

Taking an ABCD approach to foster holistic community development

Presentation to the Farmer Research Networks working group

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World Agroforestry (ICRAF), Systems' Theme
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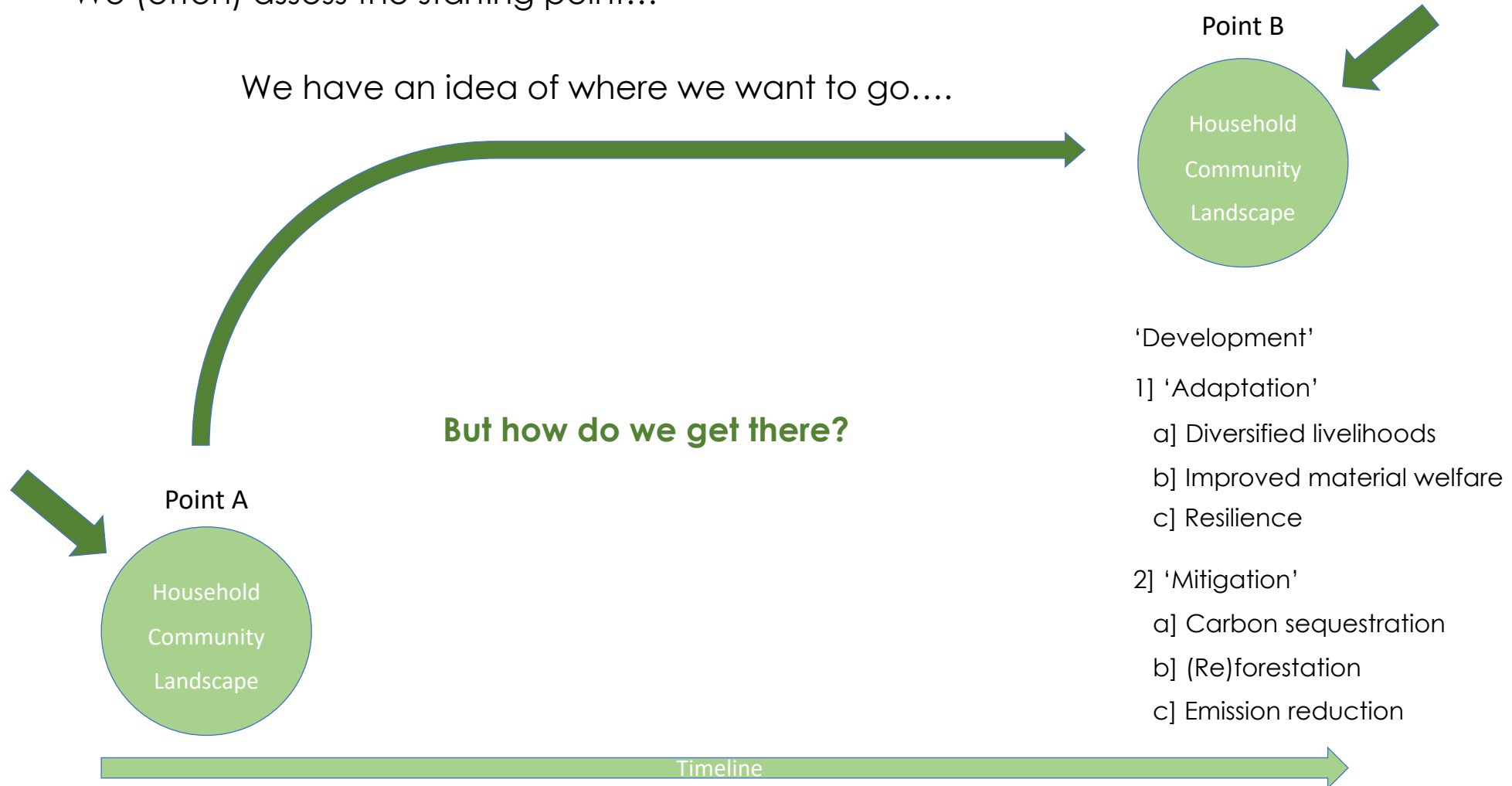
Brief outline

- Background and context
- What is asset-based community-/citizen-driven development (ABCD)
- ICRAF's ABCD journey
- Core take away points

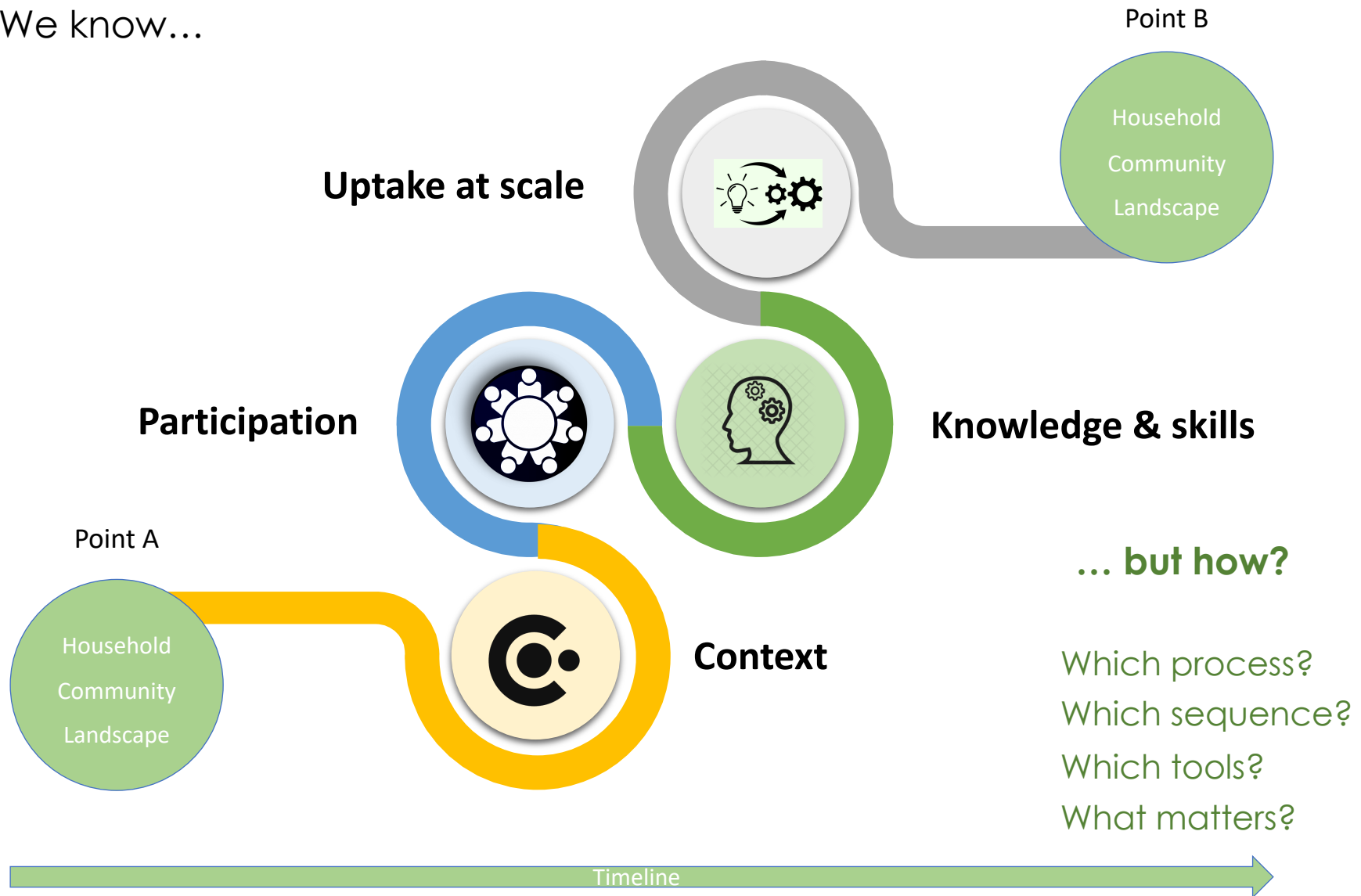
Background and context

We (often) assess the starting point...

We have an idea of where we want to go....



We know...



What is asset-based community-/citizen-driven development (ABCD)



John McKnight and Judy Kretzmann:
Building Communities from the Inside Out
(1993)

Northwestern University, IL



- Founded in 1995
- Moved to DePaul University, Chicago, in 2016

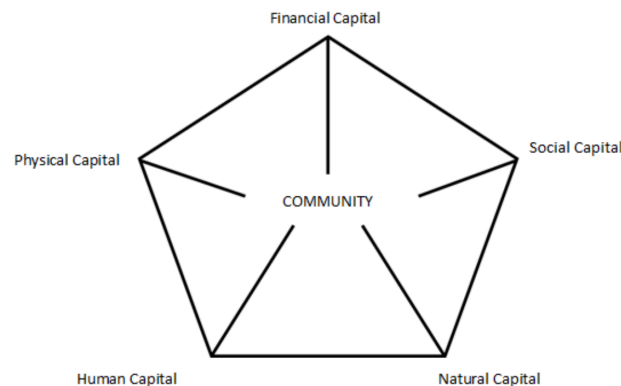


- Founded in 1959
- Inheritor of the Extension Department at StFX (1928), led by Rev. Moses Coady
- Antigonish Movement since the 1920s

What is asset-based community-/citizen-driven development (ABCD)

Simple principles

- “Everyone has gifts”
- “Relationships build a community”
- “Start with what you have”



The ABCD journey of World Agroforestry (ICRAF): The ABCD team



Victoria Apondi, Field officer



Langat Kipkorir, Field officer

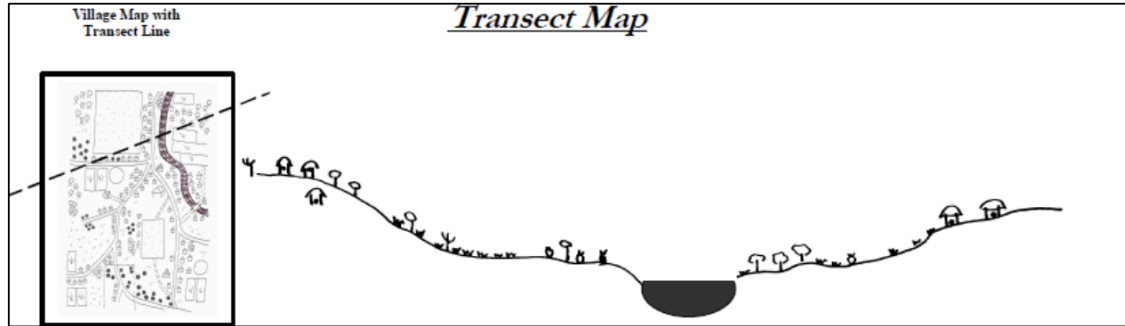


Levi Orero, Data specialist



Lisa Fuchs, Project manager

Case 1: Using individual ABCD tools (2011 - 2014)



adapted from Freudenberger (1994), in Mathie, Cunningham, Peters (2017).

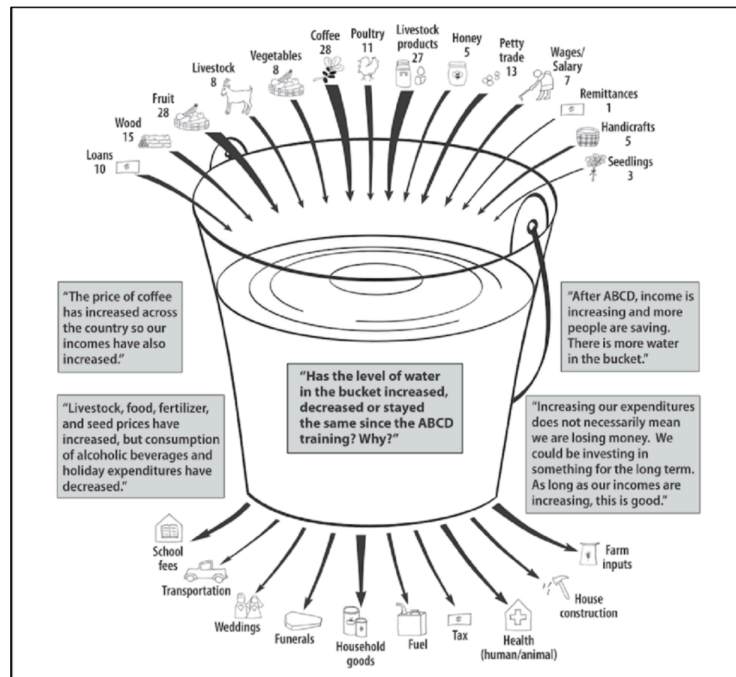


Figure: Community Leaky Bucket

NB: The thickness of the arrow represents the amount of money flowing into or out of the community from each source.

Source: MacDonald. J. (2005)

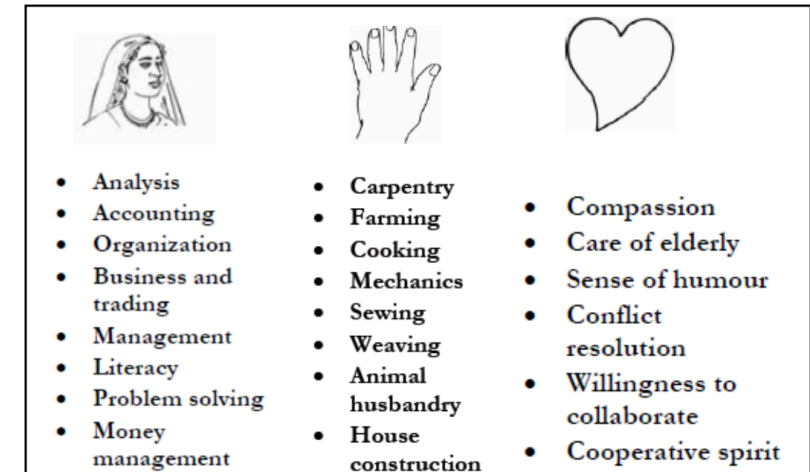


Figure: Illustration of the 'Heads, Hands, Hearts' tool

Source: Coady International Institute (no date).

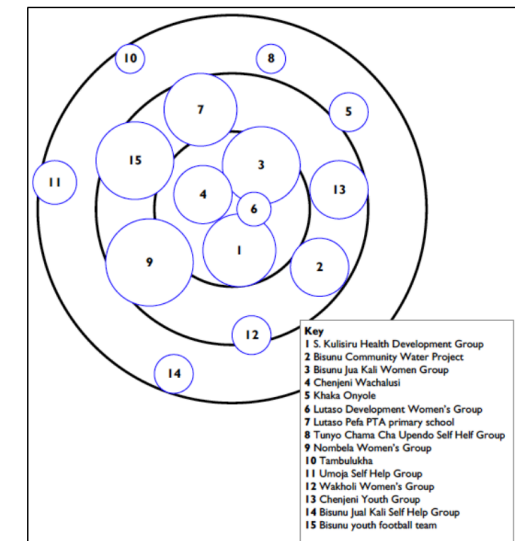


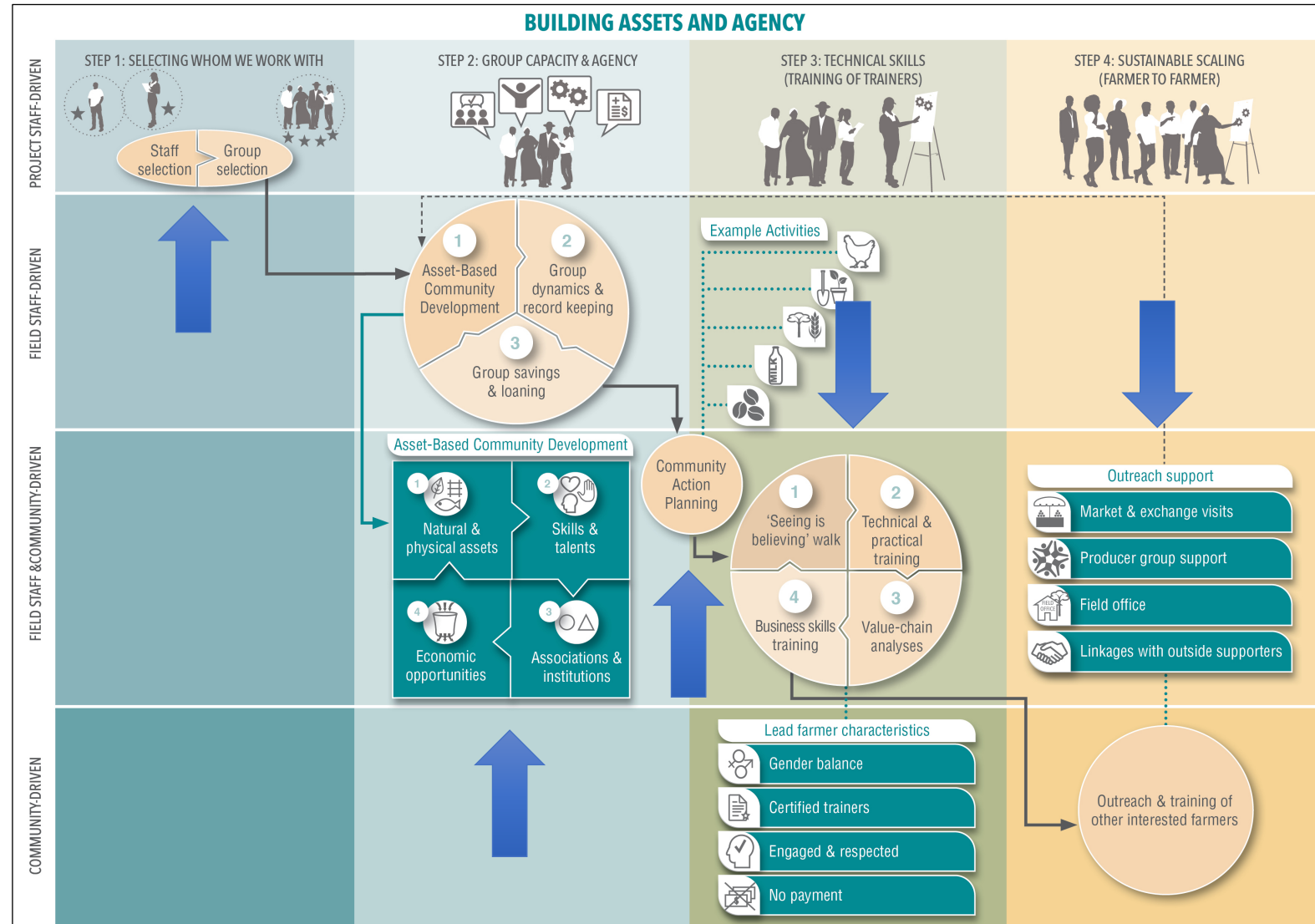
Figure: Venn diagram illustrating the relative size, importance and relationships between different associations

source: Mathie, Cunningham, Peters (2017).

Case 2: Building assets and agency (2015 – 2019)

ABCD is about tools.

... but it's also about process, a way of doing things!



Case 3: Infusing ABCD in Regreening Africa (since 2020)

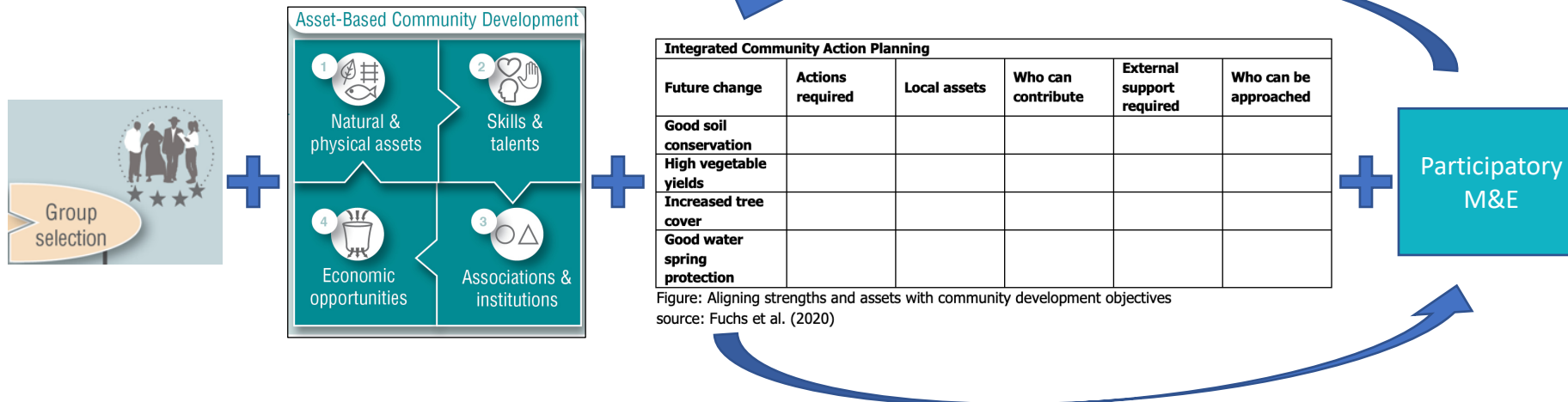
'Reintegrating' ICRAF

- Planned comparison
- Different biophysical and human/social context
- Full model vs. essential/measurable tools



* IIP = identities, interests, preferences

- (a) those that can be achieved autonomously by assessing and using existing assets better
- (b) those that can be achieved in collaboration with ICRAF (...)
- (c) those that can be achieved by collaborating with other external partners identified through social asset mapping



Core take away points

- Support and facilitate community members' belief in own agency
 - Emphasise inclusive talents and skills mapping and awareness
 - Highlight the importance of coming together
 - Encourage 'specialised' demand for external support, in line with IIP
- Don't monopolise a community's 'development' journey
 - Apply a 'diversifying' and 'specialising' approach
 - Ensure to collaborate where mutual IIP match
- More 'aware' specialised collaboration is likely to be more successful
 - Less community agony over perceived 'hijacking' of development journey
 - Interested community members likely to step forward
- In-built participatory M&E helps to 'refresh' asset-/strength-based mindset and allows communities to remember and adjust dynamic development pathways

Further reading

ICRAF ABCD work

- **Fuchs, LE, Orero, L, Apondi, VA, Kipkorir, L.** Creating a match between local and external partners to stop wasting money in international development: Opportunities and risks of structured beneficiary selection (forthcoming).
- **Fuchs LE,** Peters B, Neufeldt H. Identities, interests, and preferences matter: Fostering sustainable community development by building assets and agency in western Kenya. *Sustainable Development*. 2019; 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.1934>
- **Fuchs, LE, Orero, L,** Namoi, N, Neufeldt, H. How to Effectively Enhance Sustainable Livelihoods in Smallholder Systems: A Comparative Study from Western Kenya. *Sustainability*. 2019, 11 (Special Issue Sustainable Development of Tropical Agriculture), 1564, <https://doi:10.3390/su11061564>
- **Fuchs, LE.** Bridging the divide in community development: The importance of process in linking community demands and responsive external support. *Coady Innovation Series*, (8), 2018, 11 pp., <https://coady.stfx.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/IS8.pdf>
- Cunningham, G., **Fuchs, LE, Orero, L, Apondi, VA, Kipkorir, L.** The Integrated Household Leaky Bucket. Building financial and economic literacy by doing: A simple guide to help smallholder farmers separate their farm and household revenues and expenses. *Coady Innovation Series*, (14), 2018, <https://coady.stfx.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/IS14.pdf>

Online resources about ABCD

- The ABCD Institute, Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning at DePaul University, Chicago, IL, Publications by topic, <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/publications/publications-by-topic/Pages/default.aspx>
- The Coady International Institute, <https://coady.stfx.ca>
- The Jeder Institute, <http://jeder.com.au/resources/abcd-resources/>
- Sustaining Community blog, A reading list on ABCD (over 150 resources), <https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2016/04/11/abcd-reading-list/>

Thank you!

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Also see: <http://www.abcd-agroforestry.com>



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Discussion questions

- What are the processes, sequences, and timelines that others have experience with to foster a truly community-driven process?
- ABCD is sometimes accused of denying structural effects – due to its focus on assets and strengths. Do you necessarily see a conflict between asset-/strength-based and rights-based approaches?