

Exploring Community Assets:

Session Outline

Background:

Community assets are those things that are available within the community that contribute to its well being. This may range from hard, physical assets, to knowledge. Naturally, each community is unique in the type, quantity, and combination of assets that they hold. Consequently, each community has unique opportunities to draw upon their assets, and other resources if needed, to further enhance their community and the lives of people who live there.

Objectives:

- To recognize our community assets and what we value in them
- To identify potential strategies to capitalize on assets to enhance the community
- To identify potential strategies to sustain community assets

What you'll need

- For each participant: Pens/pencils, notepaper, markers, 3" X 5" file cards (three per participant), a copy of "Are these assets sustainable?" worksheet
- Masking tape; large coloured sticker dots; PowerPoint presentation, notebook, projector, and screen.
- Optional: flip chart

Steps

Time ¹ and PPT slide(s) #	Instructions
#1	A. Before the session begins: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange the room such that participants may see the projection screen, and the wall upon which category headings will be placed. Arrange seating and tables to accommodate participants working as individuals, in five working groups, and as the full group. Place headings on the wall for the following categories: Natural; Service; Built; Social; and Economic. Arrange them such that all will be able to see the category headings and that they will be able to place cards under each category heading

¹ Times may vary according to number of participants.

	<p>as per step D</p> <p>c) Distribute index cards (3/participant), markers (1/participant), and pen/pencils and note paper for each participant.</p> <p>d) Display the welcome slide as participants arrive</p>
10 min. #2-5	B. Introduction: Setting the context. Review the objectives (focus of session is to share what we value in our community and how we may enhance and sustain the assets that we have); discuss and define categories posted on the wall.
10 min. #6	C. Reflection - Each participant will brainstorm at least 6 assets. At least one should be in each of three different categories
45 min. #7 & 8	D. Sharing Assets (45 mins) - Participants record on cards 3 key assets (one per card). Ask each community member to share what they see as the top 3 assets in the community. Have each participant place the asset card under the relevant category. Ensure that all participants are clear on what each card posted means. However, this is not time for participants to advocate that their items are top of the group's list. Where there are duplicates, check with both posting participants and either remove duplicates or clarify the wording to ensure that all may discern the differences between the two items.
45 min. #9	E. Large Group Discussion - The group discusses why this list of assets is important. This discussion gives participants an opportunity to think about their own and others' choices. Use the following questions as a guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Why did we decide that these assets are important? b) Are there any surprises? c) What do the surprises mean?
30 min. #10	7. Participants will choose the most important asset in each category and break into small groups for discussion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give each participant 5 large coloured sticker dots² and have them identify the one most important asset in each asset category. 2. Count the number of dots on each asset card to identify the most important asset attributed to each category. 3. Have the large group divide into small groups according to asset category.

² Alternatively, participants may simply use non-bleed-through markers and place a check mark on the cards where their votes are to be applied (i.e., one check mark per participant per category).

	Groups could self-select. However, if any group looks to have too few members, ask that others volunteer to move to the group needing more members.
60 min. #11	<p>8. Small group identification of supports to sustain assets and threats to our assets. Each group will discuss supports and threats to the assets in the chosen asset grouping. The following questions are included on worksheets and on the overhead and should guide group discussions:</p> <p>Are these assets sustainable?</p> <p>If so:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In other words, what are the opportunities for using these assets to enhance the economic and social needs of our community? Can these opportunities be realized while maintaining the values we hold as important (e.g., sustaining our culture, environmental conservation)? What additional resources would we need to capitalize on such opportunities? How might we access those additional resources? <p>If these assets are not sustainable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the threats. What could be done to preserve and increase the collective value of these community assets? What resources would we need for these strategies?
45 min. #12	9. Presentation - Each presenter will share the group's summaries. Ask each presenter to summarize the key points of the group discussion, giving an overview of the threats, supporting resources and opportunities associated with the asset.
45 min. #13	<p>10. Next Steps. Lead a discussion with the whole group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are there groups existing in our community that could follow up on these opportunities? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If so, who? How do we ask them to consider the opportunity? If not (or if the existing groups decline), are there people interested in collaborating to capitalize on the opportunities? Does such collaboration require a formal structure (e.g., non-profit society, co-operative, corporation)?³ What further information do we need? What should be our next steps?
10 min. #14	11. Wrap up: Thank participants for participation. Ask them to complete an evaluation if you choose to use one. Advise as to how they will learn of any follow-up.

³ See the resources for exploring Alternative Organizational Types on the ACCA website.

Are these assets sustainable?

If they are sustainable:

- a) What are the opportunities for using these assets to enhance the economic and social needs of our community?

- b) Can these opportunities be realized while maintaining the values we hold as important (e.g., sustaining our culture, environmental conservation)?

- c) What additional resources would we need to capitalize on such opportunities? How might we access those additional resources?

If these assets are not sustainable:

- a) Identify the threats.

- b) What could be done to preserve and increase the collective value of these community assets?

- c) What resources would we need for these strategies? How might we access those additional resources?