



## **2014 AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE POSTER PRESENTATION**

**Visionary Evaluation for a Sustainable, Equitable Future - October 15, 2014**

***Gaining Another Perspective for Evaluation: Focusing on Children Participation in Asset-Based Community Development Capacity Inventories and Asset Mapping***

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### **ABSTRACT**

An overview of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) is given, while emphasizing the role of children. The use of capacity inventories and its implementation to create asset maps is highlighted. In order to push innovative evaluation practice, it is suggested that a specific child-oriented exemplar capacity inventory is developed using Kretzmann and McKnight's 1993 Capacity Inventory. Additionally, a specific list with suggestions on how to modify for children is recommended. Lastly, it is proposed how children can better identify skills and develop asset maps in a manner that they can understand and relate.

### **AUDIENCE**

In general, the likely primary audience for whom this poster presentation would be relevant to are people that are interested in exchanging ideas on how to include children within the evaluation process. More specifically, this poster may be applicable to someone who does Asset-Based Community Development, works within the school system, does case management with children, coordinates youth programs, or has habitual interaction with children.

### **UNDERSTANDING ABCD AND ITS CONNECTION TO EVALUATION**

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) focuses on existing strengths of a given group in order for progress to thrive, membership participation to unleash, and systems thinking to be enabled. ABCD emphasizes community relationships.

Under the umbrella of ABCD, capacity inventories are tools frequently used for asset mapping, community building, and generating sustainable development. Capacity inventories allow for comprehensive evaluation.

### **ABCD AND CHILDREN**

During a December 2013 speech in Scotland, Cormac Russell spoke of ABCD and children. His premise was based on the notion of the importance of relationships, centering on positive attributes, and that children can be key contributors to finding solutions. Russell also affirmed the power of children's voices and advocated for opportunities for children to share their gifts. Engaging children in community evaluation instills a greater potential for them to be civically engaged and to become community builders and leaders. Children are able to create asset maps with capacity inventories.

## **CAPACITY INVENTORY AND ASSET MAPPING**

Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Capacity Inventory is an exemplar framework that is able to be adapted. In order to continue innovation within evaluative practice, it is suggested that a specific child-oriented exemplar framework is developed. For example, a section relevant to school activities and academics could be added. Also, a specific list with suggestions on how to modify and how to apply accommodations to meet the abilities of the children is encouraged.

Once children identify capacities, they will be able to produce asset maps and can design ways to play a role in enforcing their community's advantage points in a manner that they can understand and relate to. Communities are interconnected and encompass a generational spectrum. Emphasizing children's participation in ABCD through adapted capacity inventories unlocks evaluation's ability to be more interconnected, sustainable, and equitable.

## **REFERENCES**

Children 1<sup>st</sup>. (2013, December 16). *Annual lecture 2013: Part 1*. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejH9tPsgN\\_E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejH9tPsgN_E)

Children 1<sup>st</sup>. (2013, December 16). *Annual lecture 2013: Part 2*. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw&v=TEghN7j0vwM&desktop\\_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DTEghN7j0vwM%26sns%3Dtw&app=desktop](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw&v=TEghN7j0vwM&desktop_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DTEghN7j0vwM%26sns%3Dtw&app=desktop)

Kretzmann, J. P. and McKnight, J. L. (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research.

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