



Organization for Women in Self Employment (WISE)

(Asset Based Community Driven Development (ABCD))

**Start with what we have, build on
what we know!**

Community development, tailored to the needs of the people, has gained considerable attention in recent years. If members of a community or group are constantly made to see themselves as powerless and unworthy and believe that they need outside help, they may adopt a mindset of powerlessness, defeat, and apathy.

“ABCD” focuses on individuals’ and communities’ achievements, strengths, gifts, and diverse resources.

The method promotes the possibility that these resources can lead to lasting positive changes. What makes the method unique is that it challenges a development approach based mainly on problems or needs, which sees people as incapable of living their lives and leading their developments without outside help. In other words, ABCD’s approach to development is a strategy that facilitates individuals and communities to be able to lead their own development on their own and take an active part.

John McKnight and Johnny Kratzman, who are researchers, took an interest in community members in small towns and elsewhere that were considered underprivileged. The realization by the researchers that members of poor communities have a wide range of knowledge, skills, capacity, and resources that they can use to carry out their development has provided the basis for ABCD. Oxfam Canada and Coady International have introduced the implementation of the “ABCD” method in Ethiopia to be used in various areas. However, in many societies, it is clear that the concept has been practiced for centuries in different contexts.

“ABCD” promotes the attitude that “no one has nothing, no one has everything, everyone has something they can share.”

“The starting point of change is attitude and positive mindset.”



Deficiency/Needs

Capacities/Gifts

Half-full or half-empty?

“ABCD” focuses on the half-full part, which is the resource, capacity, and strength of the community/individual.

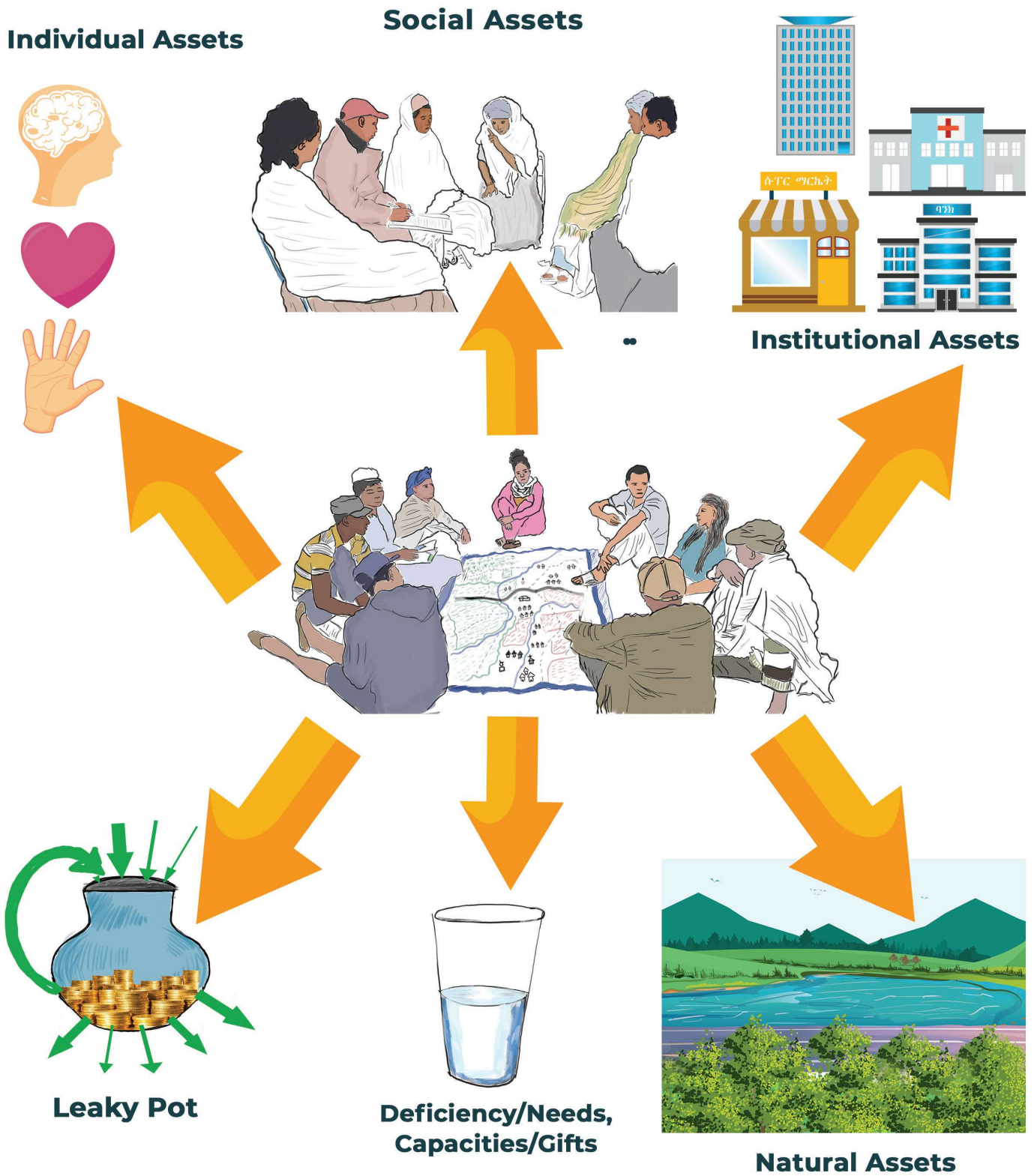
When a community or individual identifies its own assets, the willingness to devote its resources to its own development becomes greater. This approach helps community members to change their perspective by focusing on resources rather than deprivation.

“ABCD” is an inclusive method. That is, it encourages underprivileged members of society, such as women, the elderly, the extremely poor, and the uneducated, to utilize their potential and contribute to the development process of the community.

“ABCD” recognizes the role of relationships from the micro to the macroeconomic arena so that citizens can become active participants in their own development and achieve sustainable growth.

The facilitators/leaders of the “ABCD” discussion use participatory methods, which include role-playing games, teamwork, drawings, stories, competitions, etc.

Asset Mapping



Different levels of community engagement

- » **Inform:** Decisions are made by other bodies. The community is informed of the decision and what is planned to be done in the future.
- » **Consult:** The community is invited to give its opinion. Other bodies determine whether their opinion is included.
- » **Participate:** The community is invited to participate in decision-making on certain issues, but other bodies decide on critical ones (e.g., budgets).
- » **Partner:** The community is equally involved in all matters and makes decisions.
- » **Own:** The community generates its own ideas, designs projects and executes them. Other entities provide advice and assistance as needed.

Most Significant Changes

The process of measuring the most significant changes is a method for monitoring and evaluating the transformations that have taken place within a community and determining which of these changes are of utmost importance. This procedure ensures that community feedback remains intact during review requests, and allows for the monitoring and evaluation of both anticipated and unexpected changes. Above all, this monitoring and evaluation work is rooted in the community itself.

High-hanging Low-hanging

Low-hanging - Assets/wealth that can easily be generated by the capacity of the community.



High-hanging - Assets/Wealth that cannot be generated solely by the capacity of the community and need external help to generate them.