



Asset Based Community-led Development (ABCD)

An integrated Afrocentric Toolkit for Community
Foundations in Southern Africa





About SGS Consulting

SGS Consulting is an African development and management consulting social enterprise driven by a vision of a more equitable and inclusive society, where communities have the power and resources to shape their own futures. Working regionally and across the continent, we strengthen organisations, institutions and community agency through social justice, constitutionalism, education, philanthropy and grantmaking.

Working with national, regional and global partners, we build philanthropy infrastructure across Southern Africa, strengthening community foundations and the organisations that support them. As South Africa's Community Foundation Support Organisation, we help turn local knowledge, leadership and financial and non-financial assets into collective action. By connecting these strengths with wider partnerships and resources, we support communities to drive development on their own terms, guided by the priorities they define.

African Roots, Community-Led Futures

Building community philanthropy begins with recognising and nurturing local giving and African generosity. These practices provide the foundation for community foundations, institutions that connect, sustain and grow this generosity in service of community-defined priorities. We believe an asset-based, community-led approach is essential to this work, strengthening collective agency and enabling African communities to direct their own development.

This toolkit is rooted in African wisdom: our wellbeing is connected, and communities have the knowledge, relationships, resources and leadership to shape their own futures. Ubuntu, Letsema, Nhimbe, Thangata, Xitique, Mafisa, stokvels and village savings groups bring this wisdom to life through solidarity, mutual support and collective action. Drawing on these traditions and Asset-Based Community Development, the toolkit supports community foundations to help communities recognise, connect and mobilise financial and non-financial assets, from savings and local giving to time, skills, indigenous knowledge and shared spaces. Its guiding belief is simple: lasting change grows when communities build on their strengths, set their own priorities and act together.



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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed as a practical facilitator's guide and workbook that can be used for training, community dialogues, strategic planning and programme implementation. It follows the Afrocentric ABCD Journey, guiding Community Foundations and community leaders from discovering community strengths to taking collective action. The toolkit is organised into eight sections that can be used sequentially or adapted to meet local needs.

Section		Purpose
1	Our African Story of Community Philanthropy	Understand the African foundations of community-led development.
2	Thinking Differently: The ABCD Mindset	Shift from deficit thinking to asset-based thinking.
3	The Afrocentric ABCD Framework	Explore the five pillars of Africanized ABCD.
4	The ABCD Journey	Learn the six practical steps for community mobilisation.
5	Community Foundation Toolbox	Use practical tools, worksheets and facilitation guides.
6	Community Foundation Self-Assessment	Reflect on organisational practice and monitor progress.
7	Learning from Southern Africa	Explore case studies and lessons from across the region.
8	Action Planning Workbook	Develop practical action plans for implementation.

Throughout the toolkit you will find:



Reflection Questions to stimulate discussion and learning.



Community Foundation Checkpoints to assess progress.



Worksheets and Templates that can be photocopied for workshops.



Remember Boxes highlighting key messages and African proverbs.



Facilitator Tips to support participatory learning.



Case Studies demonstrating successful community-led initiatives across Southern Africa.

The toolkit is intended to be interactive. Write in it, adapt it, photocopy the worksheets and use the tools to support communities in discovering and mobilising their own strengths.

WHO THIS TOOLKIT IS FOR

This toolkit has been developed primarily for **Community Foundations** and the organisations and individuals they work with to strengthen community-led development across Southern Africa.

It is suitable for:



Community Foundation staff, trustees and volunteers.



Local government officials and development practitioners.



Community development practitioners and facilitators.



Women's groups, youth groups, cooperatives and community associations.



Community leaders, traditional leaders and local champions.



Philanthropic organisations and local donors.



Civil society organisations, NGOs and faith-based organisations.



Universities, training institutions and students of community development.

Whether you are facilitating a community dialogue, designing a development programme, strengthening local philanthropy or supporting community economic development, this toolkit provides practical guidance for recognising, connecting and mobilising community assets.



Remember:

Communities are not empty vessels waiting to be filled. They are places rich in people, relationships, knowledge and resources waiting to be connected and mobilised for lasting change.



SECTION 1:

OUR AFRICAN STORY OF COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

Opening Reflection

"Motho ke motho ka batho." (Setswana)

"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu." (isiZulu/isiXhosa)

"Munhu munhu nekuda kwevanhu." (Shona)

"Munthu ndi munthu na anthu." (Chichewa)

"A person is a person through other people."

This proverb reminds us that no one thrives alone. Communities flourish when people share their gifts, support one another and work together for the common good. Long before governments, NGOs and Community Foundations existed, African communities relied on relationships, reciprocity and collective action to solve problems, care for vulnerable people and create opportunities for future generations.





As you begin this toolkit, reflect on this question:
Who helped your community long before development projects arrived?

A Community Story

Imagine a village where no one waits for a donor before helping a neighbour.

When a family's crops are ready for planting, neighbours gather early in the morning to work the fields together through Letsema, Ilima, Nhimbe or Thangata. No one receives a wage, yet everyone benefits because next week they will help another family.

When a young entrepreneur wants to start a small business, members of a stokvel, village savings group or Xitique pool their savings to provide capital.

When a family loses a loved one, neighbours, churches and burial societies organise food, labour and financial support.

When drought affects livestock, the spirit of Mafisa reminds communities that productive assets can be shared so that no household is left without hope.

No one calls this "community philanthropy." It is simply how communities have cared for one another for generations.

These everyday acts of generosity demonstrate an important truth:

Communities have always possessed the knowledge, relationships, leadership and assets needed to shape their own development.

The Asset-Based Community-led Development (ABCD) Toolkit begins with this belief.

Communities are not empty vessels waiting to be filled. They are places rich in assets, relationships, culture, wisdom and potential waiting to be connected and mobilised.



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN



By the end of this section you will be able to:

- Explain community philanthropy from an African perspective.
- Recognise indigenous traditions of giving, sharing and collective action.
- Understand why Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) resonates strongly with African values and practices.
- Explain the role of Community Foundations in strengthening local assets, participation and ownership.
- Appreciate why sustainable development begins with what communities already have rather than what they lack.

1.1 Why This Toolkit?

Across Southern Africa, Community Foundations are increasingly recognised as catalysts for locally led development. They bring together communities, donors, civil society, businesses and government to strengthen local leadership, mobilise resources and improve quality of life.

Yet many development initiatives still begin by asking:

“What problems does this community have?”

While understanding community challenges is important, beginning with problems alone can unintentionally reinforce dependency, overlook local capacities and position communities as passive recipients of assistance.

This toolkit proposes a different starting point:

“What strengths already exist within this community, and how can they be mobilised to create lasting change?”

Rather than focusing first on needs, the Africanized ABCD approach begins by identifying people's gifts, relationships, organisations, cultural traditions, natural resources and local enterprises. These become the foundation upon which additional resources and partnerships can be built.

The toolkit will help Community Foundations to:

- Discover and mobilise local assets.
- Strengthen community ownership.
- Promote local philanthropy and volunteerism.
- Build inclusive local leadership.
- Support community wealth creation and local economic development.
- Reduce dependency on external resources.
- Strengthen resilience and long-term sustainability.

Facilitator Tip



Do not begin community conversations by asking people what they need. Begin by asking what they value, what they are proud of and what strengths already exist.

This simple shift changes the entire conversation.

1.2 Our African Story of Community Philanthropy

Community philanthropy is not a new concept imported from elsewhere. Across Southern Africa, communities have always shared labour, food, livestock, land, knowledge, care and financial resources to support one another. These traditions demonstrate that philanthropy extends far beyond charitable donations. It is expressed through relationships, reciprocity, trust, generosity and collective responsibility.

Across the region, communities continue to practise traditions such as:

Tradition	What it demonstrates
Ubuntu	Shared humanity and interconnectedness
Letsema / Ilima	Collective labour and mutual support
Nhimbe	Community cooperation for shared benefit
Thangata	Collective responsibility and mutual assistance
Mafisa	Sharing productive assets to strengthen livelihoods
Xitique	Collective saving and investment
Stokvels and Village Savings Groups	Local financial resilience
Burial Societies	Compassion, solidarity and mutual care

These practices remind us that development begins with people and relationships before it begins with projects and funding.

Although colonialism, apartheid, conflict and donor dependency weakened many indigenous systems, communities never lost their capacity to organise, support one another and innovate. Community Foundations now have an opportunity to reconnect with these traditions while responding to contemporary development challenges.

Reflection Box

Think about your own community.

Which of these traditions still exist today?

Traditions	Exists	Do not exist
Collective labour		
Savings groups		
Burial societies		
Faith-based giving		
Youth volunteer groups		
Traditional leadership		
Women's groups		
Community gardens		
Other (Mention)		

What do these tell you about the strengths already present in your community?



1.3 Community Philanthropy across Southern Africa

Although traditions differ from country to country, the underlying values remain remarkably similar.

Country	Examples of Community Philanthropy
South Africa	Ubuntu, Letsema, stokvels, burial societies
Zimbabwe	Nhimbe, Mukando, community volunteerism
Malawi	Thangata, Village Savings Groups
Mozambique	Xitique, faith-based mutual support
Zambia	Chilimba, Village Savings Groups

Different names reflecting the same shared values, shared responsibility and shared prosperity.

1.4 The Values That Unite Us

Across Southern Africa, communities express common values through proverbs and indigenous wisdom.

Value	Indigenous Wisdom
Ubuntu	"A person is a person through other people."
Collective Action	"One hand cannot build a house."
Reciprocity	"Giving is also receiving."
Solidarity	"People help one another."
Shared Prosperity	"Whoever shares, multiplies."
Community Ownership	"A collective task is strongest when led by its owners."
Local Wealth	"Do not pour water into a leaking basket."

These sayings remind us that sustainable development grows through participation, trust and cooperation rather than dependency.



Remember:

African philanthropy is not defined by the amount of money people give. It is defined by the willingness of people to share their time, knowledge, labour, relationships and resources for the common good.

1.5 Why ABCD Matters for Community Foundations

ABCD helps Community Foundations shift their role from delivering projects **for** communities to facilitating development **with** communities.

Moving From	Moving Towards
Charity	Community ownership
Deficits	Assets
Dependency	Agency
External solutions	Local solutions
Service delivery	Community-led development
Short-term projects	Sustainable change

Instead of asking, “Who will solve our problems?”, communities begin asking, “What can we do together with the assets we already possess?”

Community Foundations become facilitators, connectors, conveners and catalysts that strengthen local leadership, build partnerships and mobilise community assets.



Community Reflection Exercise

Looking Back

- How did people in your community solve problems before development projects became common?
- What traditions of giving and mutual support still exist today?

Looking Around

List the assets that make your community strong.

People	Associations	Institutions	Natural Assets	Economic Assets

Looking Forward

What could your Community Foundation do differently if it truly believed that communities are rich in assets?

Write down three practical ideas.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Community Foundation Checkpoint

Are We Building on Community Strengths?

Statement	Yes	Partly	No
We recognise communities as asset-rich.			
We identify local strengths before identifying needs.			
Community members influence decisions.			
We strengthen local leadership.			
We actively support local giving and volunteerism.			
We work with existing community associations.			
We build on local assets before seeking external funding.			

Reflection

6–7 Mostly Yes:
Strong ABCD practice.

3–5 Mostly Yes:
Good foundation with opportunities to deepen asset-based practice.

0–2 Mostly Yes:
An opportunity to rethink how the Community Foundation engages with communities.



Key Takeaways

By now you should recognise that:

- Community philanthropy has deep historical roots across Southern Africa.
- Communities possess valuable assets, knowledge, relationships and leadership.
- Indigenous traditions such as Ubuntu, Letsema, Nhimbe, Thangata, Mafisa and Xitique embody the principles of Asset-Based Community Development.
- Community Foundations can strengthen—not replace—these traditions by connecting people, assets and opportunities.
- Sustainable development begins by recognising what is strong before addressing what is wrong.





Remember



"The best fertiliser for community development is not money - it is people working together."

SECTION 2:

THINKING DIFFERENTLY: THE ABCD MINDSET

Opening Reflection

"Bana ba kgwale, ithuteng molodi, le gopole motlhang malata a ileng." (Setswana)

"Children of the partridge, learn the song and remember it for the day when the servants are no longer there."

This proverb reminds us that lasting development begins when communities recognise the knowledge, wisdom and strengths they already possess. Sustainable change does not happen because someone else solves our problems, it happens when people discover their own abilities and work together. Before learning about ABCD, we first need to change the way we see communities.



ACTIVITY 1: IS THE GLASS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY?

Ask participants:

What do you see?

Some will say:

"The glass is half empty."

Others will say:

"The glass is half full."

Neither answer is wrong.

Then ask:

What would an entrepreneur see?

Someone may answer:

"An opportunity."

Explain:

ABCD does not ignore problems. It simply begins with what is already present. Communities may experience poverty, unemployment or inequality, but they also possess people, skills, land, organisations, traditions, businesses and relationships that can become the foundation for change.



Facilitator Tip



Do not correct participants. Allow them to discuss why people see the same situation differently. This conversation introduces the ABCD mindset naturally.



THE ABCD MINDSET JOURNEY

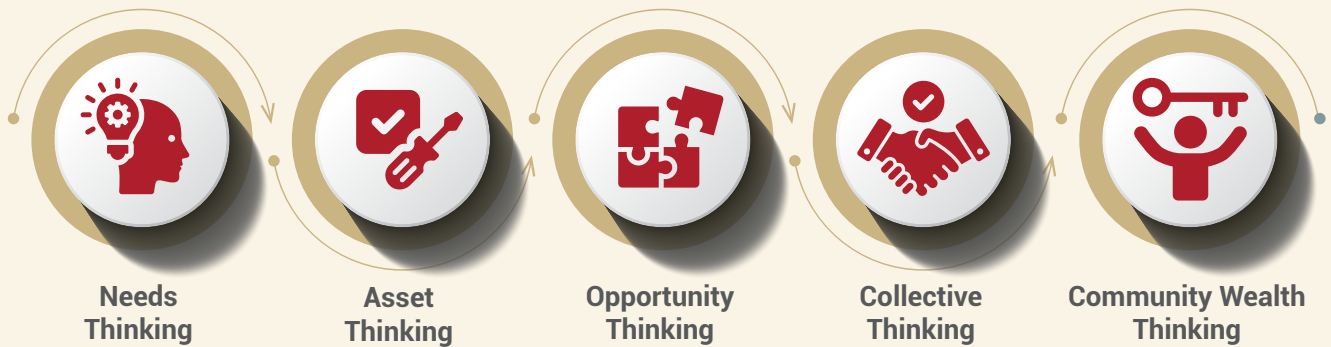
From Seeing Problems to Building Community Wealth

Before communities can change their circumstances, they often need to change the way they think about development. Asset-Based Community-led Development (ABCD) is more than a set of tools, it is a different way of seeing communities.

The journey begins by recognising challenges but gradually shifts towards identifying strengths, creating opportunities, working together and building lasting community wealth.

Stage	Key Question	Primary Focus	Typical Response
1. Needs Thinking	<i>What problems do we have?</i>	Needs, deficits, shortages and external assistance.	<i>"We need someone to help us."</i>
2. Asset Thinking	<i>What strengths already exist?</i>	Skills, relationships, local knowledge, natural resources, institutions and cultural assets.	<i>"We already have more than we realise."</i>
3. Opportunity Thinking	<i>What opportunities can our assets create?</i>	Innovation, entrepreneurship, partnerships and new possibilities.	<i>"How can we build on what we have?"</i>
4. Collective Thinking	<i>Who can work together?</i>	Collaboration, participation, volunteerism, shared leadership and collective action.	<i>"We are stronger together."</i>
5. Community Wealth Thinking	<i>How do we grow and keep wealth in our community?</i>	Local enterprise, local procurement, community philanthropy, local investment and community ownership.	<i>"How do we keep wealth circulating locally?"</i>

Visual Summary



Facilitator Reflection

Ask participants:

Which stage best describes how your Community Foundation currently approaches development?

- ☐ Needs Thinking
- ☐ Asset Thinking
- ☐ Opportunity Thinking
- ☐ Collective Thinking
- ☐ Community Wealth Thinking



ACTIVITY 2: DRAWING OUR COMMUNITY

Work in small groups.

- Draw your community today.
- Do not write words.
- Draw pictures only.
- After five minutes ask:
- What do you notice

Now repeat the exercise.

This time imagine:

- Every resident contributes one gift, one skill or one idea.
- Draw your community again.
- Compare the two pictures.

Reflection Questions



What changed?
Which picture feels more hopeful?
Which community would you rather live in?

ABCD IN ONE SENTENCE

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a way of building communities by starting with what people already have rather than what they lack.

ABCD asks:

“What is strong?” before asking “What is wrong?”

THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF ABCD

Principle	What it Means
Everyone has gifts	Every person can contribute.
Relationships matter	Change happens through people working together
Citizens drive development	Communities lead their own development.
Participation builds ownership	People support what they help create.
Local assets matter	Start with what already exists.
Institutions support communities	Organisations facilitate rather than control.

Community Foundation Reflection



- Which of these principles are already visible in your work?
- Which one requires the greatest attention?



Remember

Communities are never empty. Sometimes their greatest assets have simply not yet been recognised.



Key Takeaways

- ABCD begins with a change in mindset.
- Every community possesses valuable assets.
- Problems matter, but strengths provide the foundation for solutions.
- Community Foundations help communities recognise and connect these assets.
- Sustainable development grows from participation, relationships and collective action.



SECTION 3:

THE AFROCENTRIC ABCD FRAMEWORK

Opening Reflection

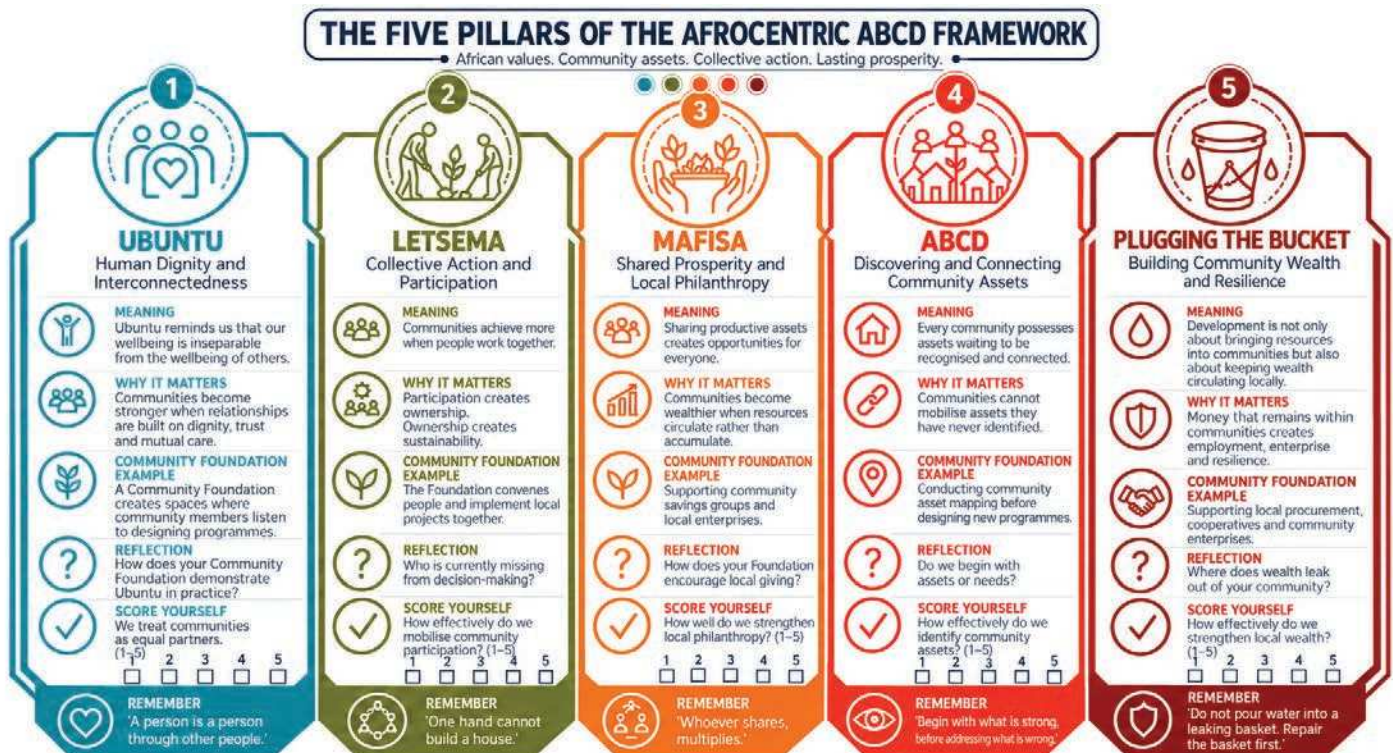
"Mabogo dinku a thebana."
"People help one another."

Across Southern Africa, communities have always organised themselves around shared values, mutual support and collective responsibility. The Afrocentric ABCD Framework builds on these traditions by combining indigenous knowledge with practical approaches to community-led development.

The framework rests on five interconnected pillars. Together they provide Community Foundations with a practical roadmap for strengthening local philanthropy, participation and sustainable development.



THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE AFROCENTRIC ABCD FRAMEWORK



Community Foundation Reflection

Which pillar is your Foundation's greatest strength?
Which pillar requires the greatest attention over the next year?

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SCORECARD

Pillar	Score (1-5)
Ubuntu	
Letsema	
Mafisa	
ABCD	
Plugging the Bucket	

Interpretation

- 21-25:** Excellent foundation for Afrocentric ABCD.
- 16-20:** Strong practice with opportunities to deepen implementation.
- 10-15:** Good beginnings—prioritise areas for improvement.
- Below 10:** Start by strengthening one pillar at a time.



Key Takeaways

- The Africentric ABCD Framework is rooted in African values and indigenous systems of mutual support.
- The five pillars are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.
- Community Foundations strengthen communities by facilitating relationships, participation, local philanthropy and wealth creation.
- The framework provides a practical guide for moving from charity to community-led transformation.



Remember

"When communities recognise their strengths, connect their assets and work together, development is no longer something done to people, it becomes something created by people."



SECTION 4:

THE ABCD JOURNEY

From Discovering Assets to Community-Led Action

Opening Reflection

"Letsema le thata ka beng." (Setswana)

"A collective task is strongest when led by its owners."

Recognising community assets is only the beginning. Sustainable development happens when people organise themselves, connect their strengths, develop a shared vision and take collective action. The ABCD Journey provides six practical steps that Community Foundations can use to facilitate community-led development.





Remember

Start with what the community has before seeking what it needs.

THE SIX-STEP ABCD JOURNEY





STEP 1: DISCOVER APPRECIATING WHAT IS STRONG

Purpose: Help communities discover their gifts, talents, relationships and existing strengths.

Key Question

What is already strong in our community?

Why This Matters

People often see themselves as beneficiaries rather than contributors.

ABCD begins by helping communities recognise that everyone has something valuable to offer.

Activity: Appreciative Inquiry

Ask participants to share stories about moments when their community worked well together.

Possible prompts

- Tell us about a time when the community solved a problem together.
- What makes you proud of your community?
- What strengths helped make that possible?

Tool: Five Individual Gifts

Category	What to Identify
Head	Knowledge and ideas
Hands	Practical skills
Heart	Passion and commitment
Mouth	Teaching and communication
Feet	Networks and connections

Worksheet: My Gifts

Head	Hands	Heart	Mouth	Feet



Community Foundation Tip

Do not ask: "What problems do you have?"

Instead ask: "What gifts do people already bring to this community?"



Reflection

What surprised you about the strengths people identified?



STEP 2: MAP SEEING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Purpose: Identify and document community assets.

Key Question

What resources already exist?

Why This Matters

People often see themselves as beneficiaries rather than contributors.

ABCD begins by helping communities recognise that everyone has something valuable to offer.

Activity: Appreciative Inquiry

Ask participants to share stories about moments when their community worked well together.

Possible prompts

- Tell us about a time when the community solved a problem together.
- What makes you proud of your community?
- What strengths helped make that possible?

Asset Categories



Individual Assets



Associations



Institutions



Physical Assets



Natural Assets



Economic Assets

Community Asset Map

Asset Category	What Exists?	Opportunities
Individuals		
Associations		
Institutions		
Physical Assets		
Natural Assets		
Economic Assets		



Facilitator Tip

Walk with the community.

Communities often discover assets they pass every day without noticing.



STEP 3: CONNECT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Assets become powerful when they are connected.

Key Question

Who should work together?

Mapping Exercise

- Relationship Mapping
- Partnership Mapping
- Network Mapping
- Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	What We Need From Them	What We Can Offer	First Action	Responsible Person	Timeline
Youth Group	Volunteers	Leadership training	Recruit volunteers	Youth Coordinator	Month 1
Local Farmer	Technical skills	Recognition	Arrange mentoring	Community Foundation	Month 1
School	Learners	Garden produce	Establish school garden	Principal	Month 2
Local Market	Market access	Reliable supply	Meet market manager	Cooperative	Month 2
Municipality	Water access	Community participation	Planning meeting	Community Foundation	Month 3



Reflection

Which organisations are currently disconnected?



STEP 4: DREAM CREATING A SHARED VISION

Key Question

What future do we want?

Visioning Exercise

Imagine your community five years from now.

What has changed?

What opportunities exist?

What makes people proud?

Community Vision Worksheet

Our Vision

Community Goals

Priority Opportunities



STEP 5: ACT

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

Dreams become reality through action.

Community Action Plan

Goal	Assets	Actions	Responsible	Time

Quick Wins

Identify three actions that can begin immediately.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Community Foundation Roles



Convene



Connect



Facilitate



Mobilise



Support

Not control.



STEP 6: GROW

LEARNING TOGETHER: REFLECT, LEARN AND GROW
Communities continue learning after implementation.

Stage	Guiding Question	Record Your Reflections
Celebrate	What worked well?	
Learn	What lessons did we learn? What should we do differently next time?	
Measure	What changed? What improvements have we seen in people, relationships, assets or the community?	
Scale	What worked so well that it should be expanded or replicated?	

Biggest opportunity

Community Foundation Checkpoint

Have we completed all six steps?

Steps	Yes	No
Discover		
Map		
Connect		
Dream		
Act		
Grow		



Key Message

Sustainable development is not a project. It is a continuous cycle of discovering strengths, connecting people and building community ownership.

SECTION 5:

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TOOLBOX

Opening Reflection

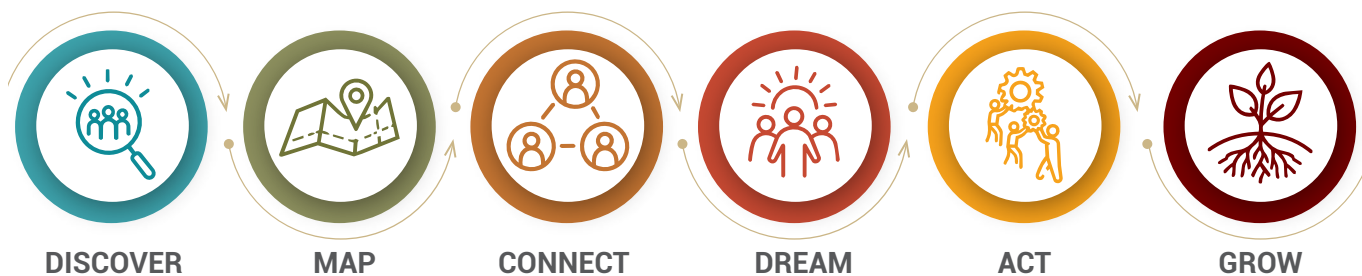
"You cannot build a house with one tool."

Different community situations require different tools. The purpose of this toolbox is not to provide a fixed set of activities that must always be followed in the same way. Rather, it provides practical, participatory tools that Community Foundations can select and adapt according to the needs, strengths, context and stage of development of each community.

The tools can be used during community dialogues, workshops, planning sessions, asset-mapping exercises and community-led development processes. They are designed to be simple, practical and adaptable to different languages, cultures, literacy levels, group sizes and community contexts.



THE TOOLS FOLLOW THE SIX-STEP ABCD JOURNEY:



Facilitators should select tools according to the purpose of the session rather than attempting to use every tool.

How to Use the Toolbox

Each tool includes:

- i. **ABCD Stage** – identifies where the tool fits within the six-step ABCD Journey.
- ii. **Purpose** – explains why the tool is used.
- iii. **Learning Outcome** – describes what participants should know, understand or be able to do after completing the activity.
- iv. **Estimated Time** – provides an indicative time. Facilitators may adjust the time according to the size of the group, the local context and the depth of discussion.
- v. **Materials** – identifies the materials required.
- vi. **Preparation** – outlines what the facilitator should prepare before the activity.
- vii. **How to Facilitate** – provides numbered steps for conducting the activity.
- viii. **Expected Output** – identifies what participants should produce or agree on.
- ix. **Reflection Questions** – help participants make sense of what they have discovered and consider what should happen next.
- x. **Community Foundation Application** – explains how the information generated can be used to strengthen community-led development.
- xi. **Facilitator Tip** – provides a practical reminder to support inclusive and participatory facilitation.

Choosing the Right Tool

Facilitators do not need to use every tool. Select the tool that best fits the purpose of the session.

ABCD Stage	Main Question	Possible Tools
Discover	What strengths already exist?	Five Individual Gifts; Appreciative Inquiry
Map	What assets and resources exist?	Leaky Bucket; Transect Walk
Connect	Who can work together?	Association Mapping; Institution Mapping
Dream	What future do we want?	Pictorial Community Visioning; SOAR
Act	What will we do?	Community Action Planning
Grow	What have we learned?	Reflection and learning activities



Remember

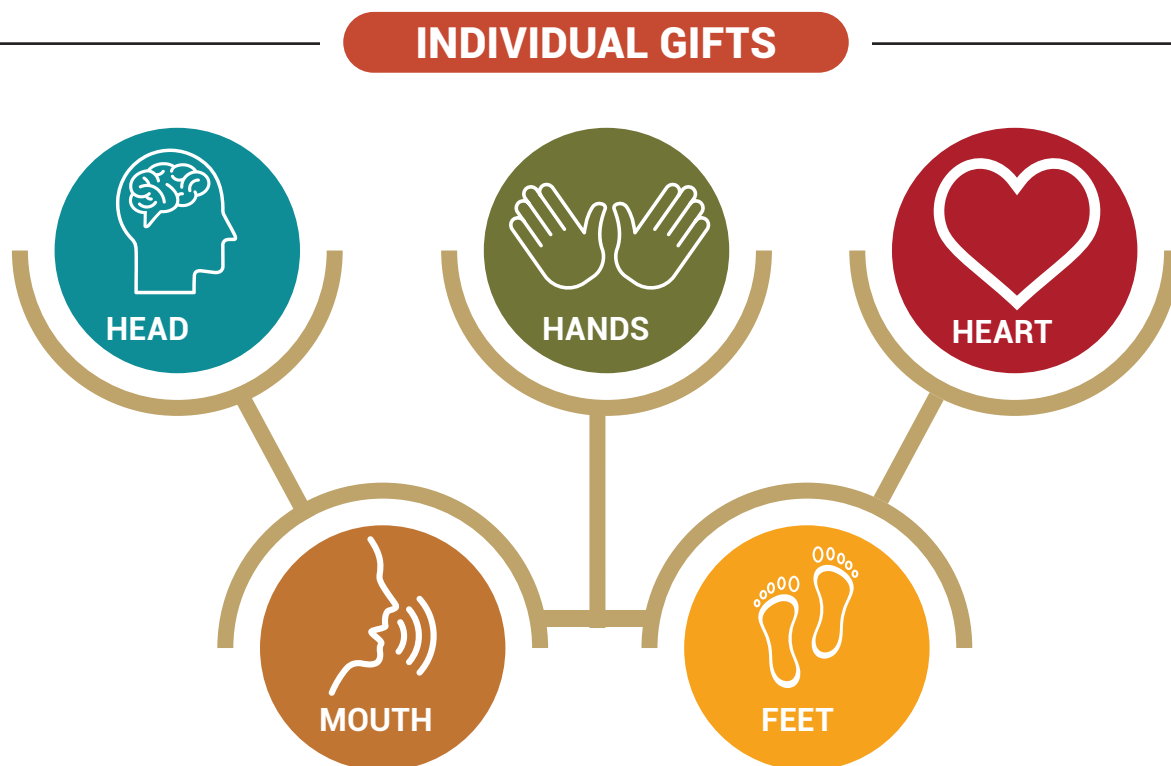
The tools are guides, not rigid procedures. The facilitator should adapt them while preserving the principles of participation, community ownership and asset-based practice.

A. CORE ABCD TOOLS

Tools	Core ABCD Tools	ABCD Step
Tool 1	Five Individual Gifts	Discover
Tool 2	Community Leaky Bucket	Map/Act
Tool 3	Transect Walk	Map
Tool 4	Association Mapping	Connect
Tool 5	Institution Mapping	Connect
Tool 6	Community Visioning	Dream
Tool 7	SOAR	Dream

TOOL 1: THE FIVE INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

THE FIVE GIFTS VISUAL FRAMEWORK



**Every person has five gifts.
When we use them together, we build stronger communities.**



ABCD STAGE: DISCOVER



Purpose:

To help participants recognise and describe the different gifts, abilities, knowledge, relationships and contributions that individuals bring to their community.

The exercise helps participants recognise that community assets are not limited to formal qualifications, occupations or financial resources. Caregiving, storytelling, listening, hospitality, community organising, traditional knowledge and cultural leadership are also valuable community assets.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify their own gifts and abilities;
- Recognise gifts and contributions in other community members;
- Appreciate the different ways people contribute to community life; and
- Identify how individual gifts can contribute to collective action.



Estimated Time

30–45 minutes



Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Five Individual Gifts Worksheet
- Pens or pencils



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Prepare the Five Individual Gifts Worksheet for each participant.
2. Prepare a flipchart showing the five categories of gifts.
3. Arrange participants so that they can work individually and then share in pairs or in the wider group.



How to Facilitate

1. Explain that every person has gifts, abilities, knowledge, relationships or experiences that can contribute to community development.
2. Introduce the five categories of gifts used in the exercise.
3. Ask participants to identify examples from their own lives.
4. Invite participants to complete the worksheet individually.
5. Ask participants to share selected gifts with a partner or small group.
6. Invite participants to identify gifts they have noticed in other people.
7. Record examples on a flipchart.
8. Discuss how these individual gifts could contribute to community-led action.

Examples of Gifts Participants May Undervalue



Caregiving



Community organizing



Storytelling



Traditional knowledge



Listening



Cultural leadership



Hospitality



Expected Output

A completed Five Individual Gifts Worksheet and a shared list of individual gifts and abilities present within the community.

Reflection Questions



- What gifts did you discover in yourself?
- What gifts did you discover in others?
- Which gifts are often overlooked or undervalued?
- How could these gifts contribute to community development?
- What could happen if more community members were encouraged to contribute their gifts?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the information generated to:

- Identify local skills and knowledge;
- Connect people with opportunities to contribute;
- Strengthen volunteerism and local leadership;
- Identify potential mentors and resource persons; and
- Build community-led initiatives around existing capabilities.

Facilitator Tip



- Encourage everyone to contribute.
- Pay particular attention to participants who may initially believe they have nothing to contribute.
- Encourage peers to identify gifts they observe in others.



Key Takeaway

When people recognise and contribute their gifts, communities become stronger, more confident and better able to drive their own development.

Indigenous Reflection



"Ntswanyana e bonwa mabotobotong."

"A person's exceptional talent, bravery, or destiny is obvious from a very young age. Just as you can tell a fierce hunting dog by the way it plays while it is still a pup, a truly gifted or ambitious child will display signs of greatness early in life".

Worksheet Template

OUR COMMUNITY GIFTS WORKSHEET				
Everyone in our community has gifts. Let's discover and celebrate them!				
Community: _____		Date: _____		Facilitator: _____
HEADS What we know, understand and can teach. (Knowledge & Ideas)	HANDS What we can do and make. (Skills & Talents)	HEART What we care about and are passionate about. (Values & Passions)	MOUTH How we share, speak and influence others. (Communication)	FEET Where we go, who we know and how we connect. (Networks & Connections)
REFLECTION What strengths did we discover? _____ How can we use these gifts to build a stronger community? _____ NOTES / NEXT STEPS _____ _____ _____				

Source: Author-generated using OpenAI's ChatGPT image-generation tool, 2026.

TOOL 2: COMMUNITY LEAKY BUCKET



ABCD STAGE: MAP / ACT



Purpose

To help communities understand how money and economic value flow into, circulate within and leave the local economy, and to identify opportunities for keeping more value circulating locally. The Leaky Bucket helps participants move from simply recognising income entering the community to examining what happens to that income after it arrives.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify major sources of income entering the community;
- Identify where money is spent and where it leaves the community;
- Recognise opportunities to reduce economic leakage;
- Identify local assets that could help meet local needs; and
- Consider practical ways of strengthening local production, enterprise and purchasing.



Estimated Time

90 minutes



Materials

- Leaky Bucket Worksheet
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Sticky notes or cards
- Pens or pencils
- Calculator, if required



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Prepare the Leaky Bucket Worksheet.
2. Draw a large bucket on a flipchart.
3. Label the inflows, internal circulation and outflows.
4. Prepare the relevant proverb for the community or language group.



How to Facilitate

1. Introduce the idea of a bucket that loses water through holes or leaks.
2. Explain that the bucket can be used as a metaphor for understanding the local economy.
3. Ask participants to identify money and resources entering the community.
4. Ask where households and community organisations spend their money.

5. Identify goods and services that are purchased outside the community.
6. Record these as economic leaks.
7. Ask participants which needs could potentially be met by local producers, enterprises or community initiatives.
8. Identify existing assets that could help plug the leaks.
9. Discuss practical opportunities for local production, purchasing, partnerships or enterprise development.
10. Record the priority opportunities for further action.



Expected Output

A completed Community Leaky Bucket showing:

- Economic inflows;
- Local circulation;
- Economic leaks; and
- Opportunities for plugging identified leaks.

Reflection Questions



- Where does money enter our community?
- Where does most of it go?
- Which expenditures represent leaks from the local economy?
- Which goods or services could potentially be produced locally?
- What assets already exist that could help plug these leaks?
- Who would need to work together?
- What is one practical opportunity we could explore?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the Leaky Bucket to:

- Identify opportunities for local enterprise development;
- Strengthen local value chains;
- Support local procurement;
- Identify potential partnerships;
- Encourage local purchasing;
- Identify opportunities for community investment; and
- Connect community assets to local economic opportunities.

Facilitator Tip



Do not present the exercise as simply a financial calculation. Encourage participants to explore the relationships between money, local assets, production, purchasing, enterprise and community ownership.

The purpose is not to blame households for where they spend money, but to identify opportunities for strengthening the local economy.

Indigenous Reflection

The Leaky Bucket can be introduced through local expressions of the same idea:



South Africa (Setswana)	"Go gamela mo kgamelong e e dutlang."	Milking into a leaking bucket.
Zimbabwe (Shona)	"Kuchera mvura mutswanda."	Carrying water in a basket.
Malawi (Chichewa)	"Kuthira madzi mu dengu."	Pouring water into a basket.
Zambia (Bemba/Nyanja)	"Ukuteka amenshi mu ciseke."	Fetching water with a basket.
Mozambique (Tsonga)	"Ku chela mati esirhangeni."	Pouring water into a cracked container.

Key Message

The purpose is not simply to identify where money leaves the community, but to discover what the community already has that could help retain more value locally.

Worksheet Template

LEAKY BUCKET WORKSHEET

Understanding Where Money Leaks Out – And How We Keep More In!

PURPOSE

To help our community understand how money comes in, where it leaks out, and how we can keep more money circulating locally to create local jobs, opportunities and wealth.

MONEY LEAKS OUT

- Spending outside the community
- Buying from big chain stores
- Paying for services outside
- Importing goods
- Lack of local businesses
- Poor infrastructure
- Other leakages

1. MONEY THAT COMES INTO OUR COMMUNITY

SOURCE OF INCOME	EXAMPLES
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

TOTAL MONEY COMING IN (Estimate) R _____

2. WHERE MONEY LEAKS OUT OF OUR COMMUNITY

LEAKAGE AREA	EXAMPLES	ESTIMATE (How much?)
1		R _____
2		R _____
3		R _____
4		R _____
5		R _____
6		R _____
7		R _____
8		R _____

TOTAL MONEY LEAKING OUT (Estimate) R _____

3. HOW WE CAN PLUG THE LEAKS (KEEP MORE MONEY LOCAL)

LEAKAGE AREA	IDEAS TO PLUG THE LEAK
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

4. OUR COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

- What can we start doing immediately? _____
- What local businesses or services can we support? _____
- What skills or resources do we need to develop? _____
- Who can help us take action? _____

5. OUR GOAL

Our goal is to keep more money in our community and build local wealth, jobs and opportunities.

By (Date): _____

We will reduce leakages by: _____

REMEMBER

Do not pour water into a leaking bucket. Repair the bucket and keep more of our money working for our community!

Date Completed: _____ Facilitator: _____ Community Group: _____

TOOL 3: TRANSECT WALK



ABCD STAGE: MAP



Purpose

To help community members discover, observe and document the assets, resources and opportunities that exist within their community through a guided walk.

A transect walk helps participants identify physical, natural, social, cultural and economic assets while encouraging discussion about how these assets can be connected and used to support community-led development.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify physical, natural, social, cultural and economic assets within the community;
- Recognise assets and resources that may have been overlooked;
- Identify underused assets and opportunities;
- Consider how different assets can be connected; and
- Identify opportunities for local employment, income generation and community-led development.



Estimated Time

90 minutes



Materials

- Community map (if available)
- Clipboard or notebook
- Transect Walk Worksheet
- Camera or mobile phone (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Drinking water



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Agree on the area to be explored.
2. Identify a safe and accessible route.
3. Prepare the Transect Walk Worksheet.
4. Explain the purpose of the walk to participants.
5. Consider any accessibility requirements and adapt the route accordingly.



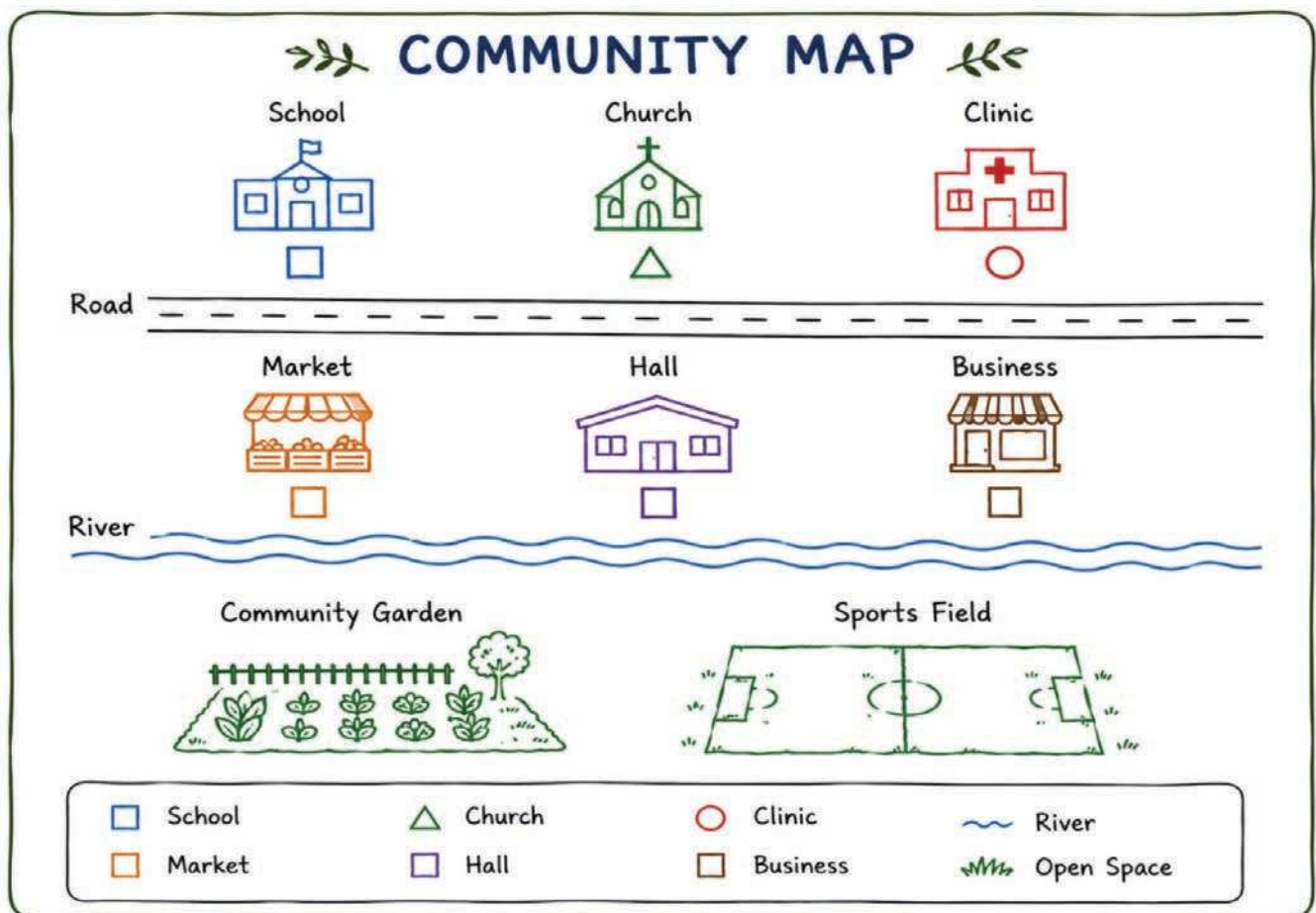
How to Facilitate

1. Explain that the purpose of the transect walk is to notice and document assets and opportunities that may otherwise be overlooked.
2. Agree with participants on the area to be mapped.
3. Conduct the walk through the selected area.
4. Observe and document physical, natural, social, cultural and economic assets.
5. Discuss what participants are observing during the walk.
6. At the end of the walk, review the assets and opportunities identified.
7. Discuss assets that were previously overlooked or underused.
8. Draw or update the community asset map.
9. Validate the map with community members.



Expected Output

A Community Asset Map showing significant assets, resources, opportunities and potentially under-used assets within the community.



Reflection Questions



- What surprised you during the walk?
- Which assets had you never noticed before?
- Which assets are underused?
- Which assets could be better connected?
- What opportunities did you discover?
- Which assets could contribute to local employment or income?
- What partnerships could strengthen these assets?
- What is one action the community could take immediately?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the information generated to:

- Strengthen community asset registers;
- Identify local development opportunities;
- Connect assets and local actors;
- Identify potential partners;
- Support local enterprise and livelihood initiatives; and
- Inform community-led development planning.

Facilitator Tip



Encourage participants to look beyond physical infrastructure and financial resources. Ask them to notice people, skills, relationships, knowledge, cultural practices, natural resources and economic activities.

Remember:



You cannot build on assets you have never noticed.

Worksheet Template

TOOL 6 – OPTION A



COMMUNITY MAPPING WORKSHEET

Our Community, Our Assets, Our Future

ABCD STAGE:
MAP

Purpose: To help community members identify and map the assets, resources and opportunities that exist in our community.

A. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Community: _____ Date: _____
 Facilitator: _____
 Participants / Group: _____
 Area Mapped: _____


B. ASSET CATEGORIES – What assets do we have?

List examples of assets under each category.

Asset Category	Examples of Assets	Where are they located?	Who uses or manages them?
People & Skills (Our people and what we can do)			
Natural Assets (Land, water, vegetation, livestock, etc.)			
Physical Assets (Buildings, roads, equipment, facilities, infrastructure, etc.)			
Social & Community Assets (Groups, networks, relationships, trusts)			
Cultural Assets (Traditions, languages, ceremonies, stories, heritage, etc.)			
Economic Assets (Businesses, farms, markets, enterprises, services, etc.)			

C. ASSETS THAT ARE UNDERUSED

Which assets are not being fully used?

Asset	Why is it underused?	What could unlock its potential?	Who could help?

F. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What surprised us when mapping our community? _____
- Which assets had we never noticed before? _____
- Which assets are most important to our community and why? _____
- Which assets could create the biggest positive change if we work together? _____
- What partnerships could strengthen these assets? _____
- What is one action we can take immediately? _____


D. COMMUNITY ASSET MAP

Draw or update a map of our community. Show where key assets are located. Use symbols, colours, or words to identify them.



Map Title: _____

MAP KEY – Use symbols or colours

People & Skills _____	Social & Community Assets _____
Natural Assets _____	Cultural Assets _____
Physical Assets _____	Economic Assets _____
	Opportunities _____

E. OPPORTUNITIES WE DISCOVERED

What opportunities exist when we connect or use our assets together?

Opportunity	Assets that can support it	Who could be involved?	Possible benefit to our community

G. OUR TOP PRIORITIES (Choose up to 3)

Priority (1,2,3)	Asset / Opportunity	Why is it important?	Next Step / Action
1			
2			
3			


KEY MESSAGE:

 We already have many gifts in our community.
 When we see them, value them and use them together,
 we build a stronger, more prosperous future for all.

Remember:

"You cannot build on assets you have never noticed."

TOOL 4: ASSOCIATION MAPPING



ABCD STAGE: CONNECT



Purpose

To help participants identify community associations, recognise the strengths they contribute, and explore opportunities to strengthen relationships, collaboration and collective action.

Associations are voluntary groups formed around shared interests, such as savings groups, youth clubs, cooperatives, faith groups and farmer associations. Strong relationships, trust and collective action are important community assets for sustainable community development.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify formal and informal community associations;
- Recognise the assets and strengths each association contributes;
- Understand the importance of relationships and networks in community development;
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between associations; and
- Identify ways of strengthening collective action within the community.



Estimated Time

45 minutes



Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Association Mapping Worksheet
- Cards or sticky notes
- Pens or pencils



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Prepare the Association Mapping Worksheet.
2. Prepare a large working surface for mapping associations and their relationships.
3. Consider the types of associations likely to be present in the community.
4. Create an inclusive environment in which participants can identify both formal and informal groups.



How to Facilitate

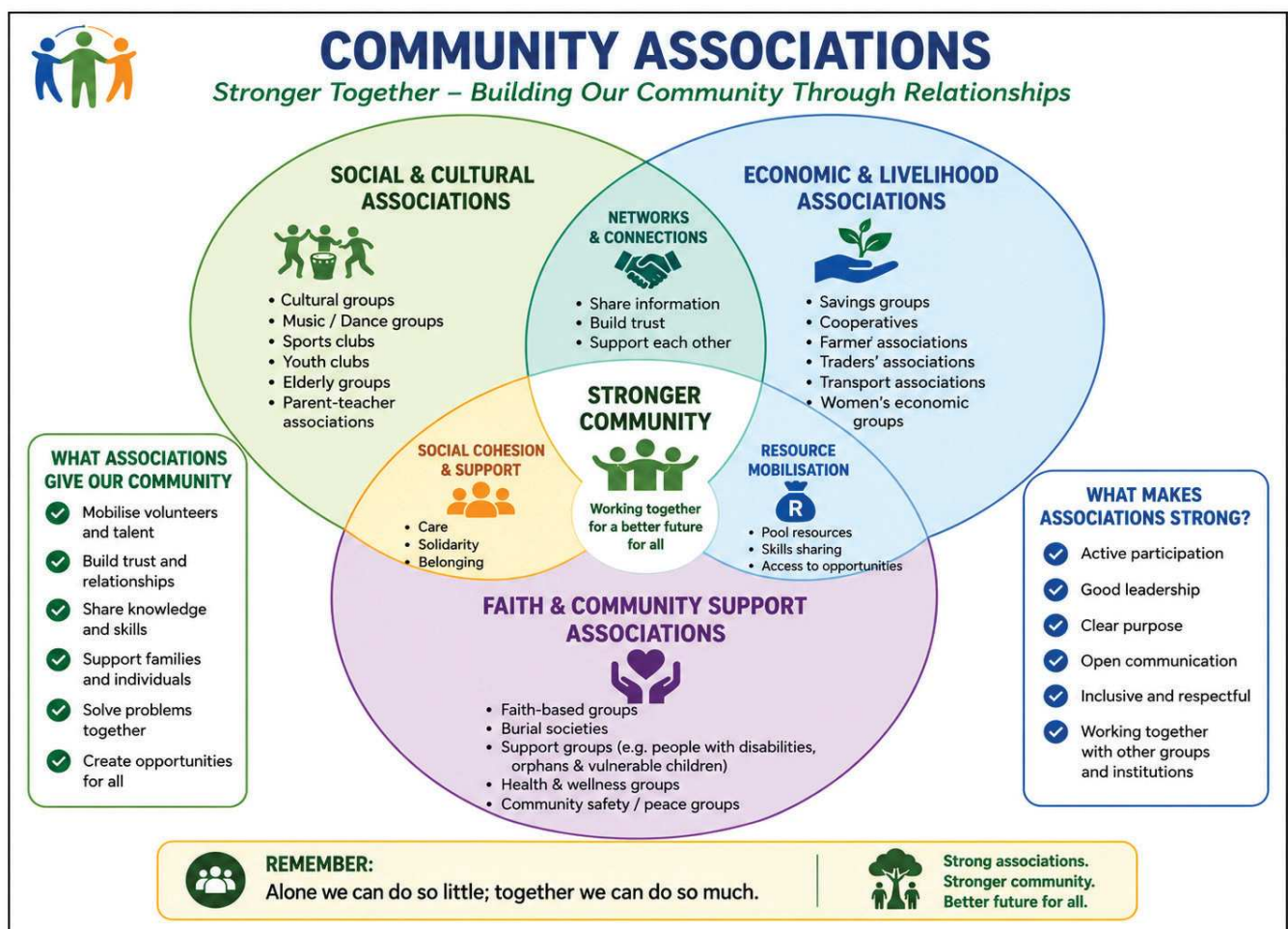
1. Explain what is meant by a community association.
2. Ask participants to identify associations currently active in the community.
3. Record each association on a card or sticky note.
4. Ask participants to identify the main strengths, assets and contributions of each association.
5. Map relationships between the associations.
6. Identify associations that are well connected and those that are isolated.
7. Identify opportunities for collaboration and collective action.
8. Discuss which relationships could be strengthened.
9. Record priority opportunities for connection and collaboration.



Expected Output

An Association Venn Diagram showing community associations, their relationships and opportunities for collaboration.

Output: Association Venn Diagram



Reflection Questions



- Which groups are already active?
- What strengths and assets does each group contribute?
- Which organisations or associations are underutilised?
- Which groups are already working well together?
- Who is not currently connected?
- What opportunities exist for collaboration?
- What relationships should be strengthened?
- What could the associations achieve by working together?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the information generated to:

- Identify local organisations and informal groups;
- Strengthen networks between community associations;
- Identify potential partners for community initiatives;
- Connect complementary assets and capabilities;
- Strengthen local leadership and collective action; and
- Support community-led partnerships.

Facilitator Tip



Do not assume that only registered organisations are community assets. Informal groups, networks and relationships may be equally important.

Encourage participants to recognise both what associations do and what relationships they make possible.

Remember:



*"Ga ke thata ke le nosi, ke thata ka ba bangwe."
I am not strong by myself; I am strong with others.*

Worksheet:

TOOL 4

ASSOCIATION MAPPING WORKSHEET

Purpose: To help participants identify community associations, recognise the strengths they contribute, and explore opportunities to strengthen relationships, collaboration and collective action.



ABCD STAGE:
CONNECT

A. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Community: _____ Date: _____
Facilitator: _____
Participants/Group: _____

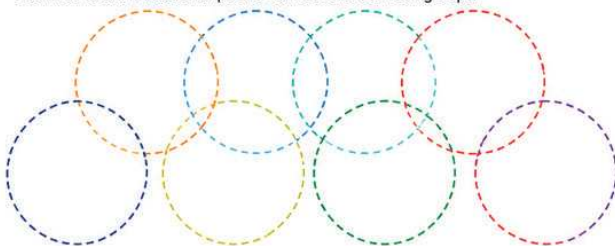
B. IDENTIFY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

List all the associations, groups and clubs that are active in your community. Include both formal and informal groups.

No.	Name of Association / Group	What is the main purpose of this group?	Who are the members?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

D. ASSOCIATION VENN DIAGRAM (RELATIONSHIPS MAP)

Write the name or number of each association in a circle below. Use lines to show relationships and connections between groups.



Key: ——— Strong relationship - - - - - Some relationship No relationship

F. COLLABORATION IDEAS

List ideas for how associations could work together to achieve more.

Collaboration Idea	Associations Involved	Possible Benefit

C. STRENGTHS AND ASSETS OF EACH ASSOCIATION

What **strengths, resources or assets** does each association contribute to the community?

No.	Name of Association / Group	Strengths, Assets or Contributions to the Community
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
9.		
10.		

E. ANALYSIS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Which associations are well connected and work closely together?

2. Which associations are isolated or not well connected?

3. Which associations have similar goals or activities?

4. What opportunities exist for collaboration or joint activities?

5. What relationships should be strengthened?

G. REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

One key insight from this exercise: _____

One action we can take to strengthen collaboration: _____

Who will take the lead? _____ By when? _____



KEY MESSAGE: "Ga ke thata ke le nosi, ke thata ka ba bangwe." I am not strong by myself; I am strong with others. Together our associations are stronger and our community can achieve more.



TOOL 5: INSTITUTION MAPPING



ABCD STAGE: CONNECT



Purpose

To help participants identify the institutions within their community, recognise the assets and resources they contribute, and explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships that support community-led development and local economic growth.

Institutions can act as community economic anchors by providing essential services, employment, infrastructure, leadership, expertise, investment and networks.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify key institutions within their community;
- Understand the roles, resources and services provided by different institutions;
- Recognise opportunities for partnerships between institutions, Community Foundations and community associations;
- Identify ways institutions can support community-led development; and
- Identify opportunities for local procurement, enterprise development and community wealth building.



Estimated Time

45 minutes



Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Institution Mapping Worksheet
- Cards or sticky notes
- Pens or pencils



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Prepare the Institution Mapping Worksheet.
2. Identify the broad categories of institutions that may be present in the community.
3. Prepare a working surface for mapping institutions and their contributions.
4. Encourage participants to think beyond government institutions and include businesses, schools, health facilities, traditional leadership structures, faith organisations, civil society organisations and other relevant institutions



How to Facilitate

1. Explain that institutions can be important community assets and economic anchors.
2. Ask participants to identify key institutions within and around the community.
3. Record the institutions identified.
4. Discuss the role and contribution of each institution.
5. Identify the assets and resources each institution can contribute, such as skills, facilities, funding, expertise, networks or procurement opportunities.
6. Identify institutions that already work well with the community.
7. Identify institutions that are missing, underutilised or not actively engaged.
8. Explore opportunities for stronger partnerships.
9. Identify practical actions for strengthening relationships between institutions, community associations and residents.



Expected Output

An **Institution Matrix** identifying key institutions, their contributions, existing relationships and potential partnership opportunities.

 INSTITUTIONS: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC ANCHORS Working With Communities to Build Local Wealth and Shared Prosperity 					
TYPE OF INSTITUTION	EXAMPLES	KEY ASSETS & RESOURCES	HOW THEY SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY	EXAMPLES OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS	HOW THEY CAN STRENGTHEN LOCAL ECONOMY
 SCHOOLS & EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	Primary & secondary schools, TVET colleges, universities	- Buildings & facilities - Knowledge & skills - Teachers & expertise - Learner potential	- Provide education & skills - Develop future workforce - Offer facilities for community use - Support local projects & research	- Career guidance with youth - School gardens with farmers - Adult education programmes	- Hire locally - Buy from local suppliers - Support local enterprises - Skills development for locals
 HEALTH INSTITUTIONS	Clinics, hospitals, community health centres	- Health services - Trained staff - Infrastructure - Health information	- Provide healthcare services - Health promotion & education - Create jobs - Support community wellbeing	- Health awareness campaigns - Community health volunteers - Local transport & suppliers	- Employ local people - Procure local goods & food - Support local enterprises - Strengthen healthy workforce
 GOVERNMENT & MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS	Municipality, government departments, traditional authorities	- Policy & regulation - Infrastructure - Funding & grants - Public services	- Provide basic services - Develop infrastructure - Ensure safety & governance - Mobilise resources	- Ward committees - Public consultations - Community projects	- Prioritise local procurement - Support local enterprises - Invest in local infrastructure - Create local employment
 BUSINESSES & PRIVATE SECTOR	Local businesses, companies, cooperatives, farms	- Capital & investment - Skills & expertise - Jobs & income - Markets & networks	- Provide employment - Pay taxes & local levies - Support local suppliers - Offer products & services	- Local supplier development - Learnerships & internships - Enterprise development	- Buy locally - Invest in local enterprises - Employ local people - Keep wealth circulating locally
 FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	Banks, credit unions, cooperatives, microfinance institutions	- Financial services - Loans & savings - Financial expertise - Investment capital	- Provide access to finance - Promote savings & credit - Support financial inclusion - Build financial capability	- Financial literacy programmes - Support cooperatives - Fund local enterprises	- Finance local enterprises - Invest in local projects - Support SMMEs - Build local wealth
 NGOS & COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS	NGOs, CBOs, NPOs, Community Foundations	- Community knowledge - Mobilisation capacity - Donor networks - Project management	- Address community needs - Mobilise communities - Provide services & support - Advocate for change	- Joint community projects - Capacity building - Resource mobilisation	- Support local initiatives - Strengthen local capacity - Connect with resources - Promote social enterprise
 FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS	Churches, mosques, faith-based groups	- Moral & spiritual leadership - Volunteer networks - Facilities & spaces - Community trust	- Provide spiritual & social support - Promote values & unity - Care for vulnerable groups - Mobilise volunteers	- Social support programmes - Youth & family support - Community outreach	- Use local suppliers - Support local initiatives - Promote community cohesion - Encourage giving & solidarity
KEY MESSAGE  Institutions are more than service providers — they are community economic anchors. When they invest in people, purchase locally, support local enterprises and partner with communities, they help build local wealth and create shared prosperity for all.   STRONG INSTITUTIONS STRONG COMMUNITIES STRONG FUTURE					

Reflection Questions



- Which institutions are the most influential in your community, and why?
- What assets—such as skills, facilities, funding, expertise or networks—do these institutions contribute?
- Which institutions are already working well with the community?
- Which important institutions are missing or not actively engaged?
- How can Community Foundations strengthen partnerships between institutions, community associations and local residents?
- How can institutions support local procurement, local enterprises and community wealth building?
- What one action can the community take to build stronger relationships with its key institutions?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the information generated to:

- Identify potential institutional partners;
- Strengthen relationships between communities and institutions;
- Identify local procurement and enterprise opportunities;
- Mobilise institutional assets and expertise;
- Strengthen community leadership and ownership; and
- Develop partnerships that support sustainable community-led development.

Facilitator Tip



Encourage participants to view institutions not only as service providers but also as potential community economic anchors.

Explore what institutions can contribute to the community and what opportunities exist for mutually beneficial partnerships.



Remember:

Strong institutions become true community anchors when they work with communities, invest locally and build partnerships that create shared prosperity.

Worksheet:

TOOL 5

INSTITUTION MAPPING WORKSHEET

Purpose: To help participants identify the institutions in and around the community, recognise the assets and resources they contribute, and explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships that support community-led development.



ABCD STAGE:
CONNECT

A. COMMUNITY INFORMATION



Community: _____ Date: _____

Facilitator: _____

Participants/Group: _____

B. IDENTIFY KEY INSTITUTIONS

List all the institutions in and around the community. Include government, private, faith-based, traditional, educational, health, financial and other relevant institutions.

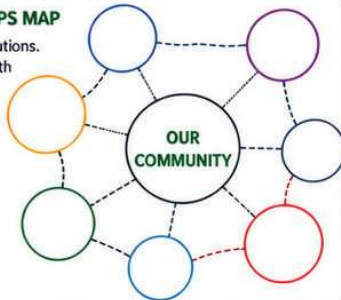
No.	Name of Institution	Type of Institution (e.g., Govt, Private, CSO, Faith, Traditional, Education, Health, etc.)	Location (Within / Outside)	Who are their main beneficiaries?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

D. INSTITUTION RELATIONSHIPS MAP

Draw the relationships between institutions. Use the key below to show the strength of the relationship.

KEY:

- Strong relationship
- - - Some relationship
- Weak relationship
- No relationship / Not connected



C. INSTITUTIONS: ASSETS, ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS



For each institution, describe the assets/resources they have and how they contribute to the community.

No.	Name of Institution	What is the main role of the institution?	Assets / Resources they have (skills, facilities, funding, expertise, networks, etc.)	How do they contribute to the community?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

E. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Identify opportunities to work together for community development.

Potential Partner Institution(s)	Area of Possible Collaboration	Mutual Benefit / Value	First Step / Action

F. INSTITUTIONS TO ENGAGE MORE



Which important institutions are not yet engaged or are underutilised?

Institution	Why are they not engaged or underutilised?	How can we engage them?	Who will take the lead?

G. REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS



Which institutions are the most influential in our community, and why?



What institutions are already working well with the community?



What one action can we take to strengthen relationships with key institutions?



Our first action: _____

Who will take the lead? _____

Resources or support needed: _____

By when? _____



KEY MESSAGE: Institutions are more than service providers. They can become community economic anchors by investing in people, supporting local enterprises and partnering with communities to create shared prosperity.



TOOL 6: COMMUNITY VISIONING



ABCD STAGE: DREAM



Purpose

To help community members imagine and express the future they want to create together and develop a shared community vision based on their strengths, aspirations and opportunities.

Community visioning should enable everyone to contribute, regardless of literacy level or preferred way of expressing ideas.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Imagine a positive future for their community;
- Express their aspirations for the community;
- Identify common themes and priorities;
- Develop a shared understanding of the future they want; and
- Begin identifying the changes and actions needed to move towards that future.



Estimated Time

60–90 minutes, depending on the approach selected



Materials

Depending on the selected approach:

- Flipcharts
- Markers
- Coloured cards
- Magazines, optional
- Glue and scissors, optional
- Visioning Worksheet
- SOAR Template, where appropriate



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Decide which visioning approach is most appropriate for the group.
2. Prepare the relevant materials and worksheet.
3. Consider literacy, language, accessibility and group size.
4. Explain that the purpose is to imagine possibilities before discussing limitations and detailed implementation.
5. Prepare a space where groups can display and discuss their ideas.

Choose ONE Visioning Approach

The following approaches are alternatives. They do not all need to be completed in one session. Select the approach that best suits the group.

OPTION A: Pictorial Community Vision

Participants draw or create a picture of what they want their community to look like in five to ten years.

They may use drawings, pictures, symbols or a combination of these.

After completing their pictures, participants share them and identify common themes that can contribute to a shared community vision.



Source: The Valley Trust Workshop: Molweni Community Vision

Reflection Question:

What does your picture tell us about the future you want to create together?

OPTION B: Future Headlines

Ask participants to imagine that a local newspaper publishes a positive headline about their community five years from now.

Participants develop a headline and, where appropriate, a short news story describing what the community has achieved.

Example:

Valley of 1000 Hills Community Wins National Award for Food Security and Local Enterprise



Reflection Question:

What must we do today for this headline to become reality?

OPTION C: Dream Community

Invite participants to imagine walking through their community five years from now.

Ask them to describe:

- What do they see?
- What do they hear?
- What are people doing?
- How are people working together?
- What has changed?
- What makes them proud of their community?

Record the ideas and use them to identify common themes, a shared vision and community priorities.

**Reflection Question:**

What is one change you would like future generations to thank us for?

OPTION D: Gallery Walk

Use this approach where several groups have developed different visions.

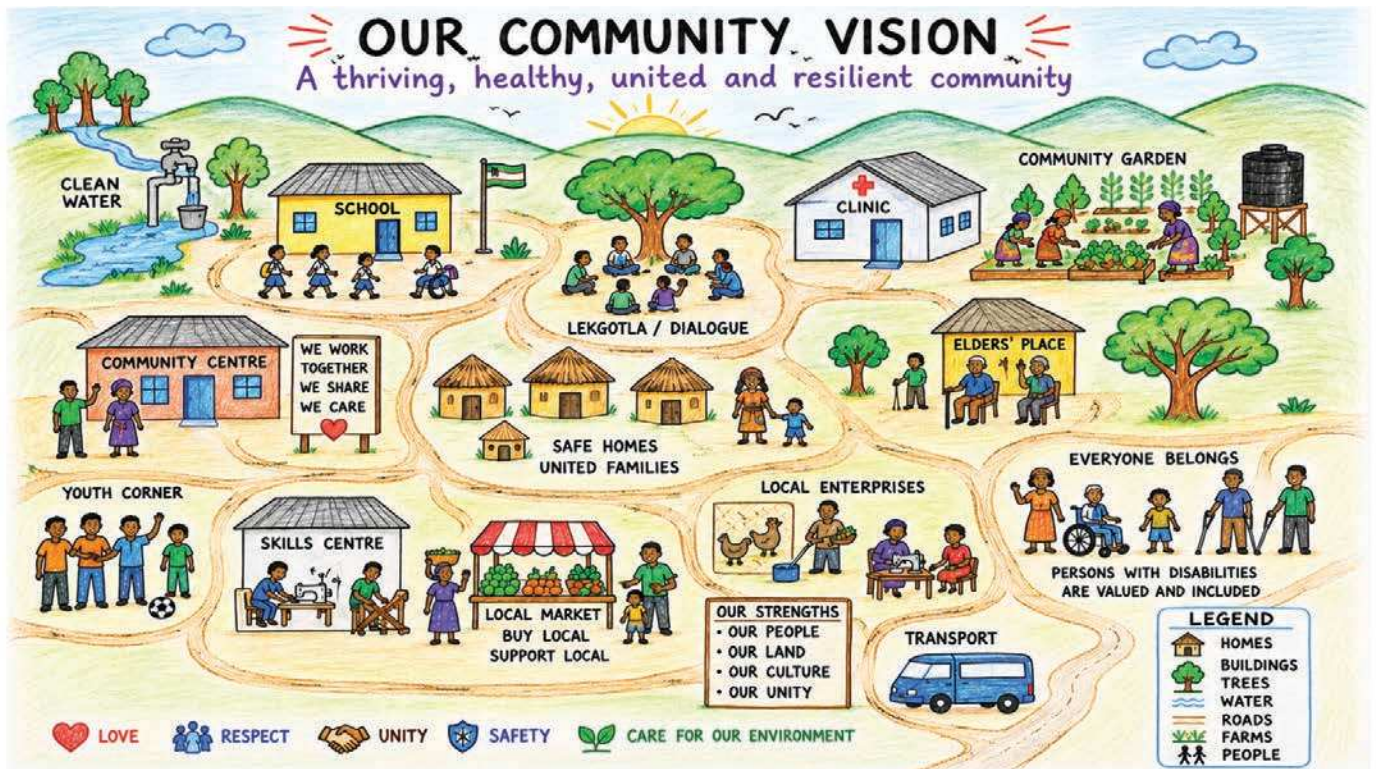
1. Display the groups' drawings or vision statements.
2. Invite participants to walk around and review the different visions.
3. Ask participants to identify common themes.
4. Discuss differences and similarities.
5. Agree on the elements that should form part of the shared community vision.

Record the ideas and use them to identify common themes, a shared vision and community priorities.



Expected Output

A Shared Community Vision expressed through drawings, statements, headlines, themes or a combination of these approaches.



Reflection Questions



- What kind of community do we want to create?
- What strengths can help us achieve this vision?
- What opportunities can we build on?
- What changes are most important?
- What should we begin doing now?
- What would future generations thank us for?

Community Foundation Application

Community Foundations can use the shared vision to:

- Guide community priorities;
- Inform action planning;
- Align partners around common aspirations;
- Identify opportunities for investment;
- Support community-led initiatives; and
- Provide a reference point for monitoring progress and learning.



Facilitator Tip

Allow participants to dream before introducing limitations such as funding, capacity or existing constraints.

"If anything were possible, what kind of community would we create together?"

Worksheet:

TOOL 6



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHEET

Imagine Our Future Together

Purpose: To help community members imagine and express the future they want to create together and develop a shared community vision.

ABCD STAGE:
DREAM



A. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Community: _____ Date: _____
Facilitator: _____
Participants / Group: _____
Number of Participants: _____ Location: _____

B. CHOOSE ONE VISIONING APPROACH

Select the approach that works best for your group.
You do not need to use all of them.



	OPTION A PICTORIAL COMMUNITY VISION	Draw or create a picture of what you want our community to look like in 5 to 10 years.
	OPTION B FUTURE HEADLINES	Write a newspaper headline and short story about our community 5 years from now.
	OPTION C DREAM COMMUNITY	Imagine walking through our community 5 years from now. What do you see, hear and experience?
	OPTION D GALLERY WALK (SYNTHESIS)	Use this after groups have created their visions. Walk around, review all visions and identify common themes.

Which approach did we choose? _____

C. OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Use the space below to express our community vision using drawings, words, symbols, headlines or any way that works for us.



Our Vision in One Sentence: _____

E. OUR COMMON THEMES AND PRIORITIES

What are the most important things that emerged from our vision?



- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

D. WHAT DOES OUR FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Describe our community 5 to 10 years from now.



	What do we see?	
	What do we hear?	
	What are people doing?	
	How are people working together?	
	What has changed?	
	What makes us proud?	

F. WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION?

What strengths, opportunities and resources can help us achieve this future?



Our Strengths (What we have)	Our Opportunities (What is possible)	Our Resources (What can we use)

G. REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

- ★ What kind of community do we want to create? _____
- ★ If anything were possible, what would we create? _____
- ★ What should we begin doing now? _____
- ★ What would future generations thank us for? _____

One action we can take now: _____

Who will take the lead? _____

By when will we start? _____



KEY MESSAGE: A shared vision gives us direction, unity and hope. When we dream together, we can build a stronger, more prosperous community for all.

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

TOOL 7: SOAR



ABCD STAGE: DREAM



Purpose

To help communities build on their **Strengths**, identify **Opportunities**, define their **Aspirations**, and agree on the **Results** they want to achieve.

SOAR provides an appreciative and asset-based approach to turning community strengths and opportunities into a shared vision and practical direction for action.

SOAR stands for:

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
What are we best at?	What possibilities exist?	What future do we want?	What outcomes do we seek?
Strategic Inquiry		Appreciative Intent	



Learning Outcome

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify community strengths;
- Recognise opportunities for development;
- Articulate shared aspirations;
- Identify the results they want to achieve; and
- Begin translating aspirations into practical priorities.



Estimated Time

60 minutes



Materials

- SOAR Template
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Sticky notes or cards
- Pens or pencils



Preparation

Before the activity:

1. Prepare a SOAR Template for each group or participant.
2. Prepare a flipchart showing the four SOAR elements.
3. Ensure that participants understand the difference between strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results.
4. Where appropriate, use information generated through earlier Discover and Map activities.



How to Facilitate

1. Introduce the four elements of SOAR.
2. Begin with **Strengths** and ask participants what the community does well and what assets it can build on.
3. Move to **Opportunities** and ask what possibilities exist within or around the community.
4. Ask participants to describe their **Aspirations** for the future.
5. Identify the **Results** they want to see.
6. Review the four areas together.
7. Identify common themes and priorities.
8. Discuss how the SOAR results can inform the next stage of community action planning.



Expected Output

A completed **SOAR Matrix** identifying:

- Community strengths;
- Opportunities;
- Shared aspirations

Reflection Questions



- What are we already good at?
- Which strengths are underused?
- What opportunities can we build on?
- What future do we want to create?
- What results would show that we are making progress?
- Which aspirations should become priorities?
- What assets and partnerships could help us achieve the desired results?

Community Foundation Application



Community Foundations can use the SOAR results to:

- Support strategic community planning;
- Connect community strengths to opportunities;
- Identify priorities for investment;
- Align partners around shared aspirations;
- Develop measurable results; and
- Inform community action plans and monitoring frameworks.

Facilitator Tip



Keep the conversation focused on possibility and strengths, while allowing participants to identify realistic results.

Do not turn SOAR into a problem-listing exercise. Challenges can be considered later when communities develop their action plans and identify what is needed to move from aspiration to action.



Key Message

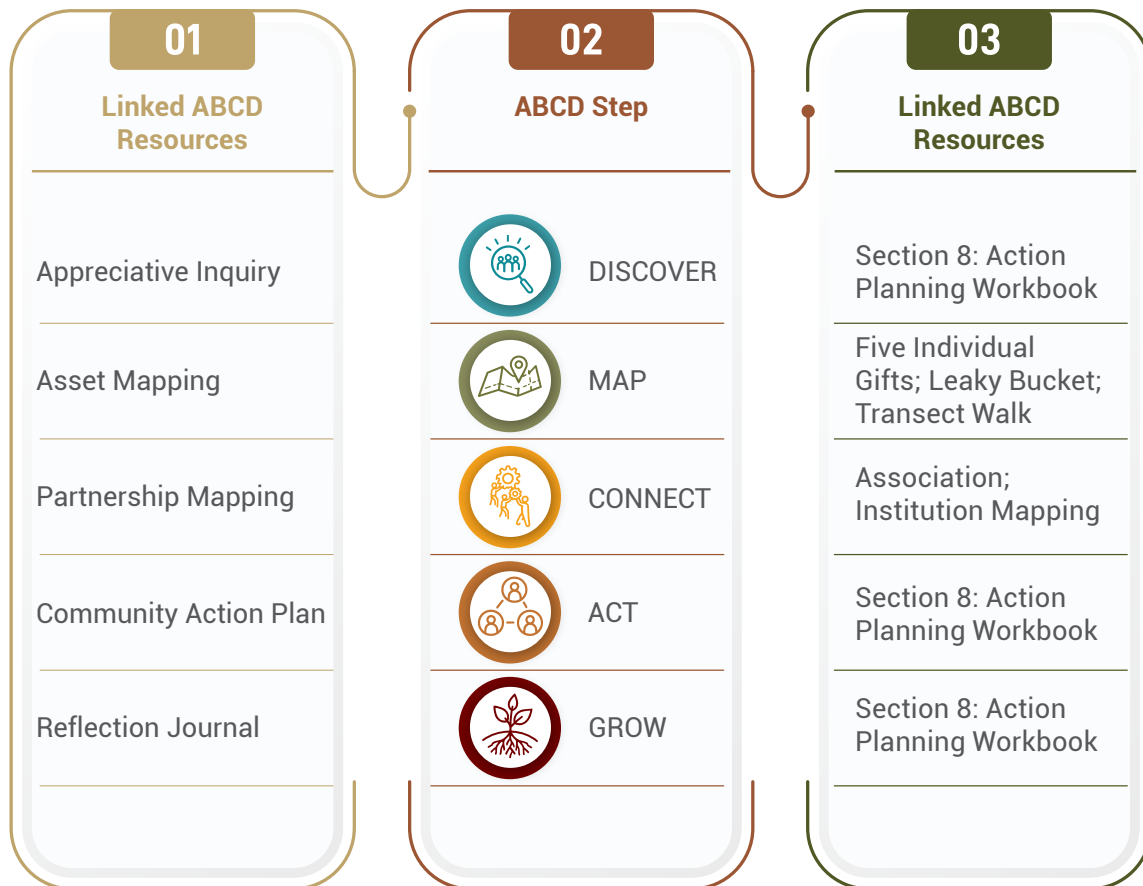
Communities are more likely to act when they can see a future built from the strengths and possibilities already present around them.

Worksheet:

SOAR WORKSHEET TEMPLATE			
Community/Group: _____		Date: _____	Facilitator: _____
SOAR helps us build on our strengths, explore opportunities, dream about our future and agree on results we want to achieve together.			
S – STRENGTHS What are we doing well? What are our assets, resources and talents?	O – OPPORTUNITIES What opportunities exist around us? What can we take advantage of?	A – ASPIRATIONS What is our dream? What do we want our community to look like?	R – RESULTS What results do we want to achieve? How will we know we have succeeded?
List our strengths	List opportunities	List our aspirations	List results
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____	8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____	9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____	10. _____	10. _____
Key strengths we will build on: • _____ • _____ • _____	Top opportunities we can pursue: • _____ • _____ • _____	Our top aspirations (5–10 years): • _____ • _____ • _____	Key results we will achieve: • _____ • _____ • _____
Next Steps: From our SOAR, what actions will we take first? _____ Who will do what? _____			

Linked ABCD Resources

The following resources complement the seven core tools and can be used when appropriate. They are linked to the ABCD Journey and to other sections of the Toolkit.



Toolbox Notes

- ✓ Photocopy-friendly
- ✓ Clearly structured for facilitation
- ✓ Easy to adapt
- ✓ Can be used independently
- ✓ Linked to the six-step ABCD Journey
- ✓ Suitable for Community Foundations, NGOs and community facilitators

SECTION 6:

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Are We Ready to Facilitate Asset-Based Community Development?

Opening Reflection

"Molelo o tshwanetse go simolola kwa legageng."

(Setswana)

"The fire must start in the cave"

Community Foundations cannot effectively promote Asset-Based Community-led Development unless they first embrace its principles internally. Before supporting communities, it is important to reflect on how asset-based your own policies, programmes and practices are.



WHY CONDUCT A SELF-ASSESSMENT?



Reflect on current practice.



Identify strengths and areas for improvement.



Measure progress towards becoming more asset-based.



Strengthen community ownership and participation.



Develop an action plan for organisational improvement.

Mini Self-Assessments throughout the Toolkit

a. Community Participation

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Community members influence decisions.					

b. Local Leadership

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
We strengthen local leadership					

c. Local Philanthropy

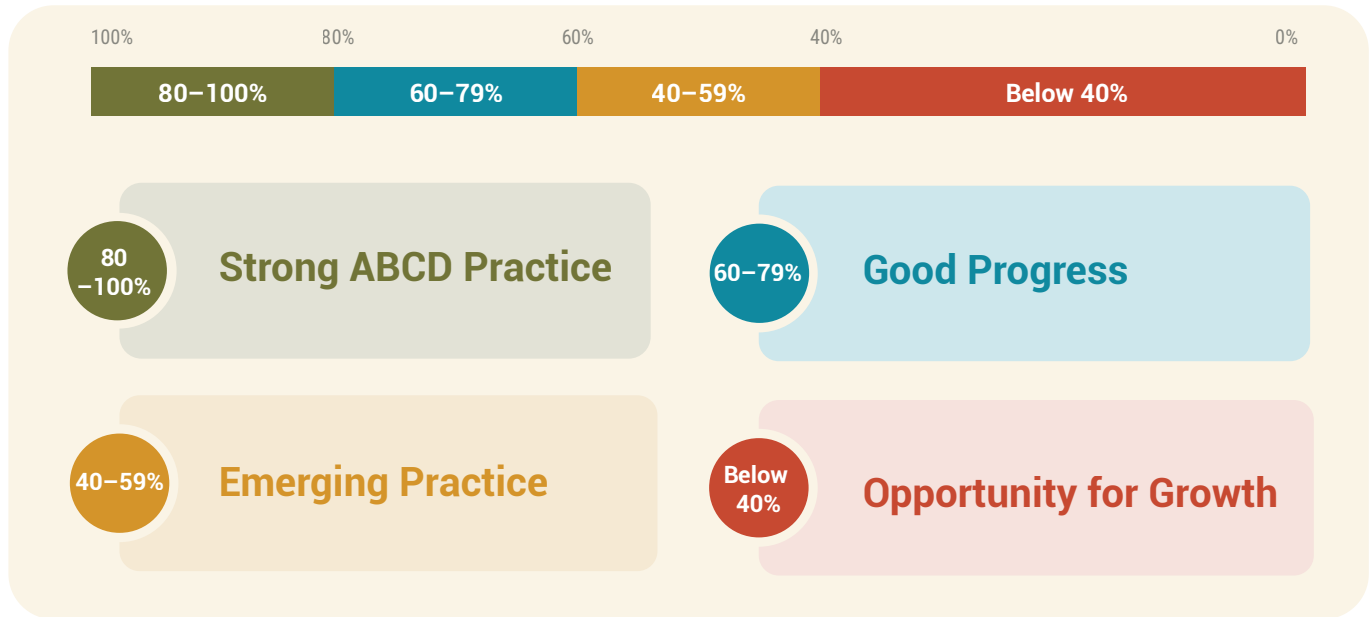
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
We encourage local giving and volunteerism.					

Final ABCD Health Check

After completing the toolkit, participants combine their scores.

Practice Area	SCORE
Community Participation	
Leadership	
Asset Mapping	
Local Philanthropy	
Partnerships	
Community Wealth Building	
Community Ownership	
Monitoring & Learning	

Your ABCD Profile



Reflection Questions



- What are we doing well?
- What should we strengthen?
- What should we stop doing?
- What will we do differently?



Remember

"You cannot give what you do not practise."

Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

"Go tshwanetse ga utlwiwa tsotlhe."

"Every voice must be heard."

Why Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation?

Once Community Foundations begin implementing ABCD, they need to monitor not only activities but also changes in relationships, leadership, participation and community ownership.

ABCD asks a different question:

What has changed in people's lives, relationships, leadership, and communities?

What should we monitor?

Area	Examples
People	Skills, confidence, leadership
Associations	Participation, collaboration
Institutions	Partnerships
Economic Assets	Enterprise growth, local procurement
Community Ownership	Volunteerism, local contributions

The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) using the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique actively involves community members in monitoring progress, reflecting on their experiences and identifying meaningful changes resulting from community initiatives. It strengthens community ownership, accountability and shared learning.

The MSC technique collects stories of change from community members and other stakeholders to capture outcomes that may not be reflected in traditional indicators or statistics. These stories help communities understand what has changed, why it matters, and what can be learned to improve future action.



Key Message

"Not everything that counts can be counted. Stories of change often reveal impacts that numbers alone cannot capture."

MSC is particularly useful when:

- Outcomes are difficult to predict.
- Community change is complex.
- Different stakeholders value different results.
- Community participation is important.

HOW TO USE MSC

The MSC technique follows five simple steps to help communities identify, reflect on and learn from the changes they have experienced.

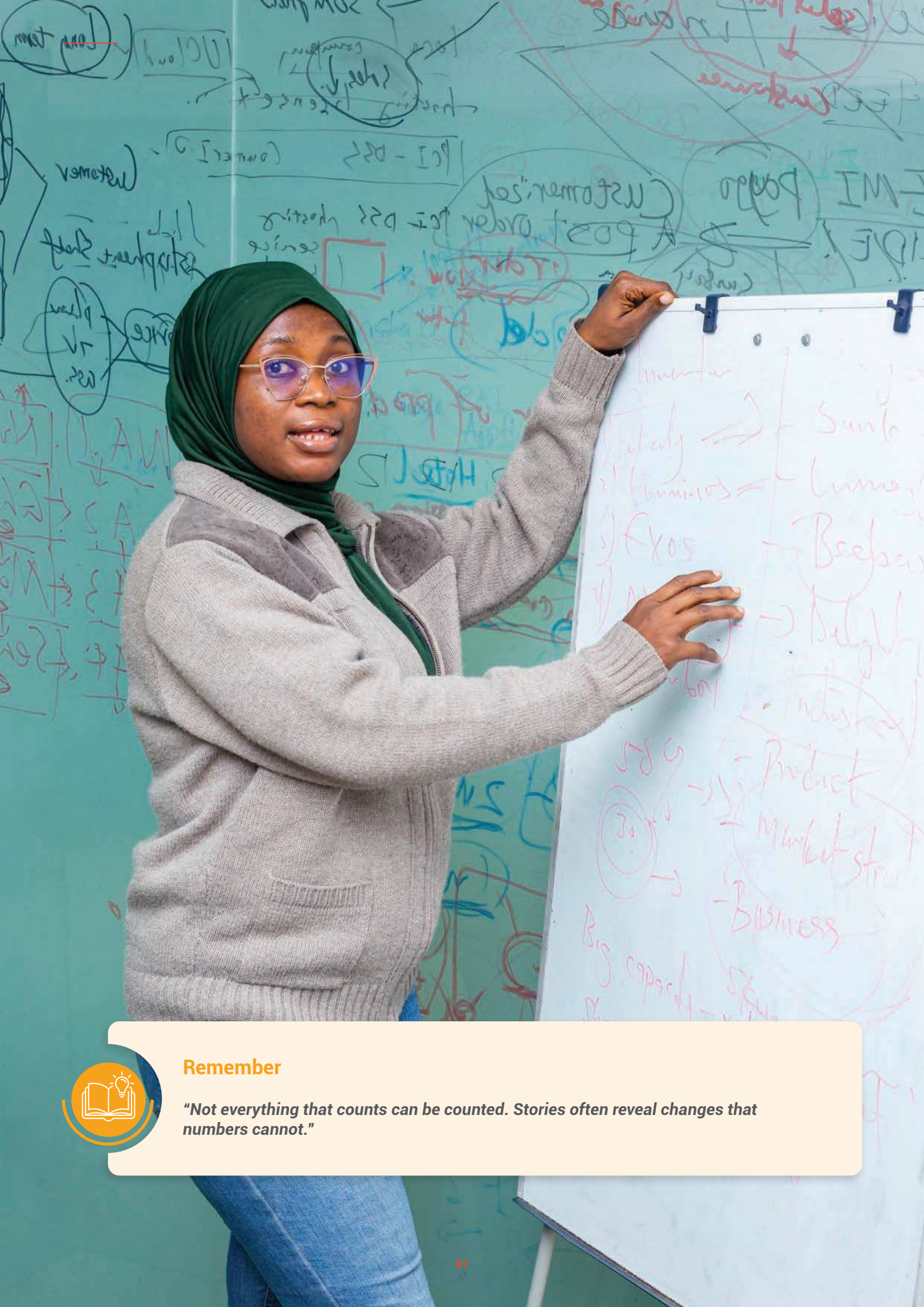
Step	What to Do	Guiding Questions
1. Define Areas of Change	Agree on the areas where you want to see change before collecting stories.	What changes are we hoping to see? Examples: • Leadership development • Community participation • Local giving and philanthropy • Economic opportunities • Social cohesion • Community ownership
2. Collect Stories of Change	Invite community members and stakeholders to share their experiences in their own words.	What is the most significant change you have experienced as a result of this initiative?
3. Share and Reflect	Read or tell the stories in a group and discuss the changes they describe.	• What changes do we hear? • Which stories resonate most with us? • What do these stories tell us about our community?
4. Select the Most Significant Stories	Together, identify the stories that best demonstrate meaningful change.	• Why is this story significant? • What made this change possible? • What can we learn from it? • How can we build on this success?
5. Apply the Learning	Use the lessons from the stories to improve programmes, strengthen partnerships and inform future planning.	• What should we continue doing? • What should we improve? • What actions will we take next?

Most Significant Change

Use community stories to answer:

“What is the most significant change you have experienced?”

This complements quantitative indicators and captures outcomes that numbers alone cannot measure



Remember

"Not everything that counts can be counted. Stories often reveal changes that numbers cannot."

SECTION 7:

LEARNING FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

Case Studies in Community-Led Development

Opening Reflection

"Wisdom grows when communities learn from one another."

Communities across Southern Africa have long practised collective action, local philanthropy and mutual support. These case studies demonstrate how indigenous knowledge and local assets can be mobilised to strengthen livelihoods, build resilience and promote sustainable community-led development



FIVE REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

Country	Indigenous Practice	Key Theme
1. South Africa	Letsema & Leaky Bucket	Community Wealth Building
2. Zimbabwe	Nhimbe	Collective Action
3. Malawi	Village Savings & Loans	Financial Assets
4. Mozambique	Xitique	Local Philanthropy
5. Zambia	Community Foundation	Community Leadership

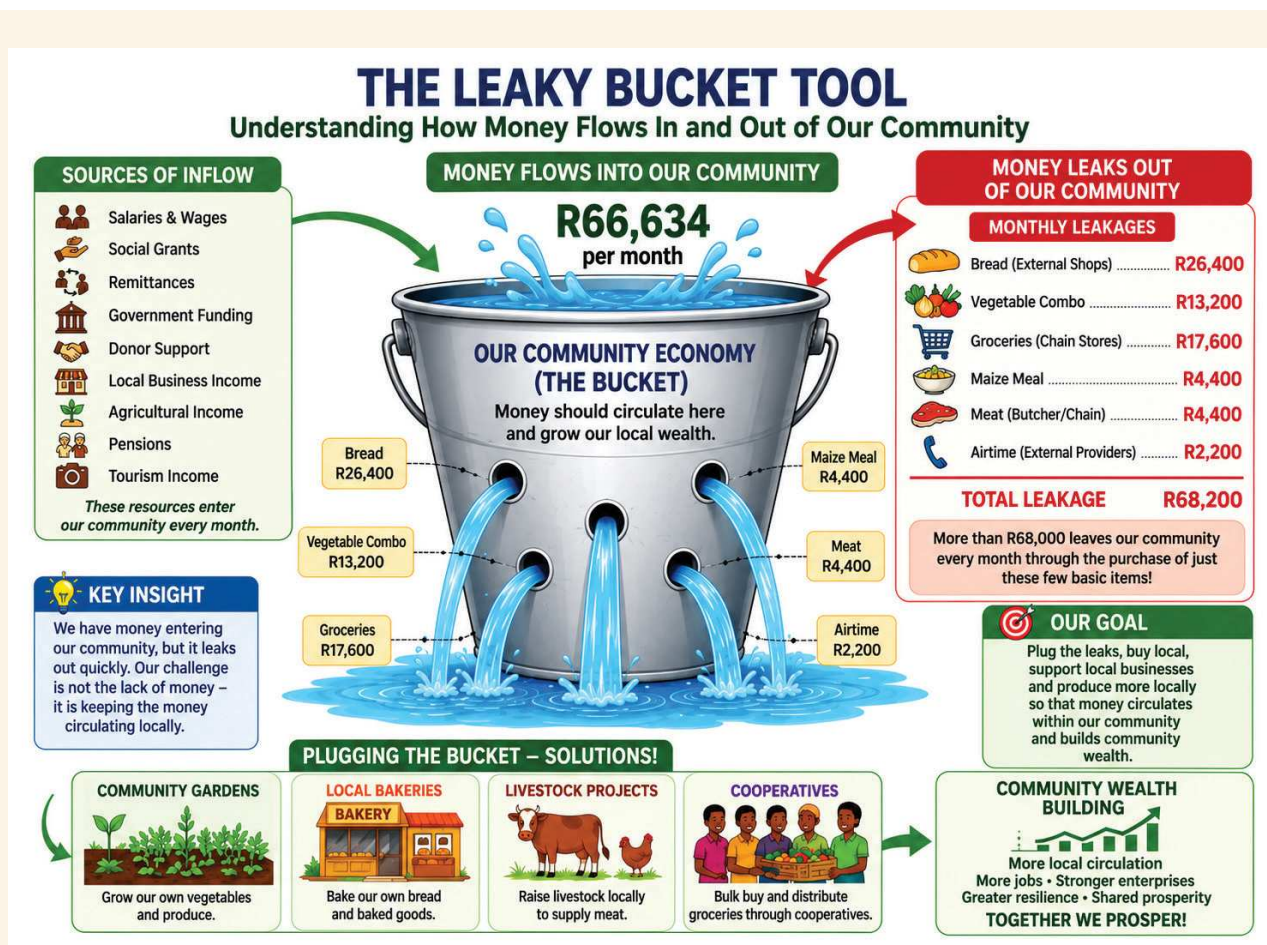
01

CASE STUDY 1: SOUTH AFRICA

Understanding the in-outflow of money: Leaky Bucket Analysis, Botha's Hill, KwaZulu-Natal

Background

During an ABCD training workshop in Botha's Hill, KwaZulu-Natal, 22 participants used the Leaky Bucket Tool to understand how money flows into and out of their households. Together, they reported a monthly household income of approximately R66,634.00.



The 'Aha' Moment: The exercise revealed that households spend over R68,200 (4 200 USD) per month through the purchase of basic goods such as bread, vegetables, groceries, maize meal, meat, and airtime from businesses outside the community. This amount was leaking out of the community economy due to fewer locally owned businesses (LOBs) than those foreign owned (FOB)

ABCD Response:

Participants identified initiatives that the community could venture in to plug the leaks which include:

- Community gardens to produce vegetables
- Local bakeries baking bread
- Local sewing groups
- Small livestock and poultry producers to supply meat
- Cooperatives that purchase and distribute bulk groceries.

Together they developed plans to:

- Start producer cooperatives and promote buying local first
- Support local enterprises
- Create local value chains
- Revive Letsema as a traditional practice for pooling local assets, labour and resources to strengthen local enterprises, build community wealth and increase the circulation of money within the community.

Expected Results

- More money circulating locally
- New business opportunities emerging
- Greater community ownership
- Increased local employment

Key Lesson

Communities become wealthier when they mobilise local assets, work together through Letsema, and keep money circulating within the local economy.

Reflection Questions:



- Which local assets (people, skills, businesses, organisations and natural resources) can be mobilised to keep more money circulating within the community?
- Which Letsema values and community strengths (e.g., trust, cooperation, reciprocity, volunteerism and shared responsibility) can help create new businesses, jobs and stronger community ownership?
- What opportunities can your community build on, and what barriers must be addressed, to successfully revive Letsema as a strategy for community-led economic development?

02

CASE STUDY 2: ZIMBABWE**Nhimbe: Collective Work for Community Prosperity****Community Challenge**

Smallholder farmers struggled to prepare fields, harvest crops and respond to labour shortages individually and adopted the Nhimbe traditional practice.



Nhimbe is a traditional practice where neighbours voluntarily work together on one family's field before moving to another. Participation is rewarded with food, music and celebration rather than wages.

ABCD Response

The community recognised that its greatest asset was:

- Mutual trust
- Shared labour
- Indigenous knowledge
- Social relationships
- Instead of waiting for external assistance, they organised seasonal work teams.

Expected Results

- Larger areas cultivated
- Increased crop production
- Stronger social cohesion
- Knowledge passed to younger generations
- Reduced household vulnerability

Key Lesson

Nhimbe demonstrates that collective action, strong relationships and shared knowledge are valuable community assets that increase productivity, strengthen social cohesion and build more resilient households.

Reflection Questions:



- Which community assets and relationships made Nhimbe successful, and how could these be strengthened in your community?
- How could collective work and sharing of skills increase local production, strengthen social cohesion and reduce household vulnerability in your community?
- What opportunities and barriers exist for reviving Nhimbe or a similar traditional practice to engage young people, transfer knowledge and improve community livelihoods?

03

CASE STUDY 3: MALAWI

Village Savings and Loans: Growing Assets Together

Community Challenge

Rural households had limited access to banks and credit, making it difficult to invest in farming and small businesses.



Community Solution

Villagers formed Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

Members:

- Save small amounts weekly
- Borrow from the group
- Repay with small interest
- Share profits annually

ABCD Response

- The community recognised its existing assets:
- Small regular savings
- Women's leadership
- Financial discipline
- Trust among members
- No external bank was required.

Expected Results

- Improved household resilience
- Growth of small enterprises
- Better food security
- Increased school attendance
- Women's economic empowerment

Key Lesson

When communities pool their financial assets, trust and leadership, they build resilient households, grow local enterprises and create lasting economic opportunities.

Reflection Questions:



- What financial and social assets helped make this initiative successful, and which of these already exist in your community?
- How could collective saving and lending help strengthen household resilience, support small businesses and improve food security in your community?
- What actions could your community take to ensure that savings groups promote women's economic empowerment, children's education and long-term community prosperity?

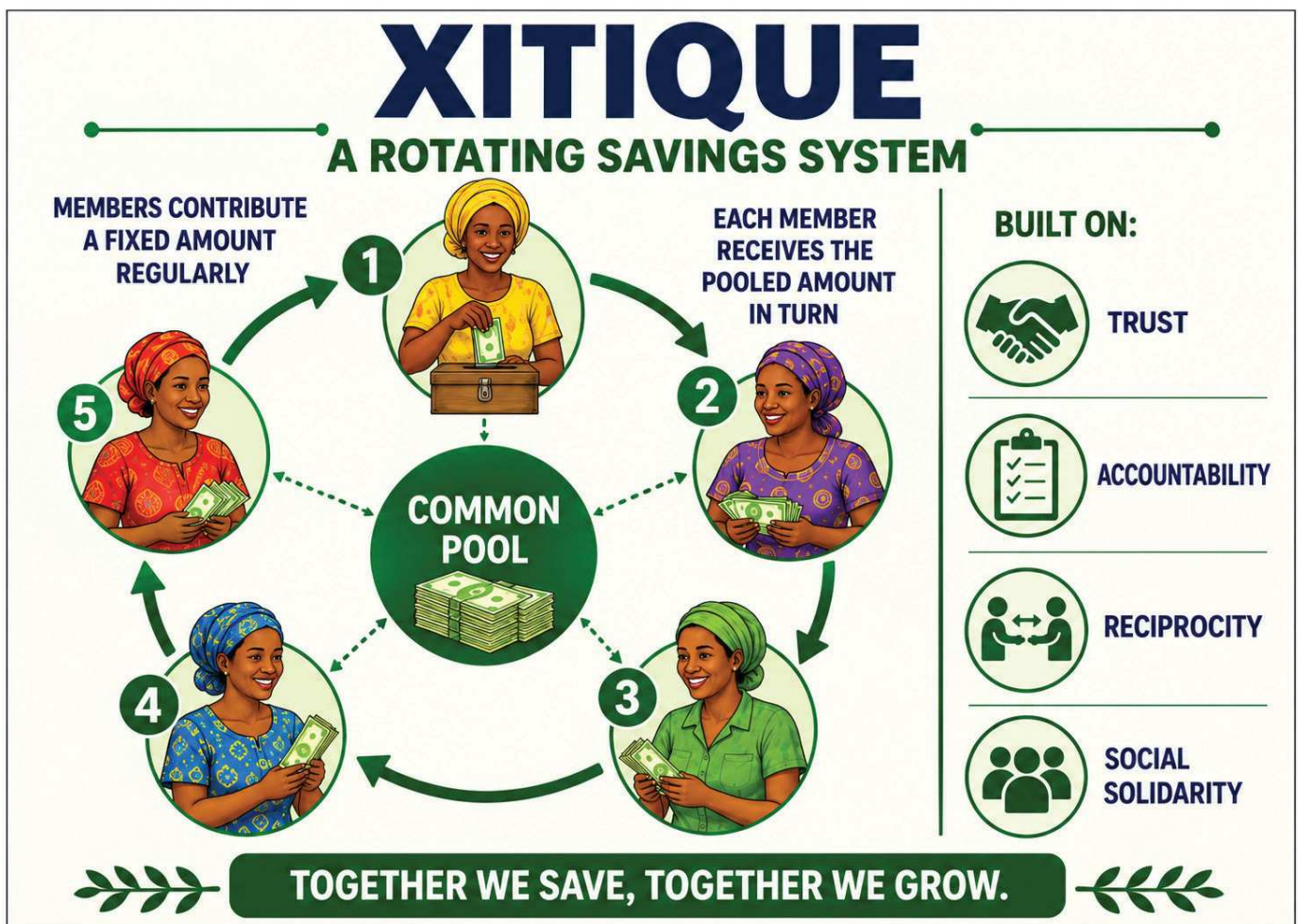
04

CASE STUDY 4: MOZAMBIQUE

Xitique: Building Wealth through Collective Saving

Community Challenge

Many families lacked access to formal financial services for emergencies or business investment and resorted to the Xitique traditional practice.



Traditional Practice

Xitique is a rotating savings system where members contribute a fixed amount regularly. Each member receives the pooled amount in turn.

The system is built on:

- Trust
- Accountability
- Reciprocity
- Social solidarity

ABCD Response

Community members expanded Xitique beyond household needs by using payouts to:

- Purchase farming equipment
- Start businesses
- Pay school fees
- Improve housing

Expected Results

- Increased household assets
- Improved financial inclusion
- Greater community solidarity
- More locally owned enterprises

Key Lesson

When communities build on traditional financial systems, they mobilise local assets, strengthen solidarity and create opportunities for sustainable local economic development.

Reflection Questions:



- What traditional financial practices or community networks exist in your community that could be strengthened to build household assets and improve financial inclusion?
- How could collective saving and mutual support help establish more locally owned businesses and strengthen community solidarity?
- What opportunities and challenges exist for adapting Xitique or similar traditional savings systems to promote inclusive local economic development in your community?

05

CASE STUDY 5: ZAMBIA

Community Foundations: Investing in Local Solutions

Community Challenge

Many development projects ended once donor funding stopped

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Local people. Local resources. Lasting change.



Community Innovation

A Community Foundation which brought together:

- Local donors
- Volunteers
- Businesses
- Faith and traditional leaders
- Youth groups

Together, they invested in community priorities.

ABCD Response

The Foundation supported:

- Community asset mapping
- Local leadership
- Small grants
- Local partnerships
- Community giving

Expected Results

- Stronger local ownership
- Sustainable community projects
- Active community participation
- Stronger partnerships
- More resilient communities

Key Lesson

Sustainable communities are built when local people invest in their own assets, strengthen partnerships and provide leadership for community-led development.

Reflection Questions:



- What local assets, organisations and leaders contributed to the success of this Community Foundation, and which of these already exist in your community?
- How could stronger partnerships between community members, local organisations, businesses and traditional leaders increase community ownership and create more sustainable development initiatives?
- What practical steps could your community take to mobilise local resources and leadership to build resilient, community-led development?

Facilitator Reflection



Ask participants:

- Which case study is most similar to your community?
- Which ideas could be adapted locally?
- Which indigenous practices already exist?
- What would success look like here?



Remember

Communities learn best from other communities.

SECTION 8:

FROM LEARNING TO ACTION

Your Community Foundation Action Planning Workbook

Opening Reflection

"A vision without action remains only a dream."



Step 1

Our Vision

Community Vision

Step 2

Our Priorities

Priority	Why Important?

Step 3

Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Contribution	Partnership Opportunity

Step 4

Partnership Matrix

Partner	Contribution	Partnership Opportunity

Step 5

90-Day Action Plan

Activities	Who?	By When?	Resources

Step 6

One-Year Implementation Plan

Quarter	Priority Activities
Q1	
Q2	
Q3	
Q4	

Step 7

Participants agree how they will track progress.

Indicator	How Will We Measure It?	Frequency

Step 8

Reflection Journal

What did we learn?

What surprised us?

What will we do differently?

Our Commitment

As a Community Foundation, we commit to recognising community strengths, building partnerships, supporting local leadership and mobilising community assets to create lasting change.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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