MAKING IT HAPPEN

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Learning Resource Pack

Developed through learning with and alongside our wonderful communities in East Sussex

making-it-happen.org.uk

8 THE VALUE OF ABCD

d **Note:** other tools from the resource pack would work here

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What does it mean in practice?

It is important to keep a record of the activities your project or group undertakes, and the costs incurred, but make sure to also record the changes, outcomes and impact of your project.
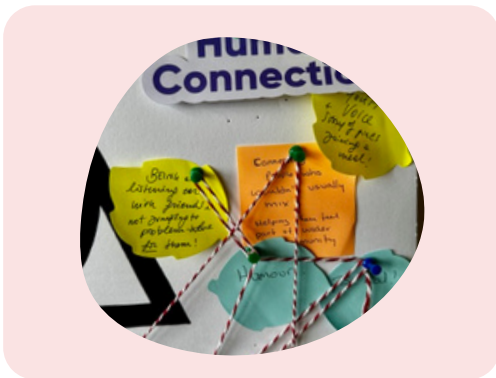
This section shares some ideas to consider when thinking about what evidence to collect, and simple tools to help track success, challenges, changes and the impact of your project.
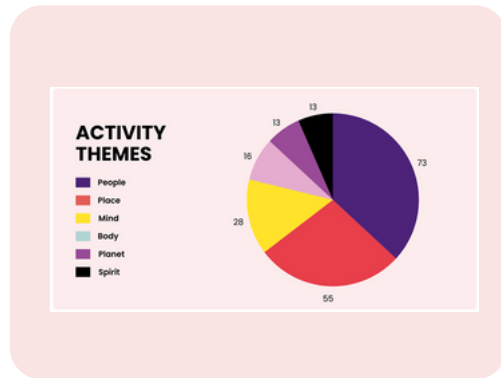
Tools

In this section we've shared some of the tools we've used to gather evidence to support evaluation of Making it Happen & Asset Based Projects.

Demonstrating Impact

Simple project review questions

Capturing reflections

Story boarding

SET UP THE STORY (THE POINT OF YOUR STORY)

Ripple Effect Mapping

Demonstrating Impact *Guidance*

It is hugely important to gather evidence right from the start of any project, activity or group, but it is also crucial to think about what matters or is important **to you,** what is important **to the people who attend** and what may be important to **funders.** These things are not always the same, so think about what you want to learn about and why.

Collecting evidence isn't always easy. If it is too official or too personal, people may disengage. So, be clear about **what is right** for your activity or community and explain this when you ask people to share information or feedback. Some reasons for collecting evidence:

- To gauge how **popular or successful** your activity was, and for whom.
- To understand **who is engaging** with you and whether it is leading to a positive change for them, their community or a particular project.
- To map **change over time** for an individual or group of individuals for whom engagement has been particularly challenging and where the long term impact may take time.
- To **log improvements or developments** over time (for example to a building, an area of waste land, a project, or in local residents perception of their area).

Through Making it Happen groups have **shared evidence** in a variety of ways. Over the next pages we share some of the most effective methods we have found to illustrate different kinds of impact, alongside templates, resources and examples.

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Demonstrating Impact
community events and activities

To gauge how popular or successful your activity was, why and for whom (for example a community event, festival or performance) Consider how you might collect information about:

- **The number of people who attended:** perhaps ask people to register or sign in. Or keep a rough tally of the number of people as they arrive.
- **Participant feedback:** Think about simple and creative ways to ask questions. Consider asking participants to tell you something about themselves, as well as to ask what they enjoyed most, or what they would change for next time.
- **Social media:** Engage with people on social media and take screenshots of their comments and feedback.
- **Photos:** Take pictures which illustrate key things about the event: Perhaps the number of people who came along; the type of people (families, older people or perhaps the diversity); or something of the joy, or social connection that took place.
- **Video:** short films to share on social media or with funders can be a great way to illustrate the success of your project.

Remember, while you can take photos and film at a public event on public land, it is polite to ask for permission if you want to take close up's. If an event requires people to register or book, you should ask on arrival if they would prefer not to have their photo taken or to be included in footage, and ensure photographers are informed if someone says no. You must gain consent if pictures or film are to be shared commercially.

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Demonstrating Impact
who are you engaging with and what change is occuring?

- **A sign in sheet or register:** This will help you evidence who comes along - whether this is consistent (people coming back for more) or whether you are attracting new people each time.
- **Surveys:** To gather information about how participants feel about the activity, or whether they have experienced a change. Simple satisfaction scales can be turned into charts, while open questions can give valuable quotes.
- **Simple review:** This can be a great way to draw out the successes, challenges and learning from a project or activity. A template is shared on page 10.
- **Artefacts:** Has the group produced artworks, newsletters or objects which show something of what has been acheived or created as part of the journey? These are valuable evidence!
- **Reflection or meeting notes:** These provide a record of key moments that evidence change over time. Reflection notes can include your own reflections about things you witnessed, or the reflections of participants (reflection questions on page 11).
- **Stories:** A story describes change over time. They are a great way to explain the 'big picture' including developments, unexpected outcomes and external factors which may have influenced the outcome or impact (story template on page 12).
- **Report:** A great way to summarise sucesses, challenges and outcomes alongside photos, facts and figures.
- Participant feedback, photos and videos all also work here.

Remember, things going wrong, or not according to plan, are just as important to record - this is how things are learned!

Demonstrating Impact
long term change for individuals or small groups

For some people it may take much longer to build relationships, connections with others, or confidence, but each step can be significant. To map change over the longer term when working with individuals or small groups, consider the following:

- **The outcomes star:** This is a tool for measuring and supporting change when working with individuals over time. It places importance on a individuals perspective and priorities, and focuses on aspects of life that are going well, as well as those that may be more difficult. Visit: https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/

- **Reflection notes:** These provide a valuable record of key moments which can help evidence change over time. (See the template on page 11).

- **Stories:** A story can describe change over time. (See page 12).

- **Report:** A great way to summarise sucesses, challenges and outcomes alongside photos, facts and figures.

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Demonstrating Impact
long term change or transformation

To log improvements or developments over time - for example to a building, an area of waste land, a project, or in local residents perception of their area, consider using the following:

- **Photos:** Take pictures right from the start to show a physical transformation and change over time.
- **Video:** short film clips to share on social media or with funders.
- **Surveys:** These can be useful to gather information about what transformation people would like to see, or how people feel about changes which may have occured.
- **Engagement events:** A great way to listen to local residents about the changes they want to see, but also as opportunities to maintain a dialogue about challenges and to celebrate positive change and transformation.
- **Newsletters or bulletins:** A great way to keep people informed over time, which can also act as evidence of progress.
- **Stories:** A story can describe change over time. (See page 12).
- **Report:** A great way to summarise sucesses, challenges and outcomes alongside photos, facts and figures.

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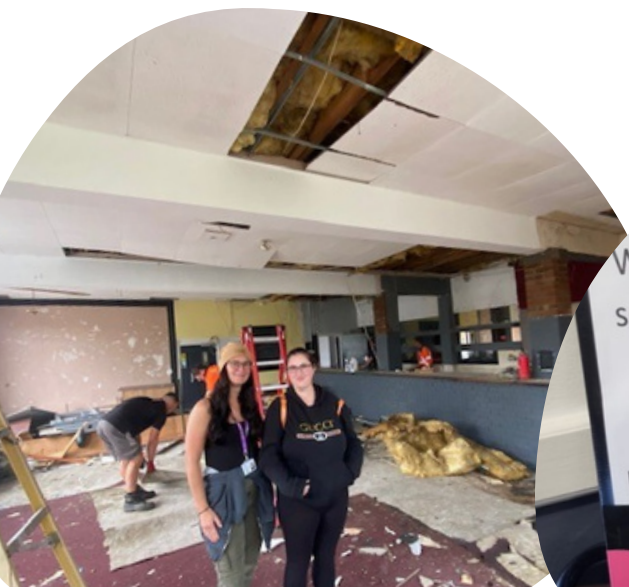
Simple project review questions

The following examples are based on questions we used throughout the programme to **draw out learning** from local groups about their activities.

Simple questions for project leaders

- What were the successes?
- What were the challenges?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- What feedback have you had from your participants or people involved in your project?

Simple questions for participants

- What has being involved or coming to the group / project / activity meant to you?
- What makes you feel welcome here?
- How does feeling welcome help you to participate?
- Have you learned anything new? Is there something you've learned that you've been able to use elsewhere?
- What are some ways that we come together even though we have our differences? What do you think has made this possible?

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Capturing reflections

We have sought to capture learning from our own activity by gathering reflections and more detailed stories on a regular basis from Community Development Workers. The reflection notes are captured as soon as possible after a meeting, significant happening, or event.

- What were your **aims / objectives** going into this conversation?

- Is there any **learning** from the activity / conversation / event that you need to record?

- What **surprised** you the most?

- What were the **key outcomes** and / or reflections from this conversation?

- What are the **next steps?**

Storyboarding

This is a template to help you **tell the story of your project, group or activity and the benefits you have witnessed or experienced**. It uses the four shifts framework as a starting point for identifying and clarifying the impact of your activity. This template was devised and shared by *Collaborate CIC* at an event for recipients of Making it Happen Grants - Telling Our Stories.

Storyboard Heading	What to include
SET UP THE STORY (THE POINT OF YOUR STORY)	Define your story's **key takeaway and central idea.** To identify the main message, choose an indicator from the four shifts framework. Feel free to represent the indicator in your own words, or create a new indicator under one of the shifts, whatever feels most appropriate and useful.
IDENTIFY THE CENTRAL FOCUS (MAIN VEHICLE)	Decide on the **focal point** of the story that will anchor the narrative, and all other parts of the story revolve around this -you choose where to begin. It could be with a conflict, a setting, around relationships or with a core message you may want to convey (for example, how collaboration fosters confidence).
DEVELOPING THE STORY COMPONENTS	Develop the story around the following components (see next page). You can start at any of these components to construct your story.

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Storyboarding
continued...

Storyboard Heading	What to include
DEVELOPING THE STORY COMPONENTS	**Plot:** Outline the main sequence of events that moves the story forward. **Characters:** Identify the main characters whose journey and development shape the story. **Conflict:** Describe the challenge or problem that initially drives the story. **Setting:** Establish the broader environment in which the story takes place. **Resolution:** Conclude with the outcome or solution to the conflict, showing the impact or shift.
CONSTRUCTING THE STORY	**Starting Point:** Chose where to begin. Consider your ideas when deciding on the central focus. For example, if your story focus related to a conflict, you might consider: • Setting out the initial problem. • The process of resolving the problem. • The final resolution.
REFINING THE NARRATIVE	**Relate to the larger impact:** Show how this individual experience contributes to a broader impact or legacy. **Check key elements:** ensure that the main message, theme and resolution align and that the story flows naturally from start to finish.

Ripple Effect Mapping

Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) is used to support impact evaluation and to better understand **intended and unintended results** of a complex programme for individuals, groups, communities, neighbourhoods and regions.

It brings together peopole who have been involved in, or affected by, the delivery of a project or programme to **visually map out what they have done and the impacts** to date. Traditional forms of evaluation frequently only capture a small proportion of what really happens, which means that valuable information can be missed.

This method is used as part of a structured process to evaluate a programme, but as a participative process, **REM workshops provide a powerful learning tool** for communities and can help them illustrate the value of their work.

National Institute for Health and Care Research ARC West: Introduction to Ripple Effect Mapping: https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/training-and-capacity-building/arc-west-courses/introduction-to-ripple-effects-mapping/

Hastings Fire Circle
Ripple Effect Map

Explore the Arch Ripple
Effect Map

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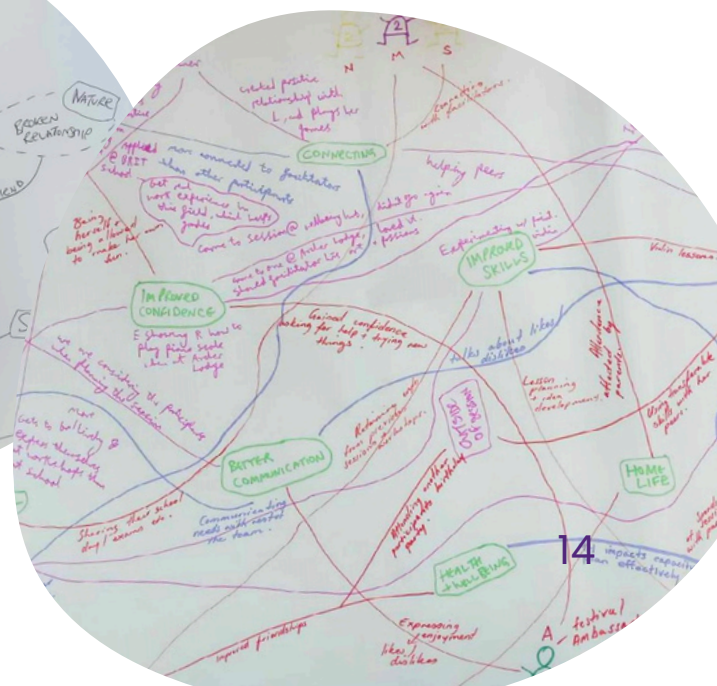
Reflections & Other Feedback

Feedback and reflections are crucial in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) as they help ensure that the voices, strengths, and needs of the community are central to the development process. By encouraging open communication, feedback allows community members to assess progress, identify areas of improvement, and adjust strategies to better align with local resources and priorities.

Reflection, on the other hand, provides an opportunity to learn from successes and challenges, fostering continuous growth and ensuring that development efforts are rooted in the community's own assets and capabilities, rather than imposed solutions.

Feedback questionaires

You can gather more open, qualitative feedback using creative tools - for example the tree of ideas using post it notes for people to share reflections, ideas or feedback.

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Feedback from participants

A member of the Dockside Barrel Scrapers, a community folk music school and band, gathered feedback from other members about what being involved in the band meant to them and what impact it had on their life.

*"We are **like a family** in the Folk Band and this personal aspect is really important to us all. I am so grateful."*

*"The impact of this must not be underestimated. The band **increases the quality of my life** immensely and I am sure it does for others in the band as well, as the evaluations illustrate"*

*"The weekly sessions on Wednesday evenings in Newhaven are giving me the opportunity to get out of the house, meet people face to face to interact and make music with. They also help me to switch off from work, which I find extremely **beneficial for my mental health.**"*

*"What I have seen happen is quite incredible. It has become a **community of skill sharers and enablers,** organisers and encouragers, makers and demonstrators of their outside interests and personal projects often utilising the talents of the group as a whole."*

Dockside Barrel Scrapers

The inspiring Newhaven Folk band led by Nick Pynn

In 2024 the band became self funding. We played 8 gigs including a number of pub based charity fund raisers, provided music for a community Ceilidh, soundtracks for Play On Productions Youth Theatre Group and Harbour Lights Lantern Parade.
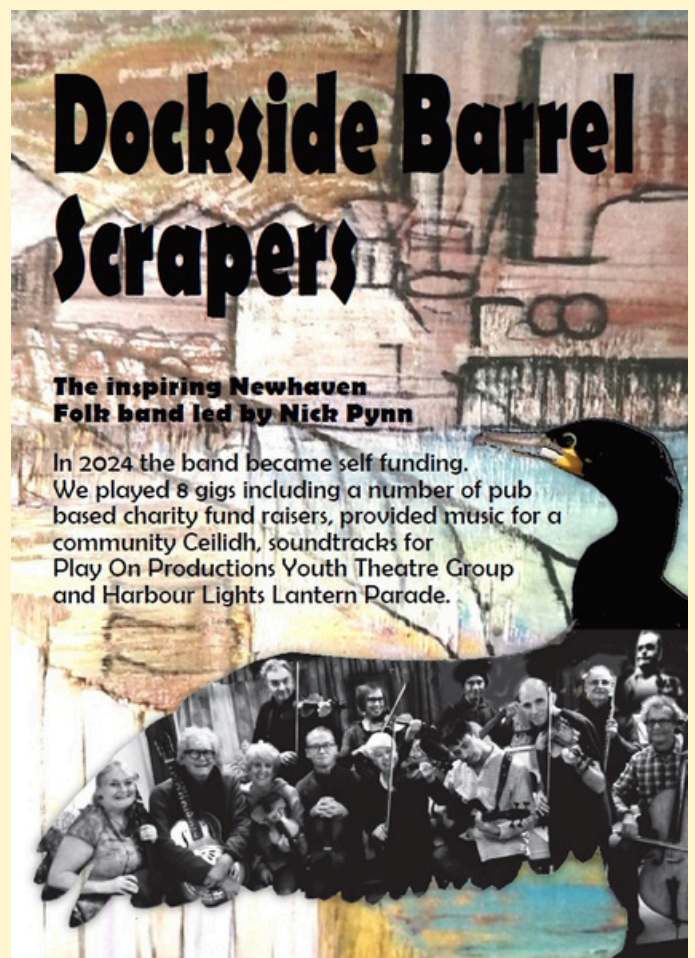
Reflecting on a project

Lead volunteers of the Eastbourne Scrap Store took part in a review conversation with the local CDW to reflect on **successes and challenges.** They also shared **facts, figures and photos.** The learning from this session was presented in a simple set of slides.

"We wanted to offer affordable crafting in a really welcoming space – somewhere you could come and have a tea or a coffee and a comfy sofa. Relationships and trust are so important. We've become a centre which is creating a sense of community – it's easy to access, we don't charge for tea and coffee, we provide simple soups. People here are easy going and welcoming and you can see it gives confidence. People send us photos of what they've done at home."

The Scrap Store is located in Langney Community Centre. It's a space for scaps of material, junk and plastic which would otherwise go to landfill. Anyone can drop in to use the resources to make and create, but they also run workshops. Everyone is welcome.

- *On a workshop day, there can be over 50 people using the space*
- *There are 15 regular volunteers and 10 drop in volunteers*

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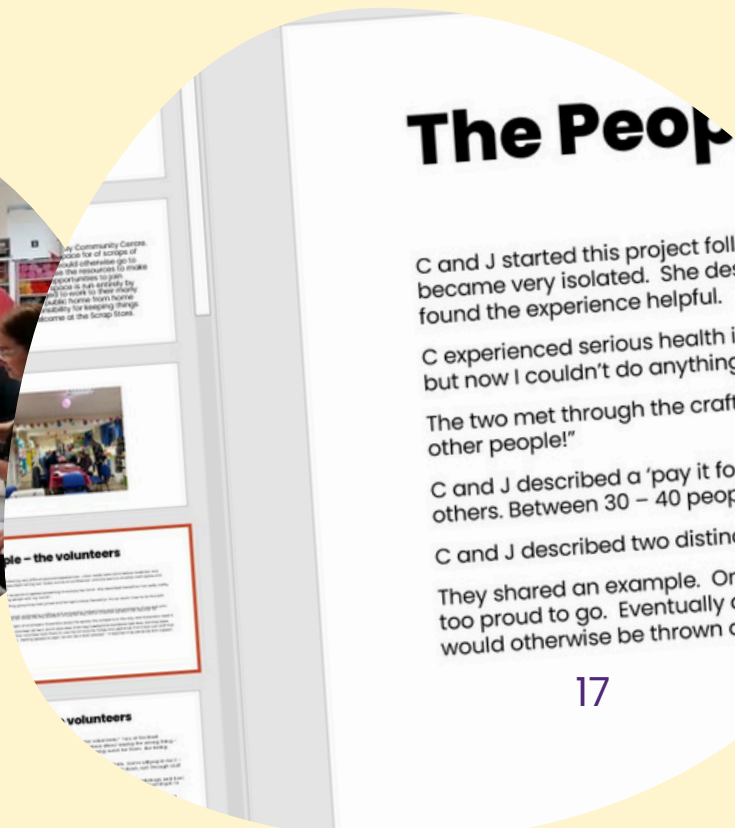
Artefacts

Artists from Compass Community Arts shared **reports, reflections, artworks and poetry** to demonstrate learning and reflections from their action research project, which was supported by funding from Making it Happen.

"We are the suffragettes of our community, without that tiny number of women, women would never have been given the vote"

What ABCD Means to us

*There is a feeling of warmth
Of belonging
Of being connected*

*Like a ball of yarn,
Like a chain of clips holding papers,
Like puzzle pieces*

*There is an understanding
A resonance
I feel accepted*

*We share ideas
To be inspired
To find friends,*

*I've gained confidence
A feeling of safety
A sense of achievement
There are good vibrations*

*I'm transported to another world
Through writing, through art,
Like watching a film*

*I get lost in the pictures,
Lost in the words.*

*I'm in flow like a river,
Time expands
Into the moment.*

Abs, Megan, Rosie, Michael, Chris, Jo, Lucy

Photo Story

The Hospitable Environment CIC shared an update on their work over the last four years via a **photo story** which charted **key milestones** in their development over time, alongside **photos.** It showed something of the way the project has brought people together and encouraged collaborations; how it has engaged people in thinking about what they would like to change; and the value of that for local people.