



Frequently Asked Questions: Asset Based Community Development

How does Episcopal Relief & Development do its work around the world?

Instead of imposing “one-size-fits-all” solutions, the organization supports unique, locally-led, long-term initiatives that address the effects of poverty, disaster and disease. Through its Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) methodology, Episcopal Relief & Development works with communities to identify and unlock their existing skills, gifts and resources. Thus, it empowers and works alongside local leaders and residents who are best equipped to assess and respond to the most pressing needs.

What is Asset Based Community Development?

ABCD is an approach that identifies and utilizes the capacities and skills of people and their neighborhoods. It is a methodology for sustainable development based on a community’s assets versus solely needs. An ABCD approach does not create or bring development to a community from outside, but rather energizes change and development from within.

Why does Episcopal Relief & Development take an asset-based approach to development?

Episcopal Relief & Development seeks to transform how it views itself in relationship to its partners, communities, colleagues, and supporters. Utilizing this approach strengthens its role as a catalyst, empowering people to engage in their own development and recognizing and reinforcing their existing assets.

What types of assets are there?

In general, there are seven common types of assets, which may also be called resources or God’s gifts:

- Human Assets: People, skills, knowledge, experiences, ideas, imagination, health, motivation, culture
- Natural Assets: Land, water, forests, renewable & nonrenewable materials
- Physical Assets: Fixed, structural or man-made, buildings, roads, bridges, wells
- Social Assets: Relationships, organizations, networks, norms of trust, political influence
- Economic Assets: Capital, savings, wages, trade, livestock, crops, retail products
- Temporal Assets: Time, seasons
- Spiritual Assets: Faith, hope and love, prayer, worship, Bible studies

How is an asset-based approach different from more traditional development methodologies?

Many national and international initiatives approach humanitarian aid and development from a needs-driven perspective. This over-emphasis on needs and gaps often leads to programming and service delivery that creates “recipients” or “beneficiaries” often labeled as victims, marginalized and/or poor.

Episcopal Relief & Development contributes to the healing of a hurting world by focusing on their assets versus simply their needs – recognizing and reinforcing a community’s gifts, ideas, decisions and existing resources – the organization contributes to healing, empowerment and sustainability.