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B-BBEE Level Four Contributor

ABCD Training Hospice and Eluxolweni

31st August until 2nd September 2016

Facilitators: Phumeza Mdingi and Anne Löffler

Venue: Hospice Grahamstown



Overview

Attendees

The course attendees were 11 people who are employed by Eluxolweni Child and Youth Care Centre (4 people) and Grahamstown Hospice (7 people). Both institutions had approached us to train their staff members in Asset Based Community-led Development a few months ago.

Purpose and goals of the training

The main objective of the ABCD course is to deepen awareness and understanding of the socio-economic drivers of development, the need-based context of development and how an ABCD approach can support community driven growth and prosperity. Learning outcomes include:

- To deepen understanding of ABCD as a paradigm (and differences to deficit-based approaches to development)
- Methods and tools which encourage critical thinking
- Methods and tools to apply for building up good relationships with learning partners
- Methods and tools they could adapt when working with children and adults
- More independence from external help
- To motivate communal support

Course-Overview

ABCD training workshop was hosted at Grahamstown Hospice from the 31st August until the 2nd September 2016. As the Hospice venue only was available for three days, we adapted our schedule of our standard 3.5 day course to one which could be facilitated within three full days. The course started on the first day with introductions and a brief overview of what the workshop is about. ABCD as a paradigm was then explored with a range of tools which promote critical thinking and positive energy. These tools can also be applied to shift poverty mindsets with associates and partners of Eluxolweni and Hospice (eg. parents and children they work with). ABCD as a process was explored the following day drawing on the group's experiences of community driven development. Subsequently, ABCD-praxis tools were introduced, such as various forms of asset-inventories and mapping as well as visioning and planning on day three. The course concluded with the 'gallery walk' (group presentations), a reflection and discussion about the group's intentions moving forward.

Course Details

Day 1

Activity	Purpose
Introduction:	
Appreciative inquiry (partner work): 1) What makes you proud of the community you live in; 2) who is your role model?	To give a 'first taste' of ABCD (positive energy and what course is about). We asked it would have felt if we had asked them to share their problems with one another (creating heavy atmosphere, sad atmosphere, "a heavy start")
Glass half full or half empty?	To show differences between deficit-based thinking (glass half empty) and asset-based thinking (glass half-full).
Defining ABCD (including types of assets)	To introduce to the meaning behind Asset-Based-Community Development. At this stage, we also introduced the notion of 'citizenship' as ABCD also can stand for Asset Based Citizen-driven Development.
Course outline and week plan	
ABCD as a Paradigm:	
"Community A and Community B": group work and feedback 	The participants were divided into Community A and Community B. Community A was then described as lacking resources, capacity and opportunities and Community B as full of assets, skills and opportunities. Participants gave feedback on how it feels to be part of Community A or B. Subsequently, we disclosed that both are the same community. However, the perception (paradigm) and language used when describing the community were different. This was again to show differences between deficit-based and asset-based thinking, highlighting the importance of perception a situation ('lenses') and 'language' we use to describe a situation.
Types of Poverty: poverty of stomach, poverty of the mind, poverty of spirit.	To show that in order to change the situation of "poverty of stomach" (poverty we normally "see"), at first, mind shifting needs to take place from poverty of mind and spirit to abundance and freedom (antidotes).
Root Causes of Poverty: Group work and feedback 	To exercise deepened critical thinking around the types of poverty and how they are interlinked. Both groups ('Hospice' and 'Eluxolweni') identified symptoms of poverty (no education, crime, teenage pregnancy etc.). With some assistance (asking "why") we could show how to 'dig' deeper to the underlying causes (root-causes) of poverty, which mainly are to be found in poverties of spirit and mind, and systemic factors.

<p>Ladder of inference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> group was asked to conclude from striking handbag things the owner of the handbag Story of Nokwanda (a woman attending a job interview and arriving to the appointment late, smelling like cigarettes and dirty fingernails), group discussion if participants would employ her Introduction of tool of ladder of inference 	<p>To emphasize how quickly we can make assumptions and jump into conclusions in development work and in our daily lives (sometimes based on very little information). We used random objects out of my and Phumeza's bags and other things belonging to our office. Group suggestions about the owner were: a child's bag, a hunter's bag, a lady's bag, a tsotsi's bag, a teacher's bag</p> <p>To show that having quality information about both assets and needs and a fuller picture of reality will inform appropriate decisions and actions.</p> 
<p>Movie Ladakh:</p>	<p>The movie shows how the Ladakh community lived without a cash economy for centuries, did not know 'poverty' but had an impressive quality and joy of life. Further, it shows how 'development' within nine years dramatically has begun to destroy local economy, community relations and self-reliance of residence. In our recap participants gave feedback on assets identified and what are they have observed what development has brought to Ladakh. Most responses referred to negative impacts of development. At this point it was important to emphasize that – even though 'well meant' development can have unintended detrimental impact, especially if it happens too fast as well as from 'outside in' (top down approach by externals).</p>
<p>Characteristics of ABCD</p>	<p>Drawing on Ladakh: I.e. 1) Appreciating and growing assets + we added looking after assets; 2) Social Capital (unity and social networks in communities which adds to quality of life and as one of the main catalysts for growth); 3) ethical leadership; 4) (re-) building local economy (ABCD tries to emphasise the local, and how to support each other for local economic growth).</p>
<p>Paradigms of Development</p>	<p>Drawing from Ladakh and telling stories from own experiences made as an organization which only recently has shifted paradigm of interventions we re-emphasised the differences between deficit-based and asset-based approach to community development. The tool shows freedom and abundance which is felt when simply using available assets as a start for growth, how essential appreciative thinking and acting are, as well as the importance of unity among people when working toward a shared goal.</p>

Day 2

Activity	Purpose
Recap Paradigms of Development	
Summary of topics discussed on day 1	<p>Lenses (paradigm), appreciating and using assets as foundation for growth, ladder of inference which shows the importance to ask questions for gaining the full picture of a situation (versus reacting out of one's comfort zone of the known and familiar), here also the story of the man in the dark cell as reminder in ladder of inference and as a reminder of different types of poverties (in this story: poverty of the mind)</p>
Levels of Engagement 	<p>Since the group members work with individuals who have different backgrounds of crisis (physical, social, economic) – we tried to differentiate between immediate demand to respond to crisis on the one hand, and the aim to also generate long-term positive impact in individuals and their lives. Here, we introduced the tool “Levels of Engagement” as a means to think about how to approach and intervene with individuals on behalf of long-term changes. We tried to explain this rather abstract tool by means of a support-group for HIV positive adolescents and youth (which is one project Hospice intends to implement). It shows the different levels of collaboration from least to most empowering engagements.</p>
ABCD as a Process	
Electric Current	<p>As an icebreaker and as introduction to ABCD-“process”: Definition of “process” by using river-analogy: A healthy river (development process) has flow – flow of information, energy and creativity and is live giving. However, development processes can also flood (be too loaded, fast and demanding), or can stagnate and dry up and bring frustration and disillusionment. Highlighting that a good process is about maintaining a good flow and knowing when to speed up the work (as the process is stagnating) or when to slow down. This is not always easy in a development context which is pressurized and needs sometimes ‘quick’ deliverables.</p>
SEWA-Steps (steps of an ABCD process): Group work and feedback 	<p>SEWA (Self Employment Women's Association/ India) – steps: The groups were given steps of an ABCD process and asked to arrange them in a logical order.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivating people 2. Asset Inventory and Mapping 3. Visioning and Planning 4. Mobilise Assets 5. Leverage

ABCD as a Practice: (Methods and tools of each SEWA/ ABCD step were explored in the following activities of day 2 and day 3)

<p>1. Motivating people: Appreciative Inquiry – partner work: sharing a success story</p>	<p>Motivating others had already been touched on with appreciative inquiry on the first day and all the consciousness building exercises. Our participants were asked to share a success story with one another and to give reasons of what made this story a success. Appreciative inquiry in form of success stories form a good approach of unlocking ‘life giving’ forces in individuals as they motivate, ‘light’ minds and give positive inspiration and advice.</p>
<p>2. Asset Inventory and Mapping</p> <p>a. Human Asset Inventory (solo time)</p>  <p>b. Social Asset Inventory: Family tree (group work)</p> <p>c. Mapping physical and natural assets (group work)</p> <p>d. Mapping Financial Assets: “The Leaky Bucket” (group work)</p>	<p>The differences between an inventory (stock taking, a list) and mapping (makes visible relations, distances, and alternative routes) were brainstormed. Subsequently, the participants started working on reflecting their assets:</p> <p>a. The group were given solo time to reflect on own individual assets. After this exercise, they reported back how it felt to focus on own strengths</p> <p><i>For all following exercises (asset inventories, visioning, planning and reflection) the group split into a. Hospice, and b. Eluxolweni teams in order to focus on their organisations.</i></p> <p>b. The family tree shows relationships with various individuals and/ or groups and other organisations. Some of the working groups had chosen one daycare for this reflection exercise. The other groups made a “group-social asset mapping”.</p> <p>c. Mapping natural and physical assets of Eluxolweni and Hospice neighbourhoods (incl. roads, houses, clinics, dams, streams, trees, sport fields, woods etc.).</p> <p>d. The “Leaky Bucket” is a mapping tool for financial assets which helps with budgeting. The water-level in the bucket symbolizes liquidity. The groups reflected on the different organizational sources of inflows (e.g. fundraising, self-sustaining income generation). Then they looked at the ‘bucket-leaks’ which symbolize the expenditures. Here, they were encouraged to look at ways of ‘plugging the leaks’ – ways of saving in expenditures for example for increasing savings.</p>

Day 3

Activity	Purpose
Linking assets with opportunities	To prepare the group for the next step (inspiration from available assets to create visions and plans), we took a look into the asset-inventories of Eluxolweni and Hospice to use some of the mentioned assets and to brainstorm possibilities (using them for what). Mentioned was, for example, to revitalize a garden area at the Hospice facilities to grow some own food for purchasing.
Visioning and Planning	
Trust-Walk (ice-breaker)	The visioning and planning module was introduced by the ice-breaker called “Trust-walk”: In pairs, people were asked to take their partner for a walk outside but the partner should close their eyes (‘blind walk’). After a while, the roles were swapped and the leader was now the one who was ‘blind’ and being led. Subsequently, the group gave feedback how it felt to walk with and without a vision. The importance of visioning then was highlighted and the risks that come when we do not have a vision and depend on others to lead.
Visioning and Planning   	After defining “vision” (leading image, long-term) the group was given advice on how to create a shared vision and both teams were given time to develop their visions. Subsequently, we introduced the method of “Low hanging fruits”. It shows a tree with fruits where we start harvesting first the ‘low-hanging’ fruits because they are the easiest to reach. They are an allegory for objectives, which – in ways of planning – form the first milestones along the way to the vision. These objectives are easy to accomplish as they involve assets people already have. It was highlighted that when investing these it will be tangible to “harvest” first small successes and build leverage at the same time. Finally, the teams developed their ‘low hanging fruits’.
Gallery Walk 	The group work was concluded with the “Gallery Walk” whereby the two teams presented their asset-inventories, visions and “low-hanging” fruits.
Movie “Voices in Harmony – Community driven development in South Africa”	
We always show this movie at the end of our workshop as it gives ABCD a ‘face’. The movie shows a few projects which were implemented by community members . It shows how they started, speaks about the challenges and how people could overcome them by mobilizing their assets, especially strong communal support.	

Adaptions/ Variations/ Moving Forward	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Tension • Action Plan 	<p>The ABCD workshop was concluded by acknowledging tensions which can arise when our visions and current reality are far apart and how important it is to hold the tension creatively (“Creative Tension”) whilst changing their situation bringing vision into reality. In this context, we did re-consider again the flow of an ABCD development process which is never straight and takes time.</p> <p>Subsequently, the group was given advice on how to plan activities (with time frames, people who are responsible, assets available, partners etc.).</p>
Closure	
Reflection and Evaluation	<p>The asset-inventory work groups gathered for the last time in this workshop to reflect and give feedback regarding the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has anything shifted or changed for us since Monday? If yes, what? • What are the three most important lessons learnt? • How can we use what we have learnt? • What are the next (‘baby’-) steps? <p>Furthermore, each individual was handed-out an evaluation-form to assess the course-work (methods, content, and facilitation). (Please find feedback summaries in the following section “Reflection”).</p>
Celebration	<p>To conclude the hard-work of all participants who attended the course regularly we handed over personal certificates.</p>

Reflection

This course was for us the first one to facilitate for staff members from other NGO’s with whom we have worked with already for a long time. To engage as ABCD-facilitators with our familiar local partners was very exciting but also made us nervous at first. However, this nervousness vanished at the very onset of the course. The atmosphere as well as curiosity and interest both teams brought along made it a wonderful 3-day journey for us.

Also, our group raised very interesting, practical discussions around how to ‘remove poverties’ (of minds and spirits) in their learning partners. For instance, Eluxolweni was very thoughtful when relating the notion of searching for ‘root causes’ of poverty to ‘how to change lives of street children’ (finding the right entrance for breaking self-destructive circles). Furthermore, for both organisations we concluded that they often have to deal with ‘immediate needs’ (crisis) at first before their learning partners are ready for ‘ABCD’ and creating long-term changes in their lives. We suggested, an ABCD-way in triggering long-term positive effects is to remember ‘ladder of inference’ which tells about the importance of gaining the full picture about a situation or a person. This means for Hospice and Eluxolweni, that apart from dealing with very obvious problems of their learning partners, they will have to find and discover also their strengths and build people up right from here.

Methods and tools

While gaining feedback from the 'electric current'-activity the feature of "sound" was mentioned as a possible feature of process. This was very interesting as sound is carried by waves. Waves remind in the tool of 'ripple effects' which we usually unpack at the end of the course. We found it a great way to wrap-up the ABCD-process module when talking about effects of a 'good process'.

In addition, when gaining group-feedback about the Ladakh-movie and taking these notes into what the main characteristics of ABCD are, we found that next to 'appreciating and growing assets' we need to add 'looking after one's assets'. This came-up at the point when discussing the environmental impact of development in Ladakh and how people in the 'traditional village' look after their natural resources. However, we found that 'looking after assets' applies to all asset categories.

Group feedback

The following little section summarises the group- and individual reflection which was gained from the evaluation forms and the very last group exercise:

- Anything shifted or changed since Wednesday?

Participants mentioned that their way of thinking has shifted. They especially referred to acknowledging and appreciating the fact that no one comes with 'nothing' and using available assets. Further it was said that their feeling has changed from being unsure about ways forward to now having an exciting starting point.

- Course highlights and most important lessons learnt:
 - "using what you have to get forward in life"
 - "feeling able now to identify own strengths and not to focus on the negative 'clouds' we face in life"
 - 'encouraging yourself and other people by appreciating strengths'
 - 'how to apply ABCD'
 - 'Process of starting a project'

- Tools: leaky bucket (especially: balance your wants and needs), visioning, low hanging fruits, motivating people (appreciative inquiry), asset inventory and mapping, process, story of Nokwanda (ladder of inference)
 - 'Independence'
 - 'team work'
 - 'set realistic goals'
- How can we use what we learned and what are the next baby-steps?

Both groups mentioned that sharing what they have learned from ABCD was one of the first steps to take. Furthermore it was mentioned to write their plans of action for their 'low hanging fruits'.

- Facilitation and how training could be improved

We received very positive feedback about our facilitation. Under 'improvement' the only recurring comment was that people wished the training took at least a day longer.