

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
- NEXT STEPS -

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Why We Started

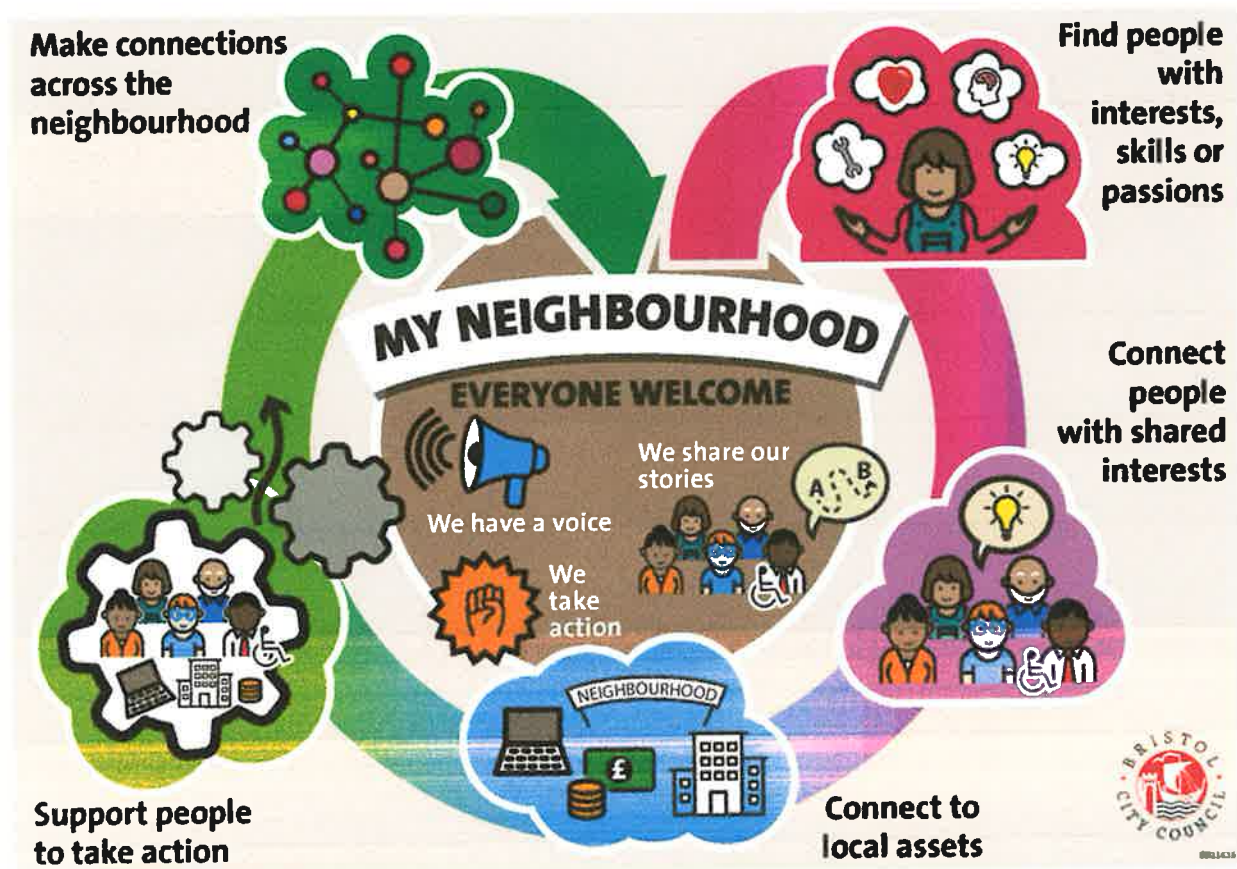


Source: Australian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment

- Effective community engagement is more than simply talking to or informing our citizens or constituents about the things we want them to know about.
- At its heart, it is a purposeful, two-way conversation that embraces the need to understand what our citizens, businesses, or constituents want and what their values and priorities are – as well as effectively integrating these perspectives and preferences into our decisions, policies, and programs.
- Community engagement – when it's done effectively – provides our community and organization with the opportunity to:
 - Build local networks
 - Enhance relationships
 - Identify underlying concerns and values
 - Leverage assets and resources
 - Increase participation
 - Improve decision making
 - Get out ahead of or avoid conflict
 - Increase trust and confidence in governance
- Citizens are “engaged” when they play a meaningful role in the deliberations, discussions, decision-making and/or implementation of projects or programs or policies affecting them.

- Organize the assets

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: What Does It Look Like?



Source: www.nurtureddevelopment.org

KEY CONCEPTS: When applying ABCD principles communities are not thought of as complex masses of needs and problems, but rather diverse and capable webs of gifts and assets.

- **INDIVIDUALS – EVERYONE HAS GIFTS AND SKILLS.** At the center are residents of the community who all have gifts and skills. Individual gifts and skills need to be recognized and identified. In community development we cannot do anything with people’s needs, only their gifts and skills. Deficits or needs are only useful to institutions.
- **ASSOCIATIONS – PEOPLE DISCOVER EACH OTHER’S GIFTS.** Small informal groups of people, such as clubs, working with a common interest as volunteers are called associations in ABCD, and are critical to community mobilization. They don’t control anything; they are just coming together around a common interest by their individual choice.

- INSTITUTIONS – PEOPLE ORGANIZED AROUND ASSETS. Paid groups of people that generally are professionals who are structurally organized are called institutions. They include government agencies and private business, as well as schools, etc. They can all be valuable resources. The assets of these institutions help the community capture valuable resources and establish a sense of civic responsibility.
- PLACE BASED ASSETS – PEOPLE LIVE HERE FOR A REASON. Land, buildings, heritage, public and green spaces are all examples of assets for the community. Every place where people choose to be is chosen for good reasons, and whilst people remain those reasons remain. A place might be a center of natural resources, a hub of activity, living skills, transit connection or marketplace. Whatever the strengths of a place are, the people of the community will be the closest to understanding it.
- CONNECTIONS – INDIVIDUALS CONNECT INTO A COMMUNITY. Asset Based Community Development recognizes that the exchange between people sharing their gifts and skills creates connections, and these connections are a vital asset to the community. People whose gift is to find and create these connections are called connectors. It takes time to find out about individuals; this is normally done through building relationships, person by person. The social relationships, networks and trust form the social capital of a community. ABCD recognizes the value of these assets and is a practical application of building relationships to increase social capital.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

CONTINUE OUR WORK IN THESE AREAS:

- COLLECT STORIES - Stories are collections of the cultural capital of a community. The listening conversation can engage people's experience of successful activities that will help to uncover the gifts, skills, talents, and assets within the community. From the stories, what people care about and their motivations to act can be discovered. Importantly this form of inquiry does not diminish but reinforces citizens as the center of their community.
- BRING TOGETHER A CORE GROUP - From the stories, people will emerge who have shown commitment and leadership in the past or who are currently taking a leadership role. Next bring together a group of these committed individuals who are interested in exploring the community's assets, identifying opportunities, and leading developmental action. Engaged and motivated to act on what they care about, using their strengths and gifts, these individuals will open networks of relationships inside the community.

- **MAP THE GIFTS, CAPACITIES AND ASSETS OF INDIVIDUALS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS** - Citizens and their associations do the asset mapping so that they build new relationships, learn more about the contributions and talents of community members, identify connections that open opportunities and enable change.
- **FIND AND ENGAGE CONNECTORS WHO CAN BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** - Lasting change comes from within the community and local people who know what needs to change. Possibly the most vital step of Asset Based Community Development is encouraging the building of new relationships and strengthening and expanding existing ones. This is the heart of community building and will lead to the immeasurable benefit that communities protect and support what they create.

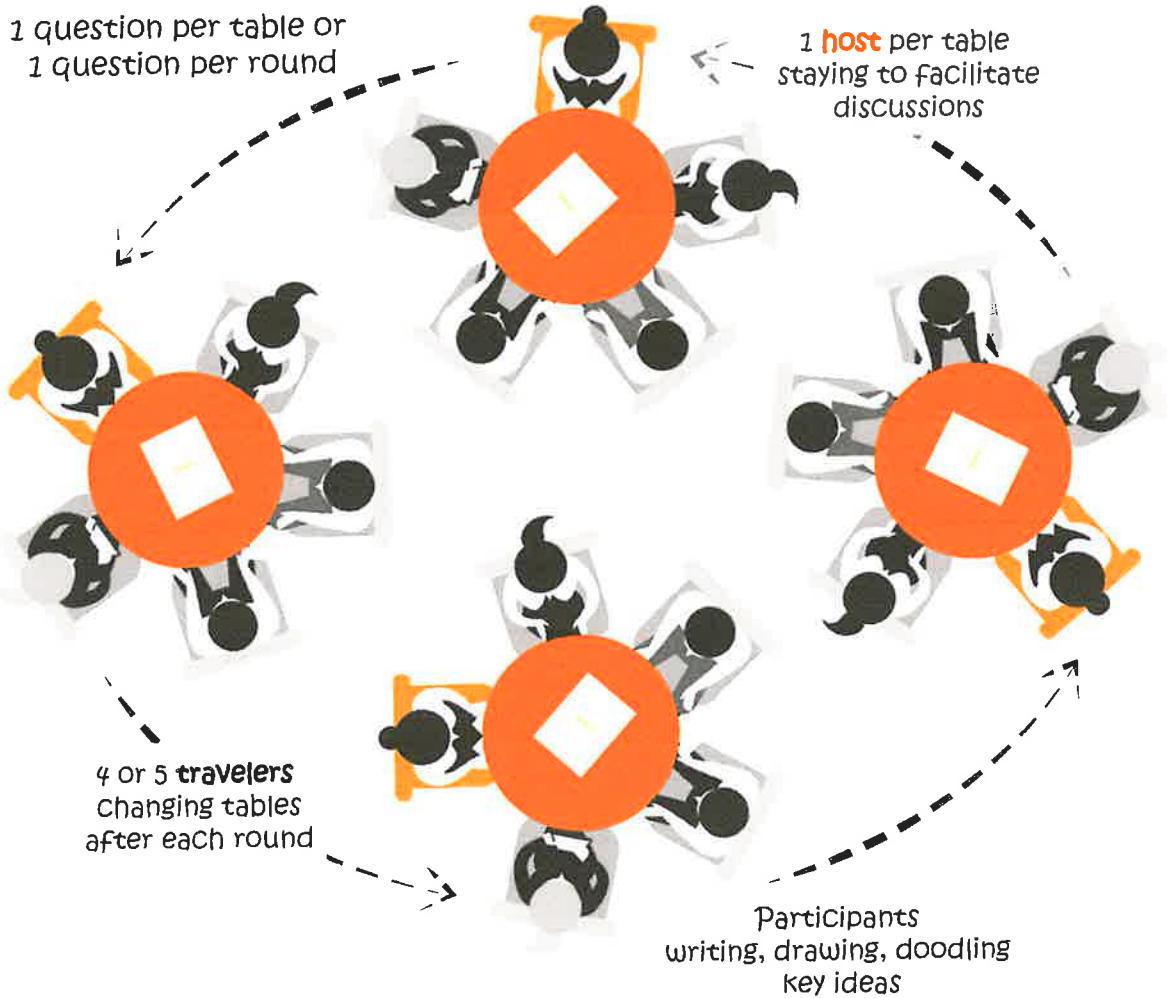
OUR APPROACH:

THE WORLD CAFÉ METHOD

(Bringing forward meaningful conversation for the purpose of positive change)

WORLD CAFÉ
METHOD

3 or more **rounds of conversation**,
approximately 20 minutes each



Source: www.theworldcafe.com

THE WORLD CAFÉ: Shaping Our Future Through Conversations That Matter

The World Café method is designed to create a safe, welcoming environment in which to intentionally connect multiple ideas and perspectives on a topic by engaging participants in several rounds of small-group conversation.

The following are seven design principles of a World Café:

1. Clarify the Context – e.g., who should be part of the conversation, what themes or questions will be most pertinent, what sorts of harvest will be most useful...
2. Create Hospitable Space – one that feels safe and inviting: When people feel comfortable to be themselves, they do their most creative thinking, speaking, and listening.
3. Explore Questions that Matter – knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions: Explore a single question or use a progressively deeper line of inquiry through several conversational rounds.
4. Encourage Everyone's Contribution – be aware of the importance of participation: Most people don't only want to participate they want to actively contribute to making a difference.
5. Connect Diverse Perspectives – participants carry key ideas or themes to new tables, exchange perspectives and greatly enrich the possibility for surprising new insights.
6. Listen Together for Patterns and Insights – listening is a gift we give to one another: Through practicing shared listening and paying attention to themes, patterns, and insights, we begin to sense a connection to the larger whole.
7. Share Collective Discoveries - Conversations held at one table reflect a pattern of wholeness that connects with the conversations at the other tables. The last phase of the Café, often called the "harvest", involves making this pattern of wholeness visible to everyone in a large group conversation.