

An Asset-Based Approach to Skills-Banking within Respond! Communities

Research Working Paper

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The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Respond! or those of the Combat Poverty Agency.



An Asset-Based Community Development Approach to Skills-Banking and Capacity-Building in Toberona, Dundalk

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Abstract

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) involves working with the strengths, skills and resources of a community as a way to build engagement and jointly defined goals, rather than starting from a needs-assessment or deficit perspective. The present study sets out to pilot an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to skills-banking and capacity-building across three estates in Dundalk. It was hoped that the ABCD approach would help the community identify its strengths and use local resources to improve life in the community. The research was carried out in three phases: the first discussed resources with children in the community, age 6-12; the second looked at young people's perspective on their community, age 13-17; and the final phase involved several sessions with adults in the community, discussing assets in the area and how they might best be used. The research found that ABCD is a useful community development approach, which could potentially motivate members of the community to network with institutions, associations and individuals. Clear objectives need to be set in order for this to happen and time and flexibility are crucial to its success. This study is likely to be of interest to community development students, policy makers and practitioners, in particular. A companion volume of resource materials was developed as part of this research study.

Key words: community, assets, young people

Table of Contents

1. Introduction and background to the study	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 Background	6
1.3 Respond! ABCD project goals	7
1.4 Project phases	8
2. Literature review	9
2.1 What is Asset-Based Community Development?	9
2.2 Criticisms of Asset-Based Community Development	11
2.3 Examples of ABCD in use	12
2.4 Individual skills and wider community assets	14
2.5 Indicators of community capacity	16
2.6 Planning asset mapping	18
2.7 Approaches to asset mapping	18
2.7.1 'Triangulation'	18
2.7.2 'Whole assets, storytelling, or heritage?'	19
2.7.3 Organising a core group	20
2.7.4 Use of focus groups	20
2.8 Using the community asset map	21
2.9 Skills-banking with younger people	22
2.10 Developmental assets of particular importance to young people	22
2.11 Community research	23
3. Project design and methodology	24
3.1 Project stages	24
3.2 Ethical considerations / approval	24
3.3 Respond! ABCD project goals	26
3.3.1 Phases of the ABCD pilot project: work with children, youth & adults	26
3.3.2 Deciding a location for the pilot	26
3.3.3 Issues for consideration in relation to transferability	28
4. Three-phase process – children, young people and adults	30
4.1 Children's asset mapping – phase 1	30
4.1.1 Initial discussion	30
4.1.2 Preliminary work: recruitment of participants	30
4.1.3 Workshop proceedings	31

4.2	Youth film short – phase 2	32
4.2.1	Initial discussion	32
4.2.2	Preliminary work: finding the right video production group	33
4.2.3	Recruitment of participants.....	33
4.2.4	Liaising with Community Development and Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT).....	34
4.2.5	Boundaries of the ‘community’	34
4.2.6	Structure of the workshops.....	35
4.2.7	Workshop 1	35
4.2.8	Workshop 2	36
4.2.9	Workshop 3	37
4.2.10	Workshop 4	38
4.2.11	Screening of the film and presentation of certificates	38
4.3	Adults’ ABCD group – phase 3	40
4.3.1	Initial discussion – meeting with enablers	40
4.3.2	Recruitment of participants.....	41
4.4	Outline of the sessions and the topics discussed	42
4.4.1	Session 1	42
4.4.2	Session 2	44
4.4.3	Session 3	47
4.4.4	Community festival.....	48
4.4.5	Session 4	49
4.5.6	Session 5	53
5.	Results and outcomes	56
5.1	Results from the children’s phase of the ABCD pilot	56
5.1.2	Staff debriefing and recommendations.....	57
5.1.3	The children’s understanding of the activities.....	58
5.1.4	The children’s behaviour	58
5.1.5	Staff.....	58
5.1.6	Parents.....	58
5.1.7	Ethical considerations	59
5.1.8	Outcomes of children’s phase of ABCD project	59
5.2	Results from youth ABCD	60
5.2.1	Assets in the community	60

5.2.2	Assets in Dundalk town	60
5.2.3	Difficulties with the youth phase	60
5.3	Outcomes of youth work aspect of ABCD project	61
5.3.1	First step in mobilizing assets	61
5.3.2	Creativity	62
5.3.3	Friends as assets	62
5.3.4	Confidence – realisation of skills	63
5.3.5	Building links with Dundalk Institute of Technology	63
5.4	Results from Adults' ABCD	63
5.4.1	Introduction to ABCD.....	64
5.4.2	Community festival	64
5.4.3	Building links between individuals and estates.....	65
5.4.4	Establishment of a working group	65
5.4.5	Plans for an eco-project	65
5.4.6	Open day in Toberona: reflecting work back to residents.....	65
5.5.1	Results Summary: Outputs and outcomes from the ABCD pilot	66
5.5.2	Further outputs from the ABCD pilot	69
5.5.3	Further Outcomes from the ABCD project.....	70
6.	Conclusions	71
6.1	Practical considerations	73
6.2	Concluding comments	74
7.	Bibliography.....	76
	Appendix 1: Background information on Respond!	80
	Appendix 2: ABCD project timesheets	82
	Appendix 3: Quotes for video production	89
	Appendix 4: Note on the work of Augusto Boal.....	90
	Appendix 5: Resource pack – contents	92

List of Tables

Table 1: Needs-Based v. Asset-Based Community Development.....	9
Table 2: Indicators of strong community capacity.....	16
Table 3: Developmental assets of young people.....	22
Table 4: Children's perspectives on community 'Places, Faces & Spaces'.....	56

List of Figures

Fig 1: Community assets map (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993).....	15
Fig. 2: Community asset map (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2005).....	21

1. Introduction and background to the study

1.1 Introduction

This research paper presents findings of a pilot study on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) undertaken by Respond! staff and the residents of the Toberona community in Dundalk, over the period June 2007 to July 2008. Asset-Based Community Development is an approach to community development which focuses on a community's strengths rather than needs and builds links between people, institutions, and associations. The assumptions underlying the model are:

- that every community has assets
- that assets are anything that improve community life
- that identifying capacities and assets is the first step towards community regeneration
- that institutions, associations, individuals and public spaces can be used to better the community
- that individuals are part of a wider community network
- that all community members can play an effective role in local matters and
- that communities cannot be developed from the top down – community development only takes place when local people are committed to the effort.

This paper reviews the suitability of ABCD as a model for community development work and capacity-building in Respond! estates, and examines how the ABCD project was formulated, planned, and implemented. The paper also presents the findings (outputs and outcomes) of the project and its potential transferability and dissemination. The model used in this study is based on the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), which was developed in the USA but which, to the best of our knowledge, has never been used in an Irish context outside of Dublin. Neither has the model been used by an Irish Housing Association. Considering the organisation's community development strategy, and the positive outcomes documented by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), it seemed worthwhile to pilot this potentially advantageous approach.

1.2 Background

The study was co-funded by the Combat Poverty Specialist Research Grant Initiative, 2007, and by Respond!. The wider context which gave rise to the study is the commitment by Respond! to provide housing to those on low incomes; alleviate poverty; and create sustainable communities which will eventually be strong enough to support themselves. Respond! has built over 4,000 housing units and (at mid-2008) directly manages some 2,785 units across 99 estates, throughout Ireland. Respond! estimates that it will build a further 15-20 estates per annum. This growth means that the organisation's community development staff will be unable to work across all Respond! estates indefinitely. In 2007 Respond! published a five-year community development strategy (Respond!, 2007). As part of the strategy, community development staff will work intensively for five years on each estate, building the skills of residents and developing the capacity of the estate, after which time residents will have the option to continue community development work, should they choose to do so.

Respond! seeks to empower local residents to play leadership roles in the running of their own estates and communities. The current strategy involves the recruitment of 'community enablers' within and outside of Respond! estates. A community enabler is defined as:

...someone who is willing to work with others on the estates to deliver programmes of activities and events on a voluntary basis. They are not necessarily the 'leaders' of the estate or those who are most vocal, they are the 'doers' and 'seers' on the estate (Respond!, 2007:8).

If residents are to take on a community development role, mobilizing community resources will assist them. The communities in which Respond! residents live face specific challenges. Currently, the number of one-parent households in Respond! estates is disproportionately higher than that of the general population (McKeown, et al., 2008). One-parent families are four-and-a-half times more likely than anyone else to live in poverty (OPEN, 2008). There is also a high child to adult ratio on Respond! estates which is known to lead to increased strains on community resources (Page, 1994).

Poverty is often seen as a deficiency of assets and those who live in poverty, therefore, are sometimes perceived as having little to contribute. Such a view of poverty can be internalised by 'the poor' so that they oppress themselves (Freire, 1970). This can lead to a culture of dependency and disempowerment. Families at risk of poverty have particular needs. They also have resources, however, and it is these resources that this pilot sought to illuminate.

1.3 Respond! ABCD project goals

The Respond! ABCD Project Goals reflect the ABCD model and take cognisance of the wider community development strategy (see Appendix 1) being rolled-out across Respond! estates nationally. These goals were to:

- develop a working model in an Irish context for ABCD community development and critique this
- enhance the skill-base of local 'enablers', that is nominated community volunteer-activists working at 'cluster' or area-level (across several estates) by offering guided skills-training and progressive responsibility for the project
- explore the potential role of community enablers in promoting ABCD as well as the actual role played by enablers and by other community leaders
- foster cohesion and joint working across the Toberona community, (i.e. three adjoining estates in Dundalk where the project was located)
- enhance the skill-base of the Respond! research and community development teams and
- develop a resource-pack of materials relating to ABCD for wider usage within Respond! estates and/or other community-based initiatives.

Further aims/anticipated outcomes of the research were to:

- help those living in disadvantaged areas to find solutions within their own communities to problems which affect them
- make communities aware of what they can achieve, rather than what they cannot
- deepen the public's understanding of poverty by demonstrating that even communities that are in poverty, or at risk of poverty, are not helpless. In fact they possess strengths which, when channelled, can help them become less vulnerable; and
- highlight the role of volunteering and social capital, within communities, and the benefits of pooling resources for the good of the community.

1.4 Project phases

The researchers used an action research model and divided the research into three phases. The first discussed resources with children in the community, age 6-12; the second examined young people's perspective on their community, age 13-17; and the final phase involved several sessions with adults in the community, discussing assets in the area and how they might best be used.

2. Literature review

This section of the research paper presents the core concepts of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) as set out in the literature.

2.1 What is Asset-Based Community Development?

Community development has long been used as an anti-poverty tool, enabling those who are marginalised to be involved in developing policies for change (Lynam, 2006). In 1990 the Community Development Programme (CDP) was established in Ireland to address poverty and disadvantage by supporting anti-poverty/anti-exclusion focused projects (Airey, 2006). Participation empowers those on the margins and is central to the community development approach to reducing poverty; as the poor become empowered they no longer see themselves as a 'problem' (Lynam, 2006).

Asset-Based Community Development was developed by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann as a challenge to traditional solutions to urban problems, which focus on the needs and deficiencies of neighbourhoods (The ABCD Institute, 2008). The literature on Asset-Based Community Development highlights the tension between the 'needs-based' and 'asset-based' approaches to community development (Beaulieu, 2002, see table below).

Table 1: Needs-Based v. Asset-Based Community Development

Needs	Assets
Focuses on deficiencies	Focuses on effectiveness
Results in fragmentation of responses to local needs	Builds interdependence
Makes people consumers of services; builds dependence	Identifies ways that people can give of their talents
Residents have little voice in deciding how to address local concerns	Seeks to empower people

The 'needs-assessment' approach to community development has been the accepted approach in Ireland since the 1960s (Russell and McKnight, 2006). This approach focuses on the gap between what *is* there and what the community *wants* to be there: in other words what is missing (Stoecker, 2005). The argument for those working in community development to adopt a more positive approach goes as follows: an audit focusing on needs tends to result in 'a laundry list of all the problems being experienced by residents...' (Beaulieu, 2002). This leads local people to think in terms of local needs (McKnight and Kretzman, 1996) and see themselves as 'deficient and incapable of taking charge' (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002a). This is contrary to the aim of community development, which is to promote 'positive change in society' by 'involving people, most especially the disadvantaged, in making changes which they identify as important and which use and develop their own skills, knowledge and experience...' (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 1995). McKnight and Kretzman (1996: 2) write:

The historic evidence indicates that significant community development only takes place when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort.

Rather than focusing on the glass being 'half empty', communities should focus on the glass being 'half full' (Russell and McKnight, 2006). ABCD is an increasingly popular approach to community regeneration. The model has been used in the USA, Canada, Europe and Australia (Community Building Resources, 2008), where it has shown favourable results. The approach rests on the principle that recognising strengths, gifts, talents and assets inspires positive action for change (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002b).

Another aspect of the assets approach which has received much public attention is the notion of social capital. Social capital can be used to support community development and social inclusion (NESF, 2003). Putnam (2000) defines social capital as networks, norms, and trust which allow people to work together for common objectives. He argues that social capital has quantifiable effects on all of

our lives, in terms of: finding employment, fighting illness, creating financial capital and resource wealth for businesses, and developing positive personality traits. Research has found that social capital is distributed less among lower socio-economic groups and those with a disability (NESF, 2003). Social capital has a negative side however, such as racism (Putnam, 2000), crime gangs (Halpern, 1999), the exclusion of those who do not conform with community norms (Portes and Landolt, 1996) and the formation of cliques (Portes, 1998).

2.2 Criticisms of Asset-Based Community Development

ABCD is not without its detractors. Critics of ABCD argue that it is a right-wing approach to community development, which implies that a disadvantaged community has only itself to blame, thus allowing the State to wash its hands of responsibility (Stoecker, 2005). Others argue that the approach understates the importance of political and economic systems that affect communities from the outside (Christensen and Levinson, 2003).

Asset-Based Community Development is presented, by its champions, as an alternative to the 'prevailing' needs approach, where community leaders are forced to focus on the needs of their area so that they can secure funding from external agencies, thus demoralising the community and making them feel powerless (Wilke, 2006). However Stoecker (2005) claims that the argument between the needs and assets approach has been misdirected. He contends that the risk of disempowering communities occurs with the social service approach to community change, not the community organising approach – which is designed to bring people together to influence public decisions (Stoecker, 2005). Mathie and Cunningham (2002a) argue that even an external agency trying to promote ABCD is in danger of creating dependency within a community. They argue that external agencies are needed to facilitate the ABCD process but should know when to step back (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002a).

Another criticism is directed at the legitimacy of some programmes claiming to be using an ABCD approach. Some models, which claim to be ABCD, are in fact needs-based approaches that co-opt the language of ABCD but not the

philosophy behind it (Indianapolis Neighbourhood Resource Center, no date). Though not a criticism of ABCD itself this does raise an important point about the need, for those claiming to be practising ABCD, to have a thorough understanding of ABCD and be faithful to its tenets.

Mathie and Cunningham (2002a) see a difficulty in ABCD's tendency to 'lead by stepping back', which insists that power comes from existing associations and networks, and its emphasis on inclusive participation. They argue that existing associations may not be egalitarian. If this is the case then the interests of those less powerful may be better served by a newly formed community organisation. The lack of 'representative representation' in some community settings is something which Respond! has encountered. Respond! agrees with Mathie and Cunningham that this needs to be addressed.

Perhaps the most pertinent and practical consideration for anyone considering the use of ABCD is its relative newness, which means that there is no long-term analysis of the approach within community development research. In addition, the authors believe that proponents of ABCD may be overly sanguine about its benefits. There is a lack of self-criticism in the literature on ABCD, which tends to concentrate on its successes rather than its limitations.

2.3 Examples of ABCD in use

Recently the Cherry Orchard Regeneration Forum (2006) published a report *Building Community Together*. The Forum's reason for using ABCD as a starting point is as follows:

In much the same way that people check what is in their cupboards, to find out what they already have before they go shopping for what they need, we began the process of regenerating Cherry Orchard by first asking what assets are already in place (2006:1).

The Forum built on the initial information they collected by consulting with a wide range of people from the community. The final stage of the process involved consulting with the various statutory agencies in the community, such as the Ballyfermot Partnership and the Local Drugs Task Force, in order to examine the assets and needs identified throughout the process and get meaningful and measurable commitments from the agencies. *Building Community Together* highlighted the importance of looking at assets as well as needs. Assets found in Cherry Orchard included individual gifts, citizens' associations, green parks and adult education.

Another example of ABCD is The Yonkers Elder Friendly Initiative (YEFI). This initiative uses ABCD to identify and mobilise community resources, in order to plan and provide opportunities for residents aged 55 and over. YEFI collaborates with existing resources to encourage older residents to use and be recognised for their talents and skills in a variety of ways (YEFI, 2005):

- as participants in the Yonkers Leadership Programme;
- as the planners of the annual citywide Senior Health and Fitness Day, a day of exercise, wellness promotion activities and information sessions run by adults aged 55 and over; and
- as planners and developers of, and participants in, the new YEFI programme '55 Plus Yonkers Connections': promoting opportunities for adults in life-long learning, volunteering work, staying connected, creativity and life planning.

This shift from a focus on needs to a focus on assets may have practical benefits for those living within communities that are predominantly made up of individuals from lower socio-economic groupings. For example, gathering information on assets allows communities to mobilize resources so that they can be shared among local residents for the good of the community. The ABCD approach aims to improve communities by building links and working relationships between people, institutions and organisations (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993).

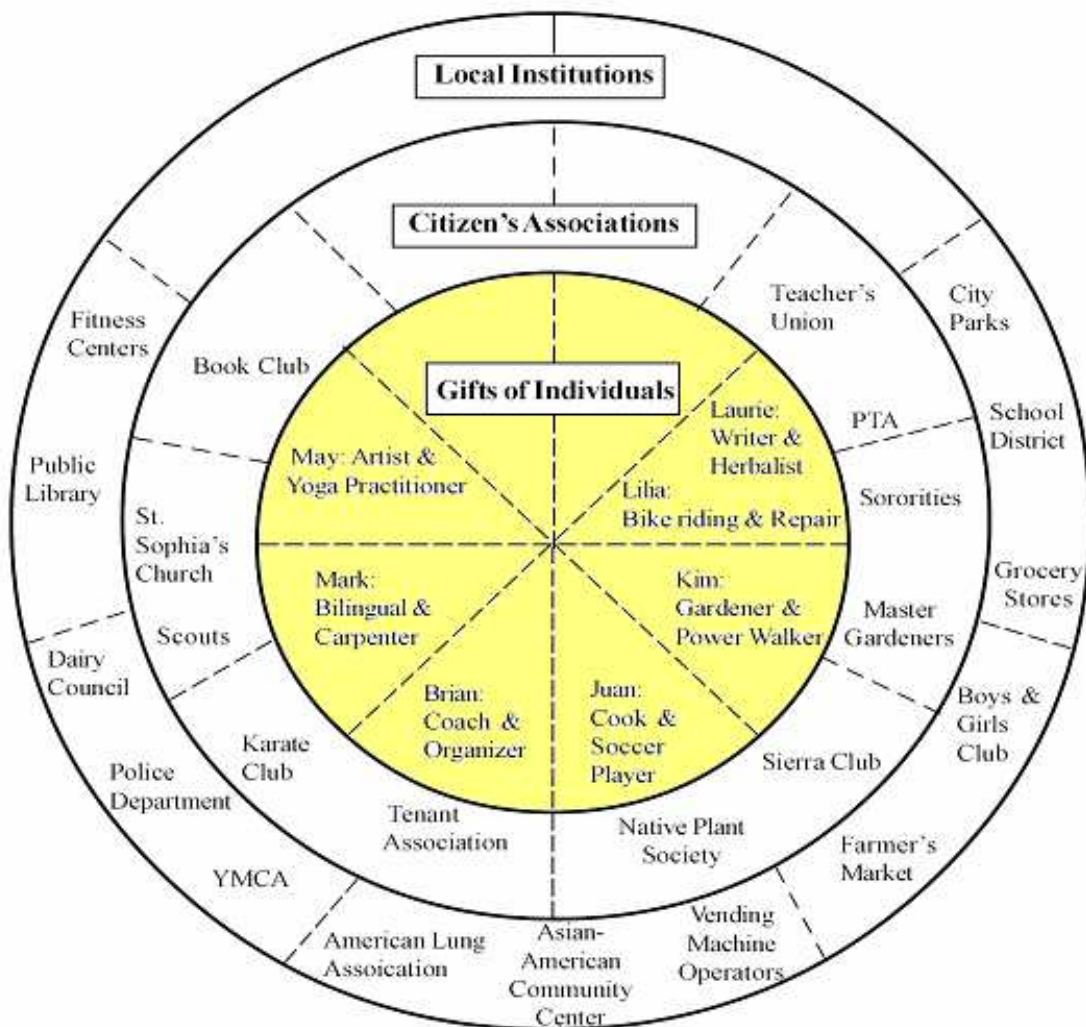
2.4 Individual skills and wider community assets

Proponents of ABCD maintain that each time a person uses his or her talents the community is stronger and the person more empowered (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). However, skills and talents may be used for anti-social purposes that have a negative impact on the community. That said, in many communities, resident skills and interests have been uncovered through the use of 'skills surveys' or 'capacity inventories' to positive effect (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). The capacity inventory, as developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) looks at civic participation, manual skills, office skills, professional skills, as well as interpersonal skills. The inventory is exhaustive and yields important information about an individual's capacity. The inner circle of the Community Assets Map below details individual skills in the context of community asset mapping.

Respond! has experience over the past two decades of working with prospective tenants and residents through pre- and post-tenancy training courses, seeking to draw out their skills and encourage self-belief and foster capacity-building. Our experience, confirmed during the course of this ABCD pilot, is that formal skills-banking inventories, while helpful, reach only some people in a community (usually those who are already involved). Those who are 'on the margins' and are less confident, are often slow to participate in any formal recording of skills. However, direct involvement, and requests for help in organising particular events or aspects of same, usually evoke positive responses of cooperation and help, and often uncover previously uncelebrated skills and interests.

Certain skills are required if Respond! is to meet its vision of helping communities to help themselves. These are skills which will build community capacity particularly in terms of: communication skills, organisation skills, manual skills (estate clean-ups), youth work, recreation work, social analysis and advocacy. While deciding the specifics of what skills might be required, it is useful to look at indicators of strong communities.

Fig 1: Community assets map (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993)



2.5 Indicators of community capacity

Table 2 below shows Jackson *et al*'s (2003) overall indicators of community capacity as well as possible ways of measuring them.

Table 2: Indicators of strong community capacity

Proposed Indicators	Possible Measures
The community is welcoming and supportive to the whole diversity of the community (e.g. all cultures, ages, vulnerabilities, class, income level, sexual orientation, parent status)	<p>(i) Information about community events is available in the various languages of the community</p> <p>(ii) Community events include all age groups in a wide range of activities and display the food and music of many different groups</p>
Residents have positive perceptions of their community	<p>(i) A range of residents report feeling proud to live in their community</p> <p>(ii) Residents report feeling comfortable to have outsiders visit their community. Fun, community-wide events open to everyone occur at several times during the year</p>
Residents celebrate together	Fun, community-wide events open to everyone occur at several times during the year
People participate actively in the social, political, and economic life of the community	<p>(i) Residents report they are involved in political action</p> <p>(ii) Banks and other businesses located in or near the community contribute</p>
People come together around community issues and work together towards a common purpose and/or joint project in balanced and proactive ways	Opposing or different points of view are present at community meetings
People from all parts of the community are involved in community activities	<p>(i) A range of groups are represented at community meetings and activities</p> <p>(ii) Many people share leadership and other responsibilities</p>
Community members have a sense of control and a sense of ownership in relation to planning and implementing local programmes and activities	<p>(i) Residents sit on Boards of Directors of local agencies and organisations</p> <p>(ii) Residents are involved in programme design and implementation in local agencies and organisations</p>

Many of these indicators also appear in the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund *Indicators of Strong Communities* (2006) which cites five required core indicators of strong communities. These are:

- The percentage of residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area
- The percentage of residents who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together
- The percentage of residents who affirm that they carried out voluntary work in an organisation once a month or more in the past year
- The percentage of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations affirming growth in activity over the past year in terms of (i) financial turnover and (ii) volunteering
- The proportion of services in selected public service areas delivered by groups and organisations on behalf of the local authority.

The above indicators show the importance of volunteering, cohesion, and participation in community capacity and are consistent with Easterling *et al*'s (1998) domains of community capacity, which are:

- Skills and knowledge
- Leadership
- Sense of efficacy
- Social capital
- Culture of learning and openness (cited in Smith, Littlejohns and Roy, 2004).

These indicators inform our thinking and knowledge of skills and capacity required for effective resident empowerment and leadership, thereby helping to achieve the Respond! objective of enabling: 'residents to participate fully in and access the services and structures of wider society' (Respond!, 2007a). Such skills are likely to exist already and may be uncovered through asset mapping.

2.6 Planning asset mapping

Before a community can begin asset mapping it must be clear what is meant by the terms 'asset' and 'asset mapping'. An asset is anything which can be used to improve community life. Assets can be people, places, or businesses within the community (UCLA, 2007). Asset Mapping is the process of identifying these assets and their location in the community. When these terms are understood, the following six steps may be implemented (UCLA, 2007):

- Define community boundaries
- Identify and involve partners
- Determine what assets to include
- List assets of groups
- List assets of individuals
- Organise assets on a map.

It is important that those living in communities conduct the asset mapping themselves so that they build new relationships, and learn about the skills available in their area (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002b).

2.7 Approaches to asset mapping

Various approaches to asset mapping are set out below:

2.7.1 'Triangulation'

According to Smith (2002), in order to profile a community it is necessary to gather data from multiple sources. These sources are:

- Census and other official data analysis
- Survey of residents
- Ethnographic study of the locality (including mapping, walk about, photography or video, collecting documents)
- In-depth interviews with key professionals and activists
- Focus groups for specific sections of the community (e.g. children, young people, women, minority ethnic communities, business people).

The Respond! Community Development Strategy (2007a) stipulates that Community Development Officers must conduct local area profiles of all Respond! estates and advocates that residents also be involved in compiling these estate and area profiles, where possible. The profiles collate census data in a range of areas, such as: household composition, ethnicity, disability and volunteer activity. At estate level the profiles gather information including: childcare and family resource services, physical amenities, and maintenance issues. These profiles will ideally be updated annually, will contribute significantly to any ABCD project being undertaken and will be an important complement to the work done by the community.

2.7.2 ‘Whole assets, storytelling, or heritage?’

Fuller, Guy and Pletsch (2006) cite three approaches to asset mapping:

- (i) The Whole Assets Approach
- (ii) The Storytelling Approach
- (iii) The Heritage Approach

The Whole Assets Approach involves going outside the community and considering what assets exist in the surrounding and interconnected areas. The Storytelling Approach relies on information provided by locals in story format and often deals with a goal that the community achieved. The Heritage Approach produces a map or list of physical features which make the community a special place. Assets in this approach include natural features (e.g. rivers) as well as built features (e.g. bridges).

Mathie and Cunningham (2002a) argue that collecting stories is a crucial part of the mapping process. It helps to uncover gifts, skills, talents and assets as well as build confidence among locals about their community. A further benefit of this approach is: ‘that stories will revolve around local places and real people. This strength helps to root asset mapping in a local reality’ (Fuller, Guy and Pletsch, 2006).

2.7.3 Organising a core group

In order to create an environment where storytelling can take place it is important to first of all gather locals together. Cunningham and Mathie (2002a) argue that these members of the community should be involved in organisations at a community level. They would then be contacted and brought together as a group to explore their community's assets. Each of these individuals will have a network of relationships inside the community that they can draw into the process (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002a).

2.7.4 Use of focus groups

Focus groups are comprised of individuals assembled to discuss a particular subject and differ from nominal groups (where researchers meet individually with members of an organisation), Delphi groups (groups made up of trained experts), and brainstorming sessions (which try to set out to generate new ideas) (Barnett, 2007). An important feature of focus groups is that nonverbal communications and group interactions can be observed (Berkowitz and Rabinowitz, 2007).

Focus groups are widely used in the investigation of applied-research problems (Bender and Ewbank, 1994) and can help people learn more about community opinions and needs (Berkowitz and Rabinowitz, 2007). Groups of six to ten are usually recommended. The more narrowly defined the research question, the more effective the group will be (Bender and Ewbank, 1994).

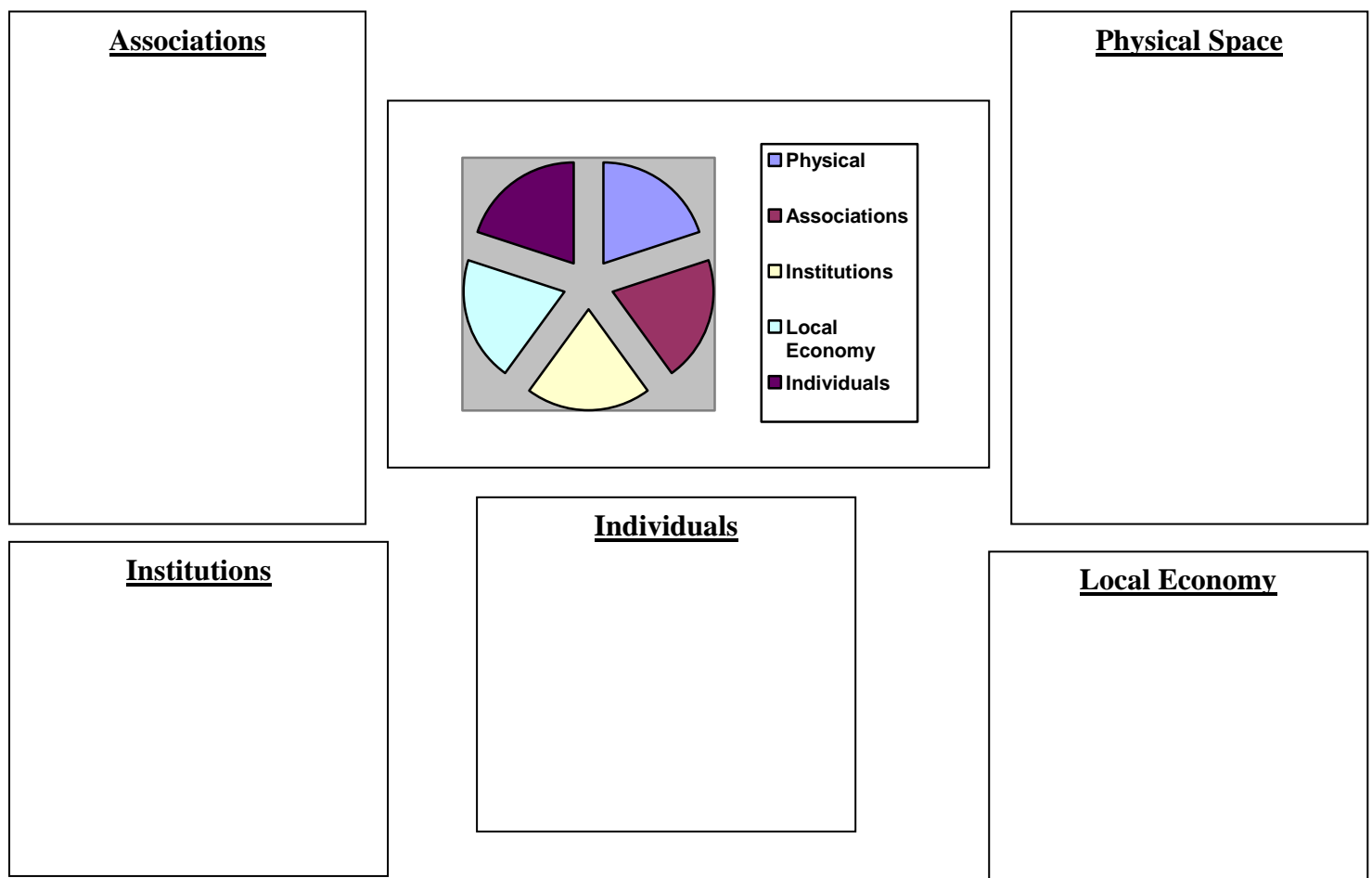
Focus groups usually last between one and two hours (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, 1998). As communication tends to be easier in groups which are demographically similar, it may be necessary to set up several focus groups to secure a good cross-section of the community in terms of age, gender, and socio-economic status (COSLA, 1998). The advantages of focus groups, according to COSLA (1998), are:

- Identifying what is of importance to people
- Building long-term relationships within the community
- Producing a source of ideas for later questionnaires
- Generating creative thinking
- Allowing those who may be inhibited, one to one, to speak freely.

2.8 Using the community asset map

Fig. 2 below shows Kretzmann and McKnight's (2005) Community Asset Map. The map is designed to be used by communities once assets have been identified. As can be seen in Fig. 2, the map divides assets into Associations, Physical Space, Institutions, Individuals and Local Economy. It is a useful reference for a community that is attempting to mobilise resources.

Fig. 2: Community asset map (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2005)



2.9 Skills-banking with younger people

It is important to give young people a role in Asset-Based Community Development. When given the opportunity, young people can make a valuable contribution to community development, build links with the rest of the community, and improve their self-esteem (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). It is important that this is done properly, with sensitivity and openness. The *Hearing Young Voices* (Children's Rights Alliance, 2002) report stresses that doing consultation badly, particularly with children experiencing poverty or other forms of social exclusion, can be harmful. Nevertheless *Hearing Young Voices* highlights the need to consult young people about issues that are relevant to them, including developments at local, regional and national level. A conclusion of *Hearing Young Voices* is that NGOs have a role to play in promoting awareness of this. The development of young people is shaped by their environment, and community is a crucial element of this.

2.10 Developmental assets of particular importance to young people

Table 3, below, shows the eight types of assets, external and internal, which the Search Institute (2007) consider of importance to the development of young people.

Table 3: Developmental assets of young people

External	Internal
Support – from family and adults	Commitment to learning – motivated to achieve, school engagement, reading
Empowerment – the community values young people	Positive values – caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, restraint
Boundaries and expectations – rules set by family, school, neighbourhood	Social competencies – planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, peaceful conflict resolution
Constructive use of time – creative activities, youth programmes, religious activities	Positive identity – has power over own life, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of future

2.11 Community research

Community research (sometimes called 'action research' or 'participatory research') is concerned with how people shape, take part in, and benefit from research. It differs from traditional research, as instead of being top down it is collaborative. A tenet of community research is that it establishes self-critical communities and is a systematic learning process (McTaggart, 1989). According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), members of the community are involved in the organisation of this type of research and in recruiting participants (AHRQ, 2003). They are also involved in letting people know about the research and promoting the use of research findings (AHRQ, 2003). Community asset mapping is a tool of participatory action research (Amsden and Ao, 2003), and as such, is of relevance to this ABCD project. Further useful references here include *The Community Planning Handbook* (Wates, 2000), a review of development projects and participatory rural appraisal in Chambers (1997 & 1999) aptly entitled *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last*.

3. Project design and methodology

3.1 Project stages

There were a number of stages to this research study, as follows:

- **Research conceptualisation, design and literature review**
Application to Combat Poverty under the Specialist Research Initiative.
- **In-house liaison and negotiation regarding the ABCD initiative**
Approval for same by the Senior & Regional Management Teams, and liaison with the NE Regional Community Development team to partner the Respond! Research & Development team in carrying out the project with residents.
- **Phases of the ABCD pilot project itself**
Work with children
Work with teenagers
Work with adults
Presentation of the ABCD Project outcomes via a Community Open Day.
- **Report-writing, analysis, and recommendations and reflections on potential transferability.**
- **Preparation of a Resource Pack for similar ABCD initiatives.**

3.2 Ethical considerations/approval

An initial element of the research design was to consider the ethical implications of carrying out the research. As Respond! designs and builds housing for those on low incomes, it works mainly with people who are in, or are at risk of poverty; and who are sometimes stigmatised due to their economic or social circumstances.

In accordance with the Respond! code of ethics, due consideration needed to be given to ensure sensitivity to the circumstances and sensibilities of those who would be invited to participate in the research and to avoid/minimise the risk of stigmatising people in poverty when reporting on research. In particular, this required:

- that the project was constructed in an open and inclusive manner and that the materials uphold the 9 grounds set out in equality legislation
- clarity as to the research work proposed (information presented in plain English with use of images so that those with literacy difficulties would not be disadvantaged)
- adherence to data protection requirements (clarity as to intended data usage; data storage/retention protocols; and nature/usage of data collected)
- the option for residents to decline to participate in, or subsequently opt out, of the project
- the consent of parents/guardians in respect of any invited participation by children and teenagers
- confidentiality and anonymity of participants (unless agreed otherwise)
- consent before any images of participants were used (see section 2 of the project *Resource Pack* for sample consent forms developed for the ABCD Project and wider usage).

The project received in-house approval by Respond! and the application to Combat Poverty under the specialist research initiative was also approved.

3.3 Respond! ABCD project goals

Having reviewed the ABCD literature, the researchers, along with the community development team, discussed how best to frame the pilot. The Respond! ABCD project goals as listed in the introduction were agreed.

3.3.1 Phases of the ABCD pilot project: work with children, youth & adults

It was agreed that the pilot would work directly with children, young people and adults in different phases, and that the work undertaken would be presented at a Community Open Day to reflect the work achieved. This would allow closure on the research aspect of the project and offer the residents and the community development team an opportunity for praxis and forward planning.

3.3.2 Deciding a location for the pilot

The original plan was for the researchers to conduct this study across several estates, both urban and rural. When the logistics of this were considered the researchers realised that it would not be possible to travel to multiple locations around the country, in any given week. The Research and Development department simply did not have the resources to do so. It was decided that the research would therefore be concentrated on one area only – as a pilot – to evaluate the effectiveness of the ABCD approach in the community development work of Respond!

Following in-house Senior and Regional Management Teams' approval of the venture, the Research and Development Team met with the North East Regional Community Development Co-ordinator to discuss possible locations for the study. The objectives of the study and how they might be met were discussed over three meetings. Dundalk was suggested as a good location for the pilot, as there is an after-school club; a youth group which meets weekly; and it is within reasonable distance of Dublin, where the researchers are based. In addition the community development co-ordinator advised that community enablers had been recruited in Dundalk and that these would operate at a cluster level.

Another factor in the selection of Dundalk was that the proposed estate went through a period of some challenges – including sustained vandalism of the community building – which resulted in difficulty engaging residents in community development work. Indeed, the community building had been closed for a period of 18 months in 2004-2006 due to vandalism. It was only in late 2006 that this situation changed. Investment in external steel window-shutters and fencing around the community building was provided by Respond! in 2006, and this has helped to create a more secure environment. A successful ‘Community Fun Day’ was held in 2006 with residents from all three adjoining Toberona estates participating. This was organised by the Community Development Officer (CDO) with input from residents and was deemed a turning point on the estate. The researchers and the community development team felt that the ABCD pilot might harness the goodwill and build on the growing cohesion in this community.

The three estates which comprise **Toberona Community** are as follows:

Oldbridge	90 units	Local Authority Estate
An Chearnóg	43 units	North & East Housing Association
Riverwell Close	45 units	Respond! Housing Association
Total:	178 households in Toberona Community	

The potential to broaden the scope of the ABCD pilot across the Respond! NE ‘cluster’ (five Respond! estates across three counties) was also considered. Dundalk was thought to be well situated within the Respond! NE cluster (which encompasses Carrickmacross, Dundalk, Drogheda, Navan and Trim) and could readily support exchange visits by residents. It was hoped that the ‘enablers’ or volunteer-leaders would, over time, be in a position to present the work of the ABCD pilot and invite its take-up, as a model of positive engagement, in communities at cluster-level. If proven successful, this could be presented at inter-regional ‘enabler’ meetings and rolled-out in each region.

In order for this to be possible the researchers had to ensure that the pilot was designed with issues of transferability in mind. These issues are explored below.

3.3.3 Issues for consideration in relation to transferability

- Ensure clarity of purpose (core goals) yet retain flexibility in target specifics (allow for these to be re-framed in line with the group's interests/energy)
- Timeframe: a minimum of a 12-18 month period for an ABCD project is probably realistic, to yield visible results
- Ideally, have a minimum of two staff to work in partnership with local residents
- Aim for 'representative representation' by residents, i.e. have all sections of a community represented (or at least ensure all have been invited to participate)
- Continuity: As community development builds on relationships of trust, even if there are changes in staff or participants it is important to have some constant figures
- Build in early visible 'successes' – even if only a map of local resources
- Keep meetings short and to an agreed time (recommend a maximum of 90 minutes)
- Adaptability/flexibility as to timing and *modus operandi* of local groups
- Perseverance: any community development initiative takes time – work at the pace of the group
- Affirm the positives and celebrate success, while encouraging and maintaining a focus on end goals

- Resources needed include: goodwill, dedicated project time, staffing, administration/office supports (including graphics, posters, art materials, camera/video work), and a budget for refreshments.

The previous section of this paper presented a review of the ABCD literature. The following chapter will set out how the model was applied to an Irish setting, working with children, young people and adults.

4. Three-phase process – children, young people and adults

4.1 Children's asset mapping – phase 1

4.1.1 Initial discussion

After a number of meetings and discussions, between the researchers and community development staff, it was agreed that the children's phase of the research would be run as an art workshop. The workshop would involve asking 6-12 year olds to discuss their community, map assets, and draw pictures to stick to the 'Big Community Map'. Children were asked to draw 'places, faces and spaces' from their community onto A5 size paper. 'Places' referred to where they usually went, or could potentially go, in their community – in other words the community's physical assets. 'Faces' referred to the people they felt were important in their community. Finally, 'spaces' referred to the activities that children do in their community, including any clubs and organisations.

A lot of preparation went into organising the children's session. This included reading background material, liaising with Community Development staff, writing a brief, sourcing art materials, and making the 'community map' to which the children could affix their pictures. Staff were briefed a few days before the workshop, so that they were clear as to what would happen and what their role would be.

4.1.2 Preliminary work: recruitment of participants

The researchers decided to run workshops with a group of children attending an after-school club. A briefing session for parents was organised a week before the workshop was due to take place. Posters advertising the event were given to parents as they brought their children to the after-school group. During the briefing session the researchers explained the purpose of the activity and encouraged parents to take part in the workshop. Leaflets, which further explained the research, and consent forms were given to parents at this time.

Despite an age range of up to six years' difference, the children interacted very well together. This may be because they attended the after-school club together and knew each other quite well.

4.1.3 Workshop proceedings

Before the workshop took place, the 'community map' was assembled in the main room of the community building. Large sheets of paper were stuck to the wall so that children's ideas of 'places, faces and spaces' in their community could be written down. Before the session began, children were given a light meal and parents were offered tea, biscuits and other light refreshments.

The workshop began by introducing the researcher and workshop leader to children and parents. Participants were given an overview of what the session would entail. Children, parents, and staff were then asked to make name badges so that everyone could easily be identified. The workshop leader encouraged children to think about and discuss people in their community, places to which they could go and finally, to list activities in which they take part. The children appeared to enjoy this discussion and answered these questions enthusiastically. While the workshop leader led the discussion, a Respond! staff member known to the children wrote their ideas on the note paper provided.

In the second segment of the workshop, children were divided into groups so that they could draw the 'places, faces and spaces' that they discussed. They were grouped according to age so that different ages would be represented in each group. Each child was assigned a colour sticker: blue, red, or yellow. Those given blue were asked to draw **people** who were important in their community, those given red were asked to draw **places** of importance within their community, and those given yellow were asked to draw **activities** they liked doing in their community. In this way it was ensured that all types of **assets** would be represented. Once the children were seated in their groups – and one or two adults were allocated to each group – they began drawing pictures. Some of the children produced several pictures, while others took their time with one. The

adults in each group were asked to ensure that the child's name and age was on the back of each picture. They were also asked to label the picture.

When the children finished drawing they were asked to go outside for a play break. This gave the facilitators time to tidy the art materials and allowed the children, who had been getting restless, to run off energy. It was intended that a discussion would take place with the children and that they would pin their pictures on the map. Unfortunately, some of the children's parents arrived early to collect them, so a member of staff had to quickly read what was on the back of the pictures and pin them up instead.

A debriefing session was held after the children and their parents went home, to get feedback on the session. Staff were asked what they would have done differently in hindsight and how future workshops might be improved. These recommendations are discussed later in this chapter.

4.2 Youth film short – phase 2

4.2.1 Initial discussion

The researchers considered different methods of getting young people aged 13-17 involved in the asset mapping process. The use of focus groups was considered but was seen as being too rigid for this age group. The storytelling approach (Fuller, Guy and Pletsch, 2006) was also considered but rejected on the grounds that it would be difficult to document these stories, without the researchers attaching their own interpretation to them. In the end, the researchers decided that video would be an appropriate medium for the youth phase of the asset mapping project. Young people are surrounded on a daily basis by films, TV adverts, and music videos. The medium is therefore familiar to them. Also, the use of video allows for flexibility and creativity, while getting the young people's perspectives across. In addition it was hoped that the young people involved would be left with a basic knowledge of video production, should they choose to further their education in this field.

4.2.2 Preliminary work: finding the right video production group

There was a considerable amount of work involved in looking for and negotiating with video production companies. The starting place for this search was Community Media Network Ireland, a 32-county non-profit organisation which brings together groups involved in community media. It was word-of-mouth, however, which yielded a list of companies that were later to be approached. A shortlist was drawn up of four video production groups in total. Two of these were located in Dundalk and two were located in Dublin. The researchers received quotes from all four video production groups. Previous experience, cost, location, and availability, were all important factors in the hiring of the production group. References were sought by the researchers to ensure that the groups had delivered on previous contracts. The researchers' preference was to have a local group run the workshops so that links could be developed. The Humanities department of the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) was finally recruited to run the workshops. Four final year students from the BA in Film and Video Production course guided the workshops, imparting their knowledge as they did so.

4.2.3 Recruitment of participants

A group of young people attending a youth club in Dundalk was approached by a Respond! Youth Worker and Community Development Officer (CDO), with the idea of asset-mapping through video. The researchers drafted an application form so that time availability, previous experience in group work and community work, as well as reasons for interest in the project could all be considered. It was made explicit, however, that previous group work or community work was not a prerequisite to participating in the project. Eight young people were selected by the Youth Worker from those who applied. These were selected on the basis that they seemed the most interested and committed to the project. We also sought to balance the group by having roughly equal numbers of males and females take part. There was some difficulty however in negotiating suitable times with participants. They were already attending the youth group every Tuesday evening and many were initially reluctant to attend workshops on a Saturday.

When the project and its advantages were explained further, however, our quota of eight young people came forward. All were very enthusiastic about the project.

4.2.4 Liaising with Community Development and Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)

Liaising with community development workers and the youth worker in Dundalk took a number of weeks. The Respond! Community Development Department had many of its own initiatives taking place. Despite this, the project was one they believed would be valuable to all involved.

Early correspondence with DKIT took place by e-mail. The researchers sent a brief to the DKIT students who would be running the workshops, outlining the objectives of the study. It was agreed that there would need to be four workshops in order for the project to reach its goals. The topic of each workshop was as follows:

- Workshop 1:** Pre-production – idea generation, brainstorming, thinking visually, storyboarding (2 hours)
- Workshop 2:** Basic DV camera and sound recording principles (2 hours)
- Workshop 3:** Shooting the film (4 hours)
- Workshop 4:** Basic editing tools and techniques (4 hours).

The locations for the workshops were decided at this point. The first two workshops would take place in the Respond! community building in Dundalk, while the third would take place on the estate. It was agreed that the last workshop, which required the use of editing equipment, would take place in DKIT. It was also arranged that DKIT would bring **consent forms** and all necessary documentation for releasing video footage into the public domain.

4.2.5 Boundaries of the ‘community’

Where a community begins and ends is different for different people. A teenager’s concept of their community is likely to differ from that of an adult. We sought to accommodate diversity of opinions with regard to boundaries by leaving them open to the interpretation of participants.

4.2.6 Structure of the workshops

The first workshop took place from 6pm to 8pm in the community building of a Respond! estate in Dundalk. One of our research team met with students from DKIT an hour before the session was due to begin, to discuss final details about the workshops. This provided space to become acquainted with one another and speak about the forthcoming project. It also allowed time to discuss our respective roles in each workshop. It was agreed that the film students would lead the workshops, while the Community Development Officer (CDO) and Youth Officer, who knew the young people well, would help to get their full co-operation. The Research Officer would observe and record each workshop.

The first two workshops would provide the platform necessary for the consultation on assets in the community. As part of making a film short, the young people had to consider what community meant to them and what their community had to offer people of their age group. For the researchers this consultation was the most important part of the process as it was the core of the research objective.

The third and fourth workshops were focused on the practicalities of making the film. The young people were divided into two groups so that the entire film could be shot in the allotted time. The following week, participants were taken to the editing suite of Dundalk Institute of Technology where they had hands-on experience using editing software of a professional standard.

A more detailed overview of these workshops follows below:

4.2.7 Workshop 1

The session began with a short introduction by the Research Officer, who outlined the purpose of the research and thanked participants for coming. The CDO then set out the ground rules for the workshops, emphasising that everyone's opinion should be respected.

The DKIT students handed out worksheets for storyboarding and explained why storyboarding was important. The concept of community was then discussed. Participants were asked about the people, places and things that made up a community, and also: Where did they spend most of their time? What did they like to do? Who were people they met on a daily basis? After this discussion there was a ten-minute break. When participants came back from their break they were split into groups. Each group was asked to come up with a basic storyboard, which would reflect their views of the community.

Ideas for film: When the young people were asked, 'What would you like to show your community in this video?' the common answer was, 'That we are not as bad as they make out'. Each group came up with a separate idea for their film. Both ideas similarly expressed the desire to subvert adults' perceptions of teenagers. In one idea, the young people wanted to show an adult eavesdropping on a group of teenagers sitting on a wall. The adult hopes to catch them out in some plot. But they are merely discussing how little there is to do in their community.

Another idea was that of an undercover reporter doing a feature on teenage anti-social behaviour. There are flashes of teenagers doing things they shouldn't be: breaking into cars, doing drugs, etc. The reporter conducts interviews with people in the area (these are the participants dressed up). Again in this idea the reporter sneaks up on the teenagers as they sit on their wall but finds them engaged in innocent conversation.

Difficulties with the session: The group did not seem interested in the technicalities of making a film. They started to lose interest when storyboarding was explained to them. At other times they were distracted by settling old scores with neighbours. Despite this the group said they were committed to seeing the project through and they seemed to enjoy the session overall.

4.2.8 Workshop 2

The participants presented their storyboards from the week before. They were then split into two groups, each group shooting different parts of the film. The

young people outlined how they would shoot various scenes and what props they would use, where they could get the props and how much these would cost.

When this was done each group was given a camera, a 'boom' (for recording sound), and a set of headphones. Students from the DKIT showed each group how to use this equipment. The young people took turns in video-taping one another and then playing back the footage.

The cameras used for the session were Sony PD170s. These were a big success with the youth group who very much enjoyed using them. It did not take them long before they felt comfortable assembling the tripod and handling the cameras. The equipment itself sparked off a huge amount of enthusiasm for the project and was far better received than the previous storyboarding session.

Difficulties with this session: The only difficulties encountered in this session were (a) punctuality (in one case only) and (b) getting the young people to concentrate on the details of their film. Participants were easily distracted by banter. They were respectful, however, when those leading the group spoke.

4.2.9 Workshop 3

Participants arrived in the morning and were split into their respective groups, as set out in the previous session. Each group then began to film their scenes, which were divided into the fictional (what adults think they are doing on their estate) and the reality (what they say they are really doing on their estate).

The young people had ample opportunity to use the cameras and sound equipment. They were guided closely by DKIT students. In many instances participants decided when a shot was satisfactory or when it should be shot again.

Difficulties with this session: It was difficult to get all participants together so early on a Saturday morning. This meant there was a forty-minute delay on the filming.

Luckily there was enough time to film everything from the storyboard. Had the schedule been tighter, however, this would have been a problem.

4.2.10 Workshop 4

Participants were brought to the Dundalk Institute of Technology where they were shown how to edit their film. They were asked: what scenes they wanted to keep, what the sequence of shots within a scene should be, and what music would be best for any given scene. The participants also recorded a voice-over. The participants took turns using the software and all gave an input to how the film should look.

Using the equipment: The participants were shown how to use 'iMovies' software for editing video footage. Two participants in particular enjoyed this the most. Overall the youths found the software to be fairly user friendly and they gradually became familiar with it.

Difficulties with this session: This workshop took place on a Saturday morning. There was a problem getting all participants together in time. Three of the four were on time but one was late. Some of the participants preferred acting or directing to editing and so the session was not to everybody's taste. There were no serious difficulties associated with the session, however.

4.2.11 Screening of the film and presentation of certificates

Once the film had been edited, everyone involved in the production was invited to see it. After watching the film, participants were interviewed and asked the following questions:

- Did you enjoy making the film?
- What did you enjoy most about making the film?
- Why is it important that this film was made?
- Would you be interested in doing more community work of this nature?
- Were you interested in video work before this project?
- Would you be interested in doing future video work?

Emphasis was placed on skills that participants had discovered while making the film. These were skills that were built on rather than created. It was evident from the interviews that participants were proud of what they had achieved.

A further screening was organised two months later for the parents, family and friends of the young people who made the video. In the interim, footage from the interviews of those involved was edited and placed on the same DVD as the film short. Invites were printed and sent to participants' households, inviting the whole family to attend.

The screening was a celebration of the young people's hard work, and the presentation of certificates of achievement acted to emphasise this. Each young person was given a copy of the DVD to keep. The evening gave closure to this phase of the research and a finished product that the young people could take home and look back on in years to come. (Refer to Resource Pack for a copy of the DVD video-short and related photo-record and notes.)

4.3 Adults' ABCD group – phase 3

4.3.1 Initial discussion – meeting with enablers

It was agreed that the Community Development Department of Respond! would facilitate the meetings with the enablers, as any future roll-out of the ABCD process would be implemented by this department. The researchers' roles would be to prepare the necessary materials and record each session. It was intended that the format of the adult sessions would closely follow Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) model. It was also decided that in order for this process to work we would have to get all three communities of Toberona involved. Before we began recruiting adults for the ABCD sessions we spoke with enablers on the estate. Respond! defines an enabler as,

...someone who is willing to work with others on the estates to deliver programmes of activities and events on a voluntary basis. They are not necessarily the 'leaders' of the estate or those who are most vocal, they are the 'doers' and 'seers' on the estate (Community Development Strategy, p.8., 2007a).

The aim of this meeting was to inform and invite community enablers to take part in the ABCD process. During the meeting we explored how ABCD would be beneficial for the community, namely in terms of:

- building links with institutions and organisations
- creating a directory of services in the area
- mapping individual skills and talents.

The enablers were presented with three images: a cup half full/half empty, a community needs map, and a community assets map. The enablers were then told about the community work the young people on their estate had completed with Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT). This was used as an example of how ABCD can be used to discover talents in a community while also building links with institutions. The enablers responded well to the theory behind ABCD

and each was attracted to a different aspect of the community map. One liked the idea of discovering individual talents, another was drawn to the idea of mapping physical places, while another was struck by the idea of building links with institutions such as the DKIT.

The role of enablers is to help strengthen their community and build relationships between community members. The participation of the enablers in the ABCD process was therefore desirable. The coincidence of the ABCD project with the recruitment of enablers was fortuitous. It gave the enablers a platform on which to build relationships with others from their area, and it gave the researchers a start on engaging members of the community.

4.3.2 Recruitment of participants

In order to recruit participants it was necessary to design attractive posters and leaflets explaining what the study was about. We chose the slogan 'Put your heads together' to convey the message that this was an attempt to get the community sharing ideas. To go with this theme we designed posters with 'heads' in different forms and displayed them in the community building and local shops. In addition, leaflets were dropped through letterboxes in each of the 180 households on three estates. Recruiting was continued between each session so that participation was open to all and greater numbers could be included in the process.

Recruiting participants was a challenging undertaking. There was a disappointing turnout from the residents on the Respond! estate, and attendance was sporadic, meaning that it was difficult to maintain momentum. The ABCD concept had to be reintroduced at the beginning of each session, for those who had never heard of it. For the fifth session it was decided to contact everyone who had attended the previous sessions, so that a working group might be formed. This working group then became committed to seeing through an eco-project as well as organising a community festival.

Unfortunately the enablers did not become involved in the pilot to the extent that the researchers hoped. This was likely due to the work in which the enablers were already involved.

4.4 Outline of the sessions and the topics discussed

4.4.1 Session 1

The aim of session 1 was to introduce participants to the ABCD process and begin mapping assets in the community, focusing on institutions, physical spaces and amenities.

Those who attended the session were from two estates in Toberona: Riverwell Close, a Respond! estate and Oldbridge, a local authority estate. Each person in attendance had received a leaflet and many brought the leaflet to the session. The facilitator explained what is meant by community mapping and showed three images to the group. The first was of a cup that was half empty/half full. The second was a community needs map and the third was a community assets map. Each member of the group was given a copy of these. The facilitator explained that it was important to focus on resources so that the community would be aware of its strengths and be more self-sustaining. The facilitator then asked the group to define the boundaries of their community, as they saw it. Some initially saw their community as their estate but when the scope of the sessions was explained to them they thought the boundary would have to be a bit wider to take in all the services and amenities in the area. The group agreed that their community was a 3-4 mile radius of their estates. When this was agreed the facilitator asked the group what they understood by the term 'Institutions'. The group began to list institutions such as churches, schools, and hospitals. The facilitator then asked what institutions were in their community.

Once a list was drawn up the sheets were stuck to the wall and discussion turned to what uses these resources could be put to. Banks were used as an example of a resource that could be used, not just for financial transactions, but for corporate social projects such as AIB's *Better Ireland Programme*, and Permanent TSB's

Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme. The community building in Riverwell Close benefited from AIB's programme when the bank funded computers for the building. Members of the group reported that the army barracks organised catering, trips, children's outings and meals-on-wheels. The library was a resource which had free use of computers, organised competitions for children, hosted storytelling, and offered people the possibility of going through archives.

At this point the session moved on from institutions to physical spaces and amenities. A list of physical spaces and amenities was elicited from the group and included: the river, several parks, the forest, the mountains, the rugby club and the swimming pool. When asked how a community could use the river, fishing, canoeing and duck-racing were all mentioned. The parks provided opportunities for picnics, sports, walks and cycling.

Conclusion of the Meeting: The group was asked if they would be interested in coming back for further sessions. Dates for two further sessions were written on the flip chart. The first of these dates was changed so as to accommodate more people. The group agreed that they would come to subsequent sessions and volunteered to collect information from institutions and places in the area. One of the researchers suggested that they divide up this work so that they were not collecting the same information more than once. This was agreed and members chose to collect what was achievable and/or interesting for them. It was agreed that at the next session information about the following would be brought:

- Educational facilities
- Hospitals
- Post Office/Train station
- Leisure clubs
- Gardaí
- Town Hall
- Banks/Credit Union.

The group was thanked for their time and the session finished.

Learning from the session: At the beginning of the session the group were confused about what an institution was. Some participants considered sports

clubs or commercial facilities to be institutions. This might have been avoided had the assets map template been shown to the group earlier. Once the facilitator actually referred the participants to the handout, they were a lot clearer on what an institution was, although they did still mention services or associations from time to time.

Further learning for the group was how an institution could be used to benefit the community. It was necessary to give a practical example when the discussion turned to the resources offered by the institutions in the area. Once an example was presented to the participants the discussion got back on track (the example given was around using the local banks as a funding source – for example, the computers in the Riverwell Close Community Building were paid for by the AIB ‘Better Ireland’ Awards). It would be worth while to have some practical examples like this ready for any subsequent sessions.

Positive outcomes: Overall there was good participation by most people who attended the session. Everybody contributed something, even if they only spoke for a short time. Although some people spoke more than others, nobody dominated the session. Participants spoke readily about the assets in their community, with little prompting from the facilitator.

Dundalk has a very high number of local services and amenities, institutions and physical spaces so there was a lot to discuss at the session. However, it may be harder to facilitate a session in an area with fewer services and amenities. It could be worth doing a further phase of the pilot in an area with fewer assets.

4.4.2 Session 2

The aim of session 2 was to recap on the work of the previous week, and to further the mapping of assets, focusing on associations and the local economy. Beginning of the session: The institutions outlined in the previous session were typed up and pinned to the wall. The Community Development Officer began by thanking everyone for showing up. He then explained the rationale behind asset-based community development and what the community stood to gain by participating in this process. By way of example the facilitator spoke about an

environmental project being undertaken in Carrickmacross, which was awarded a grant of €2,000. The facilitator also made contact with a Professor in Trinity College who offered to come and speak to those involved in the Carrckmacross project.

When the group was asked what they would like to see in their community, the following were suggested:

- A clinic in the community building, where a public health nurse might meet with residents
- Cookery classes
- Education about healthy eating
- Counselling for adults and young people
- A women's club, which might include flower arranging
- A men's club
- A parenting course
- Some kind of martial arts/ self-defence course
- Getting the army in for a demonstration.

The facilitator stressed that this process was community driven and a chance for the community to make links with associations and get them to work for 'us'. It was also a chance for residents to discover what organisations, associations or institutions are in the community and what they do. Many of the group mentioned the VEC and were interested in getting the VEC to come to the community building to start up some education programmes.

A Respond! Community Resource Officer (CDO) based in Carrickmacross spoke about some of the initiatives young people were working on there, such as horticulture and workshops in *Adobe Photoshop* software. She also mentioned the AIB's *Better Ireland Programme* as a potential source of funding. The facilitator then did a recap of the institutions listed in the previous session and explained how these might be used for the benefit of the community.

The CDO asked the group what associations were in the area. The CDO read out a list of some eleven associations that had been prepared by the researchers. These were as follows:

- Respond!
- Clanmill Ireland (housing association)
- Border Arts Centre
- Women's Aid Dundalk
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- Brainwave (epilepsy)
- Dundalk Dog Rescue
- Dundalk Widow's Association
- Dundalk Simon Community
- Dundalk Voluntary Housing Association
- North & East Housing Association (Toberona).

These were read out as an attempt to get the mapping started. The group were familiar with most of these associations but were unable to name many more, although a parents' support group for disabled children was mentioned. Also mentioned were:

- Turas
- Amen
- A/anon
- Youth Work Ireland.

After associations were explored, attention was focused on the local economy. One of the research officers explained what was meant by the local economy: financial institutions, employers, funding bodies, and any circulation of money in the area. The services offered by credit unions were explored, in terms of encouraging savings and sponsorship of events. The group were then asked to consider who the largest employers in their area were. The group did not perceive that there was a main employer in the area until the CDO mentioned Moffatt's Engineering. Then the army barracks and the HSE were mentioned as other employers.

The facilitator brought up the idea of LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems) and some of the group felt that this was already in their area, in an informal way, in that they regularly do jobs for one another. One of the residents then suggested setting up a 'Farmer's market', or a 'Sale of Work' system in the area. This idea allowed the facilitator the opportunity to discuss the skills needed to carry off such a venture and he asked each member of the group to name a skill that they have. The group was comfortable with this and showed no signs of embarrassment or shyness. The group was asked if they would be interested in coming back for further sessions. A date for the next meeting was chosen and the group was thanked for their time.

Some difficulties were encountered as follows: The session was late beginning due to latecomers. Another difficulty was that only one of the residents from the first session returned for the second session. This meant that the rationale for the project had to be explained again and some time was lost. The session was somewhat rushed for this reason.

There was a general buzz of enthusiasm among participants about the ABCD process and there was no shortage of ideas being proposed. Information was shared between those who attended the group. Some residents did not know that there were three youth clubs operating in their area, or that there was bingo in the community building. This re-enforced the benefits of ABCD to the residents. Another positive was that six new participants were recruited for this session.

4.4.3 Session 3

Due to a poor turnout from residents the agenda for session 3 was postponed. At the start of the session, the facilitators asked participants why there was such a poor turn out. The reasons given were as follows:

- People were more interested in watching television
- Some may have found the Respond! logo on the poster off-putting – thinking the meetings were for Respond! residents only

- People may not understand that these sessions are for all three estates (Riverwell, An Chearnóg and Oldbridge) not just Respond!
- The choice of venue – why not one of the other two adjoining estates?
- No childcare means that some people with children cannot attend
- Unless people see something tangible taking place (like an event), they are unlikely to take an interest.

We asked residents what we might do to recruit more members of the community into the ABCD process. It was suggested that we needed to:

- do a door knock in all three communities
- change the venue to An Chearnóg or Oldbridge
- consider changing the time of day
- organise childcare in an adjacent room (*though not taken up, when offered*)
- let people know we intend to organise an event as part of this process.

4.4.4 Community festival

In the previous session residents came up with the idea of having a 'Farmer's Market' or a 'Sale of Work'. Through discussion, these ideas evolved into a festival with potential for an annual event. Ideas around the festival included getting musicians to come and play music throughout the day. People could set up stalls and sell food and crafts. The CDO suggested that Toberona's rich history, going back to the Celts, could be celebrated. It was suggested that *Macnas*¹ be approached to make items for this purpose.

Organising a community festival is an excellent means of getting people involved in an ABCD process. In order to organise a festival a community must think about what associations could get involved, what institutions they might need to contact and the skills of local residents. It puts the theory of ABCD into practice.

¹ *Macnas* is a Galway-based group which promotes community celebration through the Arts
www.macnas.com

Before concluding the meeting, action points were agreed. Two members of the community (from An Chearnóg) said that they would be willing to door-knock and get people to attend the next meeting, when the date was decided. All four members were thanked for their time and the session ended.

The biggest difficulty encountered in this session was attendance. The second biggest difficulty was punctuality. Although those who attended were enthusiastic about the ABCD process, there were not sufficient numbers to get work done. Another difficulty was the lack of attendance from Respond!'s own residents.

Positive outcomes: From a research point of view this session highlighted pitfalls in the ABCD process, namely the difficulty in getting the community engaged. Also, we gained an insight into how we might improve recruitment, by changing the location of meetings and making the Respond! logo less prominent. As this project is a pilot, the session was helpful in terms of learning how/if ABCD can work in a social housing context and if it is a viable option for community development in Respond!. In addition, many good ideas were generated during the course of the session and those who attended confirmed their interest and commitment in taking the process to the next level.

4.4.5 Session 4

The aims of Session 4 were to ask the community which of the suggestions put forward in previous sessions it wanted to pursue (if any) and if they were willing to make a commitment, as well as to tease out some of the issues brought up in the sessions to that point.

The session began with a summary of the ABCD process and discussion as to why a community might want to undertake such a process. Examples of how a community might use the resources available in the local area were outlined, including the use of the AIB *Better Ireland Awards* as a source of community funding and the Dundalk Institute of Technology as a resource for education and expertise.

As the participants were different from the last session (although most had been to at least one of the previous sessions) they were asked if holding a community festival (which was the preference of the people who attended the last session), was also what they wanted. They all appeared to be keen on the idea of holding a community festival.

One of the participants asked what the difference was between this day and the fun day that was organised for the children in Riverwell Close a few months previously. The CDO explained that this day would be for the whole community and not just the children. Adults and teenagers would be involved in the community festival also. The CDO explained that this would be a chance to use a range of resources from the community and to draw on local people's skills. For example, they could invite local musicians to come and play at the festival or they could ask somebody who cooks to prepare some food for the day. Another reason for the process, outlined by the CDO, was that local organisations and statutory bodies could be invited to the festival in order to try and forge links with the Toberona Community. A further reason put forward was that they could invite the local Vocational Education Committee (VEC) in order to link with them in providing education to people in the local area.

There were quite a number of positive outcomes from the meeting, the main one being the agreement to stick with the process and try to organise the community festival. It was agreed that the residents and the CDOs would try to get everyone who had been involved in the process, so far, to attend the next meeting where a committee would be formed to organise a community festival. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held after the Easter holidays. The location and date for the meeting were not decided at this time.

It was envisaged that the arrangement of this day would give the participants a 'product' from the ABCD process, as it was suggested a number of times that people need to see something coming from the process rather than just holding the meetings for the sake of mapping the skills and assets of the area. In organising the event, participants would have to map the assets and skills of the

area, in order to see what resources they had available to them in the community.

One participant seemed to have a particularly good understanding of the ABCD process and gave an example of a bio-diversity programme in which her community had recently become involved. The exact details of the programme were not discussed. However, this programme would benefit the community in a number of ways: allowing for the growth of wild flowers, the development of the environment and the possibility of availing of additional funding. Participants from the other estates had not heard of this programme. They were very keen to become involved and asked for further details. There was a suggestion that all three estates could become involved in this programme so that the area as a whole could benefit from it.

A discussion followed about the great natural resource that the area has: a river and wetlands at the back of the three estates. Many of the participants felt that this area had the potential to be a fantastic resource for the estates if some work was put into it. One participant said it would be great if it became an area where they could bring their children during the summer for a picnic and another mentioned a walkway along the river. The facilitator pointed out to the group that if they have the development of this natural resource in mind, they have more clout as a whole community organisation, than as individuals.

Following on from this, it was suggested that they could devise a five-year plan for the area, including the development of the wetlands and river, plus other areas around the estate. This could be launched at the community festival. The participants were very keen on this idea as they felt it would help them deal with different organisations and statutory agencies in the area, by showing them how serious and organised the community is.

One participant suggested that young people in the area should be involved in the ABCD process. She said her own son had expressed an interest and that young people should be involved in the community from an early age so that they

could continue this work in the future. The CDO agreed that this was a good idea but asked that any young person attending the meetings be accompanied by his/her legal guardian.

Most of the ABCD meetings to this point had been quite positive. However, in this session some issues of a negative nature arose. Time constraints were raised as an issue. Some participants complained that the same people are always involved in organising community events and that these people could not take on any more work. The facilitator responded by stating that 25 people had been involved in the process to date and that if we could get them all to commit, the organisation of any event would not be left to a small number of people.

There were some worries about barriers to holding the event, such as the need for insurance for the day, and food health and safety issues. The facilitator suggested that maybe they should start from a position of looking at what might be possible rather than looking at obstacles. The facilitator felt confident that the group could use the resources in the community to get over any barriers they might encounter.

Another worry of the participants concerned the location for the community festival. Some felt that regardless of which estate was chosen, people from the other two estates would feel slighted. Someone suggested that events could be held in all three estates but another participant worried that people from each estate would only attend events held in their own estate. It was suggested that a day's programme of events would help to draw people to all three estates. Another suggestion, which seemed popular, was to hold the event in the local rugby club which is near the estate. One of the CDOs present at the meeting pointed out that if the ABCD process was to be a long-term one, and if the participants decided to hold a community day or festival each year, then it would be possible to hold the event in a different estate each time.

One final issue that arose directly related to Respond! as an organisation. One Respond! resident said that the involvement of Respond! in everything could

possibly annoy some of the Riverwell residents. This tenant said that sometimes they feel like they are being 'baby sat' by the organisation. The facilitator pointed out that there were other fora such as tenant participation committees for dealing with such concerns, and that the ABCD process was for the whole community of Toberona and not just Riverwell Close.

At the end of the meeting, a number of decisions were agreed by the participants, namely that:

- Another meeting would be held after Easter to form a working group to organise the community day or the development of the natural resources in the area
- A five-year plan would be devised for the area, outlining the community's priorities for that time
- Young people should be involved in the process and
- A community festival or some kind of community launch for the five-year plan should be organised.

4.5.6 Session 5

The aim of Session 5 was to form a working/implementation group to carry out the suggestions and decisions of previous sessions.

The facilitator put forward the idea that a working group be formed which would meet for one hour every two weeks. This group would put into action the river project discussed at the previous meeting. One resident expressed her concern that this project might be too daunting for an initial start. She suggested that the working group establish itself before taking on the river project. Another resident recommended that the group, in order to establish itself, start by organising the community festival which was mentioned in previous sessions.

The feasibility of the river project was then discussed. All agreed that this was a project that would have considerable advantages for the whole community. The facilitator introduced the idea of speaking to the Environmental Officer from the

Urban District Council and also the Heritage Officer for Louth County about the project.

Further discussion regarding the development of the river included: boundary issues, access for children, and cleaning the area to facilitate its development. It was suggested that the following groups could help with this:

- Army Barracks
- Scouts
- FCA
- Civil Defense.

Discussion then turned to the community festival. It was decided that stalls would be set up on the greens and a sort of car-boot-sale could take place. Other ideas included:

- Book sales
- Cake sales
- Arts & Crafts
- Penalty shoot-outs
- Target practice
- Card reading: tarot, angels and fairies.

A spot by the river was chosen as a suitable location for the festival. Toilet facilities could be set up there. Bouncy-castles and face-painting were all discussed. It was agreed that the Gardaí could provide an important role in terms of supervision and might be willing to join in the children's games. A provisional date (a Saturday in July) was agreed to hold the festival. It was also agreed that a further meeting would be held later in May.

Learning arising from this session: This session went very smoothly. However, it seemed that one resident's opinion regarding the river project, i.e. that it was too much to take on initially, may have influenced other members of the community, who were not vocal on this point.

Positive outcomes: A lot of planning was achieved in a short time during this meeting and there was very positive input from those who attended, as well as a commitment to persevere with the ABCD process. In addition, there was agreement that a working group be formed, which would continue the process by organising a community festival and starting an eco project.

5. Results and outcomes

5.1 Results from the children's phase of the ABCD pilot

The children were asked to discuss:

- people in their community
- places they can go and
- activities in their community in which they take part.

Table 3 below outlines their responses under the headings used in the workshop: places, faces and spaces (or activities).

Table 3: Children's Perspectives on Community 'Places, Faces and Spaces

Places	Faces	Spaces (Activities)
Mullen's (local chip shop)	Ice cream man	Play guitar
The shops	Friends	Trampoline
Park	Milkman	Cycling
Homes	Teacher	Playing on trees
Hidden Treasures (after-school club)	Staff from Respond!	Bowling
School	After-school staff	Ballet
Bowling Alley	Fireman	Making dens
Local play den (making dens)	Postman	Going out to eat
One way club (Friday evening)	Gardaí	Ice skating
Cinema	Family	Painting and colouring
Gaelic games	Lollipop man	Playing violin
Pirate's Den	Builders	Piano
Church	Ambulance man	Singing
Dog track		Playing with toy cars
Ice skating		Watching TV
Dunnes Stores (super market)		Playing with dolls
McDonalds		Playing with computers
Bed		Playing football
Holidays		Playing basketball
		Snow boarding
		Playing on the beach
		Playing the drums
		Singing

We can see from this table that the people who populate a child's view of his/her community are often officials such as teachers, firemen, and Gardaí; reflecting children's need for structure, security and routine.

5.1.2 Staff debriefing and recommendations

After the session, staff were asked to sit down with the researcher and workshop leader to discuss the session. All staff thought that the workshop was a worthwhile exercise and one the children and their parents enjoyed. It was suggested, however, that younger children enjoyed it more, as older children often get to draw as part of other activities. One suggestion was to use a different medium for older children to create their art work; for example, they could create a collage.

One staff member expressed surprise that the children were so articulate about their feelings for their community. The children seemed to have enjoyed the discussion at the start of the workshop more than had been anticipated. It was suggested that the discussion could have gone on for longer and the art segment could have been shorter. In addition the session would have been better if there had been time at the end to ask the children to talk about their pictures. The researchers recommend that this should happen at any subsequent sessions.

Organising children into groups took proportionately too much time. For this reason one staff member suggested that, in future, the children remain in their naturally formed groups. For any future workshops the name of each group should go on the back of the picture. This is so that the pictures do not get mixed up when they are affixed to the map.

Overall, the staff enjoyed the workshop. They described it as a fun exercise and quite different from activities that the children normally do. They stressed the importance of the briefing session which took place a few days before, as it helped them to understand what was going on during the session. They felt that the name badges were a good idea as the workshop leader could call the children by their first name, to which the children responded well.

5.1.3 The children's understanding of the activities

When the workshop began the children seemed very enthusiastic. Discussion focused on the 'places, faces and spaces' that featured in the children's lives and it was through this that children came to understand the concept of 'community'. When it came to discussing the activities that the children take part in, many children named passive, home activities such as playing their computer or watching TV. It had been anticipated that they would name more active, community-based activities such as playing football or going bowling; when asked, they said they also did these activities.

5.1.4 The children's behaviour

In general, the children appeared to enjoy the exercise and were well behaved, though they occasionally became restless and had to be asked to quieten down, which they did. There were two occasions where the children became loud and distracted. The first was when they were divided into groups and the second was when staff asked them to go outside to play for a few minutes. The majority of the time, however, the children behaved very well and did what they were told by parents and staff.

5.1.5 Staff

The fact that there were several staff around during the workshop made it run very well. Each group had a staff member, and most groups had one or two parents allocated to them. It is worth noting that equivalent high staffing ratios would likewise be helpful in any future workshops held with children.

5.1.6 Parents

Five mothers attended the children's workshop. At first they were reluctant to become involved and most sat with one another drinking tea. The workshop leader asked if the mothers would like to join a group but they declined. However, when one of the after-school staff insisted that they join a group they did so.

Once they were in groups they began to enjoy themselves and even drew some of their own pictures.

5.1.7 Ethical considerations

The researchers were mindful that children are a vulnerable group. We therefore took measures to ensure that their rights were protected at all times and that they were under no pressure to participate in the research. We did this by making it explicit to parents and children that participation was voluntary. Parental consent forms were used both in respect of permission for children to participate in the project, and regarding the use of photography or filming throughout the project.

5.1.8 Outcomes of children's phase of ABCD project

The session showed that consultation with children about their community is worthwhile and of interest to children. A surprising finding was that children seemed to enjoy discussing their community more than drawing pictures.

Another positive outcome was getting parents involved in this consultation with their children. This made children feel that what they were doing was of value. Encouraging different age groups to work together is a tenet of Asset-Based Community Development and this workshop was a good example of that.

Including children in the ABCD process not only incorporates an insightful and valuable group, but may also encourage them to become more involved in community life in the future.

5.2 Results from youth ABCD

5.2.1 Assets in the community

When asked what assets they had in the community, the young people named: a wall on the estate where they meet up, the 'backs' (an area at the back of the estate), two Respond! staff (A Youth Worker and a CDO), the community building, and their school. Even though they did not like schoolwork they preferred being at school to being on holidays, which they found boring. Two girls in the group said that the nearby park was beset by 'drug dealers', meaning it was not safe for them to go there.

5.2.2 Assets in Dundalk town

The group named assets such as the 'Ice Dome' in Dundalk town. They also mentioned Marshes Shopping Centre, but complained that security wouldn't let them hang around there. The overwhelming sentiment was that they could not afford to go into town much. This meant that they spent most of their time on the estate. When asked if they belong to any sports or other clubs, they said they did not and indicated that they had no interest in sports. At the end of the workshop each participant was asked to complete his/her storyboard worksheet for the following session.

5.2.3 Difficulties with the youth phase

A difficulty, encountered with the young people, was discussing assets with a group who felt that they were unwanted and did not have the means of accessing their community's assets. Although they named the 'Ice Dome' – an ice skating rink in Dundalk – as a potential asset, it was too expensive for them to use. The young people felt alienated and unwanted by their community. Though the idea of ABCD is to focus on the positive aspects of an area, these young people felt that they were locked out of their community. All services, they felt, catered for either children or adults. In addition they were not allowed on many of the green areas on their estate, in case they damaged the flowers. One youth bitterly commented that 'some people around here, think they are living in Beverly Hills.'

The young people claimed that all they ever did was come back from school, change out of their uniforms and sit on the wall of the estate, 'slagging' one another and smoking. They were constantly being asked to move from the wall but were never given anywhere to move to. They claimed that adults in the estate accused them of vandalism in the area and that they had a 'bad name'.

The young people felt marginalised and were angry at how they were perceived and treated by adults. Although the ABCD approach focuses on the positives of a community, we felt that in order to work effectively with these young people it was important to earn their trust and respect, by acknowledging their grievances. We had to accept that these young people did not view their community in a positive way. However, during the process of making the film it became evident that there were many strengths and assets in this community. These included the community building, community workers, and their friends who helped out with filming.

The boundaries of their community were narrower than those of either the children or adults. It consisted of their school, their friends and their estate. These youths rarely ventured into the town, located approximately four kilometres from them. In terms of assets, therefore, the assets of these young people were less obvious than for children and adults. Of most value to them was their relationship with their friends and youth workers. Having a place such as the community building, in which they could socialise, also meant a great deal to this group.

5.3 Outcomes of youth work aspect of ABCD project

5.3.1 First step in mobilising assets

Kretzman and McKnight (1993) write that in order for healthy communities to be built, 'youth must no longer be relegated to the margins of community life'. This project is but the first step in bringing youth in from the margins. We cannot expect to have fully realised Kretzman and McKnight's (1993) vision of mobilising the assets of young people in four workshops. However, the film the young

people produced should be an eye opener to adults in the community and demonstrates the capacity of this age group. The Search Institute (2007) lists constructive use of time and empowerment as developmental assets in young people. There is no doubt that young people used their time constructively during this project and the fact that their film was screened and watched by adults from the community helped to instil in them a sense of pride and purpose.

The young people who participated in these groups were, by their own admission, regarded by their neighbours as troublesome and badly behaved. Community for them was a sense of alienation from their adult neighbours. To get these young people involved in a process where they were encouraged to think about their community was an achievement. That they attended all workshops, two of which took place on Saturday mornings, shows their dedication.

5.3.2 Creativity

Another positive outcome was that these young people engaged in a creative enterprise and followed through to a finished product, while displaying a range of skills in the process. Some proved to be good at developing plot, others had an interest in sound, some preferred acting, while others showed a talent for editing. Making constructive use of time is a developmental asset for young people and the project was fruitful in this regard.

5.3.3 Friends as assets

The consultation with the youth group and the film they produced showed that this age group's most obvious asset is their friendship with their peers. When asked what part of the process they had enjoyed the most, all participants said it was working with their friends. There appears to be a high level of social capital within this peer group. They live in the same neighbourhood, attend the same school, and spend most of their leisure time together.

5.3.4 Confidence – realisation of skills

From the interviews we conducted with the young people after they saw the film it was apparent that they had acquired confidence from their achievement. When the researchers first met these young people they were shy about discussing their skills. By the end of the project they were far more willing to admit that they had talents in areas such as editing and storyboarding. Furthermore they were keen to enhance these skills by doing future video work. ABCD is as much about mapping individual skills as it is about mapping community assets. Therefore, the youth work section of the study was successful in this regard.

5.3.5 Building links with Dundalk Institute of Technology

Kretzman and McKnight stress the importance of building links between people, institutions and organisations (1993). By linking with Dundalk Institute of Technology for the film short, a relationship was built between the youths and their local third level institution. Such a link offers many future possibilities in terms of training, research, and community development. Additionally it may encourage the young people on the estate to pursue third level education. Many enquired about the film studies that the DKIT students were doing.

5.4 Results from Adults' ABCD

The adult sessions uncovered many assets in the area, using the community asset map (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2005) for guidance. More importantly, as the concept was explained, the adults began to see how they could use these assets for their own advantage and build links between them. Although the adult sessions did get people from the community to start making these links, we must treat the results tentatively. Effectively where this study ends is just the beginning of the work that will be carried out by the group which was formed during this research. There are, nonetheless, several outcomes which we can document in this report.

5.4.1 Introduction to ABCD

The concept of Asset-Based Community Development was introduced to a large number of people in Toberona, none of whom had previously heard about it. Many of those who participated in the sessions were accustomed to attending residents' meetings. What was different about the ABCD sessions was the genuine feeling of positivity the sessions engendered. Residents came away feeling that new opportunities could be realised through this process. They began to think about their community in a different way; many seemed surprised at how much there was in Dundalk. There was a definite air of excitement as residents spoke about making contacts with the local VEC, starting a women's group in the area, organising cooking lessons, and looking for funding from various sources. After five sessions we had just scratched the surface. The real ABCD work was just beginning and will hopefully continue long after this report.

Note on the skills audit

Although the researchers intended to conduct a skills audit as part of the sessions with adults, the time frame was not adequate to do so. As the sessions went on it was decided that the members of the working group would conduct this audit as part of their ongoing ABCD work. This would be a natural fit with the community festival, as organisers would need community members with specific skills to partake in the festival. Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Capacity Inventory was given to the CDO to help guide the skills audit.

5.4.2 Community festival

The three estates within Toberona came together and decided that they would organise a community festival. This would be an excellent way to tap into the skills of individuals on the estate. It was intended that many groups, such as those mapped during the ABCD sessions, would be invited into the community in an attempt to make links with residents.

5.4.3 Building links between individuals and estates

There is some tension between the three estates that make up Toberona. On occasions where events have taken place on one of these estates, many residents from the remaining two estates have not attended. This tension is a serious impediment to the community working together. The current research project has brought residents from these three communities together to organise events and carry out initiatives for the benefit of the entire community. Hopefully this is a first step in healing the rifts that have grown between these three estates.

5.4.4 Establishment of a working group

During the fifth session it was agreed that a working group be established with the specific aim of continuing the ABCD process by organising a community festival and by developing a river walkway, which was seen by this group as a very important asset. The establishment of this working group, comprised of members from all three communities, is a very positive outcome and may prove fruitful in the years to come.

5.4.5 Plans for an eco-project

Perhaps the most ambitious outcome of this research is the proposed clearing of the local river and creation of a river walkway for the entire community to enjoy. The residents recognised that the river had the potential to be an attraction for local residents. Such a project will necessitate the community sourcing their own funding. It will also involve members of the community working alongside one another to clean and prepare the walkway. In addition, residents intend to make links with groups such as the Army, the FCA, the Scouts, and the Civil Defense. (See Section 8 in Resource Pack for further outline).

5.4.6 Open day in Toberona: reflecting work back to residents

It was intended from the outset that all three strands of the research would be brought together and presented to the residents of Toberona. In order to do this the researchers, in conjunction with Community Development, hosted an exhibition of work completed by residents in the Respond! community building.

The children's asset map was displayed, along with materials from the adult sessions. These included:

- an ordnance survey map of Dundalk with corresponding photographs of institutions and associations which adults had listed during the sessions
- a radial diagram of community resources and how they may be linked
- a community assets map and a community needs map
- a virtual ABCD map of Dundalk created in Google maps, and
- quotes describing what the ABCD process is about.

In addition the film short created by young people was played in a loop so that residents could watch it at any time. A buffet lunch was provided throughout the day and entertainment was provided in the form of a magician and a face painter. This entertainment created an atmosphere of community and celebration and gave the large number of children in attendance a sense of engagement with the event.

The day, though not critical to the research project itself, was crucial in terms of re-enforcing the potential of ABCD. This is particularly important in light of the ongoing ABCD work within this community. The day was also successful in bringing residents from adjacent estates together which was a core objective and prerequisite for Asset-Based Community Development. Residents who were already active in the community said that the exhibition gave them ideas for community work in which they were involved, such as youth work and fundraising. It is important to note, however, that it was Respond! staff and not members of the community who organised and prepared materials for this day. Given the short timeframe involved this was reasonable. However, the goal of ABCD is to encourage and enable the local community to undertake such work themselves.

5.5.1 Results Summary: Outputs and outcomes from the ABCD pilot

There were a number of positive outcomes which could only have occurred by running this pilot. The most notable of these were the interest a group of young people took in film making and community work, and the establishment of a

working group which will continue the ABCD process. This group will also conduct a skills audit of individuals in their community as part of the initiative. These achievements alone make this project worthwhile.

To evaluate this pilot study properly we must match our goals, as listed in the introduction of this report, with the outcomes of the study. The goals for the study were as follows (*font in bold text indicates the goals; ordinary font the outcomes*):

Develop a working model in an Irish context for ABCD community development and critique this. During the course of this study a three-phase ABCD model was developed, applying the tenets of ABCD to an Irish social housing context. Whether or not this is an effective model is a matter of debate and a focus of this report. The researchers believe, however, that there have been positive outcomes. Also there is potential for transferability in this model, in that the concepts and materials can be used again in a similar context.

Enhance the skill-base of local enablers and explore the role of community enablers in promoting ABCD. The study did not realise the goal of getting enablers involved in the pilot. This was a disappointment as the researchers felt it was an ideal opportunity for these newly recruited individuals to become involved in community work and expand their skill-base. As enablers were not involved in the pilot it is impossible to say what their role might be in terms of furthering the ABCD work already begun. This is the only significant goal which was not achieved within the lifetime of the Project.

Foster cohesion and joint working in the community. The pilot was successful in this regard. The ABCD pilot initiative helped build cohesion amongst residents and leaders of three adjoining estates, breaking down stigma relating to tenure and geographic location. The ABCD meetings, Community Open Day, and Community Festival provided opportunities for integration for those new to the estate (including non-nationals).

Enhance the skill-base of the Respond! research and community development teams. During the course of this project both researchers and community development staff expanded their skill-base. The research team became more familiar with: community development models, preparing materials for the purposes of community development and running an action research study. In addition, the community development team became acquainted with a new community development approach, in the form of ABCD, and gained some technical knowledge on the use of video.

Develop a resource-pack of materials for wider usage within Respond! estates and/or other community-based initiatives. A Resource Pack was compiled to facilitate dissemination of an Irish-styled ABCD model. It is hoped that this resource pack will lessen the time required to prepare materials for any further ABCD projects.

Help those living in disadvantaged areas to find solutions within their own communities to problems which affect them. It is beyond the scope of this report to say how successful the pilot has been in achieving this aim. The number of participants in the pilot was small when compared to the overall number of those living in the community. Also such an outcome cannot be measured in the short term. Nevertheless, the study has led to outcomes such as the development of a working group, which hopefully will continue to have a positive impact on the community.

Deepen the public's understanding of poverty by demonstrating that communities that are in poverty, or at risk of poverty, are not helpless. In fact they possess strengths which when channelled can help them become less vulnerable. This aim is tied to the publication and dissemination of the report. It is intended that the report will challenge prejudices attached to low income groups by displaying the energy, creativity and sense of community that can thrive in communities in social housing.

Make communities aware of what they can achieve rather than what they cannot. This goal was best realised in the youth group, who gained confidence and skills by participating in the video project. When the project was completed the young people involved were keen to become involved in similar initiatives and were proud of what they had accomplished. The adult group also gained a sense of accomplishment by organising the community festival.

Highlight the role of volunteering and social capital, within communities, and the benefits of pooling resources for the good of the community.

In terms of the adult phase of the study, the researchers did not reach the level of analysis intended at the outset. The aim of the pilot was for the adult participants to become familiar with concepts such as asset mapping, networking, social capital, as well as to consider how community resources might best be utilised. While this happened to some extent, and participants seemed to grasp the potential of pooling resources, participants did not have enough exposure to these concepts to reinforce them. At the end of the five sessions, it is the opinion of the researchers that participants were not familiar enough with ABCD to drive the process unaided. This is reasonable considering the small number of sessions held. Any further work in this area will therefore be guided initially by the Respond! community development team.

5.5.2 Further **outputs** from the ABCD pilot

The ABCD pilot project has yielded a number of direct outputs:

- A children's community asset map of 'Places, Faces, Spaces' was completed
- A short video was produced by a local youth group as part of the project
- An overview of local assets at estate and area level was compiled by the adult group
- Several tools useful in community work were demonstrated in this project, including the use of video-work and of IT-related work (on-line Google-maps www.maps.google.com)

5.5.3 Further **Outcomes** from the ABCD project

The above 'outputs' also translate in several instances into parallel 'outcomes':

- Children (6-12 years) were given a 'voice' regarding their perceptions of their community, via a children's Community Art Map. This initiative encouraged parents to work jointly with their children – something which proved fun for both. The concept of 'family learning' promoted in the US, and also in operation in different parts of Ireland (Bassett, M., 2007), is one worth exploring. It is anticipated that the voice of children, young people, and minorities will be specifically invited in any future community planning events and celebrations. Linkage with Barnardos, and with the Children's Resource Centre in Trinity College on inclusion of the voice of children and youth (in disadvantaged areas), bears further exploration (refer to www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre).
- The young people's perceptions of how adults on the estate view them was presented in an innovative way (a short video). An Open Meeting of estate residents to enable a review of the young people's concerns, and of potential youth work scheduled for September 2008 was deferred, and later rescheduled for January 2009. Interest and initial skills in story boarding, video-shooting and editing were transmitted as well as contacts with local third level training opportunities. A clear finding from the research is that there is a high level of social capital among young people which could be channelled into a productive venture, benefiting the entire community. It is a recommendation of this study that community development work should utilise the resource that young people offer, by getting them involved in projects of interest to them and getting them to work together with their friends. This has the added bonus of making young people feel valued.
- This study indicates that video is a useful medium through which ABCD can take place, particularly with young people. The use of video can help people discover skills, create links, and map assets in the community. It is also a useful record and provides a quick means of disseminating the results of a project – in this instance, young people's view of their community.

6. Conclusions

As this study was a pilot to test whether or not ABCD could be used to create and audit skills, map assets and build community capacity, it is necessary to appraise how well the ABCD approach worked. The previous chapter showed that the pilot was productive in a number of ways. An important question, however, is: Could these outputs and outcomes have been achieved by another community development tool? In other words, was it the simple act of bringing groups together which created these outcomes and outputs or was it the ABCD process itself?

As this study was not a randomised controlled trial, we cannot answer this question. However, we can say that the ABCD approach provided a useful framework and direction for participants. Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) model allowed the researchers to structure the sessions with children, young people and adults, and focus participants on the strengths of their community; which genuinely energised all involved. Without this framework these meetings may have become a forum for residents' grievances.

On the other hand, elements of the model proved difficult. If this process is to be repeated by Respond!, these difficulties need to be considered. The ABCD approach relies on people attending meetings with no immediately obvious targets. It is all very well to call a meeting about assets in a community, but for people to come repeatedly a target needs to be set early in the process: the ABCD model needs to be grounded if people are to engage. Our study shows that it was the vision of developing the river as an amenity area and the proposal to organise a community festival that got people involved.

It is likely that most groups will not have heard of ABCD before and will therefore require an extensive introduction to it. For some community activists, looking for transformative change, this may be too theoretical. Therefore, the initial session needs to communicate the possible benefits of pursuing this model.

Looking back at the Jackson *et al* (2003) Indicators of Community Capacity we can see that several outcomes of this study are in harmony with many of the indicators mentioned, namely 'residents celebrate together', 'people come together around community issues and work together towards a common purpose...' and 'people from all parts of the community are involved in community activities.' If this model helps to build community capacity – and this study would suggest that it has the potential to do so – then it is worth pursuing across estates and communities. This is especially true in communities with a disproportionate number of lone parent households, unemployment, and other factors associated with social disadvantage, where capacity building is needed the most.

An interesting finding from this study is that both children and young people cited natural areas such as 'the backs' – an area of undeveloped land with a river running through it – as an asset. This is a good example of the different perspectives children have about their environment. It also illustrates the importance of consulting these age groups when proposing any changes to the landscape. It was only in the latter sessions that the area by the river was adverted to by the adult groups as a resource which could be greatly enhanced; hence the proposed eco-project was born.

In all, the ABCD model was very helpful and led to positive outcomes in this community. There is no reason why the approach should not work on other estates, if a similar commitment is behind it. It is likely, however, that – given the nature of community development – each individual community will come up against its own obstacles. All communities have a history and it is common for cliques to form which resist cohesion. At first people may not see the benefits of working with others from their community. It is only over time that the rewards become apparent. For this reason it is necessary to set an appropriate pace for ABCD.

6.1 Practical considerations

The ABCD model, as with any community development work, requires commitment in terms of time, skills, and resources. There needs to be a clear driver of the project. Ideally, this should be headed up in the first instance by a locally-based community development worker or youth development worker, and then to be increasingly driven by the local community, with the option of some continued support and facilitation guidance by staff.

A local knowledge of an area is helpful when mapping assets. However, it could equally be argued that there are benefits in the ABCD-facilitator knowing little or nothing about an area, so that he/she is reliant on drawing out the local knowledge base of residents.

ABCD requires skilled facilitation to maintain clarity of purpose (goals), juxtaposed with a flexibility and adaptability to the views, concerns and interests of a community as they emerge. It is complex, dynamic and fluid work – yet can yield very concrete and tangible results.

It is important to bear in mind that when using an Asset-Based Community Development model, adaptability is all-important. The process needs to be organic and driven by the community. It needs to evolve and take on a life of its own. This was demonstrated by the adult group who took the principles of ABCD, formed a working group, and decided to work towards a common goal. It would have been impossible for the researchers to predict that the initial session – examining resources in Toberona – would lead to residents coming together to create a walkway or organise a community festival.

The experience of implementing this pilot study supports the view that it is very helpful to have a researcher (or someone additional to the facilitator) record and document the goals, progress, challenges and solutions over the lifetime of a project. Ideally, residents would assist in this process; how realistic this is may vary greatly from community to community, in line with the skill-base, time

availability and interest of residents. One must be mindful, however, of the competing demands on people's time, and seek to invite participation through encouragement and demonstrated achievements.

There is merit in working across a natural geographic area, or community; in particular, where different tenure mix is involved. This may work towards integration across social and economic backgrounds. In the case of Respond! it means broadening the base for engagement (in its community development strategy) to include estates adjoining the Respond! estate. In the case of Toberona community, it meant working across three estates. While this is more time-consuming in the short-term, in the medium to longer-term it is likely to enhance capacity-building and yield a more sustainable and robust local leadership.

There is a natural tension, however, as the resources of Respond! are already stretched by working with residents of its own estates, and it has a clear strategy to work for a five-year programme with estates in respect of leadership training and capacity-building, within and across 'clusters' of estates.

6.2 Concluding comments

Expectations regarding outcomes of asset-based or indeed any other forms of community development need to be realistic and take cognisance of the starting points and challenges facing the local community and the wider economy. No one initiative, however powerful or successful, can undo the impacts of structural economic and social inequalities or the impacts of economic underinvestment or regressive taxation.

This study shows that initiatives based on the Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) ABCD model may potentially afford residents the tools and confidence to engage in self-help; as well as strengthen and deepen social and economic networking. It is hoped that participants in this pilot will go on to engage the support of local business and elected representatives, in order to leverage investment and funding for the community. The study shows that the ABCD model helps tap into

the imagination and confidence of community members, so that they can develop their skills individually and collectively.

The ABCD model of community development is a useful and energising tool, which, like most things useful, requires commitment and perseverance to be effective.

7. Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Background information on Respond!

Respond! is the largest housing association in Ireland. Over the course of 25 years the organisation has built over 4,000 units in 24 counties in Ireland. In 2005, 2006, and 2007 the company had more than 1,000 dwellings under construction per annum (Respond! 2007b). This rate of output is set to continue.

The Respond! (2007a) Community Development Strategy indicates that the goal of Respond! is to provide housing and assist in the building of stable communities for those on low incomes or otherwise in need of housing:

We seek to ensure that such communities will foster the growth of the individual resident and that of the whole community. We aim to assist our communities to grow to the stage where sufficient local community leadership exists to enable residents to access the services of and participate fully in the structures of wider society. (Respond! 2007a:3).

The definition of Community Development adopted by Respond! (2007a) is that used by the Department of Social & Family Affairs in its 2005 Community Development Programme, as follows:

- 'Community Development is about promoting positive change in society in favour of those who benefit least.
- ... It is about involving people, most especially the disadvantaged, in making changes which they identify as important and which use and develop their own skills, knowledge and experience.
- Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of poverty/disadvantage and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources'.

For further information on Respond! and its Community Development work, see

Cogan, P. (2004, 2007) *Respond! Community Development Strategy: The Next Phase*. Waterford. Respond! Housing Association.

Respond! Housing Association

Head Office,

Airmount,

Dominick Place,

Waterford.

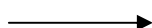
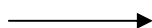
T: 0 818 357901 (national switch)

E: info@respond.ie

Respond! website: www.respond.ie

Appendix 2: ABCD project timesheets

Timesheet for children's workshop		
Action	Time taken	Staff involved
Initial discussions around the concept of Area Based Community Development and how Respond! could develop this for their estates	Around 10 days	All R&D were involved, albeit to varying degrees
Decision to hold Children's Art Workshops as part of the ABCD	Decision made during initial stages	All R&D staff
One researcher began working on the design of the children's section of the programme, which included reviewing literature and methodology options.	4 days	R&D (x1)
The researcher began the initial write-up of the programme design.	4 days	R&D (x1)
Time was taken to design the 'Big Community Map' and to make computer mock-ups of how the map would look.	3 days	R&D (x1)
A meeting was held with all the Community Development Managers from all the regions in Abbeyleix. It was suggested that Dundalk was probably a good place for the pilot phase of the programme.	1 day	All R&D (4 staff)
The researcher began working on the design of the posters, fliers and badges for the art workshop.	3 days	R&D (x1)
A meeting was held with the North East regional childcare officer and a decision was made to run the art workshop alongside that active Homework Club.	½ day (including preparation for the meeting)	All R&D at meeting
Some time was spent sourcing materials for the art workshop, such as paper to make the map, machine washable art materials for the children, safety scissors and so on.	½ day	R&D (x1)
A template for the community map was constructed.	1 day	R&D (x2)
Final dates were agreed for the workshop and briefing session.	Contact with regional childcare officer	R&D (x1)

Posters were sent to Dundalk to inform the staff and parents that a briefing session would be held the following week.	Email	R&D (x1)
The final version of the community map was constructed.	1 day  ½ day 	R&D (x3)
As there was not enough room on the wall of the community building to hang the map, a suitable stand had to be sourced.	½ day	R&D (x1)
The briefing session was held with staff and one parent in the community centre in Dundalk.	1 day (including preparation for briefing)	R&D (x2)
The Children's Art Workshop was held in Dundalk with children and parents from the local community.	1 day	R&D (x1) Com Dev (x2) Childcare staff (x3)
The write-up of the proceedings of the art workshop, including children's quotes, observations of parents and children and responses to the workshop, was carried out by one of the researchers.	1 day	R&D (x1)

Timesheet for young people's workshop		
Action	Time taken	Staff involved
Initial discussions	2 days	All R&D (4 staff)
Looking for video production groups	2 days	R&D (x1)
Negotiating with video production groups	3 weeks	R&D (x1)
Meeting with Youth Worker	Half day	R&D (x1)
One researcher began working on the design of the Youth workshops of the programme, which included reviewing literature and methodology options.	1 week	R&D (x1)
The researcher began the initial write-up of the programme design.	3 days	R&D (x1)
Drafting of Consent form, information sheet	2 days	R&D (x3)
Workshops	4 days	R&D (x1) Com Dev (x1) Youth worker (x1)
Write up of sessions	2 days	R&D (x1)
Write up of methodology	1 week	R&D (x1)
First preview of film and discussion	1 day	R&D (x1) Com Dev (x1) Youth worker (x1)
Meeting with Seán Power (Editor)	1 hour	R&D (x2)
Editing of interviews with young people	Half day	R&D (x1) Editor
Further discussion of film	Half day	R&D (x3)
Meeting about film	Half day	R&D (x3) Com Dev (x1)
Screening of film and feedback	Full Day	R&D (x1) Com Dev (x1) Youth worker (x1)
Additional editing of film	Half day	R&D (x1)
Organising the screening to parents and youth	Full day	R&D (x1) Com Dev (x2) Youth worker (x1) NE Regional Manager

Timesheet for adults' sessions		
Action	Time taken	Staff involved
Initial discussions around adult sessions	4 days	All R&D Com Dev (x2)
Guide to workshops	1 week	R&D (x1)
Preparing materials for the session	1 week	R&D (x2)
Designing posters, leaflets	9 days	R&D (x2)
Meeting with enablers	Half day	R&D (x3)
First session	2 days (R&D) Half day (CD)	R&D (x3) Com Dev (x1)
Second session	2 days (R&D) Half day (CD)	R&D (x2) Com Dev (x3)
Third session	2 days (R&D) 1 day (CD)	R&D (x2) Com Dev (x2)
Fourth session	2 days (R&D) Half day (CD)	R&D (x2) Com Dev (x3)
Fifth session	2 days (R&D) Half day (CD)	R&D (x2) Com Dev (x1)
Write up – session notes	1 week	R&D (x2)

Timesheet for meetings		
Action	Time taken	Staff involved
Initial discussions around the project	4 days	R&D (x4) Community Development (x2)
Meeting with Community Development Co-ordinator (NE)	Half day (x2)	R&D (x4) Com Dev (x1)
Meeting with Community Development Officers	Half day (x4)	R&D (x3) Com Dev (x2)
Meeting with Paul Owens (Youth Worker)	2 hours	R&D (x3) Com Dev (x1)
Meeting with Diarmaid Horkan (Multi-Media Artist)	Half day	R&D (x4)
Review meeting with NE Community Dev. Officer/ Youth Dev. Officer	1 hour (x2)	R&D Manager
Meeting with National Community Development Co-ordinator Review meeting	1 hour (x2)	R&D Manager

Timesheet for report writing		
Background discussion Initial application	3 days	R&D (x1 person) Plus discussion
Further information on methodology	1 day	R&D (x 1 person)
Interim Report	2 days 1 day	R&D (x 1 person)
Final Report	3 weeks+ Further 3 weeks	R&D (2 people)
Resource Pack Printing and collation	2 weeks	R&D (2 people)
Evaluation Liaison Revisions Reprinting	2 weeks	R&D

Timesheet for organising the Toberona open day		
Action	Time taken	Staff involved
Planning the open day	2 days	R&D (x3)
Taking photographs of local assets	1 day	R&D (x2)
Preparing display materials	3 days	R&D (x3)
Designing invites	2 days	R&D (x1) PR (x1)
Posting invites	Half day	Com Dev (x1)
Booking caterer/magician/face painter	1 day	R&D (x2) Com Dev (x1)

Appendix 3: Quotes for video production

Quotes for Video Production	
Company Name	Address
Another Avenue	31 Heytesbury Lane, Ballsbridge, D4
DKIT	Video and Film Production, Department of Humanities, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Dundalk Media Centre	Partnership Court, Park St., Dundalk, Co. Louth
Filmbase	Curved Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2

Appendix 4: Note on the work of Augusto Boal

‘Sociodramas are an off-shoot of the work of Augusto Boal, a Brazilian dramatist who was strongly influenced by Paulo Friere and invented a new and exciting approach to theatre and drama. His theories and case studies of their application are described in his first book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*.² His subsequent *Games for Actors and Non Actors* (1992) provides a host of examples and tips for popular educators on how to put his ideas into practice: it is impossible to read and not be inspired!

Boal began as an activist who sought to use theatre as a form of political struggle. He then toured Latin America, writing and performing plays which explained the political causes of poverty to grassroots communities and suggested what they should do about it. When groups attempted to follow his suggestions, achieving nothing and sometimes putting themselves in danger, he learned that he had no right to instruct others in what to do as he himself was not part of, and could not fully comprehend, their particular social reality. Instead, he developed the idea of using theatre as a forum for helping others explore issues and consider for themselves potential action for change.

A la Freire, Boal and his team of actors would try and discover the ‘generative themes’ prevalent in any particular community and then write short plays which would end, not with suggested solutions, but by posing problems to be solved. The actors would perform a play in public and a co-ordinator/popular educator (whom Boal calls the ‘joker’) would explain to the audience that the play would be enacted again only this time spectators could stop it at any point, dispute its realism or validity, come across as actors themselves and try to push the play in a different direction. For Boal, the theatre is a mirror in which the audience see the reflection of their own reality, spectators become spec-actors and the play provides a forum for discussion – indeed Boal calls it Forum Theatre – and an opportunity to ‘rehearse’ different forms of struggle. In the everyday practice of

² Boal, A. (1979) *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto.

popular education, sociodramas constitute an amateurish form of Boal's 'forum theatre'.

Boal also developed the notion of 'invisible theatre' where, in real life (on a train, in a shop, on the street, for example), as opposed to on a stage, a group of actors perform a scene deliberately designed to provoke public debate. Boal (1992:14-17) describes an example of invisible theatre he tried out in Europe with a group campaigning for safer streets in Stockholm, Sweden. Four actors set up a table in the middle of a busy street, preventing cars from passing, and sat down to breakfast. The first cars to arrive were 'plants' and the driver-actors got out to ask what was going on; when the campaigner-actors explained that they had as much right to the streets as cars, the driver-actors started to debate this, some sympathising with the campaigners and some shouting at them to get out of the way. Meanwhile 'real' drivers started to arrive. They too left their cars and on hearing the debate (which they believed to be genuine) started to join in. Lookouts whisked campaigners away before the arrival of police; the 'real' people had taken part in an event-cum-debate likely to keep them thinking for some time. In invisible theatre, real life and theatre become interchangeable.

Boal went on to work with mental health patients, an experience recorded in *Rainbow of Desire*. In 1992, in the local legislative elections in Rio de Janeiro, he and his team offered to run forum theatre to support the Workers' Party campaign. For publicity – and against his will – it was decided to put Boal forward as a candidate. To his amazement he was elected into office and his drama group became his cabinet. Working within and pushing against all the constraints of local government, he attempted to use forum theatre to engage deprived communities in the design of local laws. This experience is documented in his latest book, *Legislative Theatre*.

Above excerpt from 'The Methodology of Popular Education', Chapter 3, in Kane, L. (2001). *Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America*. London. Latin America Bureau [pp64-5].

Appendix 5: Resource pack – contents

Companion Volume (separate folder) to the Research Working Paper

Sections

1. ABCD concepts/materials
 2. Sample forms and checklists
 3. Children's Community Art Map
 4. Youth Film Workshop: ABCD project
 5. Adult sessions: resource-mapping
 6. Open Day – presentation of finding
-

Sequel: initiatives by local community

7. Community Festival
 8. Eco-Project – possibilities
-

Related Resource material

9. Area-level profiling template
10. Notes

Contents of resource pack/folder (companion volume)

1. ABCD concepts / materials

- Rationale for undertaking ABCD
- Glass half-full v. half-empty (Kenyon, 2007)
- Asset-based v. Needs-Based approach to Community Development
- Community Assets Map v. Community Needs Map (Kenyon, 2007)
- Article 'Discovering Community Power...' (2005) ABCD Institute
- Definitions of Capacity and Community Enablers
- SRDC (Mississippi State Uni, US) Power-point summary presentations
- Early plan for study (3 sections)
- Estimated Staff Deployment for ABCD Study
- Bibliography

2. Sample forms and checklists

- Attendance list
- Contact details
- Planner
- Evaluation sheet samples
- **Sample forms:** parental/guardian consent forms
 - participation in the event
 - use of photos/images of children (those under 18 yrs)
 - H&S emergency treatment consent form
 - Photo/image usage consent form for those over 18 yrs
- For **sample posters, sample invitations** and **Sample Certificate of Completion & Achievement** see sections 3, 4 and 5

3. Children's Community Art Map

- Community Mapping Project – Children's Project
- The Big Asset Activity Map: Places, Faces and Spaces
- Template for large display 'Community Art Map'

- Participant Information Sheet for Children's Workshops
 - Sample agenda/working notes for session
 - Planning check-list
 - Materials required
- Tips for research and consultation with children
- Sample art leaflet/posters for event
- Examples of name badges for children's workshop
- Photo-record of work

4. Youth Film Workshop: ABCD Project

- Participant Information Sheet for Youth Workshop
- Sample explanatory leaflets advertising the ABCD film workshop
- Sample posters advertising poster
- 'Our Community: Asset Mapping through Video' – Invitation
- Sample Application Form
- Video Production Workshops
- Interview Schedule for Youth Group – following screening of video
- Sample 'photo-stills' from the DVD video-short
- Copy of *Life in Toberona* DVD video-short
- Sample invitations to video-screening for parents/family/friends
- Sample Certificate of Achievement & Completion of video-short
- Planning check-list
- Photo-record of work

5. Adult sessions: resource-mapping

- Planning check-list
- Participant information sheet
- Sample leaflets for workshop sessions – creative ideas!
- Resource material for sessions
 - Community Asset Map (ABCD Institute, 2006)
 - Community Assets Map (Centre for Collaborative Planning)

- John McKnight Capacity Inventory (1993)
- Draft Guide for Adult ABCD Workshops
- Briefing notes for workshop sessions
- Sample Agenda/Timeline/posters
- Sample evaluation sheet
- Photo-record of work

6. Open Day – presentation of findings

- Sample posters for Open Day – ‘see where ideas take you’
- Invitation to Open Day
- Sample timetable/planning
- Checklist planning for Open Day
- Posters/wall-charts used at Open Day to present work achieved
- Sample Google-Maps as a tool
- Dundalk ABCD – *Google map* developed for this Project
- Draft press release content
- Sample ‘thank you’ cards specific to Open Day
- Photo-record of work presented

7. Sequel initiatives by local community:

- Community Festival ...flowing from ABCD Project.

8. Eco-Project:

- a 5-year initiative: Plans in development by the Toberona Community arising from the ABCD Project

9. Related resource material

- Area-Level Profiling Template

10. Notes

NOTES