

# Community asset mapping as a tool to achieve roots driven change in the rural communities of the Bojanala Region, North West Province, South Africa

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## WORKING PAPER AND MAY NOT BE CITED

**Keywords:** community asset mapping; social change, entrepreneurship and livelihood strategies, roots driven change, MDGs

**Abstract:** At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, eight critical economic and social development priorities (MDGs) for the world were identified. Initially the goals and targets were seen as standalone goals, however, it became clear very quickly that the goals and targets are interrelated and should be seen as a whole. These goals enjoin the global north and global south through a partnership that is conducive to development and to the world wide elimination of poverty. The MDGs help all stakeholders to gain consensus in the imperative of development, as they make it possible to facilitate benchmarking and cross country or regional comparison. This paper will argue that sustainable development towards the achievement of the MDGs need to be driven from within the community in order to instil ownership; a sense of pride; and a sense of belonging within one's own community. The paper will present a community asset mapping technique (CAMP) that was developed by the Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation (GRCF) in communities in the Bojanala Region (North West Province, South Africa) and the University of South Africa, as a way to achieve sustainable and responsible high impact social change within communities. CAMP enables community members to map their own assets and empowers them to use these assets sustainably to create a better life for themselves. Communities are empowered to identify their own entrepreneurship and livelihood strategies and opportunities in an attempt to generate their own wealth. Unlike many existing asset mapping techniques, CAMP advocates that the success of any roots driven change depends on partnerships and support from a multitude of different organisations, all providing different components that would be required in the process of sustainable change within communities. The paper presents an argument that if communities are to achieve effective roots driven change they would require partners with NGOs, government, civil society, business, and institutes of higher learning, who are willing to stand aside and allow communities to decide for themselves what their priorities are in achieving wealth, but would be willing to provide funding, mentorship, skills, and a continuous monitoring process over the medium to long term.

1. Millennium Development Goals and the role of roots driven change within South Africa and in particular the Bojanala district in the North West Province

The Millennium Declaration which contains the goals and related targets was signed by 189 countries. The international community reached consensus that they would work towards the development of these MDGs by 2015. Initially the goals and targets were seen as standalone goals, however, it became clear very quickly that the goals and targets are interrelated and should be seen as a whole. These goals enjoin the developed and developing countries through a partnership that would be conducive to development and to the world wide elimination of poverty. For all sitting here tonight the MDGs help us get consensus in the imperative of development, as they make it possible to facilitate benchmarking and cross country or regional comparison.

The application of the MDGs in South Africa must be seen within its historical context. The Apartheid era took a particularly heavy toll on the South African communities; its biodiversity and its ecosystems. Widespread impoverishment and social dislocation, forced removals, overcrowding of the vast majority of the population into the 'homelands', discriminatory urban policies that distorted resource flows, inequitable access to environmental services, unjust land use practices, the migratory labour system, and a protectionist approach to nature conservation produced not only widespread impoverishment and social dislocation but also contributed to significant environmental degradation.

Since 1994, environmental issues have moved into the socio-political arena. They bring together human rights, access to natural resources, social justice, social equity and environmental sustainability. In the first decade of freedom, Government focused on prioritizing people's needs while safeguarding the country's natural assets. The range of legislative, policy and institutional developments that have occurred over this period have served to bring about a new approach to sustainable development.

Like the rest of South Africa, inequity in access to social services, poverty, unemployment and health related issues within the North West Province are problematic. The inequities explain in larger measure the Provinces slow progress to attaining the MDGs in general. Despite a number of improvements in the social, economic and political spheres in South Africa, progress to achieve MDGs is slow and if we are to achieve the goals we need to accelerate the progress in MDGs.

## 2. What is Asset Mapping

Community mapping or community asset mapping is a participatory planning tool which engages communities in exploring their assets with the physical and social environment, with the purpose of creating a concrete output – a map that can be incorporated into a formal and informal community planning process. Asset mapping involves the documentation of tangible and intangible resources of a community, viewing a community as a place with assets that need to be preserved and enhanced, not needs that need to be remedied (Kerka, 2003). Asset based community development (ABCD) was developed by (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996) in an attempt to rebuild troubled communities in America.

## 3. The Community Asset Mapping Program (CAMP), Bojanala, North West Province

ABCD was developed in America to rebuild communities that had experienced two decades of massive economic shifts. During this period thousands of jobs were lost, and new approaches to rebuild lives and communities became necessary. South African communities have however endured decades of political, economic and social turmoil and since 1994, the need to rebuild the lives and communities in South Africa are high on the political, social and economic agenda's. As is the case with similar situations in the world there are basically two ways to approach the rebuilding of communities. The first approach (and more traditional) is to focus on the needs and deficiencies and presently this approach commands more investment from various stakeholders. The long term effect of this approach is questionable as the change in communities are not sustainable, as the change is based on the perceived needs of the donors and is not driven by the communities themselves. The second approach makes it very clear from the onset, that all communities have assets and capacities, and change in communities need to focus on these assets in order to allow communities to take ownership and pride of their own change and to drive their change with the assistance of government, business, NGOs, academia, but on the terms of the communities and not on the terms of their outside partners.

The Community Asset Mapping Program (CAMP) paradigm as applied in the North West Province, more specifically in the Bojanala Region is an empowerment paradigm that has as

its purpose a tool to facilitate self-driven change within communities. In addition the application of this tool provides external stakeholders with a more focussed driven intervention strategy that can include grant making from business, NGOs and better inform external stakeholders on what type of training needs to be implemented for effective change within any one community. The main objectives of the CAMP training in this case study are:

- to convince communities that they are richer than they think and that they can be the drivers of their own development (change)
- to assist communities on focussing on their opportunities rather than their challenges
- to assist communities to make a mind shift from a traditionally disenfranchised community into a community of empowerment and control
- to introduce a process of trust and unity within a community that focusses on attitudes, self-worth and values
- to assist community members with the generation of ideas and projects that could lead to small entrepreneurship opportunities and job creation of community members
- to enable non-government organisations, (for example Community Foundations), government organisations, civil society, business and institutes of higher learning to make informed decisions on providing relevant support (financial and monetary) to the most sustainable and critical projects that have been identified and driven by the community.

The main structure of the CAMP process was derived from the Asset Based Citizen Driven Development (ABCD) (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996), but has been adapted in many ways to be more applicable within the context South African context. The methodology presented in this paper was initially applied by the Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation (GRCF) in 2001. The methodology was refined in 2009, after ABCD was applied in Mathopestat, a rural village east of Derby, North West Province, South Africa. This was further refined as CAMP by the GRCF in collaboration with the Department of Geography, University of South Africa (Unisa). By the end of 2011, the CAMP process has been applied to nine area clusters within the Bojanala Region. These include:

- Mathopestat
- Kgetleng
- Bafokeng
- Marikana/Brits
- Tlhbane
- Rustenburg rural
- Rustenburg urban
- Mankwe
- Madikwe

More recently, the CAMP methodology has been applied to the communities in Skuinsdrift and Koffiekraal, both communities that are located on the border of the Bojanala Region.

### 3.1 Initial community visit

Once a community has been identified, an initial community visit of between 1 to 2 days is undertaken. The visit serves to engage in the major stakeholders (for example tribal leaders, ward councillors or development workers) to establish general information about the community, and to set the scene for the workshop.

### 3.2 The five day CAMP workshop

The CAMP processes essentially take a community through exercises designed to make them aware of the skills and talents they possess as well as the physical and social assets the community as a whole possesses. It also helps the community to identify their biggest hopes and fears and assist them with build trust amongst themselves. The whole process is meant to enable the communities to switch their thinking from “this is what we lack” to “we are richer than we realised”. The CAMP workshop, utilises a very practical six step methodology, this methodology allows for a creative and participatory way to engage all community members while working in small teams. These can be described as follows:

- Setting the scene
- Information gathering
- Initiating trust
- Cognitive shift
- Transect walk
- Action planning

### 3.2.1 Setting the scene

The first step in the process encourages the participants to focus on dreams and not on their problems and needs. The community is divided into groups and the workshop takes the form of storytelling, and the focus is on the sharing of experiences. The groups are asked to describe current and past success (feel good) stories within their communities, and are then asked to speculate on the reasons for the success in the examples they have provided. The effects of this exercise are remarkable as the community members for the first time discover the richness and diversity of opportunities within their own community. This exercise is particularly useful as it is particularly useful in creating a sense of pride and belonging amongst the community members. This exercise is followed by a session where the community is able to dream of a collective vision for their community, and they also provide indicators on how they will measure their success in the creation of this vision.

### 3.2.2 Information gathering

The next phase of the workshop is a session which each member of the group provides an indication to the group on their skills and abilities that they can offer the community. Each group member is provided with a template on which s/he can fill in their individual assets divided into three groups:

- Hands
- Heads
- Hearts

The facilitator will then write down a list of skills and assets in the three categories, and in this way creates a substantial list of assets that the community possess. This is followed by a group activity, called association mapping, where the groups are asked to group their community assets (using the list compiled after the individual exercise) into four different categories:

<b>Human Assets</b>	<b>Social Assets</b>	<b>Economic Assets</b>	<b>Environmental Assets</b>
Skills, gifts, abilities, talents	Associations within the community. Community organisations and groups. Collaborations with outside	Entrepreneurial – including existing and emerging business opportunities	Physical and Natural resources

	organisations		
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The result of this activity is a complete inventory of the collective assets that exist within a community. As the community created the list, they take ownership of the list, and the transition from them thinking about what they lack to starts to change to a proud feeling of “opportunities” based on existing assets, and a feeling of “we are richer than we realised”.

A crucial aspect of any community is the power structures within a community. The community is thus taken through a process of identifying and recognising existing power structures within their community. The power structures of the community are extremely important to describe and analyse. In some case studies the lack of open discussion of the power structure is one of the main reasons why communities do not effect change within their community, and thus leads to failure of roots driven change. During this session, the facilitator takes the community through a process where they map the power structures in terms of the following:

- Who is at the table?
- Who is on the table?
- Who is below the table?

This is a particularly difficult process, as the various role players in the power structure are normally part of the workshop groups. The community however is able to learn about power structures and how these feed into the risk evaluation by seeing who can harm or help them in their projects. The exercise does however provide the facilitator with important information regarding power structures that can be followed up during the monitoring and evaluation phase.

### 3.2.3 Initiating self-worth and trust

Another reason why roots driven change in the communities, fails is the lack of self-worth and overall trust in the communities we have applied the CAMP paradigm. This part of the workshop is what makes CAMP different from most other types of community asset mapping techniques. This part of the workshop is divided into four different processes, and each process is completed by the individuals who are attending the workshop:

<b>Quality</b>	<b>Types of questions that each individual must provide answers to</b>
Wishes	What wishes do I have for myself? What wishes do I have for my community?
Fears	What fears do I have for myself? What fears do I have for my community?
Values	What do I value about myself? What do I value about others in my community? What do I value about my community?
Changes	What changes do I want to make for myself? What changes do I want to see in my community? Who do you think will bring about change? Do you trust these people to bring about change? Do you think people in your community have the ability to change? Do your trust their abilities to bring about change?
Trust	Do I trust myself? Why do I trust myself? What abilities do I have that I can trust? Who else do I trust in my community? Reasons why I trust them?

The individual responses are collected by the facilitator, and a story board is created and the responses are captured for the group and at the same time the individual's responses remain anonymous. Not only does this process provide crucial information to the community for their own roots driven change, it also provides crucial information that will inform the success of the process into the future. In some communities, it is clear at this point those possible interventions to deal with these 'soft issues' will be required during the follow up and monitoring process. Depending on the history and composition of the community, matters of self-worth and trust would remain on the agenda of change and needs careful monitoring to ensure that communities achieve their roots driven change.

### 3.2.4 Cognitive shift

Normally at this point, the community is ready to make a cognitive shift and are able to generate ideas and projects that could lead to small entrepreneurship opportunities and job creation of community members. This step consists of two processes:

The first is simple community based economics. The individuals in the workshop are asked to provide an indication of their average income and expenses. The following information is collected:

- Total monthly income (and source)
- Expenses (individuals are asked to provide a breakdown of expenses)
- Average amount spent monthly
- The amount spent in the community
- The amount spent outside of the community.

Once all the individuals have filled in the template, an average of the above is calculated for the community. This exercise provides the community with a practical understanding of the economic situation of their community and the possible entrepreneurial opportunities that are possible. The exercise demonstrates to the community how much money comes into the particular community through salaries, grants and other income and then how much money is spent outside of the community. The community can see that money literally flows from the community, but with some innovation the money can be circulated within the community and in this way grow the community. This step is often the catalyst that encourages groups to create small business opportunities.

The second step encourages the groups to think about possible business opportunities, the communities are requested to build a community map. The groups are given material like card board, pens, crayons, glue and other material to build a map of what their community looks like in terms of the assets they have identified, and the opportunities that these assets provide in terms of possible small and medium business opportunities. This is normally a very exciting and interactive activity that allows the groups to creatively think about and plot their physical environment in terms of positive and sustainable opportunities.

### 3.2.5 Transect walk

The transect walk provides the community with the opportunity to link the previous two processes by looking at their communities through asset lenses. The groups in the workshop are divided into two, the one half physically walks through the community with a facilitator and the other looks at the community using an aerial photograph and a topographical map of the area. Both groups need to look for additional assets and then come back to their respective groups to suggest ideas for projects that will be the catalyst of change in the community.

The workshop members who walk through the community do so with a Global Positioning System (GPS), as they identify assets, the facilitator ensures that the exact location is

recorded on the GPS with a description of the asset. The information of all the groups are then collated on a Geographical Information System (GIS), and a scale map of the community is then compiled. Together with the information of the group members who did the transect “walk” on the aerial photograph and topographical maps, the community is able to create their own scale specific map, that is of value to themselves as well as local authorities.

In many instances this is the first time communities have an actual map of their community. The fact that they were able to be the authors of the map, adds to the sense of pride and belonging of the attendees to their respective communities. In addition they see new social, economic and environmental opportunities that exist and can be used to drive their roots driven change.

### 3.2.6 Action planning

The final part of the workshop is where the participants make use of all the information gathered to create a community vision and action plan in terms of projects that will be the drivers of change in the community. In the process the group identifies their own indicators of success, and it is these indicators that are used to monitor if effective and sustainable change is taking place in the community. The workshop is requested to provide information on the following:

- Future change normally in terms of an identified project
- Actions required ensuring the success of the project
- Local assets that will contribute to the success of the project
- Outside assistance required to help the project’s success
- An indication on how the community will measure the success of the project.

As the final part of the workshop, communities are encouraged to create a community forum of individuals in the community, who can champion (or lead) the process of change in the community. Not only does the creation of this forum help the community to take ownership of their own change, the group also acts as the connector to the NGO or external partner.

### 3.3 Follow up visit

Two weeks after the five day CAMP workshop has been done in a community, the facilitators visits the community to establish how the community is doing and to provide individuals/group support and assistance to progress with their future planning, and providing advice on the identified projects.

### 3.4 General support session

Depending on the action plan and the projects identified by the community a general two day workshop is presented and is tailored to meet the needs of the community and these can include the following:

- Formalisation and registration of business initiatives
- Strategic planning
- Project and/or business planning
- Financial Management
- Trust and self-worth workshops
- Soft skill workshops
- Technical support.

### 3.5 External partners as a source of expertise, skills and funding

Depending on the types of projects identified by the community, a variety of skills are normally required to assist the community. At this point the GRCF makes use of its partnerships with corporate, civil society, government and Unisa to ensure the communities obtain specific expertise and skills to ensure the success of their projects. This is a crucial aspect of the success of the CAMP process as the Community Foundation acts as a connector of communities with experts from various sectors of society as well as possible sources of further funding for a variety of projects within communities.

### 3.6 Measurement and evaluation

Regular visits to the community are undertaken to track the progress of change in the community. Communities are encouraged during the whole CAMP process to set their own indicators for success and as much as possible their success is tracked and recorded to ensure that real change is actually occurring. It is the understanding of the GRCF and Unisa that only a community can actually say whether their quality of life is improving or not although in the process the Community Foundation and the University track their own indicators of change, it is preferable to rely on community generated indicators in the monitoring and evaluation process.

### 3.7 Grant making and funding

The GRCF is a grant maker, and as such they aim to make grants that have the highest possible impact for roots driven change within a community. The CAMP process is a very important tool for the Community Foundation to make decisions on considering projects for possible grants. The GRCF also leverages partnerships in civil society, business, government and other NGOs to obtain funding for promising projects. Presently, grants and funding opportunities are only provided to deserving groups 3 to 6 months after the CAMP process. This motivation for the time lag is to ensure that funds go to the most determined and resourceful groups, this in turn ensures greater sustainability and impact on roots driven change. In terms of possible donors, the time lag also ensures more effective results for their monetary contribution.

### 3.8 On-going support

Depending on the measurement and monitoring process, on-going support with the permission of the community is provided to the community by various external stakeholders over the short to medium term. This includes the provision of skills, technical and monetary support on an as needed basis.

## 4 The difference between CAMP and ABCD

While the CAMP and the ABCD processes are fundamentally similar, they are different in their respective application, evaluation and monitoring. The table below provides the fundamental difference of the two processes based on the experience of the application of ABCD by a facilitator trained by Coady International Institute (Nova Scotia, Canada) in Mathopestat in October 2009, and a number of CAMP applications by the GRCF and the Department of Geography, Unisa from 2010 to 2012.

<b>ABCD process</b>	<b>CAMP process</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three day empowerment training</li><li>• Appreciative enquiry</li><li>• Assists communities to</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Five day empowerment workshop</li><li>• Appreciative enquiry</li><li>• Assists communities to focus in assets rather than needs</li><li>• Building of trust, self-worth, attitudes and values</li></ul>

<p>focus in assets rather than needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying of projects</li> <li>• Action planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying of projects</li> <li>• Compilation of a true to scale map with their social, economic, human and physical assets</li> <li>• Identifying of critical intervention and empowerment needs, with follow through in the form of small grants</li> <li>• Linking of communities with external partners and support services</li> <li>• Assisting communities in the development of community development forums</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation through a focussed 3 to 5 year process</li> <li>• Enabling communities to create their own community vision</li> <li>• Assist the community to map success and failures using the indicators developed by the community</li> <li>• Understanding that one size does not fit all</li> </ul>
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## 5 Partnerships for effective roots driven change

CAMP advocates that the success of any roots driven change depends on partnerships and support from a multitude of different organisations, all providing different components that would be required in the process of sustainable change within communities on terms decided upon by the community themselves.

### 5.1 Community Foundations

Community foundations serve as vehicles to assist communities, business, corporates, government and other agents of change to achieve roots driven change through the establishment of endowed funds in perpetuity to support change in communities. As community foundations serve the interest of the public good in their defined geographic areas of operation, they are probably the most effective agents for change outside of a community. In this case study, the relevant community foundation is the Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation (GRCF). This Foundation is an endowed fund that operates as a trust/foundation with the objective to provide services to communities in their geographical area in perpetuity. They have different funds that focus on health, arts, culture, environment and a general fund. The Foundation gathers financial resources from various donors which they invest in order to yield interest. They use the interest to make grants to beneficiaries in communities in their areas.

Apart from the financial support that the community foundations can provide communities in their jurisdiction, of more value is the fact that they are able to monitor progress and change on a regular basis, as they are located within the geographical area of the communities that have undergone the CAMP process. They thus play a crucial role of connector between communities and other stakeholders.

### 5.2 Institutes of Higher Learning

The Higher Education Act of 1997 (South African Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2010) set an agenda for the transformation of higher education from segregated, inequitable and highly inefficient institutions towards a single national system that would serve both individual and collective needs. Along with teaching and learning community engagement is cast as one of the pillars in this system. The Council of Higher Education defines community engagement as initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the higher education institution in the area of teaching and research is applied to address issues relevant to its community. Universities are called upon to demonstrate social responsibility and a commitment to the common good by making available the expertise and infrastructure for a

variety of community service programmes that would address specific wants and needs of the South African communities (South African Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2010). Unisa responded to the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Council of Higher Education's call to include Community Engagement as one of the three pillars of responsibilities for academics, by creating a policy on Community Engagement and Outreach that operates within the vision of Unisa as part of the 2015 Agenda for Transformation, namely "Towards the African University in service of humanity". This vision describes the Universities desire to connect with Society, by utilizing its resources and capacities in community development initiatives and collaborative partnerships.

Unisa, like other institutes of higher learning have a wealth of expertise, skills and knowledge to offer communities to facilitate roots driven change and in such a way contribute to the transformation of society. Academics however, rarely, have time to dedicate more than 20% of their time to community engagement, and partnerships with community foundations such as the GRCF, allow the academics the opportunity to share valuable expertise through the NGO which operates as the connector to the community, but which has the time and mandate to monitor change in communities on a more regular basis.

### 5.3 Government organisations, business and corporate social responsibility

Social change in communities has for many years been seen as the responsibility of the government, who was in turn have been seen as the exclusive social change agent. Since 1994, the government has done much to try and combat social inequalities, through different social programmes. However, the persistent inequalities in education, infrastructure, economic power and basic services remain part of the socio-economic reality of South Africa. Increasingly business and civil society has become active in social and community projects under the concept of corporate social responsibility. This basically means the voluntary involvement or investment in social projects by business and or civil society with the purpose of the advancement of the community and society as a whole (Flores-Araoz, 2011).

In South Africa, corporate governance guidelines and standards are contained in the various King reports. The King reports are not legal documents, however, it are universally accepted as the state of the art guidelines on good corporate governance and the adoption of the King reports are highly recommended by the business sector. King III focusses on sustainability and risk issues and at the same time highlights the importance for companies to respond to all stake holders.

## 6 Conclusion

Sustainable change towards the achievement of poverty relief need to be driven from within communities in order to instil ownership, a sense of pride and sense of belonging in one's own community. However, this is in contradiction to the more traditional development paradigms which has a top down approach that often leads to relatively high levels of dependency on the part of the provide to development is . The traditional paradigm has players that are involved in the process for short term gains that most of the times unknowingly and selfishly do not take into account the need, impact or consequences their involvement has on communities that benefited from their aid. The question arises, do communities really benefit from this relationship? The CAMP approach to roots driven change requires medium to long term commitment in terms of money, skills and continuous monitoring processes. The success of this paradigm depends on partnerships of national, local government, civil society, business, NGOs, academia and the communities themselves.

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