , collaboration to build a local economy

- **Power with, power within, power to**

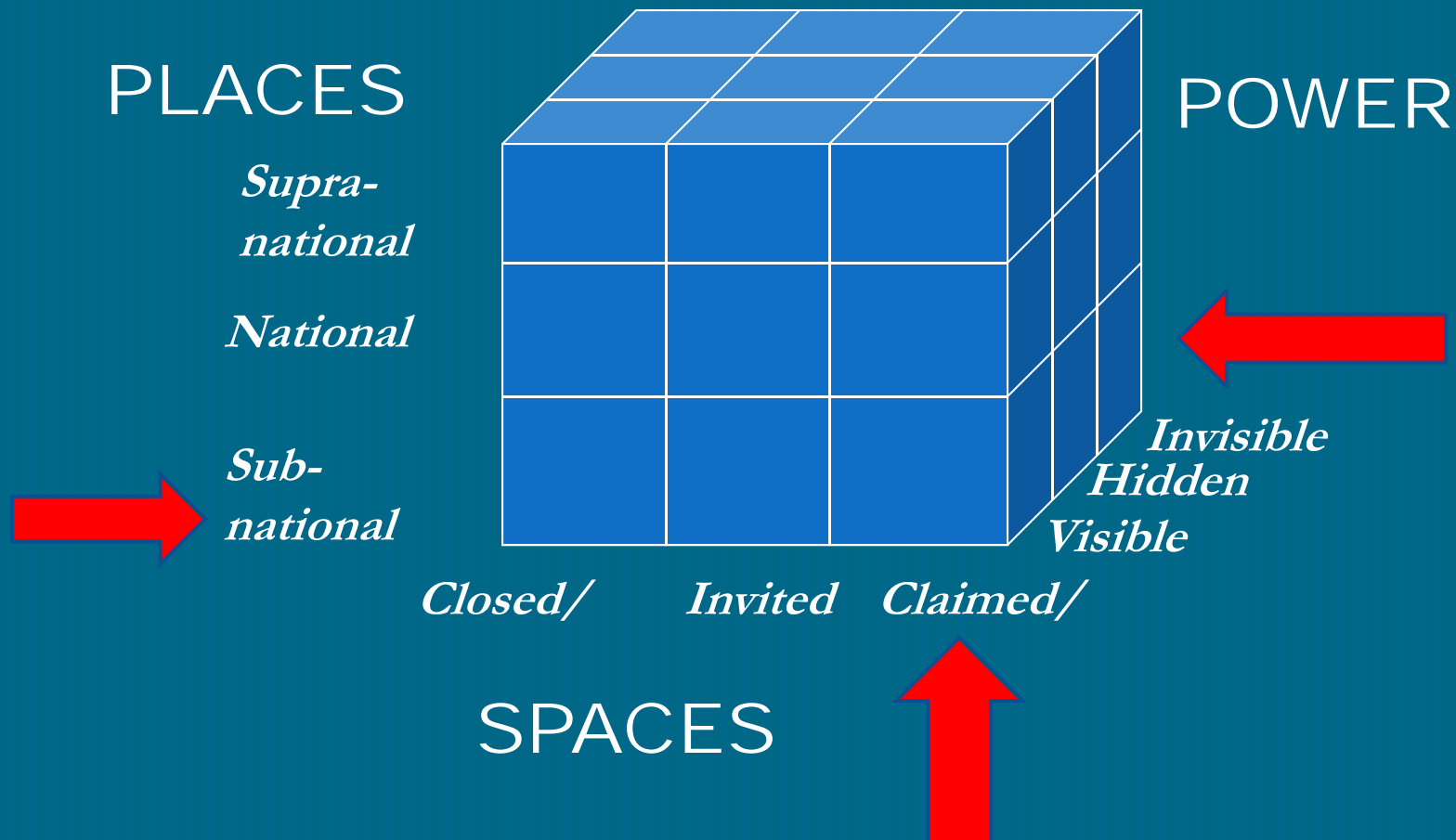
ABCD is particularly adept at stimulating horizontal citizenship. In turn, the horizontal may strengthen vertical forms

- **Vertical:** Active citizenship in terms of engagement with the state - claiming democratic rights and entitlements.

- **Power over**

Dimensions of power

ABCD and the power cube (Gaventa)



Risks

- ❑ Status quo?
- ❑ “Tyrannical” use of ABCD?
- ❑ ABCD is threatening: Makes NGOs redundant?
- ❑ Power channeled away from community/citizens?
- ❑ ABCD too “thin” for thick problems?

Radical possibilities of Asset-Based Citizen Led Development

□ **Economic citizenship:**

- Ownership and control of local means of production
- Networking and collaboration in a solidarity economy
- A revived narrative of mutual responsibility with creative partnerships to translate this into practice at local, national and global levels between state, private and civil society sectors

Ecological Citizenship

Renewed commitment to the natural asset base locally and globally for the prevention and mitigation of climate change. Reassertion of language of “the commons”

THANK YOU



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