

Illustrating asset based approaches in action – initial case study findings

Jennifer McLean
NoSPHN Meeting
March 2012

Definition

"A health asset is any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, groups, communities, populations, to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing and to help to reduce health inequalities"

(Morgan & Ziglio, 2007; p18)

Principles of an asset based approach

- What is working? What do people care about?
- 'Doing with' rather than 'doing to'.
- Identify, focus and support for sustainable improvements.
- Enhancing skills for resilience, relationships, knowledge and self-esteem.
- Building mutually supportive networks.
- Shifting control to individuals and communities.



Aim & objectives

To illustrate asset based approaches for health improvement in action by producing a set of case studies based on projects or initiatives that have taken such an approach.

We wish to:

- Explore – asset based principles?
- Highlight strengths / positive outcomes and challenges.
- Assess - improving health and reducing health inequalities?
- Synthesise – draw out transferable lessons.
- Identify policy implications - recommendations.
- Produce range of accessible outputs.



Methodology

- **Multiple case study design**
- **Data collection: a three stage process**
 1. *Documentary analysis*
 2. *Semi structured interviews*
 3. *Observation*
- **Range - geographical / audience / topic**
- **Data analysis: case-by-case, cross-case**



To date and next steps....

- **Achieved:**
 - 19 individual case studies completed
 - Documentary analysis
 - 31 staff interview
 - 26 participant interviews
 - Limited project observation
- **Next steps**
 - Complete cross-case analysis & research write up
 - Report April 2012 - active dissemination



Our cases....

- Routes out of Prison (Roop)
- Columba 1400
- Coach House Trust
- Templehall Dads Group
- Older People for Older People (O4O)
- GalGael
- StobsWell Being
- Cambuslang & Rutherglen CHI
- Fab Pad
- Home Buddy Scheme
- Gorbals Recycles
- Urban Roots
- Rag Tag n' Textile
- Bute Produce
- Playbusters
- Fair Isle Primary School
- The Big ShoutERs
- Castlemilk Timebank
- 218



Rag Tag n' Textile, Skye & Wester Ross

- Target audience?
 - Vulnerable adults recovering from mental health problems.
 - 60 people engaged with the project currently.
- Why set up?
 - Set up as a small craft group linked to TAG Highland (mental health project) in 2002
 - Rag Tag n' Textile established in 2006 – shop opened 2011
- What does the project do?
 - provides an environment that supports and encourages the personal growth and development of vulnerable adults – training, support, employment whenever possible.
 - uses environmentally sound methods and resources to deliver training and produce high quality textile items - sold to generate income.



Rag Tag n' Textile, Skye & Wester Ross (2)

- In what way is the approach 'asset based'?
 - Deliver training in traditional skills using skill-sharing and confidence building techniques in a supportive community setting
 - Support the recovery of individuals by the use of inclusion - everyone involved in the project contributes to the organisation
- Strengths of approach?
 - Holistic view – focus on person not symptoms
 - Innovative and creative ways of working
 - Training provider/volunteer ethos
- Challenges of approach?
 - Funding / working with statutory services
 - Sticking to principles of project



Older People for Older People (O4O), Highland

- Target audience?
 - 4 Highland communities - remote, rural and peripheral - Ardersier, Assynt, Tongue and South West Ross.
 - Adults over 55 years – over 200 adults engaged over 4 sites
- Why set up?
 - ‘Our Life as Elderly’ Northern Periphery Programme - people wanted to remain living in their own communities when older, concern insufficient supportive services
 - Project - Jan 2008 to Dec 2010
- What does the project do?
 - Develop social enterprises to provide identified basic services – impact on communities/ individuals
 - 4 locally responsive projects – oral history project, day care service, transport system, community home services



Older People for Older People (O4O), Highland (2)

- In what way is the approach ‘asset based’?
 - Starts with assets/resources existing in community
 - Older people as active participants/positive force
- Strengths of approach?
 - Community led - older people identifying local need, taking responsibility
 - Assets built – new locally run organisation/services
 - O4O – support to community – ‘opened doors’
- Challenges of approach?
 - Social enterprise – huge undertaking for small community
 - Working with statutory services
 - Conflict within communities – barriers to action



Are the cases ‘asset based’?

- Participant-led.
- Flexible and adaptive.
- Creating tangible skills – training/qualifications opportunities.
- Enhancing softer skills – relationships, mutual support, community spirit.
- Confidence building.
- Empowering and supportive.
- Volunteering ethos/peer support.
- Supportive community context



Emerging themes: strengths

- Asset based approaches to delivering needs based initiatives
- Flexible and reflexive practice
 - Ownership/collaboration/empowerment
 - Doing more of what works
- Honesty and humanity
 - People as assets
 - Cyclical involvement
 - Commitment of staff/appreciation of participants



Emerging themes: challenges

- Monitoring, evaluation & measurement.
 - Measuring v' doing
 - Skills/capacity
- Health impact?
- Opportunity and integrity: a trade-off?



Emerging themes: economics

- Dual nature of funding
- Supporting statutory services
 - Filling the gaps and covering the cracks
 - Breaking (costly) repeat cycles



In summary....

- Rich selection of case studies completed
- Demonstrate how the approach is being delivered – in line with asset theory
- Raised set of issues:
 - Responding to need
 - Evaluation and measurement
 - Funding
 - Impact on health and health inequalities
- Your thoughts.....



Your thoughts....?

- Initial thoughts & feedback
 - Do these emerging themes resonate with your knowledge of community based projects?
 - Funding – how could it work differently?
 - Measurement - how do we capture the impact of project on health & inequalities?



For further info.....

Jennifer McLean
 Public Health Programme Manager
 GCPH
jennifer.mclean@drs.glasgow.gov.uk
 0141 287 6959

<http://www.gcph.co.uk/assetbasedapproaches>
