

Using an Asset Based Approach: Community Building Programme

Nurture Development UK:
Supporting Community Groups & Organisations
with Community-led Action and Innovation

Nurture Development UK focus on approaches that draw on the strengths of neighbourhoods and result in community-led innovations and bottom-up neighbourhood planning that includes all voices in the community. We aim for greater innovation in the areas that matter to communities, including health, care of young people, ageing well in place, building more inclusion, environmental sustainability, community safety and local economic development.



Nurture Development

development | redefined



Our Team

Our team at Nurture Development UK specialise in strengths-based approaches to community building, because we believe they provide the best way to identify, connect and mobilise community-led innovation.

Cormac Russell, Managing Director of Nurture Development, International Faculty member of the Asset Based Community Development Institute. Listen to what Cormac has to say: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ0uuvxg2Jc>

Jim Diers, Author of 'Neighbor Power, Building Community the Seattle Way', and former Director of the Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Local Government. Listen to what Jim has to say: <http://www.channels.com/episodes/show/4577121/Jim-Diers-Mobilizing-Communiy-Assets#/episodes/show/4577121/Jim-Diers-Mobilizing-Communiy-Assets>

Martin Simon, Author of 'Your Money or Your Life: Time for Both', and Founding Advisor Timebanking UK. Listen to what Martin has to say: <http://www.thersa.org/events/audio-and-past-events/2011/timebanking-your-money-or-your-life-or-both>

What are Strengths-Based Approaches?

At Nurture Development UK, we use Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) along with other strengths-based approaches including Co-production Theory, Reciprocal Exchange systems like Timebanking, Matching grants, Appreciative Inquiry, Community Organising, Open Space Technology and World Café.

We use these approaches to work with residents who want to join together to use what they have to secure what they need, to build safer, healthier and more prosperous, innovative communities. We support community organisations to reach every part of a community and to draw out the hidden treasures of local residents, clubs, and formal organisations. We help local people figure out how best to join all of these assets together and to take action for everybody's benefit. We work from the principle: **Never, never do for others what they can do for themselves.**

Why is Our Approach Different?

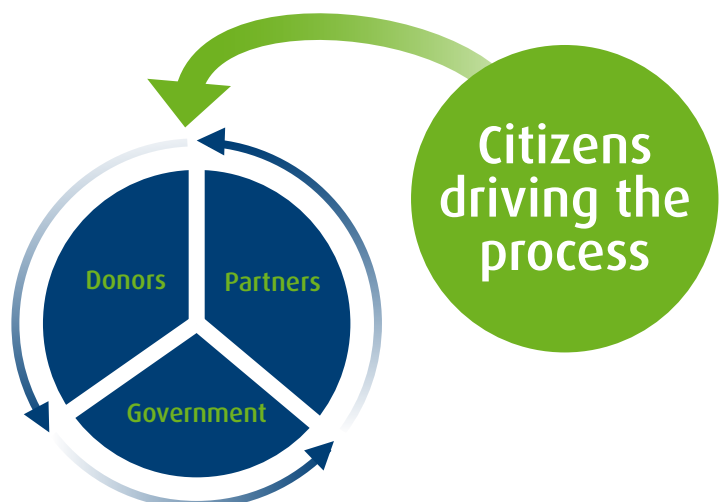
Approaches that view communities as problematic or waiting to be 'fixed' by outside experts are known as deficit approaches. Such approaches fail to recognise that people and communities are both half full and half empty at the same time, and that the 'half full part of the glass' is what holds the ingredients for community growth and development; and that this is where innovation is to be found.

The strengths-based approach, in contrast recognises:

1. **We can not know what a community needs until we first know what it has.**
2. **Every community has more gifts, skills, talents and resources than any one person or organisation can know.**
3. **These gifts, skills, talents and resources need to be identified, brought together and converted into innovative action to improve people's lives and economic opportunities.**

Starting with a community's strengths is the best way to develop real partnerships between communities and outside agencies. To build such a partnership, people and their communities need to be in the driving seat (see Figure 1) of their own lives and of their community's development, working to the principle: 'nothing for me, without me'.

Figure 1: Building Community from the inside out: community are the experts



How Can We Support You?

Here are some of the processes that we use :

1. Asset Mapping:

Individuals: to release individual gifts and talents. We use techniques including door to door conversations that focus on connecting with the entire neighbourhood. We can work with you on the questions to ask people, and then show you how best to connect people who have common passions/concerns into small groups. We provide training in asset mapping, including how to address issues like cynicism and people's fear of engagement.

Associations: to release the potential of informal and formal community clubs and groups. We support community organisations interested in engaging with faith groups, sports clubs etc. to explore untapped assets and innovative potential. We can show you how to engage with these groups to discover their potential and we can help you to develop strategies for bringing these associations together.

Institutions: to release institutional assets to support community-led action. Local businesses, not for profits and Government agencies possess huge assets for community building. We can assist you in connecting your community assets with institutional resources in a way that creates a win-win for both and leads to effective co-production.

Environment & Physical Infrastructure: to release the potential of natural and people made physical assets. We can support you to use practical tools for mapping the physical assets of your neighbourhood, while making it fun and building community connections as you do so. We have worked on projects where young people have mapped the physical assets of their community using Google Maps and Youtube footage so everyone can see the results.

Economic Exchange: to release the power of formal and informal economic exchange to ensure maximum economic advantage at local level. We can support you to assess the currency flow in your community, using techniques like the 'leaky bucket' as a way of asking how much money leaks out of your community. How can we plug those holes so locals can enjoy the economic advantages that come from better local economic exchange?

2. Matching grants that will mobilise ideas for action into community-led projects. We can help you design and facilitate a local matching grants process. This is a powerful way to support local action/project ideas.

3. Engaging with young people and supporting them to become community builders. We use extremely innovative processes that involve working directly with young people to develop a youth led plan that sets out how they can build community, with the promotion of inter generational connections at the heart of that process.

4. Engaging with people who have been marginalised or labeled as deficient in some way. We can help you build bridges between these labeled people into the centre of community life and support them to contribute their gifts.

5. Innovation Forums are used to bring people together to celebrate their achievements in the matching grants projects and to share their learning. They help to connect the various project groups and associations to explore what they could do together to build a stronger neighbourhood.

6. Establishing time banks. A time bank is an exciting way for people to come together to help others and help themselves at the same time. Participants 'deposit' their time in the bank by giving practical help and support to others and are able to 'withdraw' their time when they need something done themselves. We can help you establish a successful time bank and link it into the assets that you discovered during the mapping phase.

7. Presenting your plan to outside agencies and seeking support and investment. Once you have a plan there will be parts of the plan you can do yourself, parts you'll need agencies to partner with you to achieve and some elements of the plan will need to be addressed by outside agencies. We can support you to facilitate this planning process and to present the various elements of your plan in a way that has maximum impact and increases the likelihood of outside investment.

"We have what we need
if we use what we have"

Additional Supports when community organisations engage in a long-term working relationship with Nurture Development UK

1. Online mentoring support including monthly skype coaching/support sessions, email queries, scheduled teleconferences etc.

Online support on specific themes including:

- a. Running a matching grants programme effectively
- b. Bottom up neighbourhood planning
- c. Conducting Asset Mapping: a practical how to guide
- d. Ensure inclusion of labelled/marginalised members of a community
- e. Effective Strengths-Based Community Organising
- f. Empowering Young People to become Community Builders in their Neighbourhoods
- g. A strengths-based approach to Ageing Well in place

This offering will include a number of international guest speakers who are experts in their respective fields.

2. Practical online tools for asset mapping questionnaires including associational/institutional mapping tools, motivational conversation tools and matching grant application forms.

3. Access to online library with extensive resource materials on strengths-based approaches.

4. Structured online/off line peer support, online learning exchanges.

5. Over 12 months, 6 peer facilitated sessions where practitioners/agencies from other parts of the UK come together online for a facilitated peer review of their learning and to offer mutual support and exchange innovation.

6. Support with evaluation and impact measurement.

Co-designing the Supports that make Sense

Nurture Development UK is committed to working with each community group and organisation on an individual basis to co-create the supports that make best sense to them. See our brochure for more information or email Cormac directly at

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