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| C:\Users\bjaco\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\SLS-Teaching-Toolkit-Logo_Stacked-Initials.jpg | Exploring Asset-Based Community Development: The Tale of Two Cities | | |
| **Discipline:** All | **Type:** Discussion, in-class or virtual exercise | **Time Commitment:** 60 mins | **Category:** GT1000; SLCE; Community Health |
| **OVERVIEW:**  This exercise invites students to explore what it means to take an asset-based approach to community development (“an ABCD” approach), versus a “needs” or “deficit” approach. Students are broken into groups and given a description of a community. One group is given a list of assets while another group is given a list of needs. Students come up with recommendations for a nonprofit to engage with the community and then compare and contrast the recommendations. The exercise concludes with an explanation of ABCD principles.  This tool was contributed by Marnie Williams Harris. | | | |
| **INSTRUCTIONS:**  *Preparation:* Familiarize yourself with the [Asset Based Community Development PowerPoint](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Toolkit-Docs/ABCD/tale_of_two_cities_slide_deck_042922.pptx).  *Exercise:*   1. Read or ask students to read the “Session Opening” (3 mins). 2. Break students into teams of 5-7 people. Split the groups 50/50 into “Group A” and “Group B.”    1. In-Person Option: Provide groups with a piece of poster paper and markers.    2. Virtual Option: Provide groups with a virtual poster (Google Jamboard is recommended) as a way for the group to add recommendations on one sheet. 3. Distribute a Situation Analysis to each student (see below). Teams in Group A receive Situation Analysis A. Teams in Group B receive Situation Analysis B. 4. Activity - Teams review situation analyses and come up with a list of recommendations for a nonprofit looking to work in the community (20 minutes). 5. Report Back – Each group reports 2 recommendations to the entire class. All Group A teams report back until no new ideas are offered. Ideas should not be repeated. (8 minutes). As teams report back, write recommendations so they are accessible as a list to the whole class. 6. Repeat for Group B (8 minutes).   *Presentation & Discussion:*   1. Present the ABCD PowerPoint and facilitate a discussion about its applicability to the Tale of Two Cities exercise (20 minutes). | | | |
| **SLS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT:**  The Serve-Learn-Sustain toolkit teaching tools are designed to help students achieve not only SLS student learning outcomes (SLOs), but the unique learning outcomes for your own courses. Reflection, concept maps, rubrics, and other assessment methods are shown to improve student learning. For resources on how to assess your students’ work, please review our [Assessment Tools](http://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/tool-category/assessment).  **This tool achieves SLOs 2 & 3. See the end of this tool for further details.** | | | |

Exploring Asset-Based Community Development: The Tale of Two Cities

**Session Opening**

You are invited by a community to come spend some time there so that you can advise their leadership on policy recommendations. Your assignment is to break into groups of 5-7 people to review a situational analysis of the community. The information in the situational analysis has been compiled by consultants and community residents.

Once you are familiar with the analysis, you will then create a list of recommendations. As a group, discuss and think of some of the recommendations you would give - remember that you need to work with the list you have!

Write your recommendations down and be prepared to report back to class. After the reports, we’ll discuss the clues your recommendations give us about ways to approach community development work.

Situation Analysis A –   
A Case Study of the Community

1. This community is part of a large metropolitan city in a Southern state.
2. In the most recent government census, the population of this community was approximately 30,000 people.
3. There are more people over 60 than under 18 years of age.
4. The high school graduation rate is lower than in surrounding areas.
5. There are very few grocery stores- mostly quick marts and convenience stores.
6. Most of the commercial spaces are vacant.
7. There are poor sidewalks and very little public transportation infrastructure.
8. Many buildings have been tagged/display graffiti.
9. The mean income is lower than surrounding communities and unemployment is higher.
10. Those who do have jobs commute outside of the community to get to them.
11. Parts of the local creek are clogged with trash.

**Group exercise:**

The community is seeking recommendations to develop program activities based upon this situation analysis.

* In your team, quickly brainstorm ideas for possible actions that could be taken.
* As you discuss ideas, make note of them.
* Choose three ideas that your group considers to be the best “bets” for making a long-standing difference in the community. Write them down.

Situation Analysis B –   
A Case Study of the Community

1. There is a neighborhood park with basketball courts and playgrounds.
2. Some of the buildings have murals and art from residents.
3. During the day, some residents gather in commercial parking lots to grill-out and eat together.
4. Many of the residents have lived there a longtime and trust each other.
5. Some residents keep chickens and sell the eggs.
6. Many men in the community are part of the same brotherhood/service society.
7. A creek runs through the community and in many places has sandy banks where local kids play.
8. There is a popular local library with a bank of computers, a few loaner laptops, and a dedicated staff.
9. This area has rich local history that is known by longtime residents, especially elder women.
10. There are several churches in the community.
11. Three empty lots get lots of sunshine and are within walking distance of the affordable housing for seniors.

**Group exercise:**

The community is seeking recommendations to develop program activities based upon this situation analysis.

* In your team, quickly brainstorm ideas for possible actions that could be taken.
* As you discuss ideas, make note of them.
* Choose three ideas that your group considers to be the best “bets” for making a long-standing difference in the community. Write them down.

### Facilitation and Guiding Reflection:

After the recommendations for each of the communities are shared, please share with the group that the observations are of the SAME community. The following guiding questions can be used to start a reflective discussion:

* Now that you have the full list of observations, would any of your recommendations change?
* Are there any new ones that you would add?

Other Points of Discussion

* Whenever we go into a community, what we immediately see creates the baseline for our judgements about it - what is or isn’t “missing”
* It is common for us to focus on what a community doesn’t have and letting that frame how we view that community - if we determine that “X” is missing, then that must be what the community “needs”
* Making recommendations based on what the community lacks = needs based
* Making recommendations based on leveraging what a community already has = asset based

### Additional Resources

[The Asset-Based Community Development Institute at DePaul University](https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx)

[ABCD Basic Slide Presentation with Notes from The ABCD Institute](https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Pages/tool-kit.aspx)

[“What is Asset-based Community Development (ABCD)”](https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Documents/WhatisAssetBasedCommunityDevelopment.pdf) from the Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation

[“The New Paradigm for Effective Community Development - Asset-based” by ABCD Institute Faculty Member Dan Duncan](https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Documents/TheNewParadigmAssetBased.pdf)

["Building 21st Century Communities" by ABCD Institute Faculty Member Jim Diers](https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/latest/building-21st-century-communities)

[Sustainable Community Development: From What’s Wrong to What’s Strong – TED-X talk by ABCD Institute Faculty Member Cormac Russell](https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/blog/tedx-exeter-sustainable-community-development-whats-wrong-whats-strong/)

[Asset-based Approaches to Engaging Communities in Sustainability – see links to a variety of resources from SLS Director and ABCD Institute Faculty Member Jennifer Hirsch](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/jenniferhirsch.pdf)

SLS Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify relationships among ecological, social, and economic systems.
2. Demonstrate skills needed to work effectively in different types of communities.
3. Evaluate how decisions impact the sustainability of communities.
4. Describe how to use their discipline to make communities more sustainable.\*

\* *Note:* SLO 4 is intended to be used by upper-division, project-based courses such as Capstone.

**Want Help?**

Jenny Hirsch is the contact for this tool. You can reach her at jennifer.hirsch@gatech.edu