

Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership (GS-CUP) Training



Mulu Yeneabat translates ABCD training on person-in-environment

Forty-seven community members and three MSW students attended the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training. Five students from Addis Ababa University's School of Social Work were also present. Dr. Alice K. Butterfield and Dr. Richard Kordesh gave the training on May 24 and May 31, 2008. The topics were Asset Based Community Development and Family Based Community Development.

In the photo to the left, the concentric circles start with children in the center, surrounded by families, associations, institutions and systems.

Part One

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Professor Alice K. Butterfield presented **Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)**.

1. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Professor Alice K. Butterfield asked the training participant to observe a glass on the table. The glass contains water and reflects what they have seen.

- ▶ Is it is half full or half empty?
 - Some participants said it is half empty
 - Others said it is half full.
- ▶ The answer was both half empty and half full.

The concept of ABCD training focuses on empowering communities by emphasizing on the half-fullness. Since ABCD gives focus on asset and strength rather than needs and weakness. Prof. Butterfield presented the three major principles of ABCD. These are:

- ▶ Every person is important
- ▶ Every person has a gift to contribute
- ▶ Put people at the center of the development

These principles of ABCD were discussed in detail. Based on this, the participants were asked to identify institutions that are assets to their community's development. Accordingly, they listed:

Schools	Health Centers	Police Station	Garages	Libraries
Hotels	Cafes	Electric Power Station	Shops	Church
Idirs	Telecommunication	Market place	Community Associations	
Garbage Collectors Associations	Car Washers Associations		Government Offices	
Non-Governmental Organizations				

The differences between institutions and associations were discussed. Associations contribute to the development of the community and the lives of families focusing on the assets and strengths of the community. Institutions give focus on the needs of the community and attempt to fill the gaps through services. The community members reflected on their assets and strengths based on the half-fullness idea.

The ABCD has guidelines on how to use the strengths of the community based to build its capacity. These guiding principles are:



Women members of a garbage collectors association volunteer in the GS-CUP

1. Everyone has a Gift to Give

- Start with ordinary people and recognize that everyone has gifts to contribute.
- Strong communities know that they need everyone.
- There are unrecognized capacities and assets in every community member, and these should be identified.

2. Relationships Build A Community

- All forms of community building should nourish relationships.
- The community members should explore their relationship mechanisms and should utilize them.
- Building relationship is the core of ABCD.

3. Put People at the Center

If people are the focus of development efforts, the community members can be engaged. The community leaders should involve all traditional and civic associations, religious institutions and local businesses at the center of community. The community members should be the actors of their community issues. They should not be considered just as recipients of services.

4. Leaders should Involve Others

Community building needs to have a constituency of involved people. If community members, voluntary associations, religious institutions, local government officials, and local businesses are involved, it will create trust, transparency and firm relationships. This is the sign of strong community with a growing circle of people for change.

5. People Care about Something

Community members are motivated to work for change. The challenge is to identify and discover their core motivating issues to work for development.

6. Motivation to Act

Community members have invisible motivations for action. They should be listened to. Voluntary community members will act on certain concerns to address if they have the vision to realize change and the opportunity to contribute their personal talents. Since voluntary

community members aspire to contribute their share to their community's development, they will act without payment when they feel it is very important

7. Listening

In order to identify the motivation of the volunteers, one-to-one conversation or small group conversation is necessary. By listening carefully, it is possible to understand their vision and desires for their community's development and what they can contribute towards this end.

8. ASK, ASK, ASK

Community builders should try to use a community member's possible gifts to contribute to the development or well-being of their neighborhood. During conversations one should realize that it is ASKING question that invites stronger participation rather than giving ANSWERS.

9. Invite Community Members

The usual way of addressing concerns is to invite outside experts to find solutions for problems. But the ABCD gives emphasis to engage people in addressing their own questions in finding their own answers. The outside support or input should come after the community's answers.

10. Inside-Out Community Organization

A people centered organization whereby the community members have the say and control of its engagement and agendas is a priority of the ABCD approach for community development. If community members are engaged, it is a key indicator for success. The residents should be organized to build relationships for capacity building based on their areas of concern. The community's efforts should be backed by professionals and paraprofessional community organizers that follow the citizen leaders' agenda.

11. Status of Institutions

All institutions (government and non-governmental organizations, private businesses, etc.) are stretched in their ability to solve community problems. They have reached their limits and are tied up with daily routine activities. They need the community's engagement in more widely skillful ways.

12. Institutions as Servants

Community members can engage wider community members than government and non-governmental organization or local businesses. It should be clearly understood that both community members or community voluntary association and institutions need the institutions invaluable contributions of all sorts. The institutions should ask people what community associations/members need and offer help. Leaders in institutions have an essential role in community building as they lead by "stepping back" creating opportunities for citizenship, care, and real democracy.

Part Two

Family-Based Community Development

Dr. Richard Kordish presented **Family Based Community Development (FBCD)**. The model is based on his book, *Restoring Power to Parents and Places: The Case for Family-Based Community Development*, New York, iUniverse, Inc. (2006).

Professor Kordesh indicated that the half-full glass represents the assets of the family for this part of the training. The difference between the ABCD and FBCD is that FBCD magnifies on the family. It makes the family at the center of development. Sometimes NGOs and different institutions do not recognize the importance of the family in community development work, but when family enterprises work properly, the capacity of the community is built and families are empowered.



Wassie Kebede translates Dr. Kordesh's training on FBCD

The FBCD concept focuses the idea that community development works better when families are involved as producers. Institutions and associations should recognize the assets within families and should be involved them in their activities of community development. All institutions are important for FBCD. We need to see family in its own setting. Families are as effective as health institutions and families enable all members to contribute their skills and knowledge.

There are five steps of Family Based Community Development (FBCD) with examples from the Gedam Sefer and Ethiopian families. The five steps discussed are:

1. Describe the type and structure of the family in the community
2. Identify the skills and knowledge that exist within the families.
3. Identify the assets/wealth families have or have not
4. Identify how families are already producing within the community; and
5. Identify the SWOT analysis of families and what strategies to use to fulfill these

What is Community Development?

- ▶ It involves people who live and work in a place in planning and carrying out projects that make their community stronger.
- ▶ These people
 - Study the community's assets and problems
 - Make goals for building up the assets and solving the problems
 - Choose action steps to achieve the goals
 - Carry out the action steps
 - Evaluate and learn from their actions

Through Community Development

- ▶ People become skilled at working together
- ▶ They become more unified
- ▶ They develop a stronger voice
- ▶ They create a common vision

Community Development Works Best When

- ▶ Family enterprises are strengthened
- ▶ Families are empowered to care for themselves and their neighbors
- ▶ Families work together to grow food or bring water or other resources to the community
- ▶ Families pass down their traditions and beliefs to their children

FBCD involves families as producers of things that their members and communities need. As important as they are, families cannot carry out community development alone. They need partners.

Partnerships are important to FBCD. These partners could be

- ▶ Universities, such as the AAU School of Social Work and UIC
- ▶ Kebeles
- ▶ NGOs
- ▶ Associations
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Clinics
- ▶ Finance and funding organizations
- ▶ Businesses
- ▶ Others

Families are co-producers with these partners of good things such as ...

- ▶ Children's learning
- ▶ Children's safety
- ▶ Prevention of disease
- ▶ New business activity
- ▶ Acceptance of sick or poor people; and
- ▶ Many other good things for the community

The family's habitat can be a very important productive asset

- ▶ A place for the family's business
- ▶ A place for growing food
- ▶ A place for preparing meals
- ▶ A place for teaching
- ▶ A place for healing
- ▶ A place for prayer

Family-Based Community Development

- ▶ Enables families of all types with their partners to be the village needed by children and adults. Together, they:
 - Assess their community's assets and problems
 - Set goals for improving the community
 - Choose strategies that will work for them
 - Carry out the actions needed
 - Evaluate and learn

A community plan can help families and their partner organizations to:

- ▶ Gain recognition from funding sources for the programs that they need
- ▶ Stay focused on their most desired goals, such as:

- Good quality housing
- Clean and accessible water
- Micro-finance support
- Employable skills training
- Other goals that they choose

Steps in Family-Based Community Development

1. Identify and describe:

- ▶ The number of families
- ▶ The number of children
- ▶ Married, divorced, or unmarried
- ▶ Ages of heads of household
- ▶ How many with single and dual parents
- ▶ Presence of elders
- ▶ The number of persons per family household
- ▶ Types of employment

2. Identify Family Skills & Knowledge

- ▶ Teaching skills
- ▶ Building skills
- ▶ Problem solving skills
- ▶ Skills in caring for others
- ▶ Skills in growing food
- ▶ Skills in making things
- ▶ Selling skills
- ▶ Bargaining skills

3. Identify the Ways in which Families are Already Acting as Producers in the Community in Giving:

- ▶ Care for their sick members
- ▶ Safety for their children
- ▶ Lessons about their traditions to their children
- ▶ Decisions about their communities development plan
- ▶ Inputs and markets to their business

4. Analyze the Strengths, Weakness, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) facing Families as Producers in the Community.

5. Identify Steps to Strengthen Families as Producers

- ▶ Training and support for micro-businesses
- ▶ Obtain or improve space for production
- ▶ Provide opportunities to acquire tools, carts, or other productive assets
- ▶ Advocate for good quality and stable housing
- ▶ Provide opportunities for shared productive spaces and other assets
- ▶ Provide literacy and skills training to families

6. Think of Ways to Help Families Organize as Producers

- ▶ Incubators for family enterprises
- ▶ Food production associations involving urban gardens

- ▶ Family resource centers in or linked to schools
- ▶ Family producer cooperatives
- ▶ Family safety or protection networks

7. Think of Ways to Strengthen Families as Co-producers with Partner Organizations

Families + Associations + Police = Children's Safety. When families are too weak to be producers, there is an empty space in the community. Families can't be replaced by associations or networks or NGOs.

What is Special about Families?

- ▶ Commitment to one another
- ▶ Raise children
- ▶ First teachers
- ▶ First health care providers
- ▶ Bonding through birth experience
- ▶ Level of closeness or intimacy
- ▶ Care for, respect for, elders
- ▶ Mutual protection

Families can't build communities on their own. Associations, schools, businesses, and local government are vitally important. But, communities are stronger when families are respected, involved, and strengthened as co-producers of what the community needs.

Reflection of the Community Members

One of the participants reflected that while the community members were drafting the Gedam Sefer Partnership's bylaws, he was one of the people who were against the establishment of the Family Sub-committee since he was not convinced of the benefit to have a subcommittee focusing on the family. He said, "But today I am convinced that we need to give focus on family issues since it is the base for our development efforts. I believe as family is the base for every development but there is gap between the young and senior generations. So we need to work on this. Besides, we have the responsibility to share what we have learned today."

The participants believe that this training has given an insight on:

- Strengthening the community association
- The importance of relationships between community associations and institutions
- Strengthening the relationship and cooperation (unity) within the community members and their associations
- Attitudinal change about the significance of building relationship with institutions
- The significance of strengthening the traditional extended family relationships
- How to identify their assets and strengths and giving more weight to their strengths
- How to attempt to fill gaps in community building



Dr. Kordesh with community leaders attending FBCD training