What lies within?

An exploration of
Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

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“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
And will raise up the age old foundations
You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls
Restorer of streets with dwellings”

ISAIAH 58:12 (NIV)

For you Dad

It is finished
ABSTRACT

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) has in recent times been gaining visibility in community development practice. Practice is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven. Dimensions of community development are explored including the specific values, principles and processes that characterise ABCD as an approach, a strategy and a methodology. Critical success factors and principles of effective community development practice. These findings are consolidated in a framework of praxis indicators which is used to specifically examine ABCD practice application in current community development practice.

Three community projects are explored using an integrated methodology which explores practice through questioning of key informants and examination of relevant project artefacts. Through this approach it was possible to demonstrate how ABCD is mobilised in practical application demonstrating the positive impact on community led participation and enhanced local social capital within localised community.

Particular strengths of ABCD practice can be seen in the identification and mobilisation of local community resources through bonding, bridging and linking across sector networks which through its processes enhances social capital within defined local neighbourhoods. The impacts of practice are explored through the application of a community capitals framework which additionally highlights mobilisation of natural, built, human, cultural, financial and political capital. Specific enablers identified include the necessity for a catalyst to both ignite and sustain community led ABCD initiatives and consideration of scale in its effectiveness. Potentially ABCD practice could be further enhanced through intentional application of a community capitals framework and social network analysis and further research into its intentional application in these ways would be beneficial.

ABCD is shown to be a particularly powerful approach, strategy and methodology in its application to activating the local physical environment such as local food security initiatives and also as a mechanism to enable the localised sharing of knowledge and resources within a defined geographic neighbourhoods. Innovative financial models were developed including community resource banks, time banks and diverse alternative economy potential.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Last and most importantly, thank you to Mark, my husband, who feels like he wrote this thesis too, my sounding board and supporter from beginning to end, I can’t thank you enough for tolerating all that this journey has bought with it.
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Bridgman, Geoff (December 2012). Transcribed interview. Recorded in Auckland.

ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABCD</td>
<td>Asset Based Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Community Capitals Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLD</td>
<td>Community Led Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIA</td>
<td>Department of Internal Affairs</td>
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<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>OAP</td>
<td>Our Amazing Place</td>
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<td>PL</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest in the New Zealand community sector regarding the use of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD practice appears to be developing a reputation globally as a credible process in which a community identifies the assets or resources within its local boundaries with the intention to mobilise those resources in the interests of improved community wellbeing. There are many ways in which this is achieved with international literature providing a number of asset based tools and techniques that can be used in this process. ABCD appears to be in its infancy in regard to building its evidence base as an effective approach to community development. It is timely to explore the application of ABCD methodologies and principles in community development practice in order to develop a clear understanding of the principles which may underlie success. Numerous articles and reports about the success of localised neighbourhood ABCD initiatives internationally were located, although fewer examples of specific NZ practice could be found.

This thesis seeks to contribute to this body of knowledge in its investigation of theory and practice and specific attention is given to defining the concept of ABCD. This is necessary to identify the unique characteristics that distinguish it from generalised asset based community development approaches and to consolidate the evolution of the model since its beginnings. Early in the research it became clear that there was a lack of a current consolidated summary of ABCD practice that reflected its practice evolution over the last twenty years since the term was first posed by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Within this research process a priority became the development of conceptual praxis matrix defining ABCD including both theoretical and practice dimensions including values, principles, practice characteristics and processes. This was further enhanced through incorporation of effective practice principles and challenges. The ABCD praxis matrix was synthesised from the literature and tested through evidence of practical application and impact located in the investigation of three community based projects – Our Amazing Place, T3 and Project Lyttelton.
ABCD fits well within the emerging body of community development good practice led by Inspiring Communities, a New Zealand organisation that focuses on the practice of community led development, working to grow the recognition, understanding of the practice and to promote the difference it makes in New Zealand. Historical evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local people invest themselves and their resources in the effort. In times of global change and increasing resource scarcity, a shift to localisation may be inevitable. Identifying the local assets within a community enables development from within. The increasing impact of ongoing government austerity in line with available resources and the effect of this on New Zealand’s people should not be underestimated. Recognising the variety of assets within a geographic neighbourhood community which be leveraged to gain access to other external resources opens up a realm of new opportunities for creating sustainable enhanced community wellbeing at a neighbourhood level.

Though it may seem idealistic there is the potential to unlock the self-sufficiency of individuals and communities. The process is complex and involves a paradigm shift from that of consumers of services to that of co-producers of community wellbeing. ABCD can potentially provide a way in which to view whole communities with a discerning lens, being creative and innovative about ways to build community wellbeing and resilience through the identification and mobilising of the skills, talents and resources that lie within a community.

1.1 Personal & Professional Context

This research project is the current stage in ongoing professional practice development which seeks to identify ways in which to build individual, family, organisational and community capacity. This is motivated an increasing understanding of practice experience in which an inclination to see resources where others see nothing of value has enabled and grown many different projects and initiatives. This intuitive personal capacity to recognise, mobilise and leverage resources in ways most people would not think of has repeatedly proved to be an extremely effective way to enable ideas and initiatives driven by the passion of everyday people.

In practice I have consistently find ways to creatively resource the work of grass roots community people that have the passion and the energy to make a difference in their
communities. These resources have been vast and varied over time from peoples personal strengths and passions, underutilised buildings, natural spaces, old trailers through to specific networks, contacts in the right places and of course money. Through these experiences I have repeatedly found that by thinking laterally about the definition of resources and the ways they can be strategically used to create the greatest impact, many win/win scenarios have been achieved, in terms of both organisational capacity growth and individual empowerment. I have frequently found the greatest and most lasting impacts on organisational capacity growth have come from resources other than money. The most profound impacts have been when an individual’s unique personal strengths and capacities have been identified and enabled. It is these experiences that has bought me to question whether the same principal could be applied to build capacity in local neighbourhoods.

From this context I began investigation into how to frame that enquiry as a research question within academic study. Through the process of refining the parameters of the investigation I began to locate small amounts of literature that referred to a process called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) which seemed to describe processes similar to practice experienced. Further to this I developed a curiosity as to whether the asset based practice described was well grounded within both what the academic literature proposed and the actual practice underway in New Zealand. From there I hoped to examine how the practice and the theory meet. It is from that context that the research question was framed and an integrated methodology developed.

Subsequent to undertaking this research proposal I was contracted in a professional capacity by Violence Free Waitakere (VFW) to take up the project lead of the Our Amazing Place (OAP) project which had run its second iteration. In this capacity I was tasked to finalise a ‘how to’ manual so it could be run by other communities. I was able to see the potential in applying an ABCD approach to the project and between August 2011 and December 2013 further developed the model loosely applying aspects of ABCD methodology. Our Amazing Place (OAP) is one of the projects examined in this research piece and as such I declare any such biases that may influence the findings. The potential for such has been moderated in seeking reflection on the OAP project from other stakeholders.
1.2 Research Question and Aim

Developing a pool of knowledge around community development practice benefits whole communities as it provides an opportunity to learn from the real experiences of asset based projects in order to develop effective practice models. (Inspiring Communities, 2010, 2011, 2013) identify the need for more documented New Zealand based experiences of community led development and (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, p.17) identify “it is important to document cases that are not called ABCD but illustrate similar principal, practices and outcomes”. The overarching aim of this thesis is to explore the concept of ABCD and to understand how it can be applied in community development practice to build community capacity. The main research question was formed within this outlined context:

How are Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches being used in community development practice?

Aims:

- Identify the characteristics of effective and innovative ABCD praxis in a New Zealand context
- Inform the design of a methodology for ABCD projects in defined geographic neighbourhoods at a future time.
- Provide a documented exploration of practice that can be used to inform future community practice, policy and resourcing decisions.

In order to best respond to this broad question a twofold approach to the investigation was required and as such the following sub questions and objectives needed to be answered first in order to provide the specific parameters within which to base the investigation of the main research question.

1. What is community development practice?

Objectives:
Define community development practice
Identify effective community development practice
Explore current community development practice

2. What is an ABCD approach?

Objectives

- Define Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Develop an ABCD praxis matrix to guide practice investigations

These sub questions provide the context and thematic framework for the project investigations which directly answer the main question – How ABCD approaches are being used in community development practice?

1.3 Presentation of Research

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research and overview of the context within which the research enquiry was formed. The concept of ABCD has been introduced and the personal and professional context of the researcher and author has been clarified. The research question is defined and an overview of the research presentation has been provided.

Chapter 2 outlines the research approach and integrated research methodology used in this investigation. The rationale for this a project investigation approach is explained and the integrated processes outlined. Three community development projects were selected for investigation and an overview of the process and projects is provided. Data collection processes, analysis methods and processes used for verification and validation of the interpretation of information are outlined.

Chapter 3 provides the context for the research topic in the broader sense of community practice. Civil society, community development and social capital ideas are explored. Community development is defined along with the complexity of dimensions within which it occurs. The values and principles that guide practice are outlined and the concept of social capital is introduced.
Chapter 4 presents the findings of an intensive literature review providing a detailed overview of ABCD practice. Specific definitions are explored along with the values and principles that underlie the practice. ABCD is explored as an approach which is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven and complimentary concepts of social networks and community capitals are introduced. Specifically methodologies of mapping, building relationships, mobilising assets, community convening and visioning, leveraging resources and storytelling are outlined. Strategic application of ABCD to building community economic development, building social capital and empowering active citizenship and civic participation are explored. Specific challenges that address this community development practice are also presented.

Chapter 5 draws together the findings from chapters three and four to assist in answering the research question. By drawing on both community development and ABCD literature, it was possible to construct a praxis matrix that brings together the multiple dimensions widely agreed upon as a framework that incorporates characteristics specific to ABCD. A meta-analysis of community development practice research is presented and effective practice principles derived that will assist in identifying effective practice in the project investigations.

Chapter 6 presents each of the individual projects explored. The purpose of the project investigation is to learn from the practice experience not to evaluate the individual projects and this is reflected in the method of presentation which has both individual and collective learning components with a focus on practice reflection. The findings present the three projects individually including an overview of activities purpose, location, aims and objectives. The genesis of each is explored in detail from inception to present day, the insights gained from exploring the development of each project are valuable in informing future practice.

Chapter 7 presents the findings as they align with ABCD beginning with collective understanding and application of ABCD in practice. The ABCD praxis matrix developed in chapter five provides the framework for the presentation of the rest of this chapter which focuses on the practice identified aligning with ABCD values and principles and the processes encompassing its application as an approach, a methodology and a strategy.
Chapter 8 presents challenges located in the project practice and the effective practice principles identified that have helped to address those challenges.

Chapter 9 summarises key themes and learnings located in research in order to answer the research question. How ABCD is being used in practice is discussed and final insights gained from the project investigations are outlined including critical success factors, effective principles and practice enhancers. The final ABCD praxis matrix is presented and limitations of findings and directions for future research are suggested.
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the research approach and methodology used in this research process. Real life examples of the application of ABCD in practice provide an opportunity for deeper exploration of the theoretical base that guides that practice. Given the research question seeks to reveal the meeting of theory and practice, an in depth study of existing practice must form the basis for this research. For this reason project investigation is considered the most appropriate strategy to explore the question. Stoecker (2005) identifies that the ‘project based research model’ provides a platform to bring together the head and the hands of traditional research thus providing opportunities for social change whilst engaging in rich community led research. An integrated methodology was selected as the best approach for the project investigations.

2.1 INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY

An integrated methodology was chosen as an appropriate strategy for this project investigation which examines multiple dimensions of praxis in order to develop a deep understanding of a social phenomenon. (Plowright, 2011) proposes the use of a framework to structure research thinking - Framework for an Integrated Methodology (FraIM) is a structure or model which describes the process of designing, planning and carrying out research. The framework supports the integration of different elements of the research process to ensure effective study of social phenomena (figure 1). FraIM does not maintain that a particular philosophical position must be held prior to the beginning research but rather encourages a flexible and responsive approach to answering the research question. In addition (Plowright, 2011) rejects the traditional dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative methods. The alternative paradigm upon which this draws consists of a pragmatic integrated methodology, relativist social epistemology, realist social ontology and a realist object ontology. Plowright (2011) refers to this as holistic integration and further proposes the use of a pragmatic methodology aimed at informing decisions and activities that solve problems and impact on the world.
Figure 1 Integrated Methodology Framework

Source: Author, Adapted from (Plowright, 2011)
A comprehensive literature review was conducted on the topic of ABCD practice and the underlying theoretical principles. The information from the literature review was then used to create an initial conceptual framework of ABCD from which the project investigation questions were formulated (appendix 1). This framework for ABCD practice was later deepened through further literature review which informed the development of a praxis matrix which draws together the dimensions and characteristics of ABCD including values, principles, processes, challenges, outcomes and effective practice principles. This matrix was tested against the practice reflections from the three project investigations.

2.2 PROJECT INVESTIGATIONS

Three project investigations were selected to illustrate the breadth of ABCD approaches. This allows for each investigation to be in depth and multi-dimensional providing sufficient scope for commonality of findings as well as robust opportunity for validation of findings across all three investigations. For the purposes of this research a non-probability sampling technique known as purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is intentional in its selection of project based on criteria that meets the aims of the research. Project selection was based on the criteria of being:

- a community development initiative
- practicing asset based community development – either ABCD or similar principles
- variety of artefacts available in the public domain

The potential pool of projects was fairly limited as ABCD is an emerging practice in a New Zealand context and as such there were few projects identified that could meet all three selection requirements. It was also desirable to locate quite different projects that were at varied stages of development and variety of approaches so as to provide the opportunity for a greater breadth of concept exploration.

The three projects were discovered in different ways. As previously mentioned OAP was first identified in the process of thesis refinement and due to ease of access to information because of personal connection was selected first. A comprehensive search was conducted utilising professional peer community development networks and contacts
along with internet and literature reviews to search for other likely candidates. There were less than five potential projects identified as meeting the whole criteria and through elimination others were either too early in development or lacked sufficient artefacts for triangulation of data. Once all three projects for investigation had been settled upon personal contact was initially made to ensure criteria compliance and the projects willingness to participate in the research process.

**Project Lyttelton (PL):** Project Lyttelton is a resident led community organisation that acts as an umbrella for a multitude of community projects led by the energy, passions and skills of everyday residents who have sought to work with what they have for the betterment of their local community. The particular power of this process of ‘knowing what a community has’ was demonstrated in the weeks following the big Christchurch earthquakes when Lyttelton was able to mobilise what they had quickly when faced with complete disconnection from the outside world.

**Our Amazing Place (OAP):** Violence Free Waitakere (VFW) are involved with the ongoing development and refinement of a community treasure hunt model which is animated through free community fun days where local residents spend a day exploring their local community and the assets within. Parks, people, organisations and more are identified and highlighted to the community through the use of a treasure hunt map along with challenges and experiences which requires you to seek out these assets and interact. VFW aligns with place based groups in many different communities and guides and refines the planning process which includes asset identification and mobilisation.

**Transition Towns Thames (T3):** T3 is a Thames based network of volunteer residents established themselves formally as way to connect and enable everyday community. Principally it exists to provide a platform through which people can connect and enable their own ideas and aspirations for their community. Increasingly intentional and inspired by ABCD this group set about the mapping of skills and capacities of local residents keen to engage in discovering how this collective capacity could be mobilised. With over 1200 individual capacity inventories since collected the group has been challenged by the process of how to mobilise these community assets. Additionally working with the built and economic capital contained within the community, T3 has harnessed the collective
utilities purchasing power of over 50 homes to introduce solar electric capacity in a very cunning model of asset mobilisation.

2.3 Data Collection

The next stage of the integrated methodology used two investigative processes to collect sufficient data to answer the research question and provide triangulation of findings. Asking questions and artefact analysis were selected as methods for gaining both the narrative and numerical data required to identify how ABCD approaches are being used in practice and to explore the relevance and understanding of the principles identified in the praxis matrix.

Asking Questions

Chile (2007) identifies that "the generation of new knowledge that informs new kinds of intervention, assessment and evaluation are situated in the community in the form of practice based knowledge which derives from the experience of the community" (p.327). It is this practice based knowledge that is sought and as such the first method of data collection will be asking questions of the key project informants. Six key contacts from across the three projects were selected. Each contact was authorised by the organisation and identified as suited to participate in the research project by the associated organisation.

Interview Design

Communication with the key contacts from the three projects comprised of individual face to face exploratory conversations with six informants from across the three projects and further email and phone discussion as needed.

The themes that were explored in this process were guided by the framework developed in the literature review (appendix 1) and included but were not limited to:

- Initial knowledge of ABCD and source of knowledge
- Understanding of theoretical perspectives and motivations
- Motivation for and experience of initiating an ABCD project
- Characteristics of ABCD
• Strengths, weaknesses of ABCD
• Key learnings
• Potential of ABCD as a community development tool

The asking questions guided conversations were recorded and transcribed and along with written communications including emails represent the data collected from the asking questions stage.

PROJECT CONTACTS AND INFORMATIVE SOURCES

The spectrum of roles held by the informants were diverse – governance, researchers, managers, founders and catalysts.

OUR AMAZING PLACE

The key informants for the Our Amazing Place (OAP) project investigation were Geoff Bridgman and Elaine Dyer both of Violence Free Waitakere (VFW).

Geoff Bridgman is the volunteer chairperson of VFW and introduced the OAP concept to the organisation for further development. Geoff has a key role in the support and evaluation of the OAP project and has been involved since 2009.

Elaine Dyer is paid CEO of VFW and has been involved with the project for approximately three years. The project is managed by someone else but Elaine maintains an oversight role of the project.

PROJECT LYTTELTON

The key informants for Project Lyttelton were Wendy Everingham, Margaret Jefferies and Lottie Harris.

Wendy Everingham has been involved since 2003 in various volunteer capacities including Board treasurer and secretary for 8 years, volunteer and project manager and was has been involved since the organisations inception

Margaret Jefferies is volunteer chairperson, editor of the Lyttelton News and all round catalyst of Project Lyttelton and has been involved since its inception in 2003.
Lottie Harris has been involved for five years since moving to Lyttelton and is currently the paid manager.

*T3 (TRANSITION TOWNS THAMES)*

Mark Skelding is volunteer chairperson of T3 (Transition Towns Thames) and has been involved since inception in 2005.

**ARTEFACT ANALYSIS**

Artefact analysis is also known as documentary analysis or unobtrusive methods whereby the main activity or process is that of deconstruction of artefacts which generates information that can be collected analysed and interpreted.

Plowright (2011) identifies that the role of the artefact analyst is to develop a “deeper and critical understanding of the ideological values” (p.105), represented by those artefacts and to raise critical questions in order to understand what they tell us about society. He states the relevance of Foucault’s concern with discourse, knowledge and power through which artefact analysis provides a way of understanding the social characteristics of the world which are at the heart of how we think, relate and behave. “These characteristics are about power and control, about ideology and about the all pervasiveness of a hegemonic culture” (Plowright, 2011, p.117). Kellehear (1993) further identifies the key advantages of studying records and artefacts: the data is often unique and comprehensive and provides a good source of longitudinal data - a highly reliable data source that can easily be rechecked by others.

*Artefact Selection Process*

Artefacts can be defined as objects or events that are produced by people and can range from static written texts to visual and sound imagery through to real life dynamic events. Artefacts have four main characteristics which may also represent a hierarchy of complexity as identified by (Plowright, 2011, p.93-95).

- **Informational** – less complex of artefacts, its main function is to hold information until it is needed,
- **Presentational** – Main function is to present information to others. The purpose is to share information with others and is at a denotative level.
• **Representational** – Main function is to re-present information to others through assembly and redistribution, showing ideas, events, knowledge, information and understanding thus offering a construction of understanding about a social context, event or experience

• **Interpretational** – Main function is to offer an interpretation of the issue understudy. Explain the meaning of an event or experience by offering an interpretation.

The role of the artefact analyst is to develop a deeper critical understanding of the ideological values represented by the artefacts being analysed. Artefact identification and analysis provides the opportunity to locate further verification of the concepts explored. A range of artefacts have been located and reviewed across the artefact spectrum from basic informational to more complex interpretational artefacts which provide third party corroboration of findings. (Appendix 2) provides a list of the artefacts examined in this investigation.

**2.4 Data Analysis**

Plowright (2011) proposes that there are three main methods of data analysis, the less structured, semiotic and discourse analysis and the more structured content analysis. The less structured approaches of semiotic and discourse analysis are of particular use to expose social inequalities and to identify themes which may include relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control. For this reason thematic analysis will be utilised as it provides an inductive approach that allows for exploration in a broad sense of the topic at hand.

Both numerical and narrative data was sourced through the artefact analysis and asking questions. The FraIM model also additionally draws on two characteristics of these methods specifically the level of mediation - a ‘between methods’ characteristic and the degree of structure –and a ‘within methods characteristic’ which informs the next steps as the research project moves into the stage of data analysis.

**ABCD Praxis Framework**

Data analysis sought evidence of ABCD practice in the projects by thematic review of the interview and artefact data using the ABCD praxis matrix developed. It was intended
that this approach would enable optimum integration of the theoretical and practice findings enabling detailed identification of ABCD praxis.

A framework of thematic logic derived from the ABCD praxis matrix was applied to organise the data into key themes and emergent categories. Analysis considers various dimensions of each projects practice including alignment with ABCD characteristics, effective community development principles, practice challenges and impacts on community resilience and wellbeing. The data was thematically sorted using the ABCD praxis matrix for a basis of key themes and concepts which was expanded as new themes emerged.

2.5 Presentation of Findings

The findings of this research are presented in three ways. Firstly, each individual project is presented with findings as they relate to the projects purpose and genesis. Secondly the findings aligning with the developed ABCD praxis matrix are presented and lastly practice challenges and effective practice principles found in practice are identified. The purpose of the investigation is to examine practice not to evaluate the projects and as such direct quotes used in text to illustrate the practice have not been identified as specific to an informant or project. In bringing together the various dimensions of this entire piece of research, key learnings emerged throughout the integrated methodology process. The conclusions are discussed in relation to answering how ABCD approaches being used in community development.

Verification & Validation of the Interpretation of Information

The concern of appropriate methods for the research task is primarily with that of reliability and validity. Reliability is concerned with methodology that can easily be duplicated and turn a similar result whilst validity is concerned with how valid a method is for measuring what it claims to measure. The concern of appropriate methods for the research task is primarily with that of reliability and validity. Reliability is concerned with methodology that can easily be duplicated and turn a similar result whilst validity is concerned with how valid a method is for measuring what it claims to measure. Kellehear (1993) identifies unobtrusive methods of data collection which include written and visual records, material culture, observations and hardware. General advantages of an
unobtrusive approach include safety, repeatability, non-disruptive and non-reactivity, easy accessibility, inexpensive, good source for longitudinal studies and the benefit of study of an ‘actual’ rather than ‘reported’ behaviour. Disadvantages of unobtrusive methods can include distortion of original record, decontextualizing, selective recording, intervening variables, single method over reliance and limited application range.

To ensure the validity of the findings the following strategies were used:

*Clarification of researcher bias*

Due to professional relationships of varying degrees with the case studies I acknowledge that as a practicing community development practitioner there is a potential bias to the study and relevant professional context has been outlined in the introduction.

*Triangulation of information*

Triangulation of data is achieved through in several ways. The integrated methodology ensures multiple sources are utilised in the research process. Three methods of investigation are utilised: data from the literature review, interviews and artefact analysis. A number of evaluative reports are from third party authors and provide further triangulation to findings. This documentary evidence came from three different projects and as such it is considered that this range will produce a spread of data that will enable triangulation of emerging themes. The range of data that is expected to be sourced will vary from third party independent evaluations through to self-published project information. Data from asking questions can also be captured and analysed within the same framework providing further opportunities for triangulation of emerging themes. A challenge to be considered in a documentary analysis is how triangulation within data analysis can be achieved. Thematic analysis from multiple sources was used to develop the praxis matrix which ensures the triangulation of data and creditability and validity to the process and findings.

*Interviewee checking*

The key contacts of each project investigation were sent digital copies of the completed transcripts from the asking questions sessions and are invited to review and edit as required to ensure a true and accurate record is used for the basis of further analysis.
Presentation of discrepant data

To ensure credibility to this research piece there is inclusion of findings that may be contrary to the overall conclusions.

This chapter has provided an overview of the research approach and methodology, the following chapter now looks at the broader context of ABCD, considering civil society, community development and social capital.
CHAPTER 3
CIVIL SOCIETY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL CAPITAL

This chapter provides the context of the research in the broader sense of community development practice. Concepts of civil society as a goal, a public sphere and a means to achieve it are explored. Community development is defined along with the complexity of dimensions within which it occurs. The values and principles that guide practice are explored along with different practice approaches including community building and organising. Lastly, social capital is defined along with concepts of how it can be developed.

3.1 CIVIL SOCIETY

Somewhere in between the individual, the family, the community and the state is the realm where social change occurs and civil society provides the framework where the dialogue is to be had between state, community and citizen. Community development practice strengthens civil society, it plays a crucial role in encouraging participation and strengthening the civic empowerment capacity of people through associations and promoting the voice of marginalised communities thereby supporting active democracy by strengthening the capacity of organisations to work in partnership with people to shape and determine community priorities and action.

Edwards (2009) views civil society as having a three part framework where it is simultaneously a description of the sector (voluntary associational life), a value (the sort of society we want to live in) and a space for public discussion (public sphere). These concepts are further expanded to define civil society as simultaneously a goal, a means to achieve it and a framework for engaging in public debate.

Civil Society – a goal – the good society

As the good society we can consider civil society as ‘the way we would like things to be’, (the ideal society) based on shared ideals. It encompasses the values of cooperation, tolerance, non-violence and developing trust in a goal of a good society. Edwards (2009) argues that civil society plays two important functions in humanising capitalism by nurturing of social and economic assets that exist in even the poorest communities and
advocating for, and holding governments accountable for, the redistribution of more concrete assets through redistribution of land, employment opportunities, public facilities and services.

Civil Society – a framework for public debate – public sphere

Freire (1972) considers that the wisdom of the oppressed is to be valued and civil society provides the public sphere for the voice of the oppressed to be heard, balancing the power of state legislation and intervention within citizen rights and privacy. Unitec (2011) proposes that De Tocqueville considered that civil society balances the potentially intrusive gaze of the state, protecting the voice of the citizens and the democratic system, while Hegel identified that civil society is to be “tamed and ordered” by the state and Habermas saw a goal of civil society as revitalizing the state through dialogue and pursuit of the common good.

Tennant (2007) calls it the space between government, the family and the commercial sector. Kelly (2004) provides a model of the triangle of political space, (Figure 2), which presents us with a tangible illustration of the space in which the multifaceted layers of community dynamics works to create social change influencing individual, families, communities and state.

Figure 2 The Triangle of Political Space

Source: (Kelly, 2004, p.36)
Within civil society as the public sphere there is the constant evolution of the ‘common good’. It is the arena where important questions are debated, the democratic ecosystem in action where both the engagement and the shaping of society takes place. Within these definitions it becomes clear that social change mechanisms and interactions are debated and negotiated with the realm of civil society providing the framework where the dialogue is to be had between state, community and citizen.

_Civil Society – a means to achieve it – description of the sector – associations_

Civil society in this respect is the associations and networks that inhibit the civil society sphere. Largely organisational and essential to strengthening the community, civil society mediates the power and influence of government and business. Elliot and Haigh (2012) state “A dense network of voluntary associations and a healthy public sphere help promote transparency, accountability, public pressure and the broad diffusion of power that are essential to democracy” (p.2).

CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) includes in its definition of civil society: civil society networks and organisations; trade unions; faith-based networks; professional associations; NGO capacity development organisations; philanthropic foundations and other funding bodies. Civil society includes churches, unions, village organisations, advocacy groups and many other actors who are altruistic at their roots (Mathie & Puntenney, 2009).

_ Strengthening Civil Society_

Civic engagement requires active participation in civil society as efforts to strengthen civil society are inextricably linked to promotion of accountable governance at local, national, and international levels, stimulating participatory decision-making and involvement in civic decision making. Building the capacity of individuals to participate in a number of ways is essential to strengthening civil society.

- Civic Expression: increase the effectiveness and improve the governance of civil society organisations, as well as their capacity to set and achieve their individual and collective goals.
- Civic Existence: promote the rights of citizens to organise and act collectively towards defined goals for the public good.
• Civic Engagement: foster interaction between civil society and other institutions in order to increase the voice of citizens in public life.

Creating a process by which communities are “Building conditions under which caring becomes rational” civil society can generate "the less tangible assets that enable people to bargain, negotiate and advance their interests" that ultimately leads to "self-belief, human ingenuity, and independence of thought" (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, p.147-148).

3.2 Community Development

Defining Community

In order to develop a clear understanding of the practice of community development it is important to consider the meaning of the term ‘community’. It is generally considered that the term is used in so many different contexts that its use is subjective and as such its meaning is determined by the individual dependent upon the situation. This broad use of the term ‘community’ ranges from a description of an ideological way of living to a collective power to a feeling of belonging or a process to a description of place or a way of living (Aimers & Walker, 2009; Chile, 2007; Dunham, 1986; Ife, 2010; Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001, 2006; Shirley, 1979).

Similarly in practical application within a community development context the term is frequently described as one of three distinguishable groupings:

• Communities of place (geographically defined)
• Communities of identity (such as specific population groups i.e. demographic, cultural, gender)
• Communities of interest (groups sharing common interests or beliefs)

In this sense it is possible for people to belong to multiple communities at any given time. Increasing globalisation means communities of interest and identity can span the globe and as such are not necessarily bound by geographic boundaries.

To enable discernment in the use of the term ‘community’ when considering ‘place based’ community development, it may be useful to consider the term ‘neighbourhood’ to
differentiate between smaller scale communities of place and those of identity or interest. Using this definition enables us to recognise that multiple types of community can exist within place based communities or ‘neighbourhood’ but are not bound by them and conversely living in the same ‘neighbourhood’ does not automatically mean there is community other than that of place. Craig (2005, 2007) supports this perspective referring to communities of identity and issue based communities cross cutting geographic neighbourhoods.

**Defining community development**

It is difficult to locate one definition of community development that is universally shared although there are common elements. Chile, Munford and Shannon (2006) propose that community development has a twofold definition, as a professional practice it is an intervention which seeks to enhance individual and community well-being using capacity development strategies, these aim to equip individuals to actively participate in processes to transforming their own communities. As an academic discipline, it is concerned with “the critical examination of how the forces of structural change, economic integration, institutional development and renewal impact on the capacity of individuals, groups and communities for self-determination” (p.400).

Chile & Simpson (2004) define community development as “the process in which members of a community attempt collaboratively to promote what they consider to be their collective wellbeing through unity of action” (p.321). Both (Purcell, 2011) and (Gilchrist, 2009) refer to the definition from the National Occupational Standards for Community Development in the UK which states that Community Development is a long term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The Budapest Declaration 2004 provides us with a definition formed by delegates by over thirty countries

> [Community Development is a way of] strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and communities organising around specific themes or policy initiatives. It strengthens the capacity of people
as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It has a set of core values/social principles covering human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity; and a specific skills and knowledge base (Craig, Gorman & Vercseg, 2004, p.423).

Derrick (2000) states that community development is a model of working within self-defined communities of interest which supports community control of services. Building networks to identify the resources and skills needed to implement action to tackle problems and issues they experience collectively is key. This capacity building is echoed by (Purcell, 2011) and (Gilchrist, 2009) who agree that the process enables people to improve the quality of their own lives and communities by organising and working together to identify needs and aspirations then exerting influence on the decisions which affect their lives.

The interactions between individual, community and state are where community development is at play, actively participating in the interactions that determine their survival and quality of life. As suggested by (Ife & Fiske, 2006) it might be claimed that “community development needs a human rights framework if it is to be successful and human rights need a development framework if they are to be realised” (p.297). At its most basic level it is about helping individual and community voices to be heard, acknowledged and valued and to participate in realising their basic human rights.

(Ife & Tesoriero, 2006, p 186) state:

For community development, good process is the most important outcome that can be achieved. The process, if it is a good one, will enable the community to determine its own goals, and to remain in control of the journey as well as the destination. It seeks to establish a way of thinking where people interacting with each other is important, where the quality of the collective experience is valued, and where it is in the experience of community processes that people are able to maximize their potential and achieve their full humanity.
It is well supported that community development process is as important if not more so than the outcome, a well-informed process can be transformational at an individual and community level. (Bergdall, 2003; Chile, 2007; Freire, 1972; Ife, 2010; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, 2008). As such, it is important to consider the importance of good process and to recognise the complex dynamics that need to be considered in effective community development practice.

Community Development Approaches, Principles and Values

The most significant feature that distinguishes community development from other community work is its values and principles. The community development process is underpinned by a guiding set of values and principles that inform the practice internationally. It is important to understand how these translate into our understanding of community development. The terms values, principles, theory, practice, approaches, dimensions, processes are often used interchangeably within the literature and it can be confusing to decipher exactly which aspect is referred to. In order to best understand how these values and principles apply to community development and how that translates as both a way of thinking and a way of doing, it is helpful to clarify what is meant by these commonly used terms:

*Theory:* A supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained: A set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based (Theory, 2013).

*Practice:* The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it (Practice, 2013).

*Values:* Principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgment of what is important in life (Values, 2013).

*Principles:* A rule or belief governing one’s behaviour, morally correct behaviour (Principles, 2013).


*Process:* A series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end (Process, 2013).

*Method:* A particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one (Method, 2013).
**Strategy:** A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim (Strategy, 2013).

The difference is subtle for many of these, yet is important to make a distinction in the way the terms apply to community development to be most beneficial in the translation to application to practice. How and why community developers work in a particular way is integral to understanding the professional practice of community development. (Munford & Walsh, 2001, 2006; Ife, 2002) agreed that values and principles translate into a framework which describe both ways of thinking and ways of doing.

Ife & Tesoriero (2006) propose the framework of their overarching principles as divided: ecological, social justice and human rights, valuing the local, global and local and principles of process. Derrick (2000) suggests core values which support the same principles of social justice, holism and empowerment but additionally that participation and a resource focus are fundamental. CDX (2001) state that taking a community development approach requires being committed to equality & justice, learning and reflecting, participation, social justice, political awareness and sustainability.

In the United Kingdom (UK) community development occupational practice standards have recently been established by the Federation for Community Development Learning for application in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They were derived from comprehensive practice review of over 756 participants and contribute greatly to our understanding of the nature of community development values (figure 3).

**Community Development Principles**

Loomis (2012, p.17) consolidated community development practice principles drawn from (Craig, 2005; Chile, 2007; Inspiring Communities, 2010) and used them as a measure of community led community development practice.

- Encouraging deliberative, inclusive long-term development
- Empowering individuals and communities (i.e. place, interest, identity, etc.) to take responsibility for positive change
- Identifying, celebrating and building on local ‘gifts’
- Strengthening the capacity of organisations and people as active citizens
• Addressing injustice and inequality; promoting the autonomous voice of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable
• Respecting diversity within communities
• Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks inside and outside the community
• Encouraging a long-term process of learning and change vs. quick fixes

**FIGURE 3 UK Community Development Occupational Standards – Values & Principles**

*Source: (FCDL, 2009)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equality &amp; Anti-discrimination</td>
<td>Acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports and develops anti-oppressive policies and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values diversity of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes a sustainable environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes the link between local, societal and global contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Action</td>
<td>Promotes the active participation of people within communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects the rights of others when planning collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Empowerment</td>
<td>Promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages an understanding and commitment to the long term nature of Community Development practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes accountability and transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working and Learning Together</td>
<td>Recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates opportunities for collective learning through shared reflection on action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally, nationally and globally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Munford and Walsh-Tapiata (2006) have identified a number of principles emerging from effective bicultural community development practice in New Zealand which have similar
themes but are more practice focused and have linked success with having a vision for the future and for what can be achieved. Self-determination can be achieved through opportunities to develop knowledge which enhances participation, practice and working collectively towards a common goal. They emphasise the importance of understanding local contexts and different social structures and how these operate culturally within communities enabling the use of local knowledge to address current challenges. Working within power relations and understanding how these influence perspectives of personal place in the world and ability to establish new ways of doing things.

An ongoing action reflection cycle of practice and impacts is essential in bringing about positive social change for all communities with a commitment to overcome challenges that may be faced in recognise their ability to effect change. These principles are echoed by (Ife & Fiske, 2006) who identify the common territory between human rights and community development including locating humanity at the core of activity, aspiring to improve human well-being, and valuing self-determination.

Ife (2010) considers a range of values and principles in community development work which encompass ecological, social justice and human rights principles along with practice and process principles which operate within continuums of the values that inform community development practice. Derrick (2000) proposes the three main aims of community development are to change power structures, spread knowledge and encourage self-determination and provides the belief statement defined in 1983 by the New Zealand Community Workers Training Council which encompasses much of this understanding, it states:

The organisation and structure of society causes problems of powerlessness, alienation and inequality. To achieve greater equality and social justice, resources must be redistributed. Collective Action is a proper and effective method of working for social, political and economic change. Community work is a process which promotes such collective action. It is necessary to confront sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination within ourselves, within society, and within the institutions of society (p.18).

This myriad of thinking illustrates the complexity of community development and the multiple layers of thinking, processes and actions which inform the values and principles
that guide the community development practice. Within the essence of it all is a range of
dichotomies and paradigms about how we perceive, what we value and how we act in the
world. Community development practice works within this dynamic framework and a
preliminary model is presented which attempts to illustrate this complexity (figure 4).

Figure 4 Community Development Environment

Source: Author
It is important to locate oneself (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001, 2006; Munford & Sanders; 2005) within the community and the framework within which community development practice is occurring which will be unique to each situation and the application of community development as a way of thinking and/or doing.

**Community Development Approaches**

Community development could in many ways be considered a colonialising process (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001) and as such to maintain integrity, the community development worker should in no way be self-serving nor motivated by self-interest but rather with supporting community members “to organise activities, take up issues and challenge unjust discrimination” (Gilchrist, 2009, p.38). This view is supported by (Derrick, 2000) and (Ife, 2002, 2010) who also suggest that the community development process provides more learning and growth that the outcome and that the process requires adequate time, effective policy, programme support and an understanding of needs.

Green and Haines (2012) identify three different models of community development based on a spectrum of self-help, technical assistance and conflict. Gilchrist (2009) considers similar divisions proposing that contrasting political analyses of society and state produces three models of community development practice which are useful in defining what community development process looks like. (Figure 5 draws this thinking together). Stoecker (2005) suggests that there are two opposing paradigms - community building a programmes approach and community organising a power approach.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Development Approaches</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Political Framework</th>
<th>Role of Govt</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Organising</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Challenging Power</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Radical Socialist</td>
<td>Enabling people to act</td>
<td>Advocacy Campaigning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Capacity Building</td>
<td>Pluralist</td>
<td>Sharing Power Collaborating</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Liberal Social Democratic</td>
<td>Facilitating Partnerships &amp; Direct Service Provision</td>
<td>Community Engagement Partnership Lobbying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Claiming Power</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Communitarian Conservative</td>
<td>Enabling people to act</td>
<td>Volunteering, Social Planning, Self Help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Building is a communitarian or consensus approach is underpinned by concepts of social responsibility and a goal of social harmony underpinned by a welfare safety net. (Gilchrist, 2009; Ife, 2002; 2010) concur that all community development should aim at community building. Community building involves social capital, strengthening the social interactions within a community, bringing people together, and helping them to communicate with each other in a way that can lead to genuine dialogue, understanding and social action. Community building is really about enabling people to work together to build self-reliance, responsibility and self-confidence on a local scale. Loomis (2012) cites (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and their ABCD approach as an example of community building, whereby the emphasis is on appreciating the potential a community has to offer and strengthening the relationships within the community (figure 6).

Figure 6 Community Building

*Source: Author*
Community Organising

Community Organising takes a conflict of interest or radical approach which aligns with the poor and oppressed. This emphasis on civil rights and social justice seeking to develop political awareness and collective organising to effect social change though redistribution of power and resources (Gilchrist, 2009). Community organising is most commonly associated with (Alinsky, 1969) whom focused on how marginalised people could gain power by working more closely together. Alinksy proposed that through the strength of confrontational collective action change could be forced at policy and government level. Essentially he proposed that communities should identify problem or need to be addressed, then be organised around this problem to utilise a variety of tactics to discredit those in power whilst demonstrating the value of power to the residents (Green & Haines, 2012). Community organising practitioners work to address power and equality in their communities primarily through conflict and direct social action. This is often achieved through encouraging individuals to work together to amplify their collective voice and influence.

Community Capacity Building

Craig (2005, 2007) brings our attention to community Capacity Building as a third approach to be considered which focuses on building community capacity. Gilchrist (2009) aligns this approach as a pluralist or liberal model which considers more directly multiple stakeholders and power differences and assists community to find their collective voice to influence policy makers. Capacity building is frequently where we find the middle ground of bottom up and top down where collaboration within grassroots community, social agencies and government occurs to strengthen the sector. Additionally (Craig, 2005) points out the danger of interpreting these approaches when considering community development as a goal as much depends on the motivation and power of the driving force in each instant.

Ife (2002, 2010) suggests a fourth community development approach which is useful to consider particularly when using an economic development strategy - social entrepreneurship. This approach considers that ideas and skills from the business community can be usefully applied to community development and that application from the private sector can improve outcomes for communities.
It is important to recognise that whilst there are different approaches and dimensions to community development, often processes involve all dimensions or approaches through different stages of development, and the different characteristics and benefits can be beneficial in designing a community development strategy that empowers local communities.

3.3 Social Capital

Community development has at its foundation an ideology that motivates people to link with each other. “The social fabric of community is formed from an expanding shared sense of belonging. It is shaped by the idea that when we are connected and care for the wellbeing of a whole that a civil and democratic society is created” (Block, 2008, p.9). Associational life is the key to democracy, associations or relationships build social capital and develop norms such as reciprocity, trust, cooperation and tolerance. “Social capital theory provides a framework for consideration on how communities can work together to identify community issues and to take action on them” (Denley, 2009, p.32).

Social capital has many definitions and uses which are all useful. (Putnam, 2000) defines social capital as those features of a social organisation such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action. Coleman (1990) suggests social capital is the “invisible resource that is created whenever people cooperate.” Aspects of social structures facilitate social capital development (Putnam, 2000), as a resource that accrues to an individual by virtue of their position in social network and (Burt, 2000) suggests the sum of the resources that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of connections.

Robinson (1997, 2002) states that social capital exists both as a resource in its own right and also as a factor which contributes to the creation of other community capitals. Building social capital requires three things: active and knowledgeable citizens, a rich network of voluntary organisations and forums for public deliberation. Social Capital is essentially in the connections and collaborations across community, the sense of personal and collective efficacy or personal agency within a social context (Leonard & Onyx, 2004). The way people act which is self-determined within the limitations of the context which is social in this respect.
Furthermore (Putnam, 2000) argues that wellbeing simply has to do with the quality of the relationships and the cohesion that exists amongst its citizens. The volume of social capital possessed by an individual or a community depends on the size of the network of connections they can mobilise and the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed by each of those connected be each of them in their own right (Bourdieu, 1986).

Communities with strong social capital are interconnected and citizen led with many interactions and relationships forming opportunities on an ongoing basis. Conversely where there is weak social capital communities are disconnected and individual households live in isolation within a neighbourhood community (Putnam, 2000). Denley (2009) identifies that building formal and informal networks of individuals, families and organisations, enhances the sense of belonging and connectedness within a community. Adams, Conway and Witten (2007) conclude that neighbourhood groups, organisations and local venues are significant sites for forming and building social ties and social capital.

Leonard and Onyx (2004) state that communities with high levels of social capital have numerous interconnections between members and high levels of trust. Broadly known as associations, as suggested by (Putman, 2000; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) these networks of networks are a keystone in the foundation of strength based community development practice. Social capital is nurtured through local networks and associations where individual’s skills, hobbies, knowledge and culture are linked and enhanced through the building of networks and relationships.

Thick trust develops in strongly bonded communities, it is this environment that provides a strong platform for cooperative activities. Bonding social capital is where ties are strongest when amongst similar or familiar people. Bridging social capital requires identifying and building relationships with gatekeepers to gain access to new connections Ability to bridge structural holes in communication channels accrues social capital (connecting and brokering). Linking social capital requires active participation of people working together within a participative community who are: active agents and creators of their social world (citizens) not passive victims of fate or government policy (consumers). Block and McKnight (2010) state that the power of community grows out of ever increasing cooperative local relationships and connections.
CHAPTER 4
DEFINING ABCD

This chapter presents the findings of an intensive literature review which provides a detailed overview of ABCD practice. Specific definitions are explored along with the values and principles that underlie the practice. ABCD is explored as an approach which is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven and complimentary concepts of social networks and community capitals are introduced. Specific methodologies of mapping, building relationships, mobilising assets, community convening and visioning, leveraging resources and storytelling are explained. As a strategy application to building community economic development, building social capital and empowering civic participation are explored. Specific challenges that address this community development practice are also considered.

4.1 ABCD DEFINITION

ABCD describes an approach to community development that is increasingly evident in practice globally. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) first articulated the model known as ABCD which describes a community development approach that recognises the importance of the capacities of individuals and their associations in building powerful local communities and is intentionally focused on strengthening relationships.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) describe ABCD as a process of community building that starts with locating the assets, skills and capacities of residents, citizens associations and local institutions. Similarly (Bergdall, 2003) describes ABCD as focused on the assets strengths and capacities of a given community. Haines and Green (2012) propose that it is a planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) describe ABCD as an asset-based approach that uses methods to draw out strengths and successes in a community’s shared history as its starting point for change and that it can be understood as an approach, as a set of methods for community mobilisation and as a strategy for community based development.
4.2 ABCD VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

ABCD is grounded in the principle that positive action for community change is more likely to be inspired and sustained by identifying the strengths, talents and assets of individuals and communities than a focus on needs and deficits. Block and McKnight (2010, p.4) recognise that communities become competent and powerful when these properties are awakened:

1. Giving of Gifts - Individual gifts of people within a community are awakened.
2. Presence of Association - Gifts are amplified through association
3. Compassion of Hospitality – Welcoming new relationships to share gifts

Together it is theorised that these three properties are the key starting points in establishing communities of abundance (Block & McKnight, 2010). An ABCD approach considers first and foremost what assets the community has and how those assets can be mobilised in a way that improves community sustainability, wellbeing and resilience. Ennis and West (2010) maintain that shifting the community discourse to one of assets can change how people understand their community. This process offers an alternative to focusing on the problems and deficiencies in a community.

Values and principles summarised as underpinning community development practice clearly support the concept of using internal resources to enhance community wellbeing (collective action, empowerment). ABCD primarily encompasses all the same values and principles as community development, it is merely the focus on asset identification and mobilisation at an individual level within a local community which sets it apart. However, even that could be argued is a definitive aim of community development and not distinct to ABCD. Duncan (n.d), faculty member of the ABCD Institute at North Western University, arguably home of this approach offers a summary of principles and action steps that encapsulate the ABCD way of working (appendix 3). Values and principles of participation and inclusion, diversity, asset focused community building, civic responsibility, collaboration, partnership, reflective learning and working across sectors are all evident in an ABCD way of thinking. Collective learning based on perpetual action and reflection on practice supported by evaluative research is integral to an ABCD approach.
It is useful to consider that the distinction of ABCD is in being ‘asset based’ as ‘community development’ essential characteristics are well supported throughout ABCD literature. It is useful to consider the separation between the values and principles that inform the thinking (WHY?) and the practice (HOW?) and the processes (WHAT?)

4.3 ABCD APPROACH

The work of (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) is foundational in discussing an asset based approach. Care should be taken to distinguish between asset based community development practice in general which could otherwise be termed “strengths based practice” and the term asset based community development (ABCD) which has been specifically named by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) as a way of describing their particular community development practice approach which includes specific methodology and strategies which have been well documented through the ABCD Institute in the United States.

Foot and Hopkins (2010) propose that an asset approach is a way of thinking about the world which sees both individuals and communities as co-producers of community health and wellbeing, the promotion of networks and relationships is key in empowering communities to identify, strengthen and mobilise community assets and resources.

An ABCD approach as defined by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) maintains that by focusing on people’s gifts rather than their deficiencies healthy sustainable communities can flourish. Through identifying community assets and focusing on developing internal connections which mobilise those assets, communities can be revitalised in a sustainable way improving community wellbeing and resilience. Communities can “begin to assemble their strengths into new combinations, new structures of opportunity, new sources of income control and new possibilities for production” (p.6).

ABCD’s community-driven approach is in keeping with the principles and practice of participatory approaches where active participation and empowerment are the basis of practice. Bergdall (2003) identifies that an ABCD approach rests on the conviction that sustainable development emerges from within a community, not from outside, by mobilising and building upon local resources.
Mathie and Cunningham (2003) propose that Appreciative Inquiry (AI) provides an appropriate theoretical anchor for ABCD practice. (AI) was developed at Case Western Reserve University, primarily as a methodology to help corporations and institutions improve their competitive advantage or organisational effectiveness (Cooperrider & Srivastava, 1987). It is well grounded in lessons learnt about collective and personal motivation in the field of educational psychology and draws upon theories of knowledge construction and communication (figure 7).

Figure 7 Appreciative Inquiry Principles

Source: Author
Derived from (Elliot, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appreciative Inquiry Principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Constructionist Principle</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Simultaneity Principle</td>
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<td>The Poetic Principle</td>
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<td>The Anticipatory Principle</td>
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<td>The Positive Principle</td>
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AI is an approach to purposeful change that that identifies the best of ‘what is’ and pursues dreams and possibilities of ‘what could be’ through four stages Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver. This process shares considerable commonality with ABCD in its early stages, which seeks to transform the way a community sees itself, from largely negative terms to recognising within it the capacity to enhance quality of life (figure 8). Elliot (1999) calls this process of transformation the “heliotropic principle”, as plants grow towards their energy source, so do people, organisations and communities, locating and moving towards what gives them life and energy.
An ABCD approach is deceptively simplistic, informed by three key paradigms, it is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven.

**ABCD Approach Paradigm 1: Asset Based**

"Wherever there are effective community development efforts, those efforts are based upon an understanding, or map, of the community's assets, capacities and abilities" (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 5). Emery, Fey and Flora (2006) consider assets as forms of capital, defined as a resource or asset that can be used or invested or exchanged to create new resources. Burkett (2011) identifies assets as anything of value, acknowledging that intangible people assets can include skills, knowledge, experience and traditions, networks, relationships. Tangible assets can take the form of natural and built assets which could include the physical environment, land, buildings, streets,
infrastructure, schools and transport. Financial assets could include funds held by individuals or organisations and collective buying power. Foot and Hopkins (2010, p.7) propose that an asset could be any of the following:

- Practical skills, capacity and knowledge of local residents.
- Passions and interests of local residents that give them energy for change.
- Networks and connections – known as ‘social capital’ – in a community, including friendships and neighbourliness.
- Resources of public, private and third sector organisations that are available to support a community.
- Physical and economic resources of a place that enhance well-being.

An ABCD paradigm considers that by identifying and mobilising assets we can locate effective ways to improve community wellbeing through building on what resources a community has. The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) as proposed by (Emery et al, 2006) provides an effective framework within which to consider community assets which is underutilised in community development practice and as a tool to examine community change from a systems perspective.

Specifically it is proposed that utilising the CCF enhances ABCD practice by enabling a systems level perspective to examine structural change. There are seven community capitals which encompass both tangible and intangible resources which can be consumed, stored or invested to create new resources, Financial, Build, Cultural, Political, Human, Social and Natural. Bourdieu (1986) was an early proponent of this concept of mobilisation of community within a capital framework and originally suggested four types of capital, economic, symbolic cultural and social. Ife (2010) proposes in addition environmental, political, spiritual and survival dimensions of community capitals. Coleman (1990) considers how human and social capital are interconnected and (Putnam, 2000) how social capital can be lost.

**ABCD Approach Paradigm 2: Internally Focused**

It is important to remember that an ABCD approach is not done to communities, Kretzmann and McKnight's work on ABCD has evolved from studying hundreds of initiatives that occurred spontaneously in communities experimenting with different

Inspiring Communities (2010, 2012, 2013) consider that community led development (CLD) is intentional about fostering place based communities to thrive and be strong and resilient. CLD is a strengths based planning and development approach that involves whole systems rather than individual issues. It is about people from all sectors thinking, organising and capacity building to enable locally led action and leadership. It is important to clarify it is an approach not a service delivery model or programme, it is a way of doing things. “To sum it up…we’re convinced that a strong relationship at a street level is the DNA that forms resilient communities” (Foot & Hopkins, 2010, p.13). This community led focus is an essential element of ABCD which values local leadership. Loomis (2012) states that the principles of CLD are well evidenced as being essential to practice, engaging and empowering communities, and achieving long term local development. Grassroots leadership, a place based focus and collaboration across sectors are the essence of a CLD approach that addresses broader social processes that impact on communities. These echo the elements of an ABCD approach – asset based, internally focused and relationship driven.

**ABCD Approach Paradigm 3: Relationship Driven**

Essential to an ABCD approach is the treatment of social relationships as a primary asset. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) propose that in this way ABCD is a practical application of the concept of social capital. Social capital is generated in social relations, the focus on associations or relationships is primary where special attention is given to mobilising relationships. Denley (2009) states that building formal and informal networks of individuals, families and organisations enhance the sense of belonging and connectedness within a community. This connectedness can intentionally be fostered through the processes of bonding bridging and linking social capital. Bonding social capital refers to
the networks and connections that exist between entities that are similar and geographically local (Coleman, 2009). Bridging refers to the connections created between things that are different and not as known. Putnam (2000) proposes that the concept of linking in turn relates to the connections across power relations. Social networks are a central concept within social capital and are generally seen as the ‘structure’ within which social capital exists (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000). Ennis and West (2010) describe how the use of social network maps can demonstrate the layers of interconnected networks that link people and changes in social structures as a conceptually compatible model for maximising associations of associations in ABCD practice. ABCD practice is centred on relationships and impacts of practice on network characteristics such as size, density and centrality can be closely tied to the asset mapping process. Gilchrist (2009) proposes that integrating a networking approach to community development would enhance the ABCD practice model, in that it can assist in understanding structural change between small groups and larger social structures.

4.4 ABCD METHODOLOGY

An ABCD approach attempts to mobilise a communities entire asset base around vision and a plan that is community led and asset focused, this approach is accompanied by a number of processes or methodologies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Five key processes that are proposed by the original Kretzmann & McKnight model; asset mapping, building relationships, mobilising assets, conveying and visioning and leveraging resources. Mathie & Cunningham (2002, 2003) have become key contributors to the learning around ABCD practice globally and propose storytelling as an additional method. Storytelling helps identify factors for success and to build unique connections within the community. In practice, reflective learning is an integral part of the process, working together in an ongoing process of action and reflection is a core value of ABCD practice (figure 9).

There is no set sequence with the exception that leveraging outside resources to support locally driven development should be the last step in the ABCD process. These are not intended to be prescriptive but rather act as a guide of crucial processes in a community building path which is asset based, internally focussed and relationship driven. Each of these methods may be utilised multiple times in practice as needed, it is a constant
ongoing process that requires these methods to be continually cycled as part of a long term strategy. Only when mapping, building relationships, mobilising and convening have been completed should the community begin to leverage resources from outside the community.

**Figure 9 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Processes**

*Source: Author*

**ABCD Method 1: Asset Mapping**

Integral to the methodology of ABCD is the process of mapping assets within a community. Throughout the ages mapping has provided a way of recording the physical/geographical location and availability of resources. This recent history of
mapping as a way to record assets is not so far forgotten and would seem a logical place to start when considering how to lead community rejuvenation or empowerment. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) identify that individuals, associations and institutions contain within them a large proportion of a neighbourhood’s asset base and that provides the starting point. It is an ongoing process to locate and map all assets which can be used as resources in of community building (figure 10).

Fraley (2010) proposes the use of alter maps, locally generated maps that may represent the challenges, assets, histories, successes and landmarks that are most significant to that community. It is interesting to consider how both natural and human made resources can be mapped in different ways. Exeter, Field and Witten (2003) developed the Community Resources Accessibility Index (CRAI) to map the locational access of recreational amenities, public transport, communication, health and education services shopping and banking facilities. A scoping project for Waitakere City Council included mapping the community assets to build an understanding of the social, physical, economic and cultural environments and provide a knowledge platform for future planning and community building activities (Asiasiga, Conway, Kaiwai, & Witten, 2006). Allenby (2011) used asset mapping in a similar way to establish the assets of importance to children in the Tamaki community.

Foot and Hopkins (2010) propose that asset mapping can help stimulate and motivate change in communities where people are disengaged, few community associations exist and where communities are perceived as dependent. ABCD considers the talents, abilities, and skills of individuals within a localised community as a powerful community asset which can be mobilised though building relationships.

**ABCD METHOD 2: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) propose a key process is building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem solving within the community. Block and McKnight (2010) state “the power of community grows out of ever increasing cooperative local relationships and connections” (p.100). In this way it is crucial to consider the creation of connections and networks of networks as building blocks of social capital and core to ABCD practice.
As the relationships and connections between assets within a community are built and strengthened, new expectations begin to take root as people increasingly look within to solve problems and meet needs. The community becomes stronger each time local strangers, associations, organisations, businesses and facilities are linked with others. Networks and associations based on the naturally occurring groupings of geographic assets come from the identification of individual gifts and talents being made visible to the community. Collaboration is the essence of this process, the aims whether for economic development, information, “Collaborations are not so much about reciprocity but rather the mobilising and combining of resources and distinctive capabilities to generate benefits for each partner and social value for society” (Austin, 2000, p.69).

**Figure 10 Community Assets**

*Source: (Foot & Hopkins, 2010, p.21)*
**ABCD METHOD 3: MOBILISING ASSETS**

Mobilising internally held assets fully for economic development and information sharing purposes moves beyond locating and building relationships among assets. This community building process aims to mobilise the community’s assets fully for two important purposes: Developing the local economy and strengthening the neighbourhood’s ability to shape and exchange information (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Foot and Hopkins (2010) describe this phase “mobilising residents to become self-organising and active by sharing knowledge and resources and identifying common interests” (p.23).

Strengthening the neighbourhood’s ability to shape and exchange information is essential to the success of local plans and strategies. The capacity to exchange information at a local level needs to be strengthened and an understanding of where existing communication channels have developed. It is key to identify local communication leaders and geographic bumping places that can be strengthened, validated and expanded. The goal is to increase the capacity for a community to exchange its vital stories, plans and definitions. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) state that this focus on communication paths “rebuilds the central nervous system of a community, without which the process of restoring health and wholeness becomes unimaginable” (p.351).

**ABCD METHOD 4: COMMUNITY CONVENING & VISIONING**

Convening as broadly representative group as possible for the purposes of building a community vision and plan is an essential process in ABCD practice. Without a commonly held identity and a shared vision it is difficult to sustain the long term work of regenerating community. Elliot (1999) identifies that appreciative enquiry seeks to achieve the transformation of a culture from one that sees itself in largely negative terms to one that sees itself as having within it the capacity to enrich and enhance quality of life.

From the outset the planning process should find and mobilise local capabilities including people assets across sector along with potential local leadership. This stage of community planning contains a commitment to finding and mobilising local capabilities for problem solving in the immediate present. These early outcomes are tangible and leads to greater participation in longer range strategising by the community. Mathie and Cunningham
(2003) propose that the body of learning around participatory development work is valuable in understanding the process of relocation of power to communities and how to best encourage inclusive community participation whilst still leading by stepping back. The importance of collective community visioning is well supported if a community development project is to have any longevity. (Munford & Sanders, 2003; Inspiring Communities, 2010, 2013)

**ABCD Method 5: Storytelling**

Mathie and Cunningham (2002) propose that the collection of stories about community development practice successes is integral in early stages. Not only does storytelling help identify factors for success it is also core to the community development practice of action and reflection (Munford & Walsh, 2001). Drawing on appreciative inquiry (Emery et al, 2006) suggest that a unique sense of community can be created by sharing stories about the best that is and can be (figure 11).

**Figure 11 Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Cycle**

*Source: (PL, 2012, p.27)*

The Appreciative Cycle
It is possible to connect people with their passions and values in a positive way that allows people to find a way to activate them. Hearing what people care about can build foundations for mobilising people to make changes to enhance wellbeing.

**ABCD METHOD 6: LEVERAGING EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset based locally defined development is the final step. It is important that all other processes have been completed before attempting to leverage external resources. This process is particularly focused on leveraging resources from outside the community to facilitate the mobilisation of internal assets that have been identified. Learnings from participatory approaches can inform the strategy that ABCD practice uses to create these linkages. This process attempts to provide win/win scenarios for all stakeholders concerned. Bridging across sectors and linking through power structures can provide diverse resources that may be scarce in a defined community.

**4.5 ABCD STRATEGY**

As a strategy, ABCD provides a means of sustainable community driven development. In this way ABCD is concerned with how to link micro assets to the macro environment. An ABCD strategy proposes to identify and mobilise the local assets with particular importance on the interests, skills and talents of individuals, the social networks and voluntary associations and physical assets through strengthening relationships and social networks whereby intentionally contributing to building social capital and enhancing the wellbeing of a local geographic or place based community.

It seeks to mobilise local assets primarily for local economic development and to strengthen a communities ability to shape and exchange information. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) propose that community economic development theory may be useful in considering how ABCD can stimulate endogenous, collaborative action for purposes of building local economies under this paradigm. They propose that ABCD best fits as an endogenous development process to foster empowerment and control of local resources, although it can be argued that it can be applied across the continuum but as a means of economic growth runs the risk of becoming an exogenous process (figure 12) below illustrates this continuum.
Figure 12 Community Economic Development Continuum

Source: Author
Developed from (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p.14)

Exogenous

Focus is on reforming economic systems
CED as a means to economic growth
Community is defined in terms of administrative boundaries
Examples: Resource privatisation, financial system reform, industry attraction

Development Process

Focus is on the economic capacities of individuals
CED as a means of enhancing the capacity of the poor to become more self reliant
Community tends to have a demographic dimension - focusing on those who are marginalised
Examples: Extension services, microfinance institutions, entrepreneurship development

Endogenous

Focus is on the economic capacities of groups
CED as a means to foster individual and collective empowerment and control of local resources
Community is self defined - a group that shares a common bond
Examples: Community based resource management, community banks, credit unions, savings, credit cooperatives, cooperatives, community enterprise
Once the assets are known and the relationships have been established, each is encouraged to begin to make its own set of contributions to the neighbourhood economy exploring possibilities for how to produce more from within. Cameron and Gibson (2005) demonstrate the potential to reengage and locate both individuals and communities in Latrobe Valley, Victoria, Australia where ABCD practice was teamed with the diverse economies framework to revitalise a disenfranchised community.

Cameron and Gibson (2005) provide an alternative framework for considering community economic development. Common understanding is that the economy is comprised of capitalist firms employing workers and it is this model that economic development focuses on expanding. A diverse economies paradigm shifts this focus to include unpaid or alternatively transacted work and non-market transactions (figure 13). This move from a capitalist paradigm potentially opens up a realm of opportunity for asset mobilisation to improve the local economy in ABCD practice.

Alternative community currencies including time banks, green dollar exchanges and barter exchanges thrive in New Zealand and have been shown to improve quality of life for members (Williams, 1996). The most recent survey of green dollar exchanges in NZ in 1995 found that NZ$2.6 million green dollars were traded through green dollar exchanges - up from findings by (Jackson 1995) who estimated that in 1993 two million green dollars were traded.

The concept of time banks has been gaining considerable momentum in recent times, and are proving to be an increasingly thriving form of community currency (Ozanne, 2010). Time banks evolved from (Cahn, 2000) in an attempt to build capacity and effectiveness in social programmes. Gregory (2009) suggests that time banks develop coproduction, active citizenship and reciprocal volunteering.
An ABCD strategy pays particular attention to the assets inherent in social relationships, as evident in formal and informal associations and networks. ABCD, as a strategy for sustainable economic development, relies on linkages between community level actors and macro-level actors in public and private sectors. In fostering these linkages, ABCD also fosters active citizenship engagement to ensure access to public goods and services, and to ensure the accountability of local government. It therefore contributes to, and benefits from, strengthened civil society through building social capital (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).
Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) propose that an ABCD strategy can provide a mechanism for the empowerment of people to move from disempowered consumers to empowered citizens (figure 14). Active participation in democratic processes are fostered and empowerment can be developed through participation in an ABCD approach.

FIGURE 14 THE ACTIVE CITIZEN CONTINUUM

SOURCE: HTTPS://RYAN1BOWEN.WORDPRESS.COM/TAG/ACTIVE-CITIZEN/

ABCD seeks the empowerment of local individuals and communities. It encourages participation of people as co-producers to utilise their strengths, networks and community assets to shape their aspirations for improved community wellbeing. It plays a crucial role in supporting democratic participation in the development of social, environmental and economic policy led by the community for the community which in turn is builds the capacity of people as active citizens strengthens civil society. Ricketts (2008) demonstrated that participation in place making enhances community wellbeing and provides opportunities for people to develop skills, knowledge and understanding to make decisions that impact their personal and community wellbeing. In this way participation contributes to growing involvement in public life.

4.6 ABCD CHALLENGES

There are three main arguments against ABCD presented throughout the literature. Loomis (2012) proposes the lack of an evidence base and any links to sound theory is a well iterated critique which also suggests that the approach is not well defined and appears to be more a set of methodologies and tools. Cunningham and Mathie (2003) propose a useful academic framework which provides a theoretical anchor for contextualise the
practice of ABCD goes someway to formalising an evidence base for the practice. The key theoretical perspectives underpinning are identified as appreciative inquiry, social capital, participatory approaches, community economic development and civil society.

The second area of ABCD common critique proposes that Kretzmann, McKnight and Block have overstated the deficit/strength dichotomy in ABCD and that community needs always need to be considered in tandem with any asset based initiative. ABCD is often presented in the literature as a polar opposite to the needs based model on which community development approaches have traditionally been based. A needs based approach begins as a stock take of issues within a community followed by an action plan to improve the identified deficits. It is proposed that this deficit approach is problematic in that from the outset people are treated as clients rather than citizens. The treatment of needs versus assets is clarified by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 8.) where they state:

Focusing on the assets of lower income communities does not imply that these communities do not need additional resources from the outside. Rather…that outside resources will be much more effectively used if the local community is itself fully mobilised and invested and if it can define the agendas for which additional resources must be obtained.

Further arguments against ABCD propose that very poor communities have few assets and need external resources to start community action. This deficit paradigm fails to recognise that ABCD is focused on the people not their assets and it is exactly this perspective that sees people as deficient from the outset. Every community, however rural, isolated or poor, has resources within it. When those resources or assets, are invested to create new resources, they become capital (Flora, Flora, Fey & Emery, 2004). An ABCD strategy explicitly addresses local problems through local asset mobilisation.

It is a fundamental principle to the approach.

Limitations of ABCD can be also be considered in the perceived connection with creation of social capital. Concepts of bonding and bridging may be attainable but the linking often requires special skills and connections that are only available from external sources is a further critique of ABCD. (Edwards, 2009) explores this further in considering the limitations of civil society and the need for a balance between community and state that optimises community wellbeing and resilience.
This is addressed in the research findings which support the need for external catalysts and mentors particularly in the early stages of development. This in itself is not an issue of an exit and succession strategy form an integral part of the approach.

Loomis further critiques that ABCD is grounded in neoliberalism and that community organising is outmoded because the nature of communities has changed. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) propose that how ABCD unfolds indifferent settings will therefore depend on how compatible existing norms and cultural practices are with the principles and values of ABCD. Moving on from these well-rehearsed challenges to an ABCD approach in the literature, they propose it is timely to address the following aspects of practice which provide challenges and therefore require greater understanding and lessons from practice research for the body of knowledge to be further expanded helping to understand how to mediate these challenges.

*Fostering an endogenous process:* Practitioners of an ABCD approach are deliberate in the intention to lead by stepping back as it is a community led approach. In the early stages external catalysts and experts are essential and the process of stepping back and successful transition to community leadership incredibly important to ensure long term sustainability. Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) suggest that catalysts are mission orientated and bring creativity, innovation where radical change is needed.

*Fostering inclusive participation:* ABCD is an inclusive process in which the contributions of all are valued and appreciated. However this may be more difficult to achieve in practice and could be enhanced by learning from participatory approaches An ABCD approach does not directly confronts issues of unequal power, instead it tends to appeal to the higher motive of using power to act in the shared interests of the common good, and to uncover the strengths of those who might otherwise be less valued.

*Fostering community leadership:* As a community driven process a challenge can be how to keep external leadership at a distance whilst local leadership is located and empowered. The nature of this leadership will vary through context and community and consideration of how to identify, edify and formalise local leadership is essential

*Selecting enabling environments:* The degree to which regulatory environments and local institutions are fair and responsive, and the degree to which norms of trust and reciprocity
extend beyond the associational level are important considerations for the introduction of ABCD as is the scalability of the model.

*Handling the fluidity of associations:* Over time the form and function of associations and informal networks changes. It is important to understand the effect of an ABCD process on social relationships and patterns of associations and networks as the main arena for longevity of asset mobilisation.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of ABCD and the dimensions of practice. ABCD can be considered an approach which is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven. It is guided by a set of values and principles which align with community development good practice. As a methodology, ABCD offers six processes which identify and mobilise assets. As a strategy, ABCD can be applied to develop local economic capacity, build social capital and encourage civic participation.
CHAPTER 5
DEVELOPING THE ABCD PRAXIS MATRIX

This chapter draws together the findings from chapters three and four to assist in answering the research question, How Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches are being used in community development practice? The previous chapters have provided a context and background to the research which was used to construct a practice characteristic framework that provided a way to recognise ABCD approaches in practice. To answer the question it is necessary to develop an understanding of exactly what ABCD is and what practice looks like.

What is an ABCD approach?

- Define Asset Based Community Development ABCD
- Develop an ABCD praxis matrix to guide practice investigations

By drawing on the literature on community development and ABCD it is possible to construct a matrix that brings together the multiple dimensions widely agreed upon as a framework for community development practice that incorporates characteristics specific to ABCD. The first phase of the matrix construction consolidates theoretical community development values and principles with the ABCD practice values and principles.

5.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

(Figure 15) is a summarised synthesis of the concept explored in the research this far. Values and principles have been grouped according to commonality and the referenced accordingly with supporting conclusions. It has been condensed to present what is the foundation of community development practice widely agreed upon. It is these features that we would expect to see in community development practice and so should be evident in the practice of the projects being explored in this research.

This has provided an initial framework for community development practice characteristics beginning with the values and principles. The next step is to compare the values and principles that have been presented as those of ABCD practice so we can determine a/that ABCD has an evidential base that has strong support and b/ what makes an ABCD approach different from community development in its fundamental values and
principles. A common critique of ABCD is that it lacks an evidence base, this process builds its evidence base within the parameters of community development practice which is well evidenced.

Figure 15 Consolidated Community Development Values & Principles

Source: Author

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<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Supported by</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Working within power relations – need to articulate the nature of power relations and enable communities to redress past wrongs, in order to establish new structures and ways of operating.</td>
<td>Munford (2006), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective Action</td>
<td>Empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Munford (2006), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities.</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects the rights of others when planning collective action</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Empowerment</td>
<td>Promotes accountability and transparency</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages an understanding and commitment to the long term nature of Community Development practice</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing.</td>
<td>FDCL (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community led</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Strengthening the capacity of organisations and people as active citizens, moving from dependence to independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and Anti-Discrimination</td>
<td>Acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it</td>
<td>IACD (2007), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity</td>
<td>IACD (2007), CDX, Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests</td>
<td>IACD (2007), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.</td>
<td>IACD (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values the physical, emotional and spiritual quality of life</td>
<td>Derrick (2000), Ife (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having a vision for the future and for what can be achieved – attempt to identify the dreams for all the populations worked with.</td>
<td>Munford (2006), Fiske, CDX, IACD (2007), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All community members, regardless of gender, age, ability, race, culture, language, sexual orientation, or social and economic status have equal opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.</td>
<td>IACD (2007), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes the active participation of people in decision making within communities</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Derrick (2000), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Determination</strong></td>
<td>Achieving self-determination – having one’s voice heard and having opportunities for developing knowledge so that participation can be extended and strengthened.</td>
<td>Munford (2006), CDX, Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing the concerns or issues that communities identify as their starting points</td>
<td>cdx, Fiske</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bringing about positive social change – this incorporates a commitment to overcome challenges that may be faced and requires communities to recognise their ability to effect change.</td>
<td>Munford (2006), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), CDX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes the link between local, societal and global contexts.</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Ife (2002, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and skills</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally, nationally and globally.</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action</td>
<td>FDCL (2009), Inspiring Communities (2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) propose that learning from participatory approaches provide a strong anchor for ABCD so it is appropriate to define the values and principles we would expect to see in specific practice. Duncan (n.d) of the ABCD Institute provides a summary of ABCD values and principles (appendix 3). By merging the specific ABCD values and principles with those of community development a combined list is produced that represents ABCD supported by community development evidence. This merged list
of practice characteristics was then synthesised again to produce a final set of values and principles that characterise ABCD and that one would expect to find in the project investigations as representative of ABCD practice. The end result of this synthesis is presented in (figure 16), this first phase provides the initial structure for the ABCD praxis matrix.

### Figure 16 ABCD Values, Principles & Outcomes

*Source: Author*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(ABCD) Praxis Matrix - Value, Principles &amp; Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principles WHY?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working &amp; Learning Together</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognises that people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore equally worthy of respect and acknowledgement.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Sector Collaboration &amp; Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectors, inside and outside the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote open communication with an emphasis on active listening and reaching consensus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance priorities which focus on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of neighbourhoods and communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builds or releases capacity of community by starting with and focusing on strengths - identifying, celebrating and building on local ‘gifts’, capacities and assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support efforts that lead to sustainable solutions emphasizing leadership development, citizen participation, partnerships with agencies and organizations, and community economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 ABCD Practice Dimensions

The next phase of developing the ABCD praxis matrix is the incorporation of the practice characteristics drawn from the three practice dimensions proposed by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) - an approach, a methodology and a strategy. Each of these dimensions of ABCD in practice has then been summarised by its key characteristics as revealed in the literature review, also drawing together complimentary concepts. This is seen below in (figure 17).
This synthesis of ABCD practice characteristics provided a thematic basis for the project investigations, highlighting practice aspects that would expect to be seen when using ABCD approaches. By bringing together the values, principles, practice processes and key outcomes of ABCD it is possible to now construct a framework of what ABCD practice should look like.

This next stage of constructing the praxis matrix was the incorporation of effective practice principles. In considering how ABCD is being utilised in practice it is also necessary to develop parameters of what effective community development practice is. By synthesising the concepts and principles from the plethora of lived community development theory and practice it is possible to produce a set of principles that indicate effective practice. Four community development practice research pieces that evaluated community development projects within New Zealand were examined and findings indicating principles and enhancements of effective practice were identified.

The next section provides an overview of each of the research pieces examined and the key findings and learnings. Intentionally a variety of studies from various community development and participatory approaches including community led, asset based, community action has been used to ensure that a diverse evidence base of community
development key principles, enablers and inhibiters are identified. A full list of the projects reviewed by the four case study evaluations can be located in Appendix 4.

5.3 Meta-Analysis – Community Development Practice

Literature Case Study Review 1:

A meta-analysis of ten community action projects in Aotearoa New Zealand conducted by Greenaway and Witten (2006) identified key practices and principles that facilitate change through community action projects highlighting the benefit of new skills, relationships and connections. This study aimed to identify commonalities in structure and processes that either enhanced or impaired the objectives of ten different government funded community action projects. This research focused on the identification of factors throughout three phases of the project lifecycle which they referred to as activation, consolidation and completion/transition. The ten projects reviewed were all New Zealand based.

The study found effective community action initiatives shared the following attributes:

- Building skilled leadership
- Accessing adequate resourcing
- Enabling infrastructure development
- Creating committed strategic support from both government and community agencies
- Enabling effective coordination
- Vision Building
- Skilled Facilitation of people and processes
- Networking to build relationships, communication and knowledge
- Accessing mentors
- Effective Planning
- Making opportunities for critical reflection
Furthermore, it was found that key inhibitors included lack of clear purpose and objectives, lack of clear planned processes and communication to all stakeholders and finding a balance between short term action and long term strategy and planning. Projects clearly benefited from the support of people with community development expertise and skill accessed through funders, mentors, evaluators supporting the need for outside catalysts particularly in the early stages. Specific practices were identified which were critical to the development of effective community action projects including recognising and working with power dynamics and transforming relationships between stakeholders. “Transformation involving creating structure for collaborative action and learning, along with power sharing and fostering of developmental practices. These structures and practices created conditions within which change could occur” (Greenaway & Witten, 2006, p.14).

**Literature Case Study Review 2:**

**Inspiring Communities**

3 Publications

*What are we Learning* (2010)

*Community-led Development in Aotearoa New Zealand: a think piece* (2012)

*Learning by Doing Community Led Change in Aotearoa* (2013)

Since 2008 community research organisation Inspiring Communities have sought to understand the principles and practices that contribute to effective community led development within New Zealand context. Through ongoing collective learning practices based on active local community led projects Inspiring Communities (2010;2012;2013) have sought to “grow the recognition, understanding and practice of community led development in New Zealand”(p.6). There is an intentional focus on communities of ‘place’ and a learning cluster of Community Led Development (CLD) initiatives have provided a basis for ongoing reflection on community led practice, a process of learning by doing. Eight New Zealand based projects provide the basis for this ongoing learning process. Additionally Inspiring Communities acknowledge contributions from Regional CLD Networks, the Civil Society Leadership Co Inquiry and visiting thought leaders such as Mark Cabaj and Jim Diers. Drawing on the three publications reviewed, the following themes associated with successful community led development have been identified:
Local people actively engaged
Clear vision and outcomes
Understanding how change happens and what will be required
A strengths based approach
Building relationships and working with others
Community capacity building
Skilled teams to work with communities
A focus on growing leadership
Reflection and review
Documenting progress and celebrating success

Furthermore inspiring communities identifies how tangible and lasting change happens. Essential ingredients include: having the right people with the right skills, quality high trust relationships, starting in and with communities, a critical mass of highly skilled leaders working collaboratively, being adaptable and prepared for a long term journey. There is substantial learning from the insights developed which have been grouped in 2013 into five core principles; Shared vision for place driving action and change, Local people actively involved in planning, decision making and doing, Many sectors working together, Proactively building local leadership and ownership of change and Learning from doing.

**Literature Case Study Review 3:**
*Dept. Internal Affairs, (DIA). (2011)*

*Review of selected New Zealand government funded community development programmes.*

In 2011 DIA conducted an analysis of a variety of New Zealand based community development initiatives. The research drew from a number of sources including the evaluative data of five government funded community development programmes which in total incorporated 42 different initiatives that were grounded in community development principles, were fairly current and that were funded by a government agency. In addition site visits were made to an additional 12 community development projects. The intention of this review was to gain insights into practice and the lessons learnt to inform future practice. The principles underpinning the approach, outcomes
sought, key achievements and factors that enabled or inhibited were identified. This study is of particular interest in its focus on New Zealand based practice covering 54 different community development projects of recent times.

A diverse range of practice enhancers were identified and thematically presented under nine key learning areas (DIA, 2011, p.3).

- a shared vision is an essential foundation for community development, and adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed
- based on principles of partnership facilitate effective community development, traditional approaches to contracting may need to be revised to support effective partnering
- clarity around roles is vital and needs to be established early; direct relationships between the funder and community group can assist with role clarity
- realistic goals need to be set, outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined and have sufficient flexibility to recognise that they may need to change over time
- successful initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners, and require strong local leadership and support
- funders have a role in building the capacity of communities to meet project requirements, but this needs to be balanced to allow communities autonomy to lead their own development
- collaboration between government and non-government agencies aids community development projects, and effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities
- critical reflection can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision
- Effective practice builds on existing whānau structures Māori community development –, is grounded in tikanga and encompasses a collective approach; wide engagement of whānau together with a holistic approach to issues can contribute to the sustainability of initiatives.
**Literature Case Study Review 4:**
*Ricketts, A, (2008)*

*Participation in place-making: Enhancing the wellbeing of marginalised communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand.*

This research examines the relationship between community participation in public space decisions and community wellbeing. Community participation is a primary value of ABCD so these findings contribute greatly to our understanding of the impact of participatory practices. The overarching findings exhibited strong evidence which confirms that:

- Community participation in place making does enhance the wellbeing of marginalised communities and demonstrates how this is effectively done.
- A range of participatory processes that engage the community in relevant ways is critical to an effective participatory project. The research looked at seven participatory approaches, collaboration, partnering, vision and decision making, community led social analysis, participation in implementation processes and celebrations.
- Participant involvement in the initial preparation processes is critical to gaining community engagement in the participatory project and enhancing wellbeing
- Appointing a community advocate to plan and facilitate the participatory process is critical to gaining community engagement in the project and enhancing community wellbeing

Active Democracy is enhanced both by the predominance of personal empowerment and the community’s collective action that results from participation. Local Democracy and Governance are enhanced through participating in vision making and advocacy and Social Capital was found to be enhanced by the predominance of a sense of pride, belonging and connectedness to the community resulting from the participatory processes.
5.4 Effective Community Development Principles

The findings from this meta-analysis have been collated and summarised in (figure 18). The learnings from all four research pieces have been collated and synthesised to a common set of agreed upon effective practice principles. It is intended to look for evidence of these principles in practice as a further dimension to the project investigations.

Figure 18 Community Development Effective Practice Principles

*Source: Author, Derived from (DIA, 2012; Ricketts, 2008; Inspiring Communities, 2010, 2012, 2013; Greenaway & Witten, 2005)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Practice Principles</th>
<th>1. Growing Local Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Growing collaborative community leadership is important so leading comes from every corner of the community and creates communities with filled with connected leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Building skilled leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Effective community development requires strong local leadership and support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Identify &amp; allocate appropriate leadership roles to pre-established respected people in user group, Continue the existence of the group beyond the project</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Shared Visioning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· A Strong uniting community vision that frames local action plans &amp; outcomes is essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Vision Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· A shared vision is an essential foundation for effective community development. Adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed and involve a broad range of stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Visioning for the community has to be conceived &amp; evolved out of the community's own history &amp; experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. External Catalysts &amp; Expertise</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Skilled teams to work with communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Skilled Facilitation of people and processes, access to mentors, paid coordinator in early stages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Successful community development initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Appointing a community advocate to plan and facilitate the process is critical to gaining community engagement</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Networking and Building Relationships</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Building relationships and working with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Networking to build relationships, communication and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Relationships based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development. A direct relationship between the project sponsor/funder and the community group appears to be valued by communities and can assist with role clarity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Earn trust through building relationships &amp; knowledge of community's culture &amp; their processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Community Led for Community**
   - Local voice, vision and leadership are valued, actively engaged and empowered
   - Involving stakeholders from early stage
   - needs to be balanced against the need to allow communities the autonomy to lead their own development
   - Community participation in place making does enhance the wellbeing of marginalised communities and a range of processes that engage the community are critical

6. **Critical reflection and learning**
   - Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community led working
   - Action & Reflection practices Making opportunities for critical reflection
   - Critical reflection, whether formal or informal, can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision and contribute to building the knowledge base.
   - Creating and communicating a written & visual vision is crucial to sustaining energy for the duration of the project

7. **Collaboration Across Sectors**
   - Working together across sectors and boundaries is essential
   - Creating committed strategic support from both govt and community agencies including recognising and working with power dynamics
   - Effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities
   - Multiple stakeholders working together increases the likelihood of success, Collaboration is enhanced by clear roles and develops trust and reciprocity

8. **Long Term Organic Change**
   - Understanding how change happens and what will be required, prepared for the long term journey
   - Effective Planning for a long term process
   - Involve people in the development process at the personal/whanau level as these groups have the motivation & necessity for change

9. **Strengths Based**
   - Strengths & asset based planning and development approach is essential to tackle complex community issues - build and leverage off what communities do well
   - Programmes should recognise and value the importance of building social capital, community cohesion and community capability as outcomes in themselves and plan strategies to achieve them.
   - User participation has been successful when solutions to community problems have been sourced from the community

10. **Clear communication and information sharing**
    - Establishing good communication pathways
    - Clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders is vital and should be established at the project outset.
    - Use culturally inclusive communication & clear processes to ensure there is a unified level of understanding between participants
11. Whole Systems Change
- Whole systems change - working on big and small picture changes to effect long lasting, rather than piecemeal change
- Enabling infrastructure development
- Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages a community may be at.
- Take opportunities for social restoration of community to occur alongside environment development,

12. Intentional & Adaptable
- All projects should proceed & correspond to the larger community goals
- There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on.

This chapter has outlined the process of creating the ABCD praxis matrix used to identify ABCD practice in the projects. Theories, concepts and practice learnings have all been incorporated in this framework which provides a detailed breakdown of ABCD practice. The praxis matrix provides a framework for data analysis in the project investigations and the practice characteristics’ identified are presented in chapter seven. The ABCD praxis matrix is to be further refined in light of findings and the final model is presented in the final chapter.

The next three chapters present the findings of the project investigations firstly looking at the individual genesis of the projects, then the alignment with ABCD practice, followed by challenges and effective practice principles. The following chapter now begins with the individual projects, presenting findings about who they are, what they do and how they have evolved.
CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS – PROJECT INVESTIGATIONS

This chapter presents the three projects individually including an overview of activities purpose, location, aims and objectives. The genesis of each is explored in detail from inception to present day, the insights gained from exploring the development of each project are valuable in informing future practice. The purpose of the investigations is to learn from the practice experience not to evaluate the projects. This is reflected in the method of presentation which has both individual and collective learning components with a focus on practice reflection.

A core objective of this investigation is to develop a holistic understanding of ABCD practice and the links between theory and practice. (Stoecker, 2005) identifies that the ‘project based research model’ provides a platform to bring together the head and the hands of traditional research thus providing opportunities for social change whilst engaging in rich community led research.

When we bring the two terms theory and practice together we are talking about the links between theories explanations and assumptions, on the one hand, and everyday activities processes, task, skills and strategies on the other. Thus community development integrates theory and practice. This integration is sometimes referred to as praxis…Praxis regards people not just as objects of study but also as agents of history…For community development the integration of theory and practice brings together our theoretical understandings of the way in which society works and our vision of how we would like it to work with specific strategies and tasks (Kenny 1994, p. 54).
6.1 OUR AMAZING PLACE

PROJECT SUMMARY

Our Amazing Place (OAP) is a community led free event which has run in numerous local neighbourhoods throughout New Zealand. The concept is that within a local neighbourhood local assets are identified and then a treasure hunt trail guided by a treasure map that can be walked within a couple of hours is defined and a free community fun day is planned and organised by the community to explore the treasure map and interact with community assets along the way. The assets can be physical places, schools, community gardens, local residents with special skills, community agencies and services, businesses and so on. Each treasure on the map has a station that is run and resourced by each group involved where participants interact in a fun activity before moving to the next station.

Violence Free Waitakere (VFW) is the current custodian of the model, after involvement of varying levels in over 15 different treasure hunts, an operations manual and other resources have been developed to release the model which now independently replicates in communities. In developing the model from its initial community led creation in Pt Chevalier, Auckland, VFW collaborated with place based groups to plan and deliver localised community treasure hunts which seek to connect people with their local place based communities through the identification and amplification of community assets. VFW identifies their core role within the OAP project:

To develop and refine the community treasure hunt process by developing a toolbox, resources and a web platform to help share the learning along with support and mentoring where needed. We are also the evaluative hub collecting and sharing the stories and learnings from communities as the great idea continues to seed and spread New Zealand Wide (VFW Annual Report, 2012).

VFW is an incorporated society currently registered with the Charities Commission, the organisation was formed in 1998 by a collective of community organisations who saw the need to establish an agency that was solely concerned with the innovation and refinement of models, events and projects in the area of violence prevention.
VFW is passionate about leading long term social change in the area of violence prevention within communities. We aim to create events and projects that help build resilient communities and promote effective alternatives to violence - targeted at those communities where we can make the greatest change. The events and projects are scaled across our own communities and into other communities through our collaborative networks (VFW Constitution, 2011).

**Project Location**

VFW is located in Henderson, Auckland, New Zealand and the majority of the OAP community treasure hunts have been run within this geographic area however increasingly communities outside Auckland have utilised the model. This research draws on artefacts and experiences from the following iterations: Pt Chevalier, McLaren Park/Henderson South, Massey, Unsworth Heights, South Kaipara, Glen Eden, Glenfield, Glendene and Avondale.

**PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

When the community treasure hunt pilot was developed in Pt Chevalier the aims really were to create a sense of community, to realise what was available in the community. “The project team wanted to showcase the natural, social and built capital of Pt Chev, while getting people talking about the future of the community they live in” (VFW, 2010)

When VFW initially began to develop to OAP model, the aims aligned were aligned with its primary mission as a violence prevention agency.

*The aims…in terms of VFW was recognising a lot of the violence grows in communities that are fragmented. This seemed like a really good way of bringing a community together so that people could get to meet each other and also so they could get to meet the agencies that could help them*
Key Objectives (OAP Information Brochure, 2012)

- Create an event for the whole family to have fun with the community in the community that cultivates a greater sense of community identity and belonging.
- Showcase local natural, social, cultural and built capital.
- Provide an opportunity for local organisations and groups to showcase themselves.
- Provide an opportunity for community networking and socialising and build foundations for community resilience.
- Developing a greater understanding of who’s who in the community and who is doing what.
- Create a collaborative model that can be adapted by any other community and run to achieve similar outcomes.

**Project Genesis**

The concept of a community treasure hunt was originally developed in the community of Point Chevalier, Auckland by a small group of volunteer residents who were part of the Transition Towns initiative in the local neighbourhood. They wanted to do something that would give a sense of geographical community to those who lived in Point Chevalier so set about developing and planning a free fun community treasure hunt. The day had a strong environmental sustainability theme and ran successfully in November 2009 with over 350 people taking part in the event investigating local treasures in their community from the Lions Club, to local gardens and the local Marae.

The project team really feels like they achieved their aims and then some. Because of the event, a greater sense of belonging and a stronger local identity were created. Community capital has increased with higher public awareness.
and willingness to be part of what goes on. And all this happened while everyone had fun, a truly win win situation (Inspiring Communities, 2010).

Geoff Bridgman, Chairperson of VFW had been involved in the day as a volunteer and saw its potential for other communities. The organising committee of the pilot were exhausted and did not want to pursue any further development so Geoff then presented the model to community organisation VFW in 2010 in his capacity as volunteer chairman.

_I was there on the day, saw how it all worked and thought it was a fantastic result... The potential was there.... It actually does change the way people think and do things._

Elaine Dyer then projects manager was initially resistant to the concept as the Pt Chevalier pilot had a focus on eco sustainability and wasn’t sure if that was a fit with the organisational mission of violence prevention

_I was part of the inception but I was also one of its blockers initially... He said “this is fantastic ... we have got to have this. I said I am not sure... I had a meeting with...and she said, “I have seen something similar happening...and you create these teams as well”. That was when I got a sense that there was another way that we could develop it._

Elaine located the energy to develop this next stage of the community treasure hunts within the collaborative community organisations and networks that VFW had established though its primary work which generally provides platforms for local social services to connect with their communities.

_I really brokered the collaborative collection around it with Becks from McLaren Park and Rochelle who just started working at Community Waitakere... Rochelle fortunately project managed it... did a lot of the initial guiding._

The community response to the concept was positive and a collaborative working group ran a fun free day for the local community of McLaren Park/Henderson South (MPHS) in West Auckland on 13th November 2010. Over 20 local community organisations and services collaborated to run the day attended by over 350 participants. Evaluative
responses from the day confirmed that this was certainly a potential model for innovative way to locate and showcase local community treasures and to connect people within geographic neighbourhoods in a unique and fun way.

_The first was about the partnership between the community and us as agencies._

Plans were quickly underway in Massey Auckland in 2011 as local agency Massey Matters teamed up with VFW to bring OAP to that local community after hearing of the success in MPHS. A collaborative working group was formed of local agencies and services including VFW, Massey Matters, Massey Community House, Local Police and Citizens Advice Bureau, and Unitec. The team utilised their collective resources to identify further organisations to be involved on the day and VFW secured a small amount of funding from Auckland Council to support the event which successfully ran on 12th November 2011 with over 30 agencies and well over 300 participants.

_It is a simple concept. The beauty of it is it doesn’t take a lot to get it. The joy of it is you talk to people about it. You haven’t spent about half an hour trying to get them to do it. They are probably interested after the first minute of you talking about it so that is a major strength._

The Massey Matters community broker loved the concept and quickly set about organising another to run in early 2012 and Neighbours Day 2013 with decreasing involvement from VFW.

_As it appeals to the organiser it also appeals to the people who come along._

_Again it is so disarmingly simple walking around looking at few parks, a church here, a garden here and seeing something artistic there...It is so different from what we normally think of as entertainment but it really appeals to people._

_People come along. It is a simple idea. It has enormous potential. People see if we can do this, we can do this._

.At this stage VFW contracted a project leader for OAP to assist with the Massey iteration and to develop an operations manual funded by Auckland Council to share the process of creating a community treasure hunt with communities New Zealand wide. The new project leader had some experience of ABCD and saw how OAP could be deepened, the process of planning a treasure hunt identified and mobilised local community assets and
worked effectively across sectors. It could be developed in a more intentional way within ABCD parameters shifting it to an intentional [ABCD] mapping and relationship building process.

*It is a really transferrable process. I got quite excited yesterday to see the request coming back from South Africa. There is another place that wants to run that now. You are not going to any meeting about that and it will work.*

Both the MPHS and Massey iterations were heavily focused on the involvement of social agencies as a point of promotion to the community which was in keeping with the general genre of events run by VFW and were driven by paid staff in working hours.

**Figure 22 OAP Massey Station**  
*Source: Authors Personal Archive*

...it provided fun and specific play and that was great for the people but it also gave them education about healthy foods and things like that. Their social capital that came out of that was getting their message out there but engaging in a fun way.

The OAP project leader saw the potential of taking it back to a volunteer community led process as it had been initially in Pt Chevalier but guided by an intentional ABCD approach. Past the operations manual there was no resourcing to test the concept so the project coordinator located through personal networks a team of volunteer residents in the neighbourhood of Unsworth Heights, North Auckland who were keen to give it a go and then voluntarily mentored them through the process outside working hours whilst seeking funding in paid hours for VFW to further develop this thinking. It was clear that an ABCD approach was a powerful way to connect communities and based on these successes financial support was gained from Todd Foundation so VFW could dedicate quality time to the refinement of the process and evaluation and research.

On Neighbours Day 24th March 2012 the volunteer group ran their own OAP community treasure hunt attracting over 200 participants involving collaboration with over 20 different neighbourhood groups.
It was really exciting to see that the community took responsibility and built it into what it was. So that has really been ticking boxes around that with the community saying here is a tool that we can use.

Participant feedback from the first events demonstrated that there were connections happening in the neighbourhoods as a direct result of the treasure hunts (figure 24).

Further funding was then secured from Auckland Council to mentor further iterations leading to the next development stage, the project leader developed relationships with a number of geographic communities who had shown interest in the OAP model and fostered the concept of running their own versions with support from VFW. Some ignited quickly others took almost two years of talking before becoming reality. Through 2012 and 2013 at least dozen iterations ran with assistance from VFW in varying degrees throughout New Zealand.
It just really expanded exponentially by her having this process and she go and talk to people and offer them something tangible. It gave me new respect for the link between this process and the social networking that can happen.

Building on the relationship with Unitec extensive project evaluation including 80 Social Practice students participating on the day across five neighbourhoods was possible. By collaborating with tertiary institutions social practice and community health students were able to participate in practicums within the project extending the capacity to evaluate the project on a much larger and scale.

The thing about the way that we organise it from VFW perspective is there is a little bit of paid money that does allow for a bit of ‘hey what is happening next’ questions to be asked and perhaps create a venue to explore that.

This process intentionally attempted to withdraw direct involvement from VFW in direct working groups instead empowering communities to self-directing their own versions of OAP. In August 2013, VFW bought together the numerous groups for a learning day as first step to shift their focus to supporting the project through a peer learning community comprised of the various neighbourhood groups that had participated in running the OAP model and the growing number of community treasure hunts happening throughout New Zealand that had been inspired by the OAP model.

Trying to intensify the meaning of what comes out of the event by having a lot more in the way of preparation and other stuff that is going on around it. Stuff will go on before the event and hopefully after it. OAP is simply a starting point. The more we can get people to think about what is the next step after that and feel really warmed by the day then it will do its work.

Community Treasure Hunts continue to run without further input from VFW with many neighbourhoods on a second, third and fourth event.
6.2 **PROJECT LYTTELTON**

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Project Lyttelton (PL) is a grass roots community led umbrella organisation for a range of projects in the community of Lyttelton. PL is committed to honouring Lyttelton’s unique character and identity, and co-creating a sustainable, empowered, resilient community based on values, inclusion and participation. Central to its success is a commitment to valuing people, recognising that a community is rich with ideas, skills and talents. Every person and every voice is important. Ideas are encouraged and people are supported to make things happen.

PL is registered as an Incorporated Society and has a board of between 7-9 trustees and 35 official members. The numbers involved with the various projects is easily in the range of 500-1000 at a minimum representing at least a third of the total local population.

Volunteer Chairperson Margaret Jefferies reflects

*We don’t really worry about members. Anyone can turn up and do things.*

PL works in a non-hierarchal manner which is open and transparent and welcomes and encourages participation across the community. People are invited to bring their project ideas and if there is a passionate champion for an idea and it fits with the organisation’s vision statement, the organisation can foster collaboration and support.

*Its core purpose is to enable good projects to happen. So to harness the passions that are in the community and enable them to find feet and to fly*
Project Location

PL is based and focused within the community of Lyttelton which is located to the South East of Christchurch, Harbour Basin, Banks Peninsula, New Zealand. Lyttelton is the historic port town of Christchurch. Still a working port, the town is separated from Christchurch by the Port Hills and access to the city is via road and rail tunnels. There are 2859 people permanently based in Lyttelton, 1215 occupied and 261 unoccupied dwellings.

Project Aims and Objectives

A strong vision statement underpins the organisations activities ‘Lyttelton – portal to Canterbury’s historic past, a vibrant sustainable community, creating a living future.’ When ideas and opportunities emerge from within the community that align with the vision PL is able to move quickly to begin identifying the people and resources needed. While some projects are quite ambitious, and require funding to be sourced, others will start very simply, attracting what is needed as they grow.

[The vision statement] gives anyone in this community permission to run with any projects that suit that. I think it has created a culture of possibilities here.

Project Genesis

PL as an entity began back in 1994 as part of the main street programme that looked at towns that were underprivileged and run down. It was called Project Port Lyttelton and was involved in how to upgrade the main street and the creation of a local museum. From 1994 to 2003 that was the core focus of the organisation which towards the end of that time had become almost stagnant. At that time of transition Margaret Jefferies became involved with the development of a community vision to revitalise the organisation. Wendy Everingham had recently moved to Lyttelton at that time and meet Margaret within a few days at a community brain storming. At this point they saw potential and as
the organisation was about to morph itself a perfect opportunity was presented to use the existing entity to begin a new phase of community led development.

*That is when project Lyttleton changed into its current form which is much more a community development organisation trying to create a sustainable, vibrant future for Lyttleton.*

They approached the existing Board and were welcomed in and at that election in 2003 they were both voted in. In the early stages the governance group were fairly inactive and didn’t run projects, everyone involved were volunteers.

*People were keen for Project Lyttleton to get traction but in those early days we had a member of the community board, a member of the local of the council staff on board and just a couple of other people.*

Wendy was new to town and recalls that in the beginning it was mostly about trying to fit in and meeting people

*So, for me I didn’t know a soul. I got to go to this community brain storm meeting and then as a result of that I met some more people…we made an effort to get to know the local council people a lot better. Just really started trying to meet a few local community people.*

Wendy and Margaret both have worked as volunteers from 2003 until present day and recount that much of their early effort was around growing into it, learning about expectations and how they were going to do it. Initially they received some criticism for inaction as they spend considerable time rallying the community, brainstorming and visioning, focusing on the positive rather than divisive projects that pitched group against group around needs and issues.

**Figure 26 Project Lyttelton Visioning**

*Source: (PL, 2012)*
So we had a mind mapping session before any of these projects began just looking at our passions. What were some of the things we wanted to do for Lyttelton?

From this focus on passions Wendy, a passionate walker, had a concept for a walking map.

_I was walking around and found a lot of paths that were overgrown I thought it would be a really nice idea to get the paths maintained, sign them, get a community map together and create the Discover Lyttleton Walking Map._

There were a few other volunteers at that stage and Wendy was able to utilise her transport knowledge and experience to liaise with government bodies.

_She went to what was then the District Council here and said how about this and they said great idea but we can’t afford it. They would put up little barriers like that and she would say well I am offering my time. They would say we don’t have the resources and she would say I will find those resources._

PL leveraged support and resources to get the walking map project underway and were supported by the local Canterbury Community Trust with a small amount of funding to get the map printed and in kind support from Council.

_...she saw a cartoonist, he drew up a map and we took that out to all the people. They said, “you got that wrong, why did you do that street like that”?...it was easy to get small teams of people to say, does this map look good, does it reflect Lyttelton’s character, we wanted input, we wanted to listen to it._

The walking map project was successfully completed in 2014 and is still in use to present day, the project was such a success that Transport New Zealand were presented with a best practice award for the work PL had done.

The Discover Lyttelton walking project not only put Lyttelton’s hidden historic walkways on the map, but also the organisation that created it. People were beginning to take notice of PL and recognise that it was something special. PL began to grow and attract a diverse range of people willing to contribute.
It was a small project. When you are starting off trying to do something new, it is too daunting if you have a really big project. It is nicer to have really small, bite sized projects. It wasn’t too hard and it didn’t require too much money because we didn’t have any at the beginning.

**Figure 27 Discover Lyttelton Walking Map**
*Source: (PL, 2012)*

The walking map project was a critical stage of the organisation’s growth. Following from the success of the walking map and the growing recognition of the organisation it was necessary for PL to find an effective way to communicate with the wider community.

*There were no constant information messages going out to people about what was happening in Lyttleton so she organised Michael from the Akaroa Mail, an insert into the paper and that still happens once a month.*
It was agreed to provide a four page insert at no cost in exchange for delivery of the paper to Lyttelton homes which is done by time bank members. A local resident with newspaper experience helped Margaret setup and a small team of volunteer writers saw the first edition released in Sept 2004 which takes an intentional appreciative inquiry positive approach profiling local stories through to present day.

In 2005 PL started the first of many community festivals collaborating with Business Association, Lyttelton Harbour Information Centre and the then Banks Peninsula District Council Tourism and Economic Development department who identified that Lyttelton could benefit from having some sort of signature event to both build community and draw people to the township, the first Summer Street Festival ran on the main street of the township and attracted over 5000 people. Building on the success PL went on to run many other festivals many of which have repeated annually including the Festival of Walking and Festival of Lights. The community festivals helped build connections in the community across sectors and in late 2005 PL began the first Farmers Market which went on to be what they consider their strongest project.

With increasing concern over rising oil prices and economic uncertainty PL considers the re-localisation of food production to be a key factor in building resilient communities.

The farmers' market was set up in September 2005 to support growing and buying local produce, it provided small income for the organisation and validated many other actions.
cross sector relationships stimulating economic development in the town,

*The farmers market was successful pretty much from day one here so that enabled some small businesses to start up. That is when PL started to get some credibility here in Lyttleton. Before that I think people thought we were pretty airy fairy, dreamers and that we would never contribute anything useful to the township.*

The market thrived for seven years or so before being disrupted by the earthquakes, the mantle for organising the markets has since passed to a different group of residents in keeping with PL approach to foster and encourage community leadership and plans are afoot to run the market on the main street.

In these formative times as momentum and recognition developed the group were also able to make use of disused land and buildings when the City Council afforded them a twenty year peppercorn lease for the old parks and zoo land in Lyttelton. The community recycled paint and carpet from the community and the building was retrofitted by volunteers with a small amount of grant funding to assist. This provided a base for the group which enabled further asset based project developments, administration for festivals and increasing array of projects. “There are always people dropping by, using the space. It is used for meetings, gatherings, celebrations, workshops, art projects, shared meals and film nights” (PL, 2009, p.41).

‘The Portal’ as their base is called provided ample space to establish a community garden. It works on a sweat equity basis - do some work, take some food. Everyone is welcome and many gardening sessions end with a shared meal. At the height of the season surplus is given away to families that need it or sometimes sold at the Farmers Market. The community garden has its own champion in keeping with the PL philosophy.
For us it’s like an extended family, it’s part of who my children are growing up with. As we garden they hear stories. They talk to Jim so they get stories from an older person about gardening and about life. They get that from all the gardeners really…the garden is a lovely inspiring place to be where connections are forged” (PL, 2009, p.38).

The community garden has been ongoing involving thirty or so local people, the group began to look for additional land that could be used for growing and located the old Canterbury Polytechnic organic garden land once a teaching environment which had fallen into disuse. The land and buildings were leased and the “Grow Local” project began which is a community supported agriculture project which can supply speciality foods for local restaurants and vegetable boxes for the community. A local education trust leased the buildings and now the site at Seven Oaks in Opawa is also a collaborative teaching environment working with local children to build gardening skills and knowledge.

PL has also been running a time bank since 2004. The Time Bank is a skill trading system that uses time instead of money as a unit of measurement. In a Time Bank everybody’s time is equal, people offer skills they are willing to share, and request help where they need other skills to get jobs done.

It really values everybody. It is a leveller, 1 hr is 1 hr. It values everybody. It takes away the needy, this thing where you have experts in a community that deals with the problems and those in need. It destroys that archaic model.
That model that is showing all over the world to be failing. It is very powerful.

The key driver in the time banking concept is reciprocity which recognises that every person has intrinsic value and something to offer. The time bank is woven into all the PL projects and is used frequently to mobilise skills and resources for everything.

I see [the time bank] as the blood and veins of everything because it goes across every project and everything that we do. We have got about 450 members at the moment trading between 200 and 400 hours a month which is phenomenal.

Wendy is also a key volunteer at the local information centre and this relationship has seen the mobilising of community assets shift to a whole different level. The time bank
moved into the same building as the information centre and the information centre began to take on the role of centralised information distribution complimenting the flows already established by Project Lyttleton. The synergy of the two really came into its own following the earthquakes in 2011/2012 and has captured the attention of Civil Defence and Central government alike who have seen the time banks’ ability to mobilise a community’s skills and assets in times of need (discussed further in Chapter 7).

At the time of September earthquake we had no civil defence response here in Lyttleton so it was the time bank and the information centre that said, “we better do something”, so our centre was flat out for 6 weeks with local people coming in for cups of tea and coffee, cake and just assurance that everything would be okay. A lot of people didn’t want to be home by themselves.

People’s lives that were totally ruined were ringing in and saying could we get people to come in and help us clean the house? Could we get people to help us with food? Some people’s kitchens were totally destroyed. I remember the fire brigade ringing in and saying we need cakes and stuff for our volunteers. That all came out from the time bank.

Interest in time banks has grown nationally and PL soon found that their coordinator was spending a lot of time mentoring other communities in establishing their own time banks, this led PL to secure funding to resource the mentoring and have since received funding to set up a national time banking movement.

Another core project run by PL is the Welcome Bags, which makes great use of the time bank. When new people move into the community they are welcomed with a hand-made reusable shopping bag. The bags are made by Lyttelton Time Bankers and are filled with a map, bus timetables, information about the community garden and Time Bank and home baking, also made by members.

After the earthquakes in 2012 the local opshop building was destroyed, this presented the opportunity for PL to take it on as income potential, in line with increasing awareness of the need to also be generating financial resources contributing to long term
sustainability. The stock was relocated it to the Portal and in keeping with an asset based approach a model for the garage sale as a shared community fundraising shop was developed. Community groups can book it, they just need to turn up and man it and get to keep the proceeds from the day. PL book a number for their own purposes and community groups benefit from it for fundraising.

So it is normally about 2-$500 for a Saturday. Somebody said, I can’t tell you how many cakes we would have had to have made to have made that money.

The Lift Library has resources all about sustainability, transition towns, gardening and run regular film and book nights which can all be accessed for a nominal annual membership fee. PL have gone on to develop a multitude of community led projects inspired and driven by the assets, gifts skills and passions of the community over the last ten years.

PL is still driven by its vision statement and almost completely run by volunteers with the appointment of a paid coordinator only in recent times, who has a passion for the growth and development of community businesses to contribute to the growing initiatives and organisational long-term sustainability. PL appears to have sparked a community wide way of thinking and people are involved in community led projects with origins both internally and externally to the organisation. The Harbour Resilience project involves the whole extended basin and has an aim to produce all food for the community within the community.

PL are helping to drive a cross community effort to a place a food security and broaden resilience beyond that.

It is for the whole harbour basin. We usually describe it as being initiated by PL but we don’t want to have total ownership of it. We have to be responsible for the funding and to have it guided. Basically we are seeing once it becomes a teenager or wherever it is on its life development it is on its own.

The PL influence extends well beyond just the “official project list” in 2013 with members involved in community led projects including such things as community
banking and street gardening, projects continue to evolve as champions bring ideas from the community building on and driven by local assets.

We are conscious about it but we are also aware that others are engaged in a conversation not just those core PL people. Others are coming in because they see it is quite fun. Our vision, not so much as PL but as individuals here this street Foster Terrace is a potato city or whatever we grow. That street is providing it all. Why can’t we do that sort of thing? It is just getting people to start the process and see how it works. It is happening worldwide so people are aware of it.
6.3 T3 Connect

Project Summary

T3 Connect is a volunteer community led initiative aligned with the global transition town movement. T3 has been working since approximately 2005 to raise the awareness of issues like climate change and peak oil and to identify and connect like minds which in turn stimulates community led activities and projects. Initial activities included a web based platform which provided both a centralised connection point to this way of thinking and a community noticeboard where people of all interests could advertise their own community led initiatives. "Most sustainable improvements in community occur when citizens discover their own power to act… " (T3 Website).

Thames is the place where lots of the things that transition towns do had already been done and what Thames does extremely well is it creates pockets of interests that don’t communicate with each other well even if they have the same people doing both. So our thinking was how to create an entity that would more stimulate things rather than do things…We were thinking in terms of how to become a backbone organisation before we knew how to do it.

Early T3 activities were orientated around raising awareness, local authority relationship building and community connecting. Significant current projects directly pioneered by T3 include a comprehensive ABCD individual capacity mapping project and the ESC project (Energy Sustaining Community) which aims to reduce energy requirements, diversify fuel sources, and increase local power ownership and generation.

Project Location

T3 is a location based project located in Thames, New Zealand. Thames is located on the Firth of Thames approximately 100km South West of Auckland.

Project Aims and Objectives

- To raise awareness of issues like climate change and peak oil.
To try and generate a community conversation around that.

To catalyse and initiate activities and projects attentive to that and to try and help mesh different cogs together.

**PROJECT GENESIS**

A small group of Thames residents came together in the mid 2000’s to explore how to create an arch from how people were currently living to how people may have to live in the future as a result of changing environmental and global conditions.

*Around mid-2000’s all of things came together in Thames with the concern that knowing in 15 and 20 years’ time we will be living quite differently facing different issues with how to get from here to there. I decided what we needed was an arch to get across. I discovered around 2005/2006 the work of Rob Hopkins which was starting in Britain at the same time and decided I didn’t need to build an arch because there was already a model out there. That is how we began.*

T3 was initially established with no formal structure in 2007 and functioned in this way until 2012 when it became an incorporated society.

*There were about 4 of us. There have always been a core group of 8-10 people but there are 4 of us who have been continually involved and still involved. The first thing that we did was we initially didn’t set up any formal structure whatsoever partly because that is how heart politics kind of operates and that has been running for 27 years now.*

*We deliberately decided to do it with nothing. Just time and connections and being willing to make them. Between us we had a lot of connections. We set up the website but that very quickly grew to 60-70 people but now there are 130+.*

T3 have provided a connection point through the website which was the first thing that was established to serve as a centralised communication point for mobilising the community.

*The website was initially set up as a place to find your way into that community of thinking. It was a way of identifying people who were interested and wanting*
to know about things that were going on. It was partly to try and set up a point where people of all kinds of interests would advertise events and projects. It was a kind of community notice board primarily and a way to join so that we could identify groups of people to communicate with.

We have been blessed and challenged by the range of activities already underway in the area. Blessed because there's so much happening. Challenged because it’s often the same group. In the end we gave up worrying too much and just get on with it. We’ve gone through times of outreach and profile; and other time which have been more about consolidation. What we see as our most important role is being both crucible and catalyst’’ (T3 Newsletter).

*People of the wider network take the leadership and do whatever they do. On one level we consider that part of the work of T3 and trying to do that in such a way that we don’t appear to be owning other peoples efforts. It is a bit difficult. We have a community garden which we started with a bunch of people who were involved in T3 but it wasn’t a T3 initiative. It is a T3 activity. We don’t get too precious about it really.*

There are many projects that have had genesis or nurture under the mantle of the group. Monthly café evenings hosting various films or talks relating to community, resilience and sustainability. The Tracks programme, where youths make the transition to manhood, was been brought to the area and involved a number of T3 people in establishing and maintaining a core of men to enable the programme. A series of community items have also involved T3 to varying degrees, most notably around the town's cycling provision and its 50 year plan, as well as laying the foundations for community supported agriculture, carbon reduction and the mining issue.

In 2011, T3 began an individual capacity mapping project inspired and based on an ABCD approach. Dale Williams, Mayor of Otorohanga had been invited to a cross sector breakfast by T3 to share what they had been doing to revitalise their town.

*One of the things he said was if you don’t know what the assets are in within the community you don’t know what you have got to work with so you need to do an asset mapping project.*
Inspired to get this underway research into asset mapping led the group to the work of Kretzmann and McKnight and ABCD. Excited and keen to embark on a comprehensive individual capacity mapping project in the community they looked for support and resources.

> We discovered that Wintec were doing these research vouchers and began talking to them about the asset mapping and they got really excited about it...they gave us a $5,000 research grant which meant they didn’t give us any money but they gave us a person for $5,000 worth of time.

The person appointed to the project had experience of ABCD application overseas and it seemed like a great collaboration for the asset mapping project. T3 as a group were in a state of flux and as a volunteer group had little human resource to assist the project and so were thankful of the enthusiasm and resources from across sector. The researcher did a great job of mobilising interest from Council, to business to community who saw how this could lead to activating economic development in Thames.

> The researcher had some clear ideas about what she wanted to do...really liked Thames and was well embraced by the community and had a great time and decided she might want to live in Thames. The upside was she put a lot more time into the project than the $5,000 worth would have given us.

T3 being resource scarce were grateful for the enthusiasm the researcher had for the project and let her run with it having confidence in the knowledge that they had past experience in mobilising this type of project. However early in the piece the project began to experience issues primarily stemming from differing paradigms.

> It was top heavy but we hadn’t clearly identified what we were doing from the beginning. I think there was a slight misunderstanding between ourselves and Wintec about who was doing what and how.

> So immediately you have got some unclear issues around boundaries, responsibility around objectives between the researcher and the research funding body or the research enabling body. A naïve client. No clear process to clarify who was controlling the project. Whether it was us or the researcher.
T3 had developed an individual capacity questionnaire (Appendix 7) that they sent out to all their networks, they went to local markets out amongst the people motivated to collect as many capacity inventories as possible, as did the contracted researcher. Late in the project T3 realised that the researcher had been using a completely different questionnaire.

> What [the researcher] really wanted to know was assets so we could set up either education or apprenticeship project or to businesses… It was about skills, facilities and infrastructure, services. It didn’t so much recognise that all that happens in a particular ecological context and that is important to how people feel, behave and what they do.

Despite the issues that had developed from differing paradigms and visions for the project 1253 capacity questionnaires were collected in all. The next stage of the project was then what to do with the data in order to mobilise the assets that were identified, the vision had been to create an online database.

> It is to have a place online where that data is available which will literally be a map of our assets. Where they are and what they are so you will be able to drill in either through the map or a more traditional database searched process.

This presented an extremely costly hurdle in terms of the need to develop something specific to mobilise the data. Finding a solution to this saw significant delays in the project but collaboration again with Wintec assisted in developing the specifications so the group could find a way to resource the development. In early 2013 the project took a turn for the better with the local council deciding to collaborate to develop the much needed software to mobilise the information. The way it had arisen from the community appealed to Council as a bridge to working with community. The specs that had been worked through by Wintec are to be built on in this collaboration between community, council and business.

> We did a lot of learning on that project… If we were doing it again now we would start with a core group of 6-8 people rather than two and I think I would assume bigness. I would assume this is a really significant project and I would
go for funding from the outset probably. I’m glad we didn’t because if we had we wouldn’t have go as far as we have. We are much more robust.

Many lessons were learnt from the process which almost sunk the group in its size and scale. Building from the learning T3 have also established a community owned energy model which aims to mobilise built and financial assets within a community to enable transition to more renewable forms of energy and enhance individual wellbeing and infrastructure.

."ESC for Energy Sustained Community and the approach to that has been learnt from some of the mistakes from the asset mapping in that it is much more a backbone approach.

The first stage of the project focused on affordable home insulation teaming up with the Governments Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority to enable installation of green insulation in over 350 households in progress and resourcing in hand for a further 150.

Part of the intention is to target some of the lowest economic houses in the town to offer them those facilities. That project will be about energy and the cost savings involved.

The Warm Up Thames scheme provides 100 percent funding for community service card holders and a 50 percent discount for the rest of the community. “T3esc members have also arranged a bulk purchase agreement for two low emissions, high efficiency quality woodstoves with wetbacks… A similar arrangement is underway to supply solar panels and the necessary equipment to establish domestic solar generation.” (Thames Council News, February 2013) An initial shipment of fifteen pyroclastic stoves has been installed and the Photovoltaic part of the project. Launched in 2013 it aims to initiate the Thames Power Co within three years providing cheaper power off people’s roofs and returning resources to other community building projects borrowing a model seen overseas.

The authority in this case borrowed money at a very low rate that only the local authority can do and brought solar panels and installed them on houses continuing to own the equipment. The power generated off the roof was sold to the householder at a rate that was less than the householder could buy for their
electricity which was sufficient to repay loan plus a little bit of admin. When the householder through using power had paid off the cost of the equipment then the equipment reverted to being part of the house. It is a great model.

This chapter has presented the findings in relation to the three projects that were explored in this research. An overview of each specific project has been presented including its aims, objectives and genesis. In the following chapter the findings in relation to specific ABCD practice are presented, the praxis matrix developed in chapter five provides the framework for the findings.
CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS ABCD PRAXIS MATRIX

This chapter presents the investigation findings as they align with ABCD practice. The praxis matrix developed in chapter five provides the framework for the presentation of this chapter. The understanding of ABCD and application in practice is presented first, followed by the values and principles that guide the practice. Next the practice findings aligning with ABCD in its application as an approach, a methodology and a strategy in practice are presented. Lastly, findings indicative of impacts on community resilience are explored. A core objective of this investigation is to develop a holistic understanding of ABCD practice including links between theory and practice – praxis. It was important to explore understanding of key principles and themes along with application in the practice of each of the project investigations. It was critical to identify understanding of the various dimensions of ABCD from a theoretical and practical perspective. The first section explores the understanding and application of ABCD within the projects.

7.1 ABCD UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

ABCD is defined by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) as a process of community building that starts with the process of identifying assets, skills and capacities within residents, associations and local institutions, making connections which mobilise those assets in a sustainable way to improve community wellbeing and resilience. This definition was supported by the understanding in practice.

\[ABCD\] is where you are both thinking creatively alongside the community about helping showcase the assets of a community, exploring what can happen as a result of servicing those and interacting with those.

The majority of the projects were not initiated specifically as an ABCD initiative but certainly worked intentionally from strengths based perspective.

\textit{Looking at things from the perspective of what do we have not rather what do we need and what are we lacking? It is a strength based thing. What are we good at?}
When asked to consider the link between ABCD and the project, it was confirmed that it provided an accurate explanation of their practice.

*It gave me a name for something I already knew. If you want something to be strong and effective you need to find out what the strengths are on an agency level, community level or personal level. ABCD has come to become a theory that fits perfectly with this.*

Once discovering ABCD all the projects had gone on to apply its principles and now identify using the model intentionally to enhance their ongoing project developments.

*We are increasingly conscious about it ... it is definitely working with that model. In fact, so elegantly so that the whole communities aren’t having to start from scratch to develop everything. That model [ABCD] is definitely a superb theoretical home for this process.*

When asked to consider ABCD in practice there was clear understanding of it being community development, so much so, it was described as community development epitomised.

*From a philosophical standpoint there is no other kind of community development. If you are not going to work on strengths you may as well shut up and go somewhere else. It is not to say you totally ignore needs but you put the positive side first. I feel like it is the only way. I think it is arguably the only way that works in a lasting way that doesn’t perpetuate the in need and the giver.*

### 7.2 ABCD Practice Characteristics

The next section looks at the practice characteristics of ABCD beginning with values and principles. Practice as an approach, a methodology and a strategy are explored with insights into how those translated in practice aligning with aspects of the ABCD praxis matrix.

1. Values & Principles
2. Approach
3. Methodology
4. Strategy
5. Outcomes
7.2.1 VALUES & PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Specific values and principles which are foundational to ABCD were identified in practice and are presented with relevant reflections from the project investigations.

VALUE: FOCUS ON ASSETS

Focusing on assets empowers individuals and communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals. It recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities which can be mobilised to enhance wellbeing and resilience. This can be achieved by building or releasing capacity within a community by starting with and focusing on strengths - identifying, celebrating and building on local ‘gifts’, capacities and assets.

Looking at what you have, developing it and using it and accelerating it.

It’s about what you have got and what is there. All of those things are assets.
We often think of assets being physical things but they can be the people itself.
It is not looking at us as being a deficit.

It ensures that information which portrays community needs and problems is balanced with information about community assets and successes and that information is shared with all affected individuals and groups.

We have so much negative stuff put on us all the time in the media and television. It is all doom and gloom and disaster and it’s not healthy. The more you hear good things the more good things you think. It just seems to be counteracting that negative stuff. Valuing people for what they have got. Valuing everybody and helping people realise all the good things that they are grateful for. It is what happiness is about. It is vital.
The development of solutions that will effectively build upon the capabilities and assets of each neighbourhood and community through the strengths of individuals, families, associations, and organisations are well supported.

*Being asset based, it gives a confidence to you as individuals. You can see the results that are coming out and you get more belief in the fact that this is how humans are designed to be, so when situations come up you can move into them confidently and have dialogue with people.*

**VALUE: CIVIC EMPOWERMENT**

Civic Empowerment enables people to develop knowledge, skills and confidence so they can analyse and identify issues which can be addressed through collective action. (Freire, 1972) maintains that effective development outcomes can only be achieved when people gain a critical awareness of their location in the broad scheme of the world and that the form of action they adopt is largely a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Freire came to recognise that by enabling people to locate themselves within greater society, personal capacity to control one’s destiny could be rediscovered offering the possibility of self-determination. Similarly (Munford et al, 200, 2006) emphasise the importance of locating one’s own background and position in society as a first step towards creating social change. This critical self-awareness appears to be a precursor to building effective community development initiatives.

*We live in a world where we are all significantly disempowered all the time to think that we can’t make a difference and that we can’t change things. I have really learnt that being here you can.*

Addressing the unequal distribution of power by supporting people to become critical, creative, liberated and active participants and enabling them to take more control over their lives is a critical outcome of ABCD. Strengthening the capacity of organisations and
people as active citizens allows a way of moving from dependence to independence empowering them to take responsibility for positive change through collective action.

*They have a lot more confidence that we can take charge of where we want to be.*

Through encouraging activities that follow the principles and values of democracy and encouraging the civic responsibility of residents in aspects of community and neighbourhood life, more individuals are aware and able to choose to exercise and fulfil their civic and community responsibilities.

*There is no shortage of volunteers for new projects. There is no shortage of people who want to be on our Board. You probably hear people say you can’t get volunteers anymore. That is rubbish. You just have to tailor it differently.*

Individuals and groups should be encouraged to freely express their views and promote the concept of collective and individual leadership and responsibility for the common good.

*If you want that to happen in your community you basically have to do it yourself. Gradually groups get confident that you can do things and more resources come your way.*

A focus on assets considers that sustainable solutions emphasising leadership development, citizen participation, partnerships with agencies and organisations, and community economic development are supported, continually seeking to identify and develop the leadership potential of local people.

*I know its potential is to actually bring about change to activate people to take responsibility for the change themselves.*

**VALUE: CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP**

ABCD practice seeks to establish new structures and ways of operating within power relations, so partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks inside and outside the community is essential. Project practice is clearly aligned to collaboration across broad sectors, often leading the way in this way of working. Collaboration is what enables significant amplification of individual resources. All practice encouraged activities that respond to the uniqueness of each neighbourhood and community by
bringing together the strengths of local individuals, associations, businesses, faith-based entities, government and other organisations.

**Figure 35 OAP Station**  
*Source: VFW Digital Archives*

It is just a networking process really...it grew because we brought in our networks and the credibility that we had within those networks the more we got viability with the process.

Cooperation provides a means of connecting and strengthening communities through strongly encouraging collaborative activity amongst neighbourhoods, agencies, businesses, funders, policy-makers and other stakeholders. It was demonstrated that through working together with open and clear communication, trust and reciprocity was fostered encouraging further collaboration.

_Things have developed as time has gone by. In that initial stage we were unproved. You have got to be around and create something before they are going to take it on board as being okay._

Community building projects and approaches cross organisational boundaries wherever possible in addressing local issues balancing priorities which focus on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of neighbourhoods and communities.

_Modelling that you are not going out there and grabbing everything for yourself. You can give things away. That is the strength of networking, the ripple that comes from it. It is not just about the immediate benefit for your project but the ripple effects when people become aware of what else is going on that they can contribute too._

Practice supports the integration of community economic development, human services and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building. Current thinking presented by (Kania, Kramer & Hanleybrown, 2012) suggests that an effective
paradigm for social progress is that of collective impact. Lasting large scale social change is enhanced by highly structured collaborative efforts. They suggest five conditions needed, common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication supported by the presence of a backbone organisation to coordinate participation and centralised information. Critical factors include an influential champion, adequate resources and urgency for change.

Things are much easier when you have a hero or a champion. If you have someone that says come on champs lets go this way then that is really easy.

When you have someone that says I think we need to go somewhere that is much more challenging in so many ways and I think the rewards are richer through the second approach ultimately but they are a lot slower.

Cross sector collaboration and partnership is not only foundational to an ABCD approach, it is also fundamental to ABCD methodology in building relationships, mobilising, convening, visioning, storytelling and leveraging resources.

**VALUE: PARTICIPATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

ABCD practice recognises that all people have the equal opportunity to become involved in the community development process and are equally able to access its benefits. (Ricketts, 2008) found that inclusion in a multitude of participatory approaches from shared visioning to capacity building enhanced participation in community place making and improved community wellbeing.

It encourages people to get on board. I think it puts you in the right frame of mind first of all. You could have someone who doesn’t want to do something because you are scared you are going to create something bad whereas this is hopeful and optimistic, you can do it. It is like we are pioneers. Pioneers take risks. Giving people permission to experiment. I find that is an exciting way to be. It has made many people here feel like they want to be part of it.

Practice encouraged participation and diversity, striving to be as inclusive as possible but also recognising that it is not easy to include everyone nor will everyone want to participate. Building capacity and opportunity to participate is crucial. Individuals and
communities have the right to be consulted, involved in and to influence the decision making that effects their lives. Opportunities need to be given for people to build civil empowerment which leads to capacity for self-determination and participation.

Let as many voices as possible and the more voices you have the better the outcome is going to be. That is my number one learning I think, because you end up with much superior outcomes and more ownership. If more people have a voice on how it happens they are keener to be part of it. They put their heart and soul into it.

In practice, encouraging inclusive diverse participation recognises people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore equally worthy of respect and acknowledgement. ABCD practice celebrates the differences and uniqueness of residents in neighbourhoods by encouraging and supporting contributions.

Valuing people for what they have got. Valuing everybody and helping people realise all the good things that they are grateful for. It is what happiness is about.

Where practice is successful a variety of impacted residents of differing social and economic groups are invited to share their gifts and participate in the work of their community in increasing proportions.

We are forever connecting people, helping people contribute more to where they live. We have created a culture of possibility. I think we have given everyone in this town the ability to put their hand up and say, I can do this. Can I help with that? I think we have literally opened the door for more people to help and participate.

Participation, diversity and inclusion are fundamental values of ABCD.

VALUE: SOCIAL JUSTICE

ABCD practice seeks to bring about positive social change which incorporates a commitment to overcome challenges that may be faced and requires communities to recognise their ability to affect change. It involves identifying and seeking to alleviate
structural disadvantage and advocating strategies for overcoming exclusion, discrimination and inequality.

A lot of obstacles for people actually getting help are that they don’t want to have to turn up to CYFS, WINZ or the police because a lot of their experiences are bad. If they could actually have a chance to interact in a playful kind of way, building a relationship within those agencies so they would have a sense that they had already made a relationship with somebody.

Practice recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice, values diversity of experience and promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities. Promoting a sustainable environment and recognising and challenging inequalities and power differences challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances.

You have to take on different world views in each one of those places. They are not something you just compress and say this is the whole holistic view. You actually have to keep these balls in the air at the same time and be comfortable with that. So, that element is there, if you like, social justice, looking at all perspectives and the sense that it is a little bit chaotic too.

An ideal outcome sees every person and community able to play an active role in creating conditions for a just and equal society based on human rights that makes the link between local, societal and global contexts.

We are doing things in this community and we are doing it well, it is sitting in a bigger picture, recognising that there are millions of other organisations worldwide that are doing this sort of thing. There is one well known guy who refers to these groups as the immune system of the planet, it is really important in recognising that role, if things are to survive it hinges on groups like us.

**VALUE: WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER**

Community Development learning and practice are inseparable, the practice informs the learning in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection.
This is always the real challenge in community development. How much resource do you put into essentially an evaluation research thing and how much do you put into the mobilisation. You don’t put it into the evaluation first. You put it into the mobilisation first. Once you know what you are doing you sit back and think how can I do this in a way that inspires people?

Both successes and failures are valuable in learning and innovations that support learning from both are beneficial to practice. Promoting a collective process which enables participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences and supporting innovations where all can learn together from successes and failures builds a culture that encourages innovation.

Getting into the underlying philosophy of how do we do the asset based stuff better? How do we do the bonding stuff better? How do we top off what is a great event? Can the next event be that good...bringing stakeholders together for some kind of review, reflection, celebration process.

Promoting a supportive environment which allows communities and organisations to continually learn and grow whilst demonstrating genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders is crucial.

Do the co-creation of the philosophy with people that have the experience and are really motivated by that...The real thing about it is that it is a collection of really brilliant processes that enable people to do stuff and people take the processes away and start using the processes in ways that are relevant to their own vision, needs and lives.

Encouraging a long term process of learning and change vs quick fixes which gathers, analyses, tracks, and shares information will allow all to build upon their experiences. The optimum outcome is demonstrated where people understand the results of community building will be short term, intermediate and long term in their nature.

ABCD values and principles demonstrated in practice included a focus on assets, working and learning together, participation, diversity and inclusion, cross sector collaboration civic empowerment and social justice. The next section presents practice findings relating
to ABCD practice in three ways, as an approach, a methodology and as a strategy as suggested by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002,2003).

7.2.2 APPROACH IN PRACTICE

An ABCD approach considers a localised community is rich with untapped resources which can be mobilised by the community for the improved wellbeing of the community. Sustainable development emerges from within not outside a community by identifying, connecting and building on communities strengths.

*We have what we need if we use what we have is a philosophy. Be the change.*

ABCD is a community building approach that is informed by three core paradigms:

- Asset based
- Internally focused
- Relationship driven

It builds or releases capacity by starting with what exists, seeking to start with and focus on strengths, by community for community.

**ASSET BASED**

An asset based approach considers that a community is filled with untapped resources, not only in the traditional physical and financial assets of a community but abundance in the skills, knowledge and talents of local people.

*It is an incredible antidote to negativity or passivity...I think it creates a sense of excitement, ownership and pride in a place*

Communities are built from the assets and gifts of their citizens, not from the citizens’ needs or deficiencies (Block, 2008).

*I really believe that where you put your focus, that is what grows. If you are constantly focusing on what is missing then that’s what grows in status and in people’s minds. When you are doing anything asset based, [you are] cheering everything on all the time and saying this is brilliant, this is great...look at this.*
Anchored in appreciative inquiry, an asset based approach sees the resources of a community in their entirety waiting to be activated.

For PL it has become more of a way of being, which permeates every aspect of its activities and is how we are consciously with one another, at all levels. It’s not just in the public view that we try to do AI, it’s in everything, who we are, right at the beginning. (PL Our Story, 2012, p.27).

**INTERNALLY FOCUSED**

An ABCD approach is internally focused which means that it seeks solutions within its community to address local issues by building capacity in local assets to lead and resource solutions from within.

One of the critical features of [ABCD] is you are saying if we are going to do this we don’t actually need a lot of funding from local or national government. We can do this because we have the resources to do that. Any other kind of community development immediately means you have a dependent community.

It seeks to develop authentic local grassroots leadership to drive whole systems change using local skills, knowledge and assets.

People think that fundraising comes from outside but 80% comes from community you are within...whether it be funding or resources you have already got them there. It is just connecting with them instead of always looking outward.

Geographic communities of place are the focus of ABCD practice, there has been an increasing disconnection with our geographic neighbourhoods with the changing nature of the global world. An internal focus looks for solutions in geographic neighbourhoods for those who live there, by community for community.

**RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN**

An ABCD approach values relationships and connections above all other assets. Practice is relationship driven, relationships are the activating force within a local community, and there is constant awareness of what new connections bring.
When I meet or have relationship with people I often like to have a conversation and talk about things, rather than say I have come in here to get this of yours or have the use of that. In a general conversation I see where our commonalities lie.

Local networks and connections are the fuel of this approach, they are fundamental to the concept and the practice (Gilchrist, 2009; Ennis & West, 2010) supports the incorporation of social network theory and analysis as a strong enhancement in ABCD practice.

*Social networks can be the amazing organising force of the community or they can be amazing disorganising force depending on what kind ethos, ethics and inspiration is sitting within them.*

In focusing on relationships and connections as assets ABCD is the practical application of social capital. Social networks are the structure within which social capital exists, is built and stored.

*Social networks are about groups of people that are prepared to show up and take each other’s ideas seriously and put some energy beside them.*

An ABCD approach is a way of seeing thinking and doing things that is constantly aware of the resource and potential that lies in everything.

*If someone comes into my path, part of me is saying what is it that you might be bringing what have I asked for that you might be bringing. An awareness of what they might be bringing and that particular point might be key to what we need, aware of the resources around you and they might come in any strange form.*

The role of PL is holding everything together while allowing people to follow ideas they are passionate about - champions. This means that greater sustainability is achieved by collaboration with organisations for core support, for the organisation there is less risk to overload the core team.

The champion is basically the leader - nothing works if you don't have a leader. So our projects have all worked because we’ve had people who are passionate about whatever that particular issue is, and they’ve followed it
through to the end. We’re lucky we’ve got such dedicated people here in Lyttelton who want to challenge themselves and make Lyttelton a better place (PL Our Story, 2012, p.19).

Practice supported the concept of ABCD as an approach being asset based, internally focused and relationship driven. The next section looks at practice aligning with ABCD as a methodology.

7.2.3 METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE

The next aspect of practice examined is how ABCD methodology has been utilised in practice. Each of the projects was able to discuss how ABCD was being used as a result of being influenced by the knowledge the approach and processes. There are six methods employed in ABCD methodology which in summary seeks to identify and mobilise the assets of a community in order to enhance individual and community wellbeing and resilience.

**METHOD 1: ASSET MAPPING**

Identifying a communities assets is fundamental to practice, an ABCD approach considers that a large portion of the community contains untapped assets. Both the actual and potential assets of individuals, associations and organisations are needed for community building.

*Anything and everything really. It is obviously buildings, roads, parks, bikes, skateboards, schools, and churches, all of those things. It is those little things as well. The people that have specific knowledge about things and skills in particular areas. People who can bake biscuits for the meeting that we are going to have next... Anything may turn out to be an asset.*

Foot and Hopkins (2010) describe this stage as “mapping or making an inventory of the capacities and assets in the area”. It was important to establish if there was shared understanding of what asset mapping is and the many ways it can be applied in practice.

*I think that the asset mapping is really saying, what resources have we got and how do we identify them for future access?*
The application of asset mapping as a process was abundant in practice. The Discover Lyttelton Walking Map project featured the quirky networks of hidden steps and paths unique to the town highlighting utilities, iconic buildings, post boxes, public transport and public rest stops.

Our map served two purposes. Ladders were the shortcuts to all the little steps and so they were for the locals. The snakes were for the visitors. The snakes always got people to start at the tracks in the hills or the iconic building. That map too highlighted things like steepness. In a town like Lyttleton it is important to know where the seats are so I highlighted where all of these were. A lot of elderly people walk home and it is nice to know three quarters of the way home you can have a seat.

T3 has the individual capacity mapping project underway which has specifically applied ABCD in its gathering of over 1200 individual skill asset inventories (appendix 6).

Our asset mapping initiative is an attempt to gather together an interactive database to enable people to explore, engage and communicate with assets in the community.

The Lyttelton Time bank could be considered the embodiment of individual skill mapping mobilised.

The time bank is a bit of an asset map. It maps what people want and what people can offer, it shows what hobbies people have.

OAP maps the community assets along a geographic route, those assets are then highlighted to the community in a free fun day where people follow a route and complete interactive activities with those assets located on their community treasure map.

What do we put on the map in our local communities? What is the map of the little things like local knowledge? Local knowledge might know about things that the wider knowledge might not know about. Alleyways for examples or shortcuts to school. They might just take it for granted that the route goes past some interesting landscape.
PL aim to map the entire assets and characteristics of the community in the Harbour Resilience Project which aims to build a self-sufficient food basket for the entire basin.

...like people, things like fruit trees. It is quite diverse. Community groups and databases. There was talk about people going around with cameras and highlighting their favourite things and we have talked about how this could be recorded on this database. There are a lot more physical maps that we can have of things like climate, micro-climates, soils but it then can go historical. What are all the original Maori names in these areas? What are the special sites and what are the stories behind those? It could be who has got the skills for different things?

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) suggest a number of ways to conduct asset mapping from formal individual skill surveys through to images. Asset mapping can be a huge long term process and it can take time and connections to get a community to a place of facilitating a comprehensive asset mapping process although small projects like the walking maps can provide short term easy wins help build community confidence. This process is open in its approach, however it’s ascertained the for ABCD practice to be truly effective it must map all community assets, quite a logistical challenge.

True to ABCD practice which seeks to locate skills, energy and passion, being intentional and adaptable as resources enable is essential. A community may not develop the appropriate capacity for a comprehensive mapping project early on, everything is driven by where the energy comes from requiring adaptable practice approaches.

I have been keen to do asset mapping for a long time...We dreamt that up ages ago but it wasn’t until someone came that had certain skills that it actually took off.

Scalability and the ambition to go to big too quickly can hinder a project as was experienced by T3 when external assistance was leveraged into the project at an early stage and there was a disconnection between key stakeholders. It is one thing to collect asset data but the challenge is what to do with the information especially where the volume of data is so encompassing and varied, it is a hurdle still being negotiated.

We ended up with a very big project with not many people engaged in.
An ABCD strategy seeks to mobilise community assets and build social capital, the community capitals framework provides a complimentary structure with which to consider structural whole systems change across all community capitals – financial, natural, built, human, cultural, political and social as they relate in practice. There was substantial identification and mobilisation of community assets across all community capitals throughout the projects.

**METHOD 2: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem solving within the community is another of the ABCD processes. As a relationship driven approach to community development it’s essential to build connections and social networks, the connections and relationships are the building blocks of social capital.

*Our network has expanded and deepened because of this. Every time one has been run our network expands exponentially.*

Block and McKnight (2010) define association as “three or more people who come together by choice and mostly without pay because of a common interest. The common interest may simply to be together or it may be to change the world (p.5)”

*A really good link in with organisations with a very different outlook, different purposes but finding ways we can work together.*

Networking and relationship building, both casually and formally are essential. Foundational values of cross sector collaboration and working and learning together drive this approach to relationships.

*Where there are very strong neighbourhood organisations, you also get the strong feeling of individuals thinking we can do this and get on with doing it. They maybe get a bit of support from their neighbourhood organisation, it's just going out and doing it.*
METHOD 3: MOBILISING THE ASSETS

This community building process mobilises the community’s assets for the purposes of building information sharing capacity by sharing knowledge and resources to become self-organising and active.

*Every community needs information specific to itself.*

As suggested by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) a key step in the mobilisation of community resources is strengthening the neighbourhoods’ ability to shape and change information and establishing control over its flow.

*We have so much negative stuff put on us all the time in the media and television. It is all doom and gloom and disaster and it’s not healthy. The more you hear good things the more good things you think. So it just seems to be countering that negative stuff.*

Capacity to exchange information needs to be developed and should consider these information channels. Websites act as points of connection, regular newsletters both email and physical. Each identified asset is encouraged to begin to make its own set of contributions to the neighbourhood economy exploring ways to produce more within. Through building and strengthening complimentary asset relationships, the impacts of each can be amplified often resulting in symbiotic relationships that result in mobilisation of assets that could not have been achieved otherwise. PL made a concerted effort to connect the time bank and information centre by moving into the same building

*As the time bankers have started coming into the centre it gave them an excuse to come in because before that they thought I don’t need visitor information because I live here. It is a really good relationship...So now time bank has tapped into a new source of people and so has the information centre.*

*In the past we were mainly for visitors or new people to town. The new people would come in and then I would say time bank is in the back. Why don’t you have a chat to them, get connected into the community via the time bank. So that was the nice synergy and then for us information centre was trying to be relevant to local people.*
Mobilisation of community assets was visible in practice across the community capitals spectrum. Natural capital was activated through participation in the development of unused land as community gardens, tree plantings and the natural environment.

If you think about what people wanted to do, a lot of them wanted to have a connection with the bush walk and planting. They talked in terms of “I am going to plant something here that is going to be here in 20 or 100 years.” Looking at it they really want to create something of lasting value.

(Project Lyttelton, 2012) found that the walking festival had increased the awareness of walking tracks along with the health and social benefits of walking. The festivals contributed to positive feelings about the area and the majority of participants agreed they came away from the event with increased feelings of positivity for the community and a desire to maintain walking as part of lifestyle and/or learn more about the history.

Built capital assets mobilised included community and government buildings, healthcare services, educational facilities, churches and even energy services.

We are talking about all the waste wood that they have and the opportunities for generating energy with it. What they do currently and what they don’t do.

OAP was particularly a stand out in mobilising built capital. The treasure hunts included multiple collaborators including across sector services, the model mobilises networks to each contribute something on the day activating social, built, cultural, political and human capital at the same time.

**METHOD 4: CONVENING AND COMMUNITY VISIONING**

Convening as broadly representative group as possible for the purposes of building a community vision and plan is a crucial process as ABCD is foundationally community led. It can take time and perseverance.

It is getting your head into a different space than what the mainstream is thinking and starting to think so what have we got and what can we do? How do we connect the dots or join unusual combinations together? How do we think laterally? How do we be playful with this?
The key to success is in enabling equal participation from the outset, the projects will be richer for the diverse input and ownership gained through a variety of participative processes.

**Figure 36 Shared Visioning**  
*Source: PL Digital Archives*

I am forever astounded. Often 2 people come up with what you think is a great idea. You start heading down that direction but when you open up to the wider group it is amazing the richness of thought that comes into the conversation and the project that you initially thought was really brilliant isn’t quite as brilliant as you thought.

It is necessary to find and mobilise local capabilities and leadership, communication hubs and neighbourhood bumping places with a view to increasing capacity for exchanging vital stories, plans and dreams.

*There are notions that have come out of the gathering tradition in NZ about [how] you create spaces and hold spaces and don’t be too concerned with the outcome. Let people bring whatever they want to bring. You keep creating the space for them and eventually something will happen.*

Particularly emerging from this research was a common emphasis on the importance of meeting places in community.

*There were no meeting places here before. Now many of our events and activities have created places that people naturally congregate to that they never did before.*

*It is really useful to identify what those particular node points are where there are a number of networks that wouldn’t normally mesh, mesh in and they are the anchor points for a different level of network.*
The convening and visioning stage of community planning takes commitment and time to activate internally but the perseverance and process provide rich rewards for a community. The process can literally take years just to gain traction to begin.

*This creates a fertile environment where laughing, sharing food, having fun, dreaming and creating together brings out the best in people and everything is possible. This attracts ever increasing numbers of people who feel they want to be part of something in their community. It is really important to generate conversations and keep raising them. Why wouldn’t you do this and why wouldn’t you do that?*

**METHOD 5: STORYTELLING**

Community development integrates theory and practice, the integration of the two is praxis. Freire (1972) states when working in praxis we can transform the world. He refers to the ongoing reflection and action which is based on the lived experience which informs our actions and which enables us to locate ourselves within the greater society. The stories of our journey, of our experience, our aspirations and our practice.

*People want to tell stories. They want to write stuff down. If you give people the opportunity to tell you what they are passionate about then they will write.*

Appreciative Inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of what is to pursue dreams and possibilities of what could be. It is a co-operative search for the strengths, passions and life giving forces that are found within every system—those factors that hold the potential for inspired, positive change (Project Lyttelton, 2009).

*Maybe we have identified a bit of council land down the road. Maybe we dig it up and put in potatoes so those people. This is not a story that has actually happened yet. It is a story that is unfolding. The story often happens before it comes into reality.*

Building the positive profile of a community influences how a community perceives itself, appreciative inquiry principles in play, words create worlds, reality is subjective and is socially created through language and conversations.
The local papers don’t do it and if they do it is a sensational story... The media goes crazy, and has broken buildings galore just filling up your mind....it was time we had an appreciative inquiry on here so I went around...and asked, ‘What is it that you love about Lyttleton?’ and just started to build those stories up.

AI principles consider that image inspires action, human systems move in the direction of their images for the future. The more positive the future picture the more positive the present day action.

We are actually creating a future; we are making the path that we are walking on. We need to know where we are moving towards so that when we get there we can say we don’t turn around and say this isn’t where I wanted to be. We have to consciously choose which way we want to go and create it to the extent that we can. It is not about planning because you don’t know everything; you don’t know you are going to have an earthquake. It is about having intent where you want to move and be flexible so when something comes in you can say, yes that fits with that.

Small wins along the long term journey and sharing what is working helps to sustain momentum. Using an appreciative inquiry approach we can choose what we study, it describes and creates the world as we know it.

Bringing intergenerational conversations into play. Bringing people into a sense of renewed respect for each other in the community.

Inquiry creates change, as soon as we ask a question we have begun to create a change, the questions we ask are fateful. Positive questions lead to positive change, momentum for large scale change requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding.

I asked what has changed and she said people no longer moan...That for me was quite a key statement. It is like affirmation that what we are doing is working. She was secretary at school, had been here for a long time. She wasn’t part of...but was noticing and feeling something.
METHOD 6: LEVERAGING RESOURCES

Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset based locally defined development is the last crucial process in an ABCD methodology.

* Bridging, linking and bonding are relevant to the project...it is one of the key things but it does take a long time. I think you have to get your own group right before you start reaching out...that did take a while for us to get other people and resources.*

Community trusts and local councils are integral to seed funding for projects and in sustaining longer term support for effective projects. Local government support enabled early development of practice. Small grants and in kind support for things like printing or event resources.

* They were quite supportive of everything that we did do so they used to give us small grants and they also did a lot of in-kind things for us like the community garden.*

Sustaining long term support from local government appeared to be harder with changing councils and paradigms. Greater levels of bureaucracy impeded projects and relationship building.

* Like the current council that we work with...their role for community development just seems to be a strengthening community's team and their main role is giving out funding to communities. It is really difficult to get their funding. There are lots and lots of hoops. It is not easy.*

A direct relationship between the project sponsor/funder and the community group appears to be valued by communities and can assist with role clarity. Central government support seemed easier to achieve over a long term where innovative practice was demonstrated, support from central government but not from local government as was seen with time banks.

* The best contribution the council could make would be to farm time bank coordinators in each of their little council areas...they would get their biggest
bang for buck out of this but I still haven’t been able to convince them. Interestingly though when I talk to central government, they are more keen on the idea than the local government people here.

Linking with business proved to be most challenging, whilst it was possible to attract small support like in kind donations of prizes it was more challenging to get them actually involved with planning and contributing as a community asset.

Quite a lot of the businesses people wouldn’t support it but they were reaping the benefits. They would be there best days of trading ever yet they wouldn’t cough up money for advertising or anything like that.

It seemed that once projects had proved success there was much more buy in and collective working as was seen with the Lyttelton Farmers Market with the business sector originally resistant but now involved in the regeneration and planning. Effective working and networking brings reciprocity.

The interesting thing is, the farmer’s markets regeneration is happening in conjunction with the business association. That says a lot that they are more in tune with [PL] now than they would have been way back.

An ABCD approach was found to assist with making new linking connections. In the case of OAP and farmers markets having a tangible event for them to be involved in enabled recruiting them in local leadership of a project.

We were thinking of her making relationships with local businesses as well as local clubs and churches...She was really grateful to have an excuse to send the letter and go out and have conversations with them.

External resources should not be leveraged too early in an ABCD project so as not to waste the opportunity to make the most of natural energy driving a project from within a community. Focusing on what you need rather than what you have can squelch an idea.

I have come across it when people have come up with the idea and the next question is where you are going to get the funding for that which is where it cuts a thing right off at the knees.
A community needs to understand what they are undertaking and lessons from the practice caution moving ahead too soon with a large scale process which requires external assistance. Internal capacity needs to be developed before leveraging external resources to minimise vulnerability to external stakeholder.

ABCD practice as a methodology presented six methods in practice: asset mapping, building relationships, mobilising assets, conveying and visioning, storytelling and leveraging resources. Next the third and final dimension of ABCD practice is examined, its application in practice as a strategy achieving specific outcomes.

7.2.4 STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

ABCD practice as a strategy proposes to identify and mobilise the local assets in entirety, with particular importance on the interests, skills and talents of individuals, the social networks and voluntary associations and physical assets. Through strengthening relationships and social networks intentionally building social capital enhances the wellbeing of a local geographic or place based community.

ABCD strategy provides a means of sustainable community driven development that can be applied strategically to achieve a broad range of specific outcomes in different sectors. In practice it was seen to be used as a strategy for stimulating local economic development, building social capital and encouraging active citizenship. Firstly practice stimulating local economic development is explored.

STRATEGY: STIMULATING COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ABCD, as a strategy for sustainable economic development, relies on linkages between community level actors and macro-level actors in public and private sectors. It is necessary to consider how to stimulate endogenous collaboration and action.

*It actually reactivates people’s positivity which might have been a bit dormant... encourages creativity in the community and creativity about the community in the community. It isn’t just I am being creative about how I am going to make money in this big scheme it is what can I do in this community. What can I expose about what I could offer this community?*

In this way ABCD is concerned with how to link micro assets to the macro environment.
It will connect or it might not but you are not going to know until you have explored what the idea is. So we are very consciously creating that culture.

Motivation to mobilise local assets for income generation has seen the development of a variety of diverse economic models developed. Things like events, festivals and farmers market generate funds which can be reinvested and contribute to coordination costs.

We now believe that we need to be social entrepreneurs and create a lot of money yourself rather than waiting for other people...when you have it yourself, you are not limited on how you can use it.

This entrepreneurial innovation can also trigger larger ongoing economic growth in a community. There was a surprisingly diverse range of economic models that had been developed using and ABCD strategy. With the focus on money as just one of many resources rather than the only way of doing things, innovative financial model development is enabled.

An ABCD strategy encourages the mobilisation of resources and skills so that a range of community resource banks that enable sharing of local assets are emerging. Shared business models such as cooperatives and the shared garage sale are novel expressions of coproduction.

The literature on multi-stakeholders say it is transformational because you have producers and buyers in the same business so you can’t have one getting the best price at the cost of the other.

The op shop with a difference. The point of difference is any community group can book it. They just turn up on the Saturday with their volunteers, open the doors, and pull out all the stuff and they get to keep the proceeds. Small groups don’t have to do anything. They just open up and talk to people about what they are doing.

Festivals and markets stimulate local environments, gathering people to places stimulates opportunities for those assets located within such as business, churches and clubs.

To support the local business that did survive and the new ones that are emerging. They are having a tough time so it will hopefully help. That is a
great community gathering point in the week. [Farmers Market] It takes hours to shop because everybody sees everybody else they know.

Time banks have emerged as a powerful symbiotic tool for ABCD especially in mobilising individual talents and abilities, they evolved from (Cahn, 2004) as a direct result of his struggle to increase the effectiveness of social programmes. They are frequently based in schools, hospitals, churches, social service agencies and target socially marginalised.

*It has enabled a lot of trades to happen of people you wouldn’t have known before...You don’t have to waste time trying to do it yourself when you know there is somebody that has that skill nearby.*

Community banking models are an innovation high trust concept and the residents of Lyttelton have created Harbour Pool, a community bank which has about 30 members. The model enables interest free loans through principles of reciprocity.

*We will all shop with your business. Your business must succeed because it is our money. So already you have got that group as core buying in your business.*

As a strategy for stimulating economic development ABCD practice produces and abundant and diverse number of innovative models including community op shops, cooperatives, time banking, resource libraries and community banking.

*It is seen by us as money but we see it as far more than that. It is the relationships we build. The group that are there are now much closer and deeper that we have been before.*

In stimulating new economic models new relationships are forming contributing to the next strategic application of ABCD practice – building social capital.
Figure 37 Lyttelton Community Visioning
Source: Project Lyttelton Digital Archives
STRATEGY: BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

An ABCD strategy seeks to intentionally contribute to building social capital. There was clear understanding of social capital as a relationship based concept.

*Social capital is represented by goodwill to work together or trusting of a relationship whether on a person to person level or an organisational level or community wide level.*

To be developed social capital requires active participation of people working together who are active agents and creators of their social world. Social capital is in connections between people (relationships) and people working as a group (networks).

*Social networks would be the interconnection of social capital and the way social capital builds on itself, regenerates, reinvigorates and reinforms itself.*

Block and McKnight (2010) define association as “three or more people who come together by choice and mostly without pay because of a common interest. The common interest may simply to be together or it may be to change the world” (p. 5). Through this relationship focus an ABCD strategy intentionally builds social capital through establishing and strengthening relationships expanding social networks.

*It definitely does [build social capital], you don’t have strong communities if you don’t connect. What is the point in having a group if you don’t connect? It is all about building up trust, linking, sharing. There is some famous saying the sum of the parts is greater than the sum of the whole.*

The process of building these relationships involves bonding and bridging social capital.

*One of the things we can bridge between is the general public and the agencies but it is also the bridging between agency to agency as well and also local to local government, regional awareness. There is a lot of bridging and bonding that happens with that.*

Increasing connections, building a bank account of potential goodwill through expanding networks is crucial. Social capital is built through neighbourhood connections, work, friends and family and community connections.
There are just lots of connections...It is different because you are connecting with people you would never meet. Different social strata and different educational backgrounds. We are linked by that thing and you become so much richer because you are not just meeting with clones of yourself. You are meeting other sort of people which really builds that social capital.

**Community Connections**
People that have been involved in the community centre. There were people that were brought into our network. One woman from the Marae was totally into the organisation. The Marae put a lot of support into the project.

**Family and Friends Connections**
You get all these young mums and dads playing in the playgrounds and actively hanging out there and having a coffee

**Work Connections**
They have regular community conversations with 25-30 agencies around issues of domestic violence and that has been a very effective way of addressing some of the extremes of response that used to happen.

**Neighbourhood Connections**
There was a kind of bonding thing that went on as well at an agency level and street level...The street champs really got established to promote this whole thing and it gave the opportunity for people in the neighbourhood to get to know each other. People are hungry for connection and a lot of people have really lost that.

Strengthening relationships and social networks builds social capital which is able to contribute to building other community capitals, mobilising other community capitals also contributes to building social capital. Social capital is the value of the relationships and interactions in a community. It is made up of interactions between groups and individuals such as networks and the norms and trust that facilitate cooperation.

**Increased Cooperation**
This community is different to any other place I have lived. It is different in a good way and that is created every day by the small little things that everybody does. Whether that be helping someone move their wood or working on a
community project or shopping at the Farmers markets. It has really shown me the value of localism.

**Increased Trust**

Trust can be built through building relationships & knowledge of community's culture & their processes. “Sharing the use of our resources and having conversations about what has been traditionally a no-no subject – the details of our personal financial situation – has bought us together, creating deep trusting friendships (Jefferies, 2012, para.7).

*I think people trust each other more. Initially they were really sceptical of do good volunteers. They didn’t believe anything would happen but they have seen things happen now.*

**Increased Reciprocity**

*It is me saving in the group which is my reciprocity which enables the pool to be bigger for others.*

Say you were building a building for your business, this person over here, their brother happens to be a builder and he has a spare roof. That comes in so you don’t even have to pay so much for your building because all these favours are being pulled.

Social capital can be stored to use to specifically get things done, when reciprocity is present stocks of social capital are increased rather than depleted when used. (Ozanne, 2010, p 9) found that Time banks increased an individual’s sense of being part of the community, increased willingness to get involved in local activities and made them feel safer in their communities as a result of increased relationships which had also increased trust in other people.

*When we are doing time bank we would use that work increasing social capital. It is getting the relationships closer, linking people and getting people’s wellbeing. They feel good to be in this community, they get their needs met, they feel loved and supported.*

It was also identified as an effective mechanism for meeting new and diverse people, bridging social capital and reinforcing weak ties.
The interesting thing about evaluation survey was basically nobody plays sport in their own community just 4% played sport in their own community. The point is to bring more of that stuff into our communities, especially the friendships and connections because that will hopefully mean shared resources. That will hopefully mean lonely old people won’t be so lonely. That will mean people with mental health issues will be seen as part of the community. Things like community gardens will spring up and so on.

Drawing on the evaluation findings of iterations in Unsworth Heights and Massey they found multiple indications of local relationship building as a result of being involved including resident plans to actively continue to connect with community and an increased desire to get to know neighbours.

There's the story about four teenage girls saying best thing that ever happened! I regarded that as a pretty amazing statement for teenagers because walking around their community going to the fire station, some of these social agencies,

**Figure 38 OAP Participant Feedback**

looking at a community garden that didn’t actually have anything growing in it and actually doing all the stations and coming away and saying ‘best day ever’. I say ‘hey in social capital terms they have picked up $1,000 bucks’.

**STRATEGY: ENCOURAGING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

Leonard and Onyx (2004) state that agency can be understood as the way in which people act on or assert themselves in their world. Individual efficacy in concerned with an individual’s engagement.

*People are brought up to be individuals now and the feeling of community and sharing is foreign to lots of people. It is more competition and materialism.*

Collective Efficacy is concerned with working together and collaboration.

*One thing we have found in the process of getting the data is that 91% of people who returned forms said they would be willing to volunteer in some way in the community. 72% said they were not sure how to do that.*

Practice findings contribute to learning around collective impact and what it takes to encourage people to move into active community, moving from individual to collective. Civic empowerment refer to the capacity to participate as an active citizen in the system in order to effect change for enhanced wellbeing and resilience.

*I would say a really good example of that is the submission over the petanque club.*

The Petanque site in Lyttelton was built by Gap Filler after the earthquakes on a section that had just had a building demolished.

*They filled it with gravel, put in a Palenque pitch where you can borrow the balls and play a game. It very quickly became a community space that everybody used and everybody loved. The community went and made chairs and tables, put plants in, all that sort of*
thing. We had a remembrance ceremony there. We had Anzac day there. It has really become our town square.

It was then put on the market for sale so a number of organisations took submissions to the Council requested it be secured as the new town square.

We want it to be brought and turned into a public space so we wrote submissions and went and talked to Council urging them because it was on the market. They listened and they brought it and they are turning it into a town square. We were one of the groups that did that submission process and bridge between what the community wanted and what council were doing.

Gramsci (1971) first termed the concept of cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the state in a capitalist society. The order of power and control that is exerted by the ‘elite’ or ruling class is to such an extent that individuals lose any knowledge of individual empowerment or ability to change circumstance, as the ‘ruling class’ requires them to be, lost in the illusion that there is no individual capacity for empowerment and self-determination.

I think it is a social and cultural thing in New Zealand that somehow in the last 30 years something to do with that shift from number one mentality where we all got on with it in a degree of protected isolation. I would make mine and you would make yours.

That kind of rugged individualism seems to be giving way to some sort of anticipation that they will do it. If only they would. Why don’t they do it? There is a king of inertia that goes with that.

There is the challenge of how to move people through the continuum from consumers of services, to advisors of community programmes to co-producers of community wellbeing.

How to shift it out of the individual mind set. That is part of the why didn’t they do it? So we have gone from being empowered individuals to disempowered individuals.

Building on individual skills and abilities offers a way to empower individuals in what they can do rather than find inadequacy in what they can’t do.
We have been doing asset based adult education ...we had somebody from the Council and they were blown away by what we were doing and it’s the simplest thing. People offer skills in what they have and what they would like to teach so that is what we do. They say, but don’t you look at the needs. We say no. What is the point if people don’t want to learn it they won’t and if we don’t have the skills to teach it we won’t be sitting around saying oh dear we don’t have the skills. We don’t have the money or the skills so we are not going to sit around waiting, so it is mobilising what there is.

Ozanne (2010) found that time banks did not just encourage coproduction as an objective but could also enhance reciprocal volunteering and active citizenship.

We draw on the wider community to do all the volunteer hours for that [project] and they can claim that as time bank credits.

This section has presented ways in which ABCD practice has contributed to a specific strategy including stimulating local economic development, building social capital and encouraging active citizenship and both civic and civil empowerment. The final section of this chapter now looks at impacts of ABCD practice on community wellbeing and resilience.

7.3 ABCD IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY WELLBEING & RESILIENCE

Interventions that sustain resilience are those that strengthen relationships, build and enable social support and networks, social capital between and within communities, such as OAP. Strengthening relationships between communities and social and health agencies improves the quality of the social relationships of care (Foot & Hopkins, 2010).

I think one of the key things that was different here to other places was not the on hand volunteers but the culture was such that it was okay to ask for help. That is a real difference. Where we have a time bank, it is the normal thing. I am not asking for help, I am trading. So therefore, people asked for help. They would say they weren’t coping.

Puntenney (2000) defined community resilience in respect to organisations as the ability to sustain itself and carry out its mission in a situation of adversity and to respond to and manage planned and unplanned change or opportunities that present themselves.
Communities have to be proactive. I don’t think you can wait to develop your community groups. You have got to get out there and do it because you never know when you are going to need them. Even if you don’t have an emergency or disaster, it still helps the cohesiveness of your society.

An ABCD approach in planning for disaster recovery builds resilience. Knowing where the local resources are and how to mobilise them would be of great value to any local community as was experienced by the township of Lyttelton when struck by devastating earthquakes in late 2011 and early 2012.

Lyttleton is just really lucky that we had the foresight to develop PL the way it was...We had built up so many community assets prior to the earthquakes.

When the big earthquakes hit the town the role that PL had taken in the many years prior really proved their worth.

I remember the medical centre ringing into the information centre that day to say there are 150 elderly people that need to be contacted...elderly residence got telephone calls that week from time bankers to check how they were. Did they need any help, were they okay? Teams of people went around helping the fire brigade dismantle chimneys all co-ordinated through the time bank.

We moved house the day the earthquake hit. Seven people came and helped me move my house, helped us clean the rental and helped us do the garden. We had 70 hours from the time bank to help us move house on and after the day of the first earthquake.

Civil Defence have shown considerable interest in the Time banks after the effectiveness was evident post 2012 earthquakes.

It is being scrutinised as a possible means of community response because it enabled recovery to happen quite quickly in response to emergency situation to happen immediately after the quakes. It was really powerful as a tool for that.
PL are intentionally expanding the time bank knowing its ability to support the community. Using the time bank to resource the initiative an individual asset mapping project aims to identify assets that could be needed and mobilised in times of emergency.

We are starting to identify what are the core skills that we need in a community to survive and who has got them. We are all going to find all those skills and make sure we have got them...find out if they have things they could loan in an emergency? That might be blankets, spare bedrooms, tools.

Existing time bankers will encourage their neighbours to join the time bank and then by default...we have created our emergency network. Those people will have to hardly participate at all but indirectly they are supporting a bigger network that makes Lyttleton much more connected and much more resilient.

Support has been given to build a National Time Banking movement, the prove has been in the practice but there are still challenges in leveraging support ongoing as people struggle to enable innovation with varying support from Central and local government.

Central Government are really interested in it too and Waimakariri District Council have appointed their first time bank co-ordinator at a Council level so we have been lobbying that that should happen all around the country.

Following the earthquakes PL recognised that the town was extremely vulnerable in terms of food security. With only two ways in and out both of which were demobilised in the earthquakes the reality of self-sufficiency for basic survival.

There has been a changed level of awareness amongst the people in this area. With the tunnel being closed...We became aware that we are potentially vulnerable. Our water supply comes from Christchurch so we are in a very vulnerable place.

Funding was secured as a result of the earthquakes where the vulnerability of the town was realised in its limited accessibility when its two routes to Christchurch.
It is about resilience in the whole harbour base...it could be transport or it could be anything... the money is for the food and that is the first step...A food security process, looking at food everyone has to eat...what can we produce here?

The Harbour Resilience project is completely across sectors and a comprehensive mapping exercise underway to find all community assets that can be used in the creation of a local basket system.

Very strong community, very resilient, very well linked, very well networked. Lots and lots of communication between organisations and groups here. As an outsider very welcoming to new people which can be a real danger with small
communities where they are tight knit but very hard to get into. We certainly didn’t find that here.

Roberts, Geall, Howie and Bridgman (2011) identify that OAP may be seen as a building block of community resilience showing a strong relationship to increasing community connections.

Participants would say it was great but I don’t think they would take on board what had happened to them in the same way - the element of transformation that went on. Particularly, I have just loved the way that you can see the new migrant groups suddenly feeling “hey this community, I could be part of it. A very good OAP story of resilience is the strong cultural participation in the North Shore particularly from the Asian, African, Middle Eastern, American groups. Particularly groups who come here with English as their second language. The Asian mothers were just over the moon and the way they were arriving at the evaluation station to talk about their day gave a feeling there was a village that was there that might not be a million miles away in difference from where they come from. I think that certainly was a small step in creating resilience of that community. People say ‘it makes me feel safe in my community’, that is resilience.

This chapter has presented the findings of the project investigations as they relate to the specific characteristics of ABCD practice as identified by the praxis matrix. Specific Practice aligning with ABCD values & principles including working and learning together, participation, inclusion and diversity, cross sector collaboration, working and learning together civic empowerment and social justice was presented. ABCD in practice was examined in three different ways. Firstly as an approach which is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven, then as a methodology which encompasses asset mapping building relationships, mobilising resources, conveying and visioning, storytelling and leveraging external resources. Lastly ABCD practice as a strategy that stimulates economic development, builds social capital and encourages active citizenship is presented following by impacts community wellbeing and resilience.
CHAPTER 8
PRACTICE CHALLENGES & EFFECTIVE PRINCIPLES

The previous chapter looked at the alignment of the project practice with the ABCD practice features as developed in the praxis matrix. This Chapter first addresses the specific practice challenges found in practice as suggested by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Secondly the community development effective practice principles distilled in chapter five are located in practice. There was an uncanny alignment with features of effective practice principles that directly temper the challenges. This next section looks at these challenges and other critiques of ABCD identified in practice followed by the effective practice principles that assist practice and moderate these challenges.

8.1 CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE: FOSTERING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

As a community driven process, a challenge can be how to keep external leadership at a distance whilst local leadership is located and empowered.

So that is another key reason why I have stayed a volunteer all these years because if I was to work for that organisation, I feel I wouldn’t be able to do what I feel needs to be done.

The nature of this leadership will vary through context and community and consideration of how to identify, edify and formalise local leadership is essential.

It tells something about the nature of who you are. You can’t be blowing your trumpet too much in a job like this.

It is different from working with people on a wage and working with volunteers. When everyone is paid on a wage you can have a project, you can label things and cover the steps when you have paid people. You can cover the lot when you have paid people. You just say this is what you do and this is what you do. When you have volunteers, nobody will want to cover some of that boring stuff.
So you can’t have that overall coverage of things. You can’t do it in a logical plan.

A practice challenge that emerges in identifying and growing local leadership is managing working with volunteers which presents some specific challenges particularly where an ABCD approach is intentional and adaptable moving where there is passion and energy.

Things will seem patchy but you do what it is that you like doing. Because everything is interconnected you cover it anyhow. Meanwhile the mesh is getting finer and finer and some of those things are getting covered but not necessarily in a logical fashion I don’t know if it is working in this way or working in a voluntary capacity. I am thinking which one it really is because there are certain things. There is always that issue of working voluntarily with paid people. How do you manage that?

We are aware we are missing some gaps. Then you think, oh well, maybe you don’t have to cover it all. You cover what you do cover.

**CHALLENGE: MANAGING FLUIDITY OF CONNECTIONS**

As suggested by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2006) the form and function of associations and informal networks changes over time. It is important to understand the effect of an ABCD process on social relationships and patterns of associations and networks.

We live in our communities, we don’t work in our communities, most of our friends don’t live in our communities and we don’t send our kids to school in our community

We have got all these other ways of organising these things and maybe they are wonderful in some respects but they don’t actually create a connection to geographical community.

Clearly a challenge presented in working with local government was negotiating the constantly changing local bodies, frequent shifts in values and relationships with communities make it difficult to adopt a consistent approach.
I find it really different. I feel the old council was like it really wanted to empower you. The new council wants to control you...It is all to do with the culture of this council than the local government people here. It is very hierarchical. Very top down, big cumbersome bureaucracy. Totally inflexible.

**CHALLENGE: FOSTERING AN ENDOGENOUS PROCESS**

Endogenous development is a community process of defining and working towards future plans according to local values and priorities. In the early stages external catalysts and experts are essential and the process of stepping back and successful transition to community leadership incredibly important to ensure long term sustainability.

*I think that model still depends on some people having the vision and wanting to put in the energy. Potentially people can think this is all done and can just turn up and not recognise it still requires time, relationship building.*

Practitioners of an ABCD approach are deliberate in the intention to lead by stepping back as it is a community led approach.

*If you have a strategic planning document that lays out a year’s budget and what you are going to do in 10 years’ time, it is not community development. It is one person and one group’s idea.*

**CHALLENGE: FOSTERING INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION**

ABCD is an inclusive process which values diverse participation, this may be more difficult to achieve in practice.

*Not everybody will partake in it. For some people it is a bit too green and alternative. As much as you want to connect with the entire community you never will. There are always people that want to maintain power. They don’t like working co-operatively. It is hard to get those people on board.*

Challenged because it’s often the same group. In the end we gave up worrying too much and just get on with it. We've gone through times of outreach and profile; and other time
which have been more about consolidation. What we see as our most important role is being both crucible and catalyst. (T3 website).

*The objectives really are, from an ideal point of view, to build a strategic base for further community development. That didn’t happen. The organisers were so exhausted by it all. The rest of Transition Towns wasn’t ready to commit their life to it because that is what it felt you would have to do.*

**CHALLENGE: SELECTING ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS**

**BALANCING STRENGTHS/DEFICIT DICHOTOMY**

ABCD is often criticised for having a rose coloured glasses approach and that it ignores needs.

*I think a lot of people from the outside would look in and say you are flying with the fairies. You are not facing reality.*

It is argued that needs are not ignored but rather that ABCD practice seeks to source the solution within a community to solve its problems.

*The antithesis of needs based which looks at what the problems are and brings in experts to try and change them.*

*You are not looking at the issues but that is not what it is about if you are looking at appreciative enquiry. You are looking at how you are at your best so when you look at yourself at your best you can see the underlying values that hold you there and enable you to be at your best so that when along comes an issue when you are not working at your best you can say wow let’s have a look at the values that we are holding around here because these are the values that allow us to succeed here.*

It uses what it has as a start and follows the energy located at grassroots within a community to mobilise the internal resources.
If we simply focus on and work with those community assets then those problems will sort themselves out on their own. I don’t agree with this. Those problems are hugely important teachers and essential part of the mix…If we do look at them they may seem overwhelming but if you can look them in the eye and know that you have this great ground bag of community assets then you have a possibility of changing the level of consciousness. If you are never prepared to look then you are never going to change the level of consciousness.

8.2 Effective Practice Principles

Practice Principle: Strengths Based Practice

Strengths & asset based planning and development approach is essential to tackle complex community issues - build and leverage off what communities do well.

I did a submission to Council. They were saying things like there are so many people in Christchurch that don’t have qualifications past a certain point. I said what a lot of nonsense is that? Have you asked them if they are good mums and dads? Have you asked them about these other things? What is a piece of paper with a qualification? It means diddlysquat. I am very strong in that.

Seeing what you have got there. This is our wealth. This is where we are where the universe has placed us. This is our learning. Use that and you will be right.

Programmes should recognise and value the importance of building social capital, community cohesion and community capability as outcomes in themselves and plan strategies to achieve them. A focus on assets results in community participants exhibiting increased commitment to and confidence in the collective action of neighbourhood residents and leaders.

Social capital is the people that live in your area and it is empowering them to get more involved so the greater your social capital, the more people you have participating.

User participation has been successful when solutions to community problems have been sourced from the community.
Anyone feels they can do stuff so as a result, we get heaps of people putting their hands up to run projects.

**Practice Principle: Critical Reflection and Learning**

Community practitioners often grapple with the balance between practice and research because of the resourcing characteristics of the sector. Funding [which is rarely enough] is most often granted to do as much work as possible for as long as the money lasts therefore action is the primary focus, there is often little resourcing for research. Conversely an academic perspective focuses on a ‘research project’ where research is paramount and action is secondary. This is detrimental to practice as ongoing processes of action and reflection that inform practice are an integral component of community development. Critical reflection, whether formal or informal, can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision and contribute to building the knowledge base.

*This is always the real challenge in community development. How much resource do you put into essentially an evaluation research thing and how much do you put into the mobilisation. You don’t put it into the evaluation first. You put it into the mobilisation first. Once you know what you are doing you sit back and think how can I do this in a way that inspires people?*

Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community led working.

*Because the old stories don’t work anymore. We have got to find some new stories.*

Action & Reflection practice ensures making opportunities for critical reflection, creating and communicating a written & visual vision is crucial to sustaining energy for the duration of the project.

*It is trying to connect the pieces together in some way that will get some new insights into what we are actually doing.*

Cross sector collaboration can build strong reciprocally beneficially relationships. Working with tertiary institutions was seen to enhance projects enormously. Alliance
with Unitec social practice and AUT health promotions practicum placement students’ benefit from practicum placement in the organisation. Research and development opportunities to test thinking or expand is enabled. Larger research across time can be fostered like VFW and Unitec who are working in partnership on long term evaluation of OAP. Wintec and T3 partnered in the individual asset mapping project and PL and Lincoln in the Harbour Resilience project mapping.

*I am also having this conversation saying because I want to do asset mapping really. He says, well that is what I do at Lincoln and we get excited so now he is doing all the underlying work with his students.*

**PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: NETWORKING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationships based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.

*It is easy to have an agency conversation but that is not a network that is just a conversation. There is something about a network that establishes the relationship that is important.*

Networking to build relationships, communication and knowledge and working with others.

*I think [we have] had a strong influence in creating a lot of those. Not all of them but a lot of them and enriching them.*

**PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: SHARED VISIONING**

A strong uniting community vision that frames local action plans & outcomes is an essential foundation for effective community development.

*My understanding is whenever we have done that, community agency, community development agency in the area that might have been partnering with us around this has really synthesised those requests and often*
helped shaped where they have gone and some of the development that they do from there as well.

Adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed and involve a broad range of stakeholders.

*It took us about 18 months until we built the momentum up and I think that would have been an easy time to dropout and loose the vision of what was possible. We garnered a bit of criticism. The common thing was ...people are good at talking about things but never actually doing things’, it was seen as a talkfest but that didn’t daunt us.*

Visioning for the community has to be conceived & evolved out of the community's own history & experience.

*The first thing we set about was getting a vision statement. That took us quite a few weeks and we had someone facilitate that for us. It took a lot of talking and at the end when we got it...It had to go through that process so people would take ownership.*

*I realised that if you wanted to do something like this, you had to know the voice of the people...Of course you don’t get everyone but around 30 or so people came to a series of meetings to work out what our vision was as a community. So it wasn’t me...saying this is what our vision is*

The idea behind AI is that wherever you place your attention that’s where the energy flows towards, then that grows.

*Connecting with people so there needs are met. It just seems natural. It is how I thought humans work. I think they do if they have that opportunity. So it is creating that environment for people to work in an optimal level.*
FIGURE 42 PL Visioning Day Map
Source: PL Digital Archives
Local voice, vision and leadership are valued, actively engaged and empowered and stakeholders are involved from an early stage. “ Hutt City Council (2010) have been early adopters of ABCD reflecting that communities understand themselves better than they can. Through ABCD, Council has been able to gain a greater understanding of what the gaps are in local communities and ways to work alongside communities to bridge those gaps. The most important part of ABCD is the relationships, the conversations and the act of bringing people together. It is not always easy to get people to think about solutions, especially around hard subjects like graffiti and vandalism, and takes time. People are not always ready to participate positively from the word go, but patience and persistence reaps the biggest rewards.

I am a great fan of trying to use the informal organisational processes within a community rather than relying too much on the institutional processes.

External assistance and agendas need to be balanced against the need to allow communities the autonomy to lead their own development. Community participation in place making does enhance the wellbeing of marginalised communities and a range of processes that engage the community are critical.

Things are much easier when you have a hero or a champion. If you have someone that says come on champs lets go this way then that is really easy. When you have someone that says I think we need to go somewhere that is much more challenging in so many ways and I think the rewards are richer through the second approach ultimately but they are a lot slower.

Practice Principle: Whole Systems Change

Whole systems change - working on big and small picture changes to effect long lasting, rather than piecemeal change.

I was talking with Edgar Khan and he said when are you going to wake up in New Zealand, the rest of the world is looking to you? It is that role. Gene Houston talks about New Zealanders being in the skunk works which is out the
back sort of on the edge of the rest of the world and that’s where things happen and she was actually saying that same thing. This is where things are going to happen but we don’t believe it. We haven’t told the stories to ourselves.

Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages a community may be at.

I keep talking to people about this, I am educating…I am thinking about things like climate change, I am thinking of peak oil and everything really, financial crashes, all of those things.

You don’t know until you see the opportunities and when you overlay everything together you start seeing relationships that you hadn’t seen before.

Take opportunities for social restoration of community to occur alongside environment development, enabling infrastructure development, addressing broader social processes that impact on communities.

Our intention is that this energy project becomes a benchmark for good practice for us and we get it more right than anything else we have done and that we use that as a springboard for similar complementary projects.

I am part of living economy so I have been looking at the money system for a long time and what all that means.

**Practice Principle: Long Term Organic Change**

Involve people in the development process at the personal/whanau level as these groups have the motivation & necessity for change. Understanding how change happens and what will be required, prepared and effectively planning for the long term journey.

We all know that to make a significant change in the community you have to be committed for a 10 year project, a 5 year project at least.

We have been operating for 5 years and probably now we are reaching a point where things are starting to happen and we have been criticised, doubted or dismissed at various times over those 5 years.
Acknowledge that to be successful this work requires a long term commitment.

*It is not just a one day thing but there is a little bit of thinking about moving away. A lot of agencies do an event and then tick the box. The community development aspect of it is think beyond the event. What happens next?*

**Practice Principle: Collaboration across sectors**

Working across multiple interrelated sectors and boundaries in a strategic planned and outcome driven way is essential. Collaboration is the driving force so a relationship driven community development practice is serious about connecting and fostering empowering long-term reciprocal relationships for the greater good of the community, creating committed strategic support from both government and community agencies including recognising and working with power dynamics.

*Our community constable is just fantastic. We were working with him already... he was really great with balloon animals as well...he had a police helicopter toy and his police car with siren and loudspeaker...He really played with the community and it was so impressive to watch the way in which he was able to do that. My sense was that that was quite a deepening day for him with the community.*

*They didn’t even have a community section in the old council so we were like a gap filler for them. So on the whole I think they were really happy that there was this group of people that wanted to help Lyttleton to connect and become more vibrant.*

Multiple stakeholders working together increases the likelihood of success, effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities.

*Really recognising that if we are going to make changes, the more skill we have in a community around what the services are that are available the better. If more people come they have that reference point in mind. They are more likely to cross refer to each other as well because it is getting the word into the networks outside the agency is important.*
There are all these other agencies putting their contribution in. They have their own projects and hopefully there is good research going on so information is getting fed into the community about what it's and what it desires and so on.

**Practice Principle: Intentional and Adaptable**

All projects should proceed and respond to the larger community goals.

*In a positive we could be doing a whole range of things that we don’t even know of by the end of the year. This is exciting because it is very much on the edge of what is happening.*

There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on.

*People get scared with not having it all laid out but for me that is the fundamentals. To be on the edge and try to enable and facilitate things to happen.*

*If you actually want to do community development you can’t have a strategic plan because you are doing unto others and you are not developing a community if you have a plan. You have to be receptive and waiting which will enable things to happen.*

**Practice Principle: Clear Communication & Information Sharing**

Establishing good communication pathways is essential and a broad range of processes were used.

*I think we have contributed significantly to the social networks of this whole area in terms of creating real credibility with the networks. The social networks also have flow on effects what I say in these conversations with these 4 people also goes out and ripple out wider and wider.*

Use culturally inclusive communication & clear processes to ensure there is a unified level of understanding between participants.
We are all hungry for all the information so we have been compiling at a central place which is the information centre and sending out every week...If people read the newsletter that comes out each week, it is the most connected they will have been in years.

The Council uses it. Some of their media people will put out media specifically related to us now and their community board doesn’t have their own email newsletter so they send stuff into us.

Clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders is vital and should be established at the project outset.

[PL] used to be the main information provider for lots of groups. That role as changed now so the information centre has taken over the core role of distributor.

We are the main linker of the dots around the harbour, the main community groups, and individuals...Basically a big spider web.

**Practice Principle: Growing Local Leadership**

Growing collaborative community leadership is important so leading comes from every corner of the community and creates communities with filled with connected leaders. All projects need a champion, someone who is willing to provide the energy and drive to move ahead, this approach means that greater sustainability is achieved for the organisation as there is less risk over overload the core team. As long as a project meets the parameters of the vision statement and has energy behind it the organisation can support the project manifestation wrapping mentoring basic services as able.

_I think both Wendy and I have got a lot of stick ability and I know when a lot of other communities say how have you done that, both Wendy and I have said don’t forget to factor in you need either a Margaret or a Wendy. It is an ongoing process. Yes and also you might have paid staff or other volunteers and if any of those fall down Wendy or I step in. We are the ones at the back that_
always are there. If people say, I can’t do that, I have done my hours for the week or that sort of thing. That doesn’t factor with Wendy and I.

There is a clear intention to foster and grow new generations of successive leadership within the community. Projects promote grassroots leadership and community wide engagement.

It is time for the next generation to come through and put their mark on how it develops into the future. I don’t think I will be rolling out heaps of big ideas.

Mentoring others.

That is some of our learning through sustainability to make sure you have someone else to step up who has that knowledge. Therefore if one leaves all that knowledge doesn’t go with that person. So we have two people in this role.

**PRACTICE PRINCIPLE: EXTERNAL MENTORS & EXPERTISE**

Successful community development initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners.

I think my reading of [ABCD] is where I would see its examples as an art form. If it is done well, you don’t rush out there and have a scoping process that has vast amounts of data that has to be processed. You can, but you have got to make some decisions about where the real energy is going to come from.

Skilled Facilitation of people and processes, access to mentors, paid coordinator in early stages.

So that balance between how much do we bring in our perspectives, skills, tools and experience into it in a way that doesn’t walk over what community needs to do in its own unique way but actually offers the value of what that about. I think that is actually quite a fine line... What is a sustainable way we can support this without taking it over or abandoning.

Appointing a community advocate to plan and facilitate the process is critical to gaining community engagement.
So our projects have all worked because we’ve had people who are passionate about whatever that particular issue is, and they’ve followed it through to the end. We’re lucky we’ve got such dedicated people here in Lyttelton who want to challenge themselves and make Lyttelton a better place.

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the project investigations as they relate to challenges and effective principles in practice. Aspects of these challenges have been identified along with effective practice principles that were located in the practice. Many of the effective practice principles appear to mitigate the challenges.
CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter draws together the findings of this investigation into Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). The purpose of the research is recapped along with the research question and sub questions. An ABCD approach is defined and how it is being used in practice is discussed demonstrating its application as a methodology which identifies and mobilises community assets across the community capitals spectrum. The application of ABCD as a strategy is shown to build social capital, encourage active citizenship and stimulate economic development. Critical success factors and effective practice principles are identified along with further practice enhancements arising from the investigation. The synthesised ABCD praxis matrix is presented, limitations of the research and directions for future research are suggested closing with the final conclusions.

9.1 DISCUSSION

This research set out to define the concept of ABCD and to explore its application in community development practice in order to identify characteristics of effective and innovative praxis which could be used to enhance planning and design for future ABCD projects in defined geographic neighbourhoods. It was necessary to understand what an ABCD approach was so that it is possible to recognise the practice, addressing the first sub question and its objectives:

What is an ABCD approach?

- Define Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

ABCD is a specific approach to community development that was originally defined by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) based upon evaluation and learnings from thousands of community development initiatives. An ABCD approach considers a localised community is rich with untapped resources which can be mobilised for the improved wellbeing of the community. Sustainable development emerges from within a community by identifying, connecting and building on strengths.
Over the past twenty years, there has been ABCD practice globally which has contributed to the evolution of the model. Since its inception, much of this progression has been documented by the ABCD Institute. There was an abundance of documented stories of community practice utilising the model yet no definitive source that bought this all into one framework for practical use. There was also much confusion in language relating to values, principles and practices which made it difficult to break ABCD practice into its elements. These issues made it clear in the early stages of the research that a primary focus was to synthesis this practice evolution through the development of a praxis matrix which reflects current dimensions of ABCD practice and attempts to synthesise the diverse language from ABCD pioneers.

- Develop an ABCD praxis matrix to guide practice investigations

The characteristics of ABCD practice were refined to develop the ABCD praxis matrix which was tested in the project investigations. The findings have provided evidence of alignment with the matrix confirming its validity. The matrix has been refined in light of the findings and a final version is presented at the end of this chapter. This refined ABCD praxis matrix is offered as contribution to the pool of practice based knowledge.

**ABCD Approach**

ABCD is community development, its place purpose, way of working, values and principles align with traditional community development practice. The fundamental characteristic that sets it apart is in the focus on assets. In practice the assets of the community are mobilised to offer solutions to community’s problems that are found within.

*Asset Based Approach asks:*

*What do we have and how can we use it?*

Thinks…a local geographic community is rich with untapped resources which can be mobilised by the community for the improved wellbeing of the community.

*Needs Based Approach asks:*

*What is wrong with us and what do we need to get to fix it?*

Thinks…a local geographic community has all sorts of issues and problems that need to be solved by utilising external resources.
Loomis (2012) proposes that this dichotomy is overstated and that community needs should always be considered in tandem with any asset based initiative. However in practice the needs are simply not the subject of the inquiry, the strengths are, if in answering, we figure out we can solve a problem with what we have then that is success. There is no ignoring of needs as is so prolifically the scorn of an ABCD approach.

An ABCD strategy explicitly addresses local problems through local asset mobilisation. It is a fundamental principle to the approach. Further critique of ABCD in relation to the asset/needs dichotomy proposes that very poor communities have few assets and need external resources to start community action. This deficit paradigm fails to recognise that ABCD is focused on the people. Duncan (2012) proposes:

- Everyone has gifts and abilities
- Everyone has something to contribute
- Everyone cares about something and that passion is their motivation to act

Practice findings support that an ABCD approach is being used in practical application as a methodology and a strategy for community development as proposed by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) which directly addresses the main research question.

*How are Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches being used in community development practice?*

An ABCD approach is evident in practice as a methodology and there are valuable lessons identified in the six methods that assist in developing a successful ABCD project. The methodology of mapping community assets and subsequent relationship building stimulating mobilisation of assets, benefits from the use of the community capital framework (CCF). As suggested by (Emery et al,) the CCF is a useful tool to examine community change from a systems perspective.

An ABCD approach clearly mobilised community assets across the community capitals spectrum. Physical capital was well mobilised, this was an expected result as it is fairly common to see activation of green spaces as an introductory process by community brokers as they are fairly easy to mobilise, changes are visible and the process is often short term. These are the easy wins that build momentum. Community gardens, park
clean-ups, tree plantings, were common to all projects. Mobilisation of physical assets can be simple, not requiring external resources in the early stages.

The mobilisation of financial capital and the number of alternative economic models found was unexpected, including food security, skills banks, resource bank. The successful use of time banking bore out findings by (Ozanne, 2010) who in considered the impacts of time banking on the CCF. He found there were huge benefits to human, social, cultural and physical capitals as a direct result of involvement in time banking.

ABCD practice appears to be significantly able to impact across the spectrum with particular strength in building social capital whilst mobilising other capitals. Ripples of mobilising one type of capital saw positive impacts on other capitals too. In identifying and mobilising social capital is accrued. If approached systematically this has enormous potential power to be intentional in accruing social capital to activate other capitals and vice versa, cultural, political, built, natural, financial and human. Evidence supports (Bergdall, 2003), in demonstrating that successful asset mobilisation stimulates further activity. Once success became visible, people were more willing to participate and more assets became available for collaborative working. Using ABCD, a backbone structure can be successfully created that can provide mentoring and administrative support to enable mobilisation of human capital.

Convening the community to come together to collectively create a vision for their future is a critical process for success. A shared vision is an essential foundation for community development, and adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed which could take a couple of years. Storytelling ensures that the journey and experiences are recorded for collective learning, a culture of possibilities is built through the sharing of these stories. When it comes to leveraging resources externally this record of the project is valuable in providing practice evidence.

As was seen with T3 leveraging external resources too soon can result in complications arising from ineffective shared visioning resulting in dysfunctional collaboration. This affirms (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) that leveraging must be the very last process. If the whole initiative has not been developed per an ABCD methodology there is not the
experience accrued in collaborative working to sustain the influence of external forces who may have differing paradigms.

An ABCD strategy proposes to identify and mobilise the local assets with particular importance on the interests, skills and talents of individuals, the social networks and voluntary associations and physical assets through strengthening relationships and social networks whereby intentionally contributing to building social capital and enhancing the wellbeing of a local geographic or place based community.

As a strategy to stimulate local economic development ABCD demonstrated surprising success as a diverse range of alternative economic models evolved in practice. Significant enhancements to economic development were seen acting as an incubator for creative ways of transacting. These findings support (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) who maintain that ABCD is a pathway to increased economic development and enhanced community wellbeing. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) suggest that community economic development theory in regard to group capacity building can be applied to an ABCD strategy. As an endogenous process ABCD enables individuals who lack resources to independently improve their wellbeing through collective action which spawns cooperative models as seen in the investigations, from cooperatives to community shops, time banks, community banking, resource banks and food security initiatives.

There is no understating that ABCD is all about relationships, they are fundamental to the paradigm as an approach, as a method, a critical success factor and as a strategy, building social capital is all about relationships. An ABCD strategy seeks to build social capital through strengthening relationships and networks. There was substantial evidence to support that ABCD in practice developed strong relationships between the diverse community stakeholders. Concepts of bonding social capital and bridging social capital were clearly attainable with an ABCD strategy, linking social capital took a lot longer as it aligns with the final ABCD step of leveraging resources. The projects managed by volunteers took far longer to create these links than those that had engaged a paid professional broker, catalyst or facilitator.

An ABCD focus on the assets skills and talents of individuals certainly appears to encourage increasingly active civic participation. Encouraging active citizenship and
civic empowerment is fundamental to ABCD and as a strategy appears effective. It was interested to note that numerous volunteers that had become involved in different projects as champions, supported to run with their passion in creating an initiative, were the most successful. A surprising number of these ‘champions’ who had stepped up from the grassroots and grown individual capacity throughout an ABCD project had gone on to run for local community boards, councils and even central government. Whilst this investigation cannot determine the link between the two within the scope of this research, it certainly is of interest that entering at a soft grassroots level appears to promote involvement across a continuum of activity from democratic processes to capacity building and active engagement. There does appear to be a shift from consumers to co-producers as suggested by (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993;, Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Duncan, n.d).

In this shift to co-production and civic empowerment it has been shown that community resilience and wellbeing is enhanced. This was clearly demonstrated by Project Lyttelton post-earthquakes where the power of the time banks was undeniable in its effectiveness to mobilise assets to assist the community in recovery. Potential impacts on community resilience are significant, clearly this thinking is shared with the likes of Civil Defence seeing the effectiveness of an ABCD model.

**ABCD PRACTICE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

An aim of this research was to identify the characteristics of effective and innovative ABCD praxis and as such considerable focus is given to factors that are critical to success when working in this way. Critical success factors in working with ABCD were very clear and present in all cases aligning with community development practice principles suggested by (Inspiring Communities, 2013; DIA, 2012; Greenaway & Witten, 2000; Ricketts, 2008; Munford & Walsh Tapiata, 2001, 2006). Practice can be further enhanced through application of effective practice principles that help mitigate challenges associated with an ABCD approach.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: CATALYSTS, CAPACITY FINDERS AND CHAMPIONS**

Particularly common to all three projects was the largely intuitive approach of the founders which seeded all three projects. Practice was not originally grounded in
theoretical community development principles or models by design, however as time has progressed all have been empowered by the discovery of theories and principles that describe their unique way of working. Consequently there is a more intentional application of externally prescribed models which clearly have enhanced practice. Skilled facilitation of people and processes, access to mentors, and if possible paid coordination in early stages, increase the effectiveness of practice.

**Effective Practice Principle: Access to External Mentors & Expertise**

The projects all share the commonality of being driven by passionate volunteers who wanted to connect with their community. The people who have driven all of these projects share a way of thinking – one that sees resources and capacity everywhere and is always on the outlook for opportunities to create connections to mobilise those strengths together to spark something greater. This supports recommendations from Loomis (2011) who suggests that community led development doesn’t just happen. It is crucial to have someone on the ground who has the skills and experience to play the role of catalyst and broker and to get things done. Community building from the inside out usually involves some form of eternal stimulus agreeing with (Bergdall, 2003).

Locating the ‘capacity finders & developers’ was identified by Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) as a crucial step along the path of building community. People with a capacity orientated view of the world, local leaders who are able to find, enhance and build upon assets and capacities in associations. The role of a catalyst is to stimulate change, they play the role of facilitator not implementer. They enable a community to look at itself through an asset lens which may not be how they have seen things before. Catalyst connect people with each other to participate. Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) describe a catalyst as emotionally intelligent, inspirational, collaborative and connectors and suggest that catalysts are mission orientated and excel when radical change and creative thinking is needed. They bring innovation, chaos and ambiguity in their way of seeing things and can help a community see themselves in a positive light. They are often unseen behind the scenes and ambiguous in their approach and as agreed by (Bergdall, 2003) embody a presence that helps build trust.

To mobilise these abundant assets, all projects need a champion, someone who is willing to provide the energy and drive to move ahead. A champion pushes a project forward and
attracts people to participate. Success is seen where a champion is supported to drive a project based on personal passions and abilities. Confirmed by the findings, capacity finders, catalysts and champions are vital and may be internal or external to a community. An external catalyst can provide the initial momentum needed to grow community participation and develop local leadership and capacities in the absence of an initial localised catalyst. Capacity finders, catalyst and champions all fulfil different aspects of an ABCD approach and may or may not be the same person.

**Challenge: Fostering an endogenous process**

As suggested by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) fostering an endogenous process is challenging, one of the cardinal principles of ABCD is that it should be a community-driven process. Whilst these roles in the projects were predominately filled by volunteers from within the community, there is certainly evidence that suggests that paid capacity finding, catalyst and facilitation roles enhances development enormously. This was seen particularly in OAP where a resourced role was able to build critical momentum in a relatively short time.

The skills to build initial momentum may not be located within a community and as was seen in this investigation, practice was enhanced by accessing skilled mentors, facilitators and catalysts. This was not to do things for the community but to identify local champions, build networks and relationships, mentor and build capacity in local people as successors to the initial brokering and catalysing. Community development initiatives clearly benefit from the support of people with community development expertise and skill as suggested by (Greenaway & Witten, 2006) supporting the need for outside catalysts particularly in the early stages. Resourcing this role is a challenge and this is where the cross sector collaboration and leveraging resources comes into play. Resourcing community broker roles as an intermediary to get things started with an exit strategy from the outset is powerful and is a role that can be supported by local and central government resourcing.

The challenge is to avoid involvement that can induce dependency, PL appear to have developed an approach which can offer support for volunteer local champions, enabling locally led development whilst still maintaining the oversight and accountability required. This supports suggestions by (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) that the role of external agencies is in capacity building, ensuring local associations drive the process of visioning,
mapping and mobilising local resources. It can take up to five years to get traction within a community, at ten years there is a cultural shift that can be felt at a local levels, a challenge is how to resource this brokering role for sufficient time so that a backbone structure can be developed that will enable literally dozens of locally led initiatives. In the case of PL, they were fortunate enough to have two volunteer catalysts who are long term residents, this may not be the case for many neighbourhoods and initial resourced assistance may be needed.

**Challenge: Fostering community leadership**

This is long term work, endogenous development occurs when a community defines and works towards future goals which are based on local values and priorities. The challenge of sustaining a community driven process can be how to keep external leadership at a distance whilst local leadership is located and empowered. The nature of this leadership will vary through context and community and consideration of how to identify, edify and formalise local leadership is essential. Providing an administrative support to handle the administrative and bureaucratic aspects of community development work builds a culture of possibilities where individual passion can be enabled through providing support and mentoring. It takes time but it is only necessary to catalyse capacity development in one or two people initially to demonstrate success which will encourage further participation. It is possible to build relationships that can shift individual paradigms from consumers to co-producers.

**Effective Practice Principle: Growing Local Leadership**

There is a clear intention to foster and grow new generations of successive leadership within the community. All projects need a champion, someone who is willing to provide the energy and drive to move ahead.

**Critical Success Factor: Collaboration across sectors**

Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities increases the likelihood of success as suggested by Munford and Walsh (2001, 2006), emphasising the importance of working collectively to achieve self-determination. The evidence certainly supports this thinking, collective working across sectors is a critical factor in an ABCD approach. It was very clear that
Collaboration across sectors is the lifeblood of an ABCD approach in practice. All projects demonstrated masterful skill in networking and building relationships across sectors both internally and externally. An enormous investment of time is made in forging strong connected networks whose resources can be mobilised to enhance community led initiatives. This success was strongly demonstrated and it was impressive to see how assets and resources other than money could be leveraged to enable something to happen minimising the need for financial resources.

Incredibly effective collaboration with tertiary institutions allowed for significant learning and capacity building. All initiatives had collaborated with tertiary institutions in ways which enabled access to skills and capacities not necessarily available internally. Students hosted on practicum placements from health and social practice programmes, were supported to assist in development and evaluation of community led ABCD initiatives. This supports the concept of developmental evaluation as described by (Westley, Zimmerman & Quinn Patton, 2007), social innovators and researchers working alongside, capturing the learnings, issues and insights as they emerge.

**Challenge: Handling the fluidity of associations:**

Over time the form and function of associations and informal networks changes. Effective working and collaboration will eventually create a culture of a way of working together that surpasses individual people. OAP is a great example of how the model and concept of cross sector working together can be communicated simply and effectively. A way of working has been modelled and embedded which surpasses individuals and moves to a culture of doing. It takes time but as success is modelled, ways of working become embedded as the norm. It is important to understand the effect of an ABCD process on social relationships and patterns of associations and networks as the main arena for longevity of asset mobilisation.

**Challenge: Fostering inclusive participation**

ABCD is an inclusive process in which the contributions of all are valued and appreciated. Ricketts (2008) demonstrated that promoting involvement of across a continuum of activity from democratic processes to capacity building and active engagement on a consistent basis would encourage participation.
• Inviting participation – asking for input always
• Make the space for something to happen it will,
• Enable people to step up and eventually they will

Findings supported (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) who suggest that an ABCD approach tends to appeal to the higher motive of using power to act in the shared interests of the common good, and to uncover the strengths of those who might otherwise be less valued.

**Effective Practice Principle: Networking & building relationships.**

Relationships are the driving force of ABCD, networking to build relationships, communicating and building knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development. Findings support (Gilchrist, 2009) who suggests that social network theory and analysis can enhance ABCD practice.

**Effective Practice Principle: Clear communication and information sharing.**

All projects were masterful networkers but the key to longevity of success were those which gained control of community information. Use culturally inclusive communication & clear processes to ensure there is a unified level of understanding between participants. Generating community information that focuses on the positive can shift a paradigm over time, showing people how things look in another way.

**Critical Success Factor: Shared Visioning**

Munford & Walsh (2006) emphasised the importance of working collectively to achieve a shared vision for the future. As evidenced by PL it takes time to bring together stakeholders, they offered an alternative paradigm which was consistently presented over a sustained time and participation continually welcomed as relationships were built. Eventually the community become increasingly responsive. Contrary to the statement by Loomis (2012) that “local communities are usually drawn together by not by relationship building exercises but by a crisis, need or problem” (p.11), the findings of this research support the fact that it is long term relationship building that has drawn participation from the community to work together, not a need or crisis. A strong uniting community vision that frames local action plans & outcomes that has been conceived and evolved from
community experience and history is an essential foundation for effective community development.

**Effective Practice Principle: By community for community.**

Local voice, vision and leadership are valued, actively engaged and empowered and stakeholders are involved from an early stage.

**Critical Success Factor: Critical Reflection and Learning**

There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on. An ongoing cycle of reflective practice is essential and effective projects were designed with evaluative cycles as a core aspect to the project development and enrichment, creating opportunities for collective reflection and learning.

**Effective Practice Principle: Intentional & Adaptable**

Adaptive practice was evident as it is clear that ABCD practice is responsive to where energy is located for change. This makes it difficult to plan as there can’t be a defined intent other than that to support the identification and mobilisation of assets. As energy to act is located activities can shift and change, demonstrating the heliotropic principle suggested by (Elliot, 1999). Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community led working.

**Critical Success Factor: Long Term Organic Change**

An ABCD approach takes time, the findings supported that long term organic change achieves results. It was evidenced that community led initiatives can take three to five years to reach a stage were local community awareness and participation increases to a mass whereby the community becomes engaged and more willing to participate. The first one to two years are needed to develop form and build relationships within a community to identify potential collaborators and local leadership. Small wins are attainable in this time and activation of visible assets that enhance a community go a long way towards building credibility. In years two and three, sufficient momentum is gained to be able to attract diverse participation within and as a collective articulate shared objectives so that a shared vision and plan can be developed. In three to five years, there is a lot of learning
about what to do and what not to do. Lessons are learnt and reflective practice helps inform the path forward. By year five the community led initiatives are just beginning to feel like they have a sense of what works and how to proceed. In years 5-10 networks and relationships are expanded and reliable collaborative partnerships built through collective experience. After ten years, there is a visible shift in paradigm beginning that can be felt at a neighbourhood and participation is increasing, more and more community led initiatives spawn without needing structure or resourcing. To be successful, ABCD requires a long term commitment and an understanding of how change happens, what will be required, preparing and effectively planning for the long term journey.

*Effective Practice Principle: Strengths based practice*

A strengths and asset based planning and development approach is essential to tackle complex community issues - build and leverage off what communities do well.

*Effective Practice Principle: Whole systems change*

Working on big and small picture changes to effect long lasting, rather than piecemeal change. Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages a community may be at.

**ABCD Effective Practice Principles**

The twelve practice principles synthesised from the meta-analysis in chapter five were identified in the practice. The alignment of these effective community development principles with an ABCD approach is uncanny (figure 43). This could be explained in that they were both formulated from looking retrospectively at practice reflections. When ABCD was formulated by Kretzmann and McKnight, they were synthesising best practice from thousands of practice examples. This informed the foundations and methodology for the approach. Similarly in synthesising these twelve effective practice principles in this research, the practice learnings from over a hundred community development informed the development. In considering this, it could indicate that ABCD is effective community development epitomised as all principles align with values, principles, approaches, methods and strategies of ABCD practice.
**ABCD Practice Values & Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on Assets</th>
<th>Strengths Based</th>
<th>Strengths &amp; asset based planning and development approach is essential to tackle complex community issues - build and leverage off what communities do well.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Empowerment</td>
<td>Growing Local Leadership</td>
<td>There is a clear intention to foster and grow new generations of successive leadership within the community... All projects need a champion, someone who is willing to provide the energy and drive to move ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Empowerment</td>
<td>External Mentors &amp; Expertise</td>
<td>Skilled Facilitation of people and processes, access to mentors, paid coordination in early stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Sector Collaboration</td>
<td>Collaboration across sectors</td>
<td>Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities increases the likelihood of success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Sector Collaboration</td>
<td>Networking &amp; building relationships</td>
<td>Networking to build relationships, communication and knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Clear Communication and Information Sharing</td>
<td>Use culturally inclusive communication &amp; clear processes to ensure there is a unified level of understanding between participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Shared Visioning</td>
<td>A strong unifying community vision that frames local action plans &amp; outcomes that has been conceived and evolved from community experience and history is an essential foundation for effective community development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Whole Systems Change</td>
<td>Working on big and small picture changes to effect lasting, rather than piecemeal change. Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages a community may be at.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Long Term Organic Change</td>
<td>Acknowledge that to be successful this work requires a long term commitment. Understand how change happens and what will be required, preparing and effectively planning for the long term journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working &amp; Learning Together</td>
<td>Intentional &amp; Adaptable</td>
<td>There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working &amp; Learning Together</td>
<td>Critical Reflection and Learning</td>
<td>Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community led working.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Practice Enhancers**

- Enable peoples passions - assist people do what they want to do, not tell them what you want them to do
- Create space for something to happen and eventually it will - inviting participation asking for input always
- Provide support for the administrative and bureaucratic things
- Build a culture of possibility through mentoring to build capacity
- Be intentional and adaptable
- Maintain momentum by demonstrating success – small and large
9.2 ABCD PARADIGM

**Asset Based** - If we use what we have,

*Critical Success Factor: Long term intentional and adaptable organic change*

- Value: Focus on Assets
  - Principle: Builds or releases capacity of community by starting with and focusing on strengths - identifying, celebrating and building on local ‘gifts’, capacities and assets
  - Effective Practice Principle: Strengths Based Practice

- Value: Social Justice
  - Principle: Identifying and seeking to alleviate structural disadvantage and advocating strategies for overcoming exclusion, discrimination and inequality.
  - Effective Practice Principle: Whole Systems Change

**Challenge: Fostering an endogenous process**

**Internally Focused** we have what we need,

*Critical Success Factor: Shared Visioning*
*Critical Success Factor: Catalysts, capacity finders and champions*

- Value: Participation, Diversity & Inclusion
  - Principle: Promoting involvement of across a continuum of activity from democratic process to capacity building and active engagement
  - Effective Practice Principle: Clear communication and information sharing

  - Principle: Respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity within communities
  - Effective Practice Principle: By community for community

**Challenge: Fostering inclusive participation**

- Value: Civic Empowerment
  - Principle: Empowering individuals and communities (i.e. place, interest, identity) to take responsibility for positive change
  - Principle: Strengthening the capacity of organisations and people as active citizens, moving from dependence to independence
  - Effective Practice Principle: Growing local leadership

**Challenge: Growing local leadership**

**Relationship Driven** be the change,

*Critical Success Factor: Critical collective reflection and learning*
*Critical Success Factor: Collaboration across sectors*

- Value: Working & Learning Together
  - Principle: Encouraging a long-term process of learning and change vs. quick fixes
    - Effective Practice Principle: Intentional & Adaptable

- Value: Cross Sector Collaboration
  - Principle: Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectors, inside and outside the community
    - Effective Practice Principle: Networking & Building Relationships

**Challenge: Handling the fluidity of associations**

There is significant evidence that suggests that ABCD is more than an approach, strategy or methodology. It also appears to be a way of thinking and seeing things – a paradigm. It is certain that for some people it comes naturally and this is what is seen in the project.
investigations. The people involved have by nature this way of thinking and seeing the world. An ABCD paradigm is often referred to as a glass half full attitude, seeing what you have not what you don’t. There are innate personality characteristics where people tend to gravitate one way or another but also there is the notion of ‘caught ‘& taught – that it can be a learned behaviour if people are introduced and familiarised to an ABCD way of working so that change of attitude follows practice.

In summary, the refined ABCD praxis matrix is presented  (figure 44), this final version draws together the various findings of this investigation into ABCD practice.
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Link Micro to Macro</td>
<td>Asset Based</td>
<td>Focus on Assets</td>
<td>Continually identify and development potential of people at the grassroots level and provide opportunities to lead.</td>
<td>Recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities.</td>
<td>Ensure that information which portrays community needs/problems is balanced with information about community assets and that information is shared with all affected individuals and groups.</td>
<td>Support efforts that lead to sustainable solutions emphasizing leadership development, citizen participation, partnerships with agencies and organizations, and community economic development.</td>
<td>Support the development of solutions that will effectively build upon the capabilities and assets of each neighbourhood and community through the strengths of individuals, families associations, and organizations.</td>
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<td>Stimulating local economic development</td>
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**Figure 44 ABCD Praxis Matrix**

*Source: Author*
**Approach**

- **Values**
  - **Principles WHY?**
  - **Principles HOW?**
  - **Principles WHAT?**

- **Enhancer**

- **Methodology**

- **Promotes the rights of individuals and communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives**

- **Achieving self-determination – having one’s voice heard and having opportunities for developing knowledge so that participation can be extended and strengthened.**

- **Ensure that the process is inclusive, open, and that information is shared by all**

- **Recognize and celebrate the differences and uniqueness of residents in neighbourhoods and communities by encouraging and supporting inclusiveness.**

- **Acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.**

- **Promote the values and history of our many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.**

- **Work to mobilize residents and communities for collective action.**

- **Promote the civic responsibility of residents in all aspects of community and neighbourhood life.**

- **Encourage activities that follow the principles and values of democracy.**

- **Encourage individuals and groups to freely express their views.**

- **Promote the concept of collective and individual leadership and responsibility for the common good.**

---

**Linking Micro to Macro**

- **Participation, Diversity & Inclusion**

  - **Strategy**
  - **Approach**

  - **Values**

  - **Principles WHY?**

  - **Principle s HOW?**

  - **Principles WHAT?**

  - **Critical Success Factors**

  - **Effective Practice**

  - **Outcomes**

  - **Enhancer**

  - **Methodology**

  - **Outcomes**

---

**Participation, Diversity & Inclusion**

- **All community members, regardless of gender, age, ability, race, culture, language, sexual orientation, or social and economic status, have equal opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.**

- **Recognizes that people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore equally worthy of respect and acknowledgement.**

- **Respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity within communities.**

- **Acknowledge the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.**

- **Promote the values and history of our many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.**

---

**Participation, Diversity & Inclusion**

- **Empowering individuals and communities (i.e., places, interest, identity, etc.) to take responsibility for positive change.**

- **Work to mobilize residents and community ties for collective action.**

- **Promote the civic responsibility of residents in all aspects of community and neighborhood life.**

---

**Participation, Diversity & Inclusion**

- **Strengthening the capacity of organizations and communities as a whole and of active citizens, moving from dependence to independence.**

- **Encourage activities that follow the principles and values of democracy.**

- **Encourage individuals and groups to freely express their views.**

- **Promote the concept of collective and individual leadership and responsibility for the common good.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Principles WHY?</th>
<th>Principles HOW?</th>
<th>Principles WHAT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancer</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Enhancer**

- Maintain momentum by emphasizing the importance of community-building activities.
- Encourage a long-term process of learning and change.
- Gather, analyze, track, and share information to build upon experiences.
- Support innovation where all can learn together from successes and failures.
- Set a culture that encourages innovation.
- Acknowledge that success requires a long-term commitment.
- Promote a collective process enabling participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences.
- Demonstrate genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders.
- Promote co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities.
- Encourage activities that respond to the uniqueness of each community by bringing together the strengths of local individuals, associations, businesses, faith-based entities, and other organizations.
- Promote open communication with an emphasis on active listening and reaching consensus.
- Create incentives for approaches and interventions that cut across program boundaries (e.g., education, employment, housing, health, and human services).
- Balance priorities focusing on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of communities.
- Support the integration of community economic development, human services, and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.

**Methodology**

- Encourage a long-term process of learning and change which gathers, analyzes, tracks, and shares information that will allow all to build upon their experiences.
- Support innovations where all can learn together from successes and failures.
- Set a culture that encourages innovation.
- Acknowledge that to be successful, this work requires a long-term commitment.
- Promotes a collective process enabling participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences.
- Demonstrate genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders.
- Promote co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities.
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- Balance priorities focusing on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of communities.
- Support the integration of community economic development, human services, and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.

**Critical Success Factors**

- Linking Micro to Macro: Building community resilience and enhancing community wellbeing.
- Strategy:
  - Cross Sector Collaboration & Partnership
    - Working within power relations – need to articulate the nature of power, roles, and power relations and seek to redress past wrongs in order to establish new balances and ways of operating.
    - Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectoral boundaries, including businesses, churches, human service agencies, policy makers, and community leaders.
    - Initiatives undertaken increase the number of involved partners and result in increased collaboration.
- Building Relationships:
  - Networking & building relationships
    - Networking to build relationships, communication, and knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.
- Critical Reflection and Learning:
  - Being intentional, adaptable, and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community-led working.
- Relationship Driven
  - Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountability.

**Effective Practice**

- Principles WHY?
  - Encouraging a long-term process of learning and change.
  - Gathering, analyzing, tracking, and sharing information.
  - Supporting innovation where all can learn together.
  - Setting a culture that encourages innovation.
  - Acknowledging the need for a long-term commitment.
  - Providing a collective learning process.
  - Demonstrating genuine accountability for outcomes.
  - Promoting cooperation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities.
  - Encouraging activities that respond to the uniqueness of each community.
  - Promoting open communication with an emphasis on active listening.
  - Creating incentives for approaches and interventions that cut across program boundaries.
  - Balancing priorities focusing on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target community development.
  - Supporting the integration of community economic development, human services, and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.

**Outcomes**

- Effective Practice
  - Critical Success Factors
    - Linking Micro to Macro: Building community resilience and enhancing community wellbeing.
    - Strategy:
      - Cross Sector Collaboration & Partnership
        - Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectoral boundaries, including businesses, churches, human service agencies, policy makers, and community leaders.
        - Initiatives undertaken increase the number of involved partners and result in increased collaboration.
      - Building Relationships
        - Networking & building relationships
          - Networking to build relationships, communication, and knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.
      - Critical Reflection and Learning
        - Being intentional, adaptable, and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community-led working.
      - Relationship Driven
        - Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountability.

**Values**

- Principles HOW?
  - Encouraging a long-term process of learning and change.
  - Gathering, analyzing, tracking, and sharing information.
  - Supporting innovation where all can learn together.
  - Setting a culture that encourages innovation.
  - Acknowledging the need for a long-term commitment.
  - Providing a collective learning process.
  - Demonstrating genuine accountability for outcomes.
  - Promoting cooperation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities.
  - Encouraging activities that respond to the uniqueness of each community.
  - Promoting open communication with an emphasis on active listening.
  - Creating incentives for approaches and interventions that cut across program boundaries.
  - Balancing priorities focusing on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target community development.
  - Supporting the integration of community economic development, human services, and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.

**Principles WHAT?**

- Principles WHY?
  - Encouraging a long-term process of learning and change.
  - Gathering, analyzing, tracking, and sharing information.
  - Supporting innovation where all can learn together.
  - Setting a culture that encourages innovation.
  - Acknowledging the need for a long-term commitment.
  - Providing a collective learning process.
  - Demonstrating genuine accountability for outcomes.
  - Promoting cooperation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities.
  - Encouraging activities that respond to the uniqueness of each community.
  - Promoting open communication with an emphasis on active listening.
  - Creating incentives for approaches and interventions that cut across program boundaries.
  - Balancing priorities focusing on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target community development.
  - Supporting the integration of community economic development, human services, and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building.

**Approach**

- Critical Success Factors
  - Linking Micro to Macro: Building community resilience and enhancing community wellbeing.
  - Strategy:
    - Cross Sector Collaboration & Partnership
      - Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectoral boundaries, including businesses, churches, human service agencies, policy makers, and community leaders.
      - Initiatives undertaken increase the number of involved partners and result in increased collaboration.
    - Building Relationships
      - Networking & building relationships
        - Networking to build relationships, communication, and knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.
    - Critical Reflection and Learning
      - Being intentional, adaptable, and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community-led working.
    - Relationship Driven
      - Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountability.

**Strategic**

- Critical Success Factors
  - Linking Micro to Macro: Building community resilience and enhancing community wellbeing.
  - Strategy:
    - Cross Sector Collaboration & Partnership
      - Partnering and collaborating with diverse stakeholders and networks across sectoral boundaries, including businesses, churches, human service agencies, policy makers, and community leaders.
      - Initiatives undertaken increase the number of involved partners and result in increased collaboration.
    - Building Relationships
      - Networking & building relationships
        - Networking to build relationships, communication, and knowledge based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.
    - Critical Reflection and Learning
      - Being intentional, adaptable, and demonstrating progress and celebrating success are core ingredients of effective community-led working.
    - Relationship Driven
      - Creating strategic support from multiple stakeholders based on a shared interest in outcomes and accountability.

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9.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

This research has drawn on practice learnings from three projects only and is informed primarily by those running the projects. There is some verification from participants located in artefacts but insufficient to be able to truly verify the findings indicated here within the scope of this research piece. A further limitation is in attention to cultural aspects of community which for the most part have not been directly considered in this research piece yet are essential to community development practice. There may be sensitivities in working with ABCD in different cultural and spiritual environments which have not been considered and are worthy of further investigation. Chile and Simpson (2004) state that “the underpinning link between community development and spirituality is the connection of the individual to the collective, acknowledging that the wellbeing of the individual influences and is influenced by the wellbeing of the community.”(p.318). Van Beek (2000) states that this failure to recognise the centrality of spirituality within the process of community development ultimately robs the poor of opportunities to tap into whatever strength, power and hope that this dimension gives them.

9.4 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Mathie and Cunningham (2002) identify ABCD practice challenges which needed greater understanding and learnings from practical research to build the knowledge pool on how to mitigate these challenges. This investigations offers some insights from the practice that may contribute to working with these challenges. The ABCD praxis matrix developed in this research process needs to be retested in practice and again against current literature to validate the breakdown presented. Used as a practice framework it would be potentially enhanced further by intentional application of the complimentary approaches and tools discovered in this investigation.

Utilisation of social network theory, mapping and analysis as proposed by (Gilchrist, 2009; Ennis & West, 2010) in ABCD practice could prove a powerful combination. Interest in collective impact (Kania et al, 2012) is increasing and has a natural alignment to ABCD also. Intentional application of pre and post initiative networks impacts could go a long way in building the knowledge base of ABCD.
The community capitals framework (CCF) proposed by (Emery et al, 2006), provides a structural framework for whole systems change, it could use research based refinement particularly relating to cultural and spiritual capital which are both significant domains in an ABCD approach. It is also a natural companion to ABCD particularly with the asset mapping and mobilisation being such a significant characteristic. It would be interesting to apply the CCF intentionally in the project design in the same way as social network theory. A fully documented ABCD project from start to finish with a well-planned framework incorporating these tools and frameworks would be a valued research addition to practice based knowledge in this field.

9.5 Conclusion

An aim of this research was to identify the characteristics of effective and innovative ABCD praxis, in order to inform the design of a practice methodology for ABCD projects in defined geographic neighbourhoods at a future time. This documented investigation has achieved that objective and can be used to inform future community practice, policy and resourcing decisions. This contribution to practice based knowledge as identified by (Chile, 2007) attempts to provide greater clarity of ABCD and to contribute the evidence base for its effectiveness in community development practice.

It is clear that ABCD is being used in community development practice as an approach, a methodology and a specific strategy. ABCD practice is embedded in established community development, values and principles, it is the asset focus that sets it apart from traditional practice. When community development was established as a profession in New Zealand, it was as a response to overwhelming social issues that needed attention in an environment that was completely dependent on the state. Times have changed and the power is moving back to communities to address their own wellbeing.

Community development processes cannot solve all social problems such as structural unemployment and the growing gap between rich and poor. However, it is possible to improve people's well-being through building social capital and creating opportunities for active participation, then these sorts of issues can be taken up by citizens at the appropriate levels of government. ABCD does not provide a single answer but rather new possibilities that come from doing things differently. There is no single right approach,
there will always be external forces that can overwhelm even the most asset rich and connected community.

The paradigm is shifting from needs to strengths, slowly the tide is turning, the new paradigm is asset based, internally focused and relationship driven. Identifying catalysts with an ABCD paradigm is vital. Successful implementation and sustainability depends on locating local people who can mentor and be mentored in this way of working. ABCD practice has shown potential to mobilise assets right across community capitals and shows strong potential to stimulate local economic development and to build social capital through creating new connections and strengthening relationships and networks. Communities can potentially be revitalised in a sustainable way which in turn improves community wellbeing and resilience.

*It takes time to shift a paradigm.*

(Author)

*We have what we need if we use what we have.*

*Be the change.*

(Edgar Cahn, Time Bank Founder)
REFERENCES


Workshop on The Future of Australia’s Mid-Sized Cities. Latrobe University, Bendigo, VIC, 28 & 29 Sept.


www.carnegietrust.org.uk (accessed on 25th May 2013)


Inspiring Communities. (2010). *What we are learning about community led development in New Zealand*. New Zealand: Inspiring Communities Trust.


Kretzmann, J., & McKnight, J. (1993). Building communities from the Inside Out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a communities assets. Chicago: ACTA.


## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: ASKING QUESTIONS GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An investigation of asset based community development practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GUIDING QUESTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL ROLE DESCRIPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have you been involved with the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your role within the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your role paid or volunteer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT INCEPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations and experience of initiation, enablers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you part of the projects inception?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES – What was the motivation for initiating the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the project design develop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who was involved in the early stages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the original project aims and objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resources were needed to get things started?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did those resources come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there a role from government either central or local?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the role of the private sector business and community in those early stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify the internal and external resources that were used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you reflect on the role of networks and connections at this inception stage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT CURRENT STAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell me about this project and its aims and objectives in 2012?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What significant changes have you seen in this community as a result of this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell me a specific story that reflects those impacts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is that story significant for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL MOTIVATIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS AND REFLECTION IN PRACTICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any specific theoretical motivations or perspectives that have influenced this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of asset based community development (ABCD)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell me about what you understand ABCD to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a connection between this project and ABCD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a story that reflects that connection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of the concept of social capital?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you understand the concept to mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you explain the connection between this project and social capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a specific experience you can reflect on that illustrates that connection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with the concept of social networks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you understand the concept to mean?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Can you explain the connection between this project and social networks?
Can you tell me an experience that reflects this?

Does the concept of bridging bonding and linking resources in a community resonate with you?
Are these concepts relevant to this project?

Are you familiar with the concept of community mapping or specifically asset mapping?
Can you explain to me ways in which mapping may have been used in this project?

When I speak of community assets what do you understand that to mean?
Can you tell me of an experience within this project where assets have been identified and what that information was subsequently used for?
How were these assets mobilised?
What was the motivation to mobilise, in other words, what was the desired outcome from the mapping process?
Can you tell me a specific story that illustrates the impacts of asset mobilisation?

Do you consider that this project works from an asset based community development paradigm?
Is that intentional?

What have you found to be the key strengths in working from an asset based paradigm?

**KEY LEARNINGS**
What have you found to be the weaknesses in working in an asset based way?

What are some significant learnings you can reflect on in regard to the history and outcomes of this project so far?
Why do you consider those learnings to be significant?

Considering ABCD as a community development process where do you see its greatest potential?

Can you share a story that reflects the impact of this project on community wellbeing and resilience?

What are your future aspirations for this project?

Is there anything further you would like to add?
## APPENDIX 2: PROJECT INVESTIGATIONS ARTEFACT LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational</th>
<th>Presentational</th>
<th>Representational</th>
<th>Interpretational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| OAP Participant feedback forms  
  - South Kaipara  
  - Unsworth Heights  
  - Massey | OAP Project Reports  
  - October 2011  
  - January 2012  
  - March 2012  
  - April 2012  
  - March 2013 | OAP Evaluation reports  
  - Unsworth Heights  
  - Massey  
  - MPHS  
  - Pt Chevalier | OAP Unitec student reflections  
  Glen Eden  
  Unsworth Heights  
  Avondale  
  Massey |
| VFW Constitution | OAP PowerPoint Presentation  
 OAP Website  
 OAP Information Brochure | OAP Operations Manual  
 Project Lyttelton – Our Story | OAP Bridgman PowerPoint, Events evaluation findings |
| VFW Document Archives including meeting minutes, newsletters, newspaper articles and planning documents | PL Digital Photo Archive  
 T3 Website  
 Project Lyttelton Website | PL Evaluation Reports  
 - Seven Oaks Community Garden  
 - Festival of Lights  
 - Festival of Walking  
 - Farmers Market | PL Visioning Graphics |
<p>| T3 Asset Mapping Questionnaire | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Principle</th>
<th>Practice Processes</th>
<th>How do we know it is working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Participation and Inclusion** | Directly involve people affected to decide, develop and implement solutions in their neighbourhoods and communities.  
Create an environment which encourages and supports the participation of all people and differing perspectives.  
Ensure that the process is inclusive, open, and that information is shared by all.                                                                 | A variety of impacted residents of differing social and economic groups, are invited to share their gifts and participate in the work of their community in increasing proportions. |
| **Focus on Assets (Build Capacity)** | Continually identify and develop leadership potential of people at the grassroots level and provide opportunities to lead.  
Ensure that information which portrays community needs/ problems is balanced with information about community assets and that information is shared with all affected individuals and groups.  
Support efforts that lead to sustainable solutions emphasizing leadership development, citizen participation, partnerships with agencies and organisations, and community economic development.  
Support the development of solutions that will effectively build upon the capabilities and assets of each neighbourhood and community through the strengths of individuals, families associations, and organisations. | Community-building participants exhibit increased commitment to and confidence in the collective action of neighbourhood residents and leadership. |
| **Civic Responsibility**     | Work to mobilize residents and communities for collective action.  
Promote the civic responsibility of residents in all aspects of community and neighbourhood life.  
Encourage activities that follow the principles and values of democracy.  
Encourage individuals and groups to freely express their views.  
Promote the concept of collective and individual leadership and responsibility for the common good.                                                                 | More individuals choose to exercise and fulfil their civic and community responsibilities.                        |
| **Collaboration and Partnership** | Strongly encourage collaborative activity amongst neighbourhoods, agencies, businesses, funders, policy-makers and other stakeholders.  
Encourage activities that respond to the uniqueness of each neighbourhood and community by bringing together the strengths of local individuals, associations, businesses, faith-based entities and other organisations.  
Promote open communication with an emphasis on active listening and reaching consensus.                                                                 | Initiatives undertaken increase the number of involved partners and result in increased collaboration.            |
| **Comprehensive**            | Create incentives for approaches and interventions which cut across program boundaries whenever and wherever possible (e.g. Education, employment, housing, health, and human services).  
Balance priorities which focus on solving individual problems with actions that strategically target the development of neighbourhoods and communities.  
Support the integration of community economic development, human services and civic responsibility as a comprehensive approach to community building. | Community-building interventions and approaches cross organisational boundaries (e.g., businesses, churches, human service agencies, etc.) in addressing community issues. |
| **Embrace Diversity**        | Recognize and celebrate the differences and uniqueness of residents in neighbourhoods and communities by encouraging and supporting inclusiveness.  
Promote the values and history of our many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.                                                                                                                                  | A variety of impacted residents of differing social and economic groups, are invited and participate in the work of their community in increasing proportions. |
| **Learn**                    | Promote a supportive environment which allows communities and organisations to continually learn and grow.  
Support innovations where all can learn together from successes and failures.  
Set a culture that encourages innovation.                                                                                                                     | Successes and failures of community building efforts are used as learning opportunities for communities and organisations. |
| **Focus on Results**         | Encourage a system which gathers, analyses, tracks, and shares information that will allow all to build upon their experiences.  
Demonstrate genuine accountability for outcomes to residents, donors, and all stakeholders.  
Acknowledge that to be successful this work requires a long term commitment.                                                                                 | People will understand that the results of community building will be short-term, intermediate, and long-term in their nature. |
APPENDIX 4: PRACTICE EVALUATION CASE STUDIES

Literature Case Study Reviews: Projects evaluated
Meta-analysing community action projects in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Initial focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moerewa Community Project</td>
<td>Alcohol and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitomo Papakāinga Tracker Project</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacifica Healthcare</td>
<td>Community garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Waves / Matangi Male</td>
<td>Education for non-violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whaingaroa Catchment Management Project</td>
<td>Integrated catchment management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Rangihou New Day Project for Opotiki Safer Communities Council</td>
<td>Alcohol, drugs and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roughcut Youth Development Project</td>
<td>Employment training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch Youth Project</td>
<td>Young people and crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIERI Trust River Catchment Project</td>
<td>Catchment and community health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFICA</td>
<td>Governance and management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literature Case Study Review 2:

Inspiring Communities 3 Publications (What are we Learning 2010, Community-led Development in Aotearoa New Zealand: a think piece 20120, Learning by Doing Community Led Change in Aotearoa 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Initial focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rakiura/Stewart Is</td>
<td>Form a shared vision for the islands future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Start Taita</td>
<td>Connecting people to people in a local neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Cents Porirua</td>
<td>Understand the cycle of unsustainable debt and seek solutions as a community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitara Community Development Project</td>
<td>Develop a plan for community revitalisation and the towns future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opotiki</td>
<td>Economic Revitalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaki</td>
<td>Active participation of community in decisions affecting their future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massey Matters</td>
<td>Building Massey into a better place to live, work and learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mataura</td>
<td>Revitalise the township and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Literature Case Study Review 3:**

*Dept. Internal Affairs (DIA) (2011)*  
*Review of selected New Zealand government funded community development programmes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Initial Focus</th>
<th>No of initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whānau Development Project (Ministry of Social Development 2000–2004)</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) providing funding and support for whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities to assess their own needs and develop and deliver local initiatives to meet those needs.</td>
<td>14 communities in 6 regions around New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Level Solutions (Te Puni Kōkiri 2000–2004)</td>
<td>The aim of the programme was to reduce inequalities, while simultaneously developing Māori communities. The programme aimed to support the government’s commitment to continue to contribute to the sustainable development of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori.</td>
<td>15 LLS initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger Communities Action Fund (former Department of Child, Youth and Family Services – 2001 to 2005)</td>
<td>The high level objective was to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in disadvantaged communities.</td>
<td>9 communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Communities Pilot Projects (Department of Internal Affairs and Auckland Regional Council 2004–2007)</td>
<td>The Sustainable Communities vision was: “To achieve strong, liveable and prosperous communities in Auckland through a sustainable development approach”.</td>
<td>2 projects: Progress Papakura and SC² – Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Action Research Projects (Department of Internal Affairs 2003–2006)</td>
<td>An expanded community broker role. The community broker role was described as having four components: building capacity; fostering collaboration; promoting sustainability; and championing inclusiveness.</td>
<td>2 communities Kaikohe &amp; Raetahi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sites visited were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Nature of Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIPPY South Kaipara</td>
<td>South Kaipara</td>
<td>A home-based intervention programme, which supports parents to become actively involved in their four and five year old children’s learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Mau Te Wero Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Provides a community voice for the people of Glenn Innes, and facilitates partnerships for the benefit of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren Park Henderson South Community Initiative</td>
<td>Waitakere</td>
<td>An integrated community development programme with a range of projects designed to meet community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and Family Centre</td>
<td>South Kaipara</td>
<td>Assists men of all ages who are underachieving and struggling to take up responsibilities in their families and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project name</td>
<td>Initial focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisbourne skateboarding park youth centre</td>
<td>Through a participatory process involving youth who used the skate park and the local community a proposal was developed for expanding the youth centre and skate park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moerewa township &amp; economic development initiative</td>
<td>The community collectively envisioned and implemented several place making projects which sought to integrate the improvement of local social, environmental and economic development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motukaraka marae and housing developments</td>
<td>A hapu planning process led the development of proposals for the addition of public buildings and housing on communally owned land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otara urban papakainga complex</td>
<td>The development of a sustainable urban village incorporating four marae including whanau housing, business development and a number of cultural and environmental dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5: COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORKS TOOL

Source: Emery, Fey, Flora & Bregendahl
Community Capitals: A Tool for Evaluating Strategic Interventions and Projects.
### APPENDIX 6: T3 THAMES ASSET MAPPING QUESTIONNAIRE

**Asset Mapping – Individual Form**

**PLEASE SAVE THIS FORM TO YOUR COMPUTER UNDER A NEW NAME [EG: "YOUR NAME" - Asset Mapping], COMPLETE, AND SEND TO:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: YOUR NAME</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2: AGE/GROUP [TICK ONE]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU COME TO BE HERE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: WHAT PART OF TOWN/DISTRICT DO YOU LIVE</td>
<td>4A: PHONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: EMAIL</td>
<td>5A: MOBILE PHONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS AREA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN THAMES? PLEASE INCLUDE ANY FAVOURITE PLACES, BUILDINGS, PARTS OF TOWN, THINGS TO DO, SERVICES OR EVENTS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: WHAT DO THESE ADD TO YOUR SENSE OF OUR PLACE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: ARE THERE ANY HOBBIES/SPORTS IN WHICH YOU TAKE ACTIVE PART? OR AS A SPECTATOR? NOT NECESSARILY IN THAMES</td>
<td>9A: ☐ ACTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: WHERE DO YOU USUALLY DO THIS?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: HOW EASY IS IT TO DO THESE THINGS IN THAMES?</td>
<td>☐ very easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER AND/OR IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND OTHERS?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO LEARN OR GET INVOLVED WITH?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: WHAT QUALITIES, ATTITUDES, VALUES, TALENTS OR SKILLS DO YOU TRY TO BRING TO A SITUATION?</td>
<td>11A: OF THESE, WHAT DO YOU FEEL MOST PROUD OF, OR WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED IN YOUR LIFE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. WHAT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE OR WOULD BE WITH A LITTLE PRACTICE OR TRAINING - REALLY GOOD AT DOING?

14. ARE THERE ANY EXTRA SKILLS OR TALENTS YOU WANT TO LEARN?

15. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO TEACH, DEMONSTRATE OR SHARE WITH SOMEONE IN OUR COMMUNITY? (FROM SEWING TO BUDGETING, MATHS TO SURFING, WELDING TO ASTRONOMY, AND MORE!)

16. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE OF VALUE TO OUR ASSET MAPPING PROJECT?

17. OF ALL THE THINGS WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

AND NOW, A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOU

18. WHAT IS/WAS YOUR MAIN OCCUPATION/TRADE?

☐ RETIRED ☐ VOLUNTEER
☐ NOT WORKING ☐ EMPLOYED ☐ FAMILY

19. WHO IS/WAS YOUR MAIN EMPLOYER

20. IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING, WHAT TYPE OF AREA WOULD BE OF INTEREST?

☐ SPORT ☐ ENVIRONMENT ☐ EDUCATION ☐ SOCIAL WELFARE
☐ ELDERLY ☐ YOUTH ☐ PRACTICAL

21. DO YOU HAVE ANY FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS?

22. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO THE FOLLOW-UP UP TO THIS PROCESS WHICH WILL BE IN LATE NOVEMBER?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ MAYBE - KEEP ME POSTED

23. WHEN WE ACHIEVE 1500 COMPLETED RETURNS, WE WILL AWARD A COMMUNITY SPORTS, ENVIRONMENT, SUPPORT OR STAFF GROUP A PACKAGE OF BENEFITS. PLEASE LET US KNOW YOU THINK WHO THIS SHOULD BE.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. WE WILL USE THE DATE TO GAUGE GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY, AND GIVE YOU CHOICES ABOUT WHICH DATA MAY BE USED FOR GROUPS, CLUBS OR PEOPLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH YOU, BASED ON YOUR SKILLS OR INTERESTS, WITHOUT HAVING DIRECT INFORMATION ABOUT YOU, UNTIL YOU CHOOSE TO GIVE IT TO THEM.