

2018 Gardens Network Summit

Growing Community: An Asset-Based Approach to Making Connections

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What do you see?

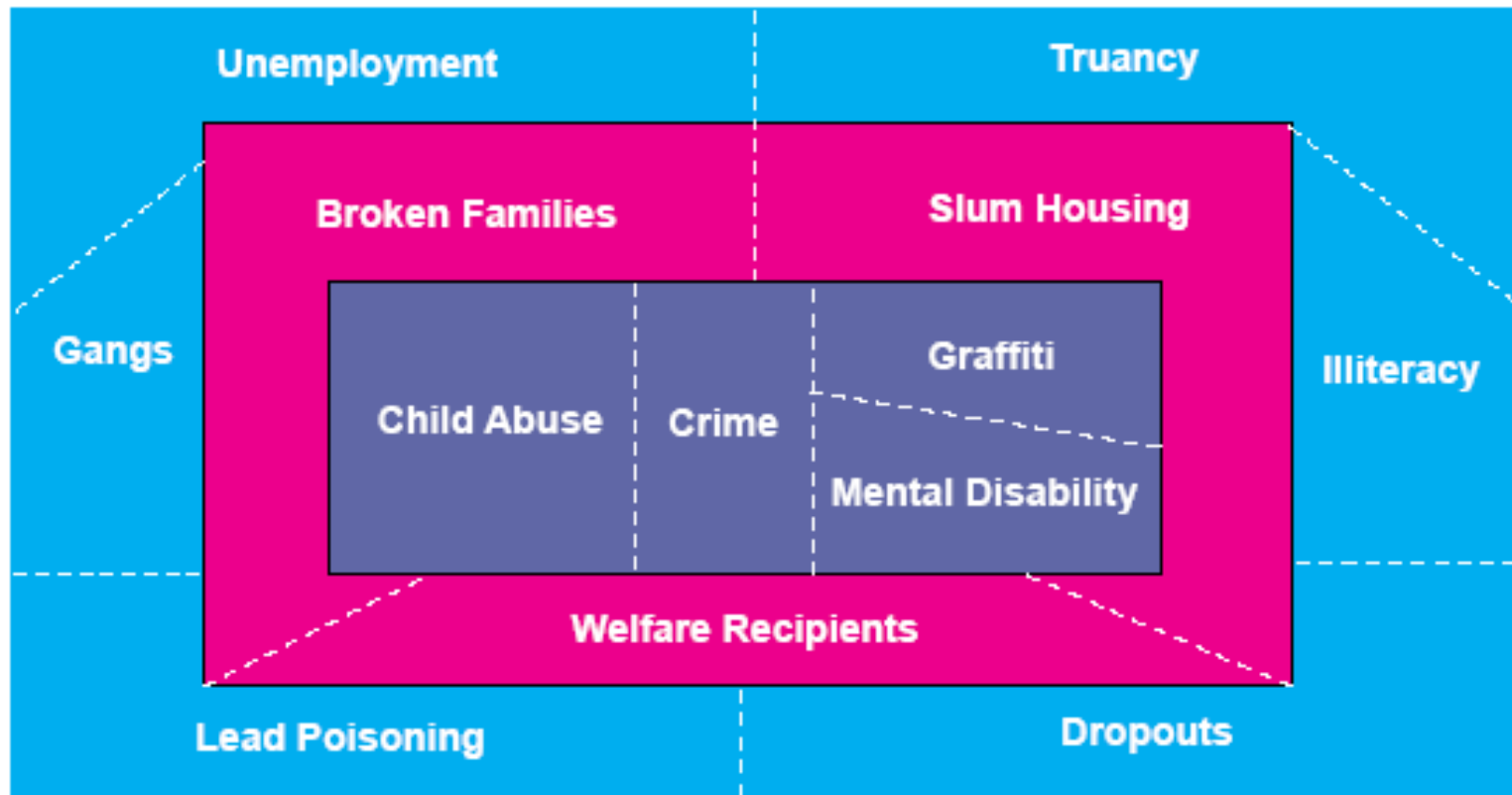
Is the glass half-empty
or half-full?



History of ABCD

- Grew out of Community Organizing experiences in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's
- Response to “consumer” and “client” oriented society
- ABCD Institute housed at DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning and Community Service Studies
- Broad-based philosophy covering a wide range of social policy, including education, faith-based organizations, inclusion for people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.....

Neighborhood Needs Map



Needs-based Model

- Residents believe they are deficient
- Fragments efforts to find solutions
- Targets resources to service providers, not to residents
- Forces community leaders to denigrate their own communities to receive funding
- Emphasizes relationships with outside professionals at the expense of relationships **within** the community

Needs-based Model continued

- Ensures the deepening of the cycle of dependence—problems must get worse if funding is to be renewed
- Maintenance and survival tactics are targeted at individuals, not at the entire community
- Maintenance and survival focus contributes to sense of hopelessness



Three characteristics of ABCD

First Characteristic

- This process is “asset-based”
- The community development strategy starts with
 - What is present in the community
 - The capacities of its residents and workers
 - The associational and institutional base of the area
- Not with what is absent, what is problematic, nor what the community needs

Second Characteristic

- This process is “internally focused”
- The development strategy concentrates first upon agenda building and problem-solving capacities of
 - Local residents
 - Local associations
 - Local institutions
 - Stresses the primacy of local definition, investment, creativity, hope and control
- Does not minimize influence of external forces nor the need to attract additional resources

Third Characteristic

- Process is “relationship driven”
- Challenges
 - Constantly build and rebuild relationships between and among
 - ✓ Local residents
 - ✓ Local associations
 - ✓ Local Institutions

Caveats for Asset-Based Community Developers (ABCD)

- Low-income communities NEED additional resources from the outside
- ABCD should complement, not supplant existing community strategies

Learning Conversations – Exercise

Form pairs. Have a ten minute one-to-one conversation to discover the other person's gifts and what they really care about.

- For five minutes let one person be the asker.
- Then switch roles for five minutes.
- For the final five minutes we will reflect on what it felt like to conduct a learning conversation.

Suggested Questions:

- What 2 skills make you especially good at your paid or volunteer work?
- What is something that you love to do so much that you get lost in it for hours without getting board?
- What do you care about? (Issues and concerns you want to work on?)

Potential Discussion Questions:

- What was it like to ask another person about what was really important to her or him?
- What was it like to be asked about what was really important to you?
- How did you recognize real “motivation to act” rather than just “opinion”?
- How could you see using these kinds of learning conversations to discover what people care about – enough to act?
- People may not care about what those with a particular agenda want them to care about

Six Types of Assets to Connect

1. Talents and skill of our people
2. Associations, and our network of relationships
3. Institutions and professional entities
4. Physical assets
 - Land, Property, Buildings, Equipment
5. Economic assets
 - Productive work of individuals
 - Consumer spending power
 - Local business assets
6. Stories and Culture

Community Assets: Individuals

Gifts, Skills, Capacities, Knowledge & Traits of

- Youth
- Older adults
- Artists
- Welfare recipients
- People with disabilities
- Students
- Parents
- Entrepreneurs
- Activists
- Veterans
- Ex-offenders

Community Assets: Associations

- Associations you know
- Associations you don't know
- What do they currently do?
- What have they talked about doing but haven't done yet?
- What might they do if they were asked?

Willingness to Work on Neighborhood Projects

	Have Done Work	Willing but Haven't Done Work	Uncertain if Willing	Not Willing
Neighborhood Beautification	10	6	5	0
Working with Youth	15	4	1	1
Working with Senior Citizens	12	7	2	0
Supporting Families	8	9	4	0
Improving Neighborhood Health	10	6	3	2
Neighborhood Safety	8	8	3	2

Based on interviews with 21 association leaders

Willingness to Work on Neighborhood Issues

	Have Done Work	Willing but Haven't Done Work	Uncertain if Willing	Not Willing
Teenage Pregnancy	3	9	4	5
Child Abuse	4	10	4	3
Drug Abuse	5	12	4	0
Domestic Violence	2	10	3	6
Youth Truancy & Gangs	7	9	2	1
Integrating Disabled People	4	12	3	2
Integrating Ex-Convicts	5	9	4	3

Based on interviews with 21 association leaders

Associations and the Local Economy

	Have Done Work	Willing but Haven't Done Work	Uncertain if Willing	Not Willing
Start or attract businesses to the neighborhood	2	15	4	0
Buy at new businesses in the neighborhood	1	16	2	2
Invest in new businesses in the neighborhood	2	11	2	6
Buy at existing local businesses	2	16	2	1
Improve the general business climate (i.e., safety patrols, parking)	1	15	3	2
Invest in the expansion of local businesses	0	15	2	4
Get banks to provide credit to existing local businesses	1	16	2	2
Close undesirable local businesses	0	0	7	3
<i>Based on interviews with 21 association leaders</i>				

Associations and Job Training/ Placement

	Have Done Work	Willing but Haven't Done Work	Uncertain if Willing	Not Willing
Start a job training program in the neighborhood	2	11	2	6
Participate in an existing job training program in the neighborhood	5	12	2	2
Participate in an inventory of the job skills and interests of local residents	1	12	2	6
Inform members of neighborhood jobs through postings	6	11	3	1
Inform non-members of local jobs through postings	5	13	2	1
Help local teenagers find jobs	4	14	2	1
Connect unemployed residents to the work places of employed members	4	13	2	2

Based on interviews with 21 association leaders

Community Assets: Institutions

- Gifts of employees and volunteers
- Physical space and equipment
- How money is spent—supplies, services, hiring, etc.
- Current relationship with community

Community Assets: Physical Space

- What is in the neighborhood

Gardens, parks, schools, libraries, community centers

Hospitals and clinics

Apartments, single family homes

Neighborhood businesses

Walking paths, green spaces, vacant lots....

- What happens where

Block club activity, recreation/sports, crime

Senior activities, youth activities

Clean-ups, code problems, housing type, etc.

Community Assets: Local Economy

- For-profit businesses
- Consumer expenditures
- Merchants
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business associations
- Banks
- Credit unions
- Institutional: purchasing power and personnel
- Barter and exchange
- Community Development Corporations
- Corporations and branches

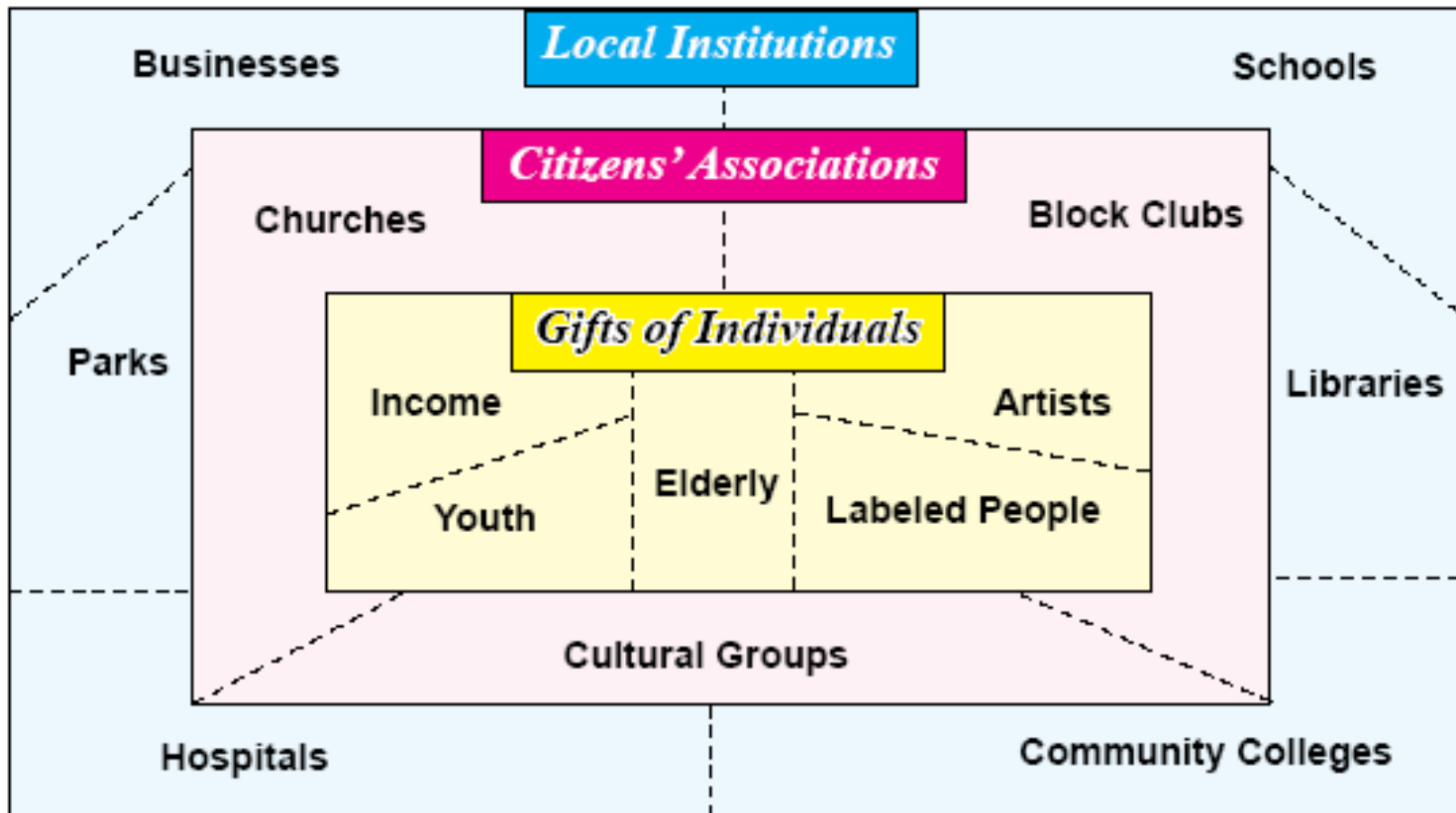
The Economy As Iceberg



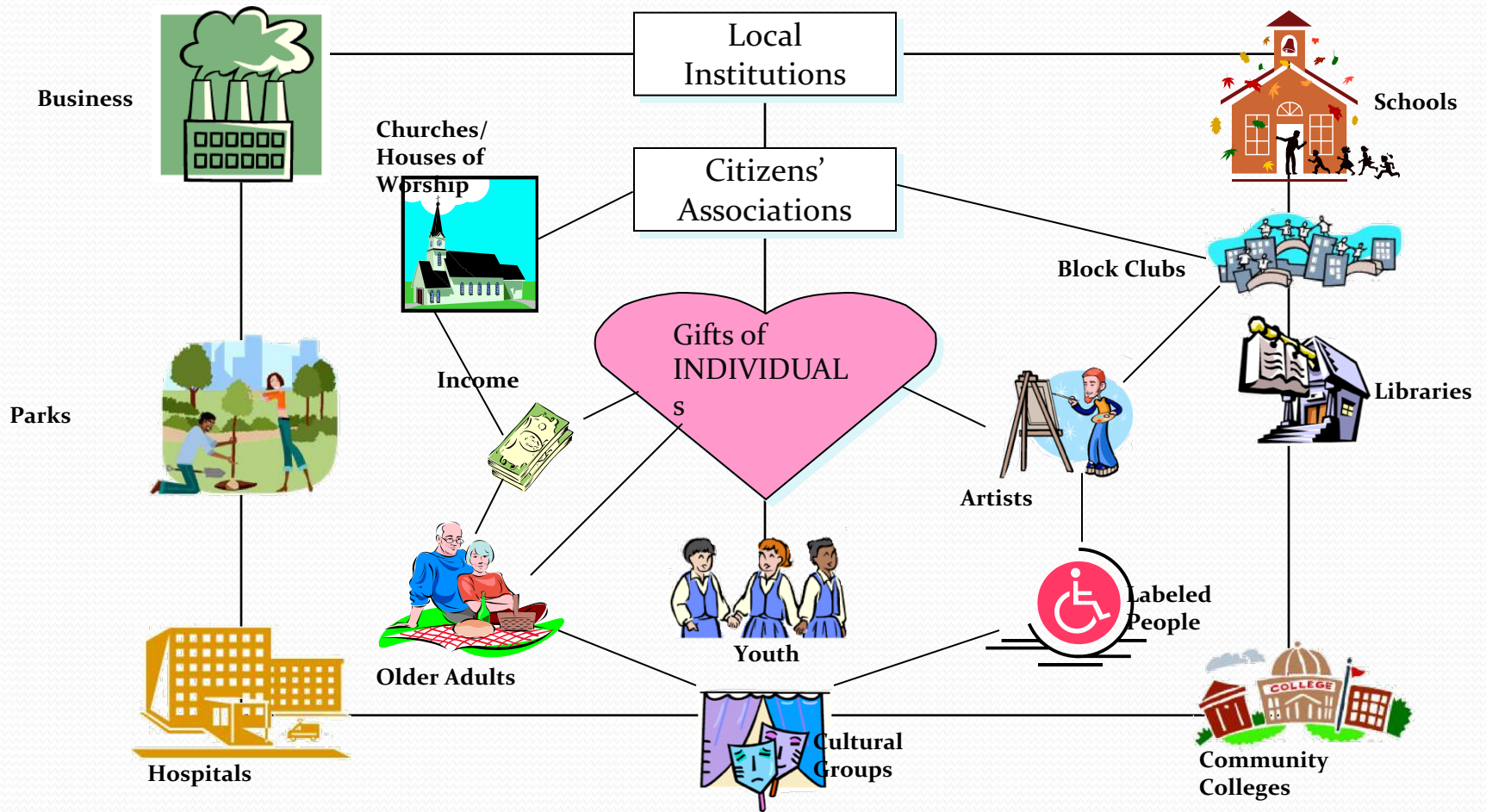
Community Assets: Stories and Culture


- Background & personal history
- What you like to do and contribute
- Realizing and engaging skills and capacities
- Successful community development
- Economic growth
- Addressing racism
- Including those who are marginalized
- Recognizing the value of everyone
- A time when you or your group felt appreciated and valued
- A time when the community was at its best

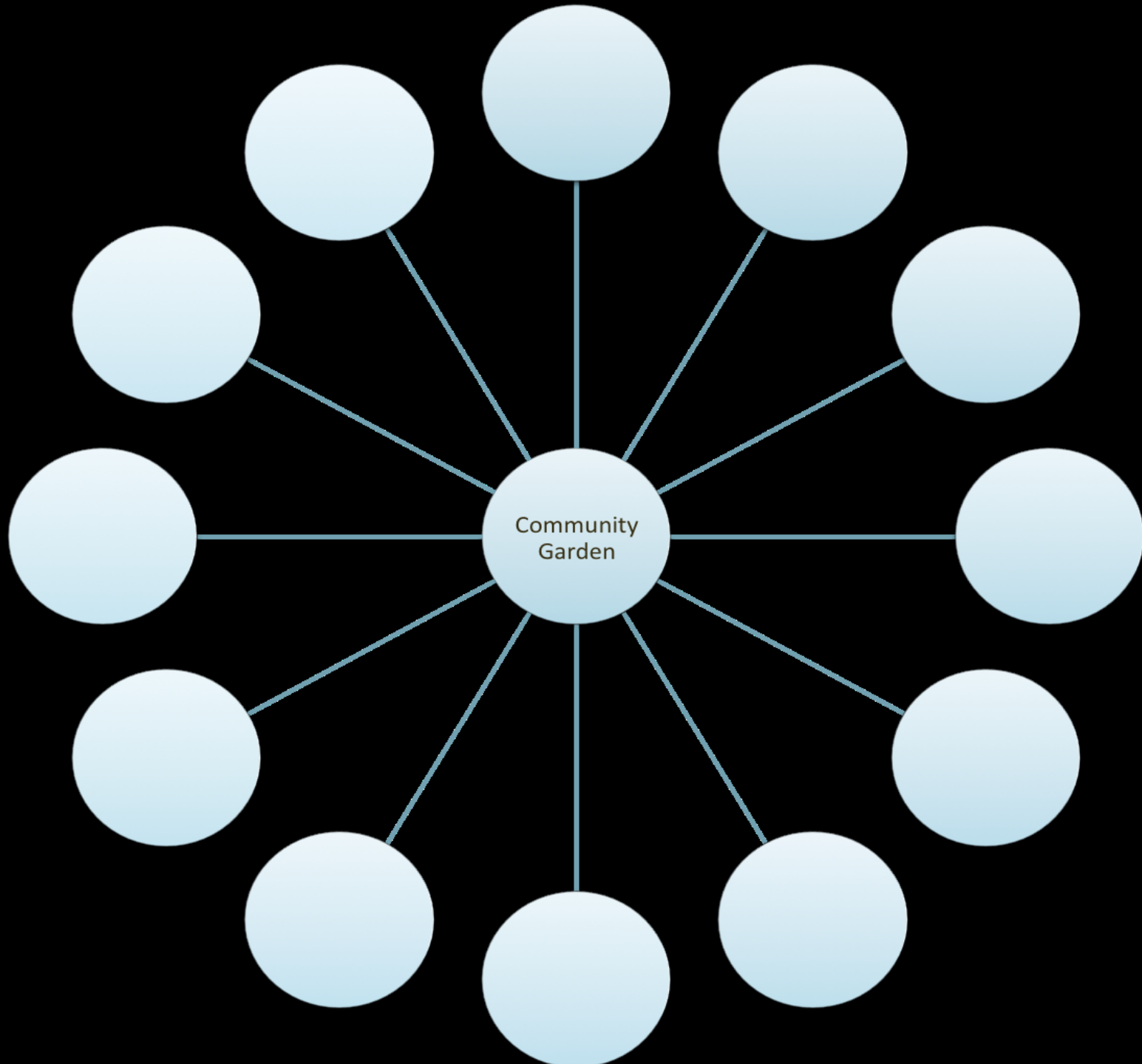
Community Assets Map



Community Assets Map



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1. On a large sheet, draw a circle in the middle and write "Community Garden Project," or the appropriate name for your own project, inside.
 2. On the outside edges of the paper write the names of partners or potential partners you can identify and draw a box around each of them. Think creatively about potential partners.
 3. Brainstorm ways that each partner can help a community garden, again thinking creatively. For example, the police department could be a potential partner that might be willing to include the garden site on its neighborhood check route or to donate funds from the local police athletic league fund.
 4. Draw an arrow from each partner to the garden circle and label each arrow with the ways that partner can contribute to the garden effort.
 5. Brainstorm what the garden can offer each partner. For example, could act as a gang or violence prevention strategy by providing youth alternatives to boredom or illegal activities, which would benefit the local police department.
 6. Draw an arrow from the garden to each potential partner, and label those arrows with the ways the garden can benefit the partners. The result is labeled arrows in both directions between each partner and the garden project.





Want to learn more?

- www.abcdinaction.org
- www.abcdinstitute.org
- <http://www.abundantcommunity.com>