

PRESENTATION TITLE HERE

Speaker Name Here

Location/Date/Context Here

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What we will cover

- What is Making it Happen?
- The Asset Based Community Development Approach
- Grants, Activities and Outcomes
- Evaluation Findings
- Four Shifts Evaluation Framework
- Learning and Development
- Key Learning
- Summary of Key Messages

What is Making it Happen?



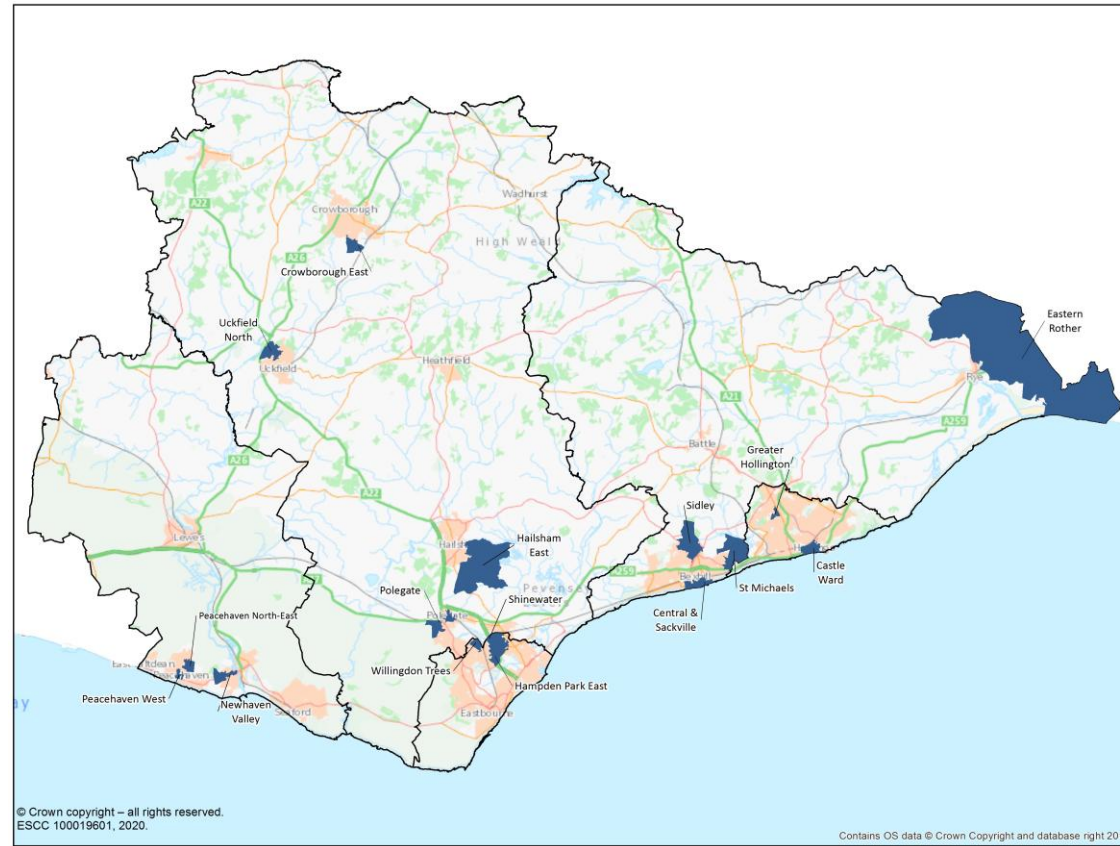


What is Making it Happen?

A 5.5 year (Oct 19 to Mar 25) Community Development Programme, funded by ESCC Public Health and delivered by a partnership of 5 local voluntary sector organisations:

- **Sussex Community Development Association**
- **Hastings Voluntary Action**
- **Action in Rural Sussex**
- **Rother Voluntary Action**
- **3VA**

Where work is focused



Delivered by partners in each of the Districts and Boroughs

- **Eastbourne (3VA):** Willingdon Trees, Shinewater, Hampden Park
- **Hastings (HVA):** Castle Ward and Greater Hollington
- **Lewes District (SCDA):** Peacehaven and Newhaven
- **Rother (RVA):** Bexhill Central and Sackville, Pebsham St Michaels, Sidley and Eastern Rother
- **Wealden (AIRS):** Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate




How we work

- Making it Happen adopts the principles and values of **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)**.
- Generic Community Development Workers work alongside communities in a **neighbourhood context** to identify, connect and build from the positive things that exist in a locality.
- Because there is **no set agenda** other than positive action taken forward by the community, it has the potential to **enrich every aspect of civil society** and to feed into the whole range of local strategic priorities.
- This requires a willingness and ability of institutions and organisations to **flex and adapt** to engagement.

The Asset Based Community Development Approach






What is ABCD?

ABCD is an approach that centres on communities themselves: their citizens, their capacities, and their assets:

“Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.” ([ABCD Institute](#))

Time and effort goes into building relationships, connections, and trust, resulting in a huge amount of important (but hard to quantify) activity.

The key is collaboration: supporting people, organisations and services to work together in ways that can complement and add value to what communities are doing on the ground.





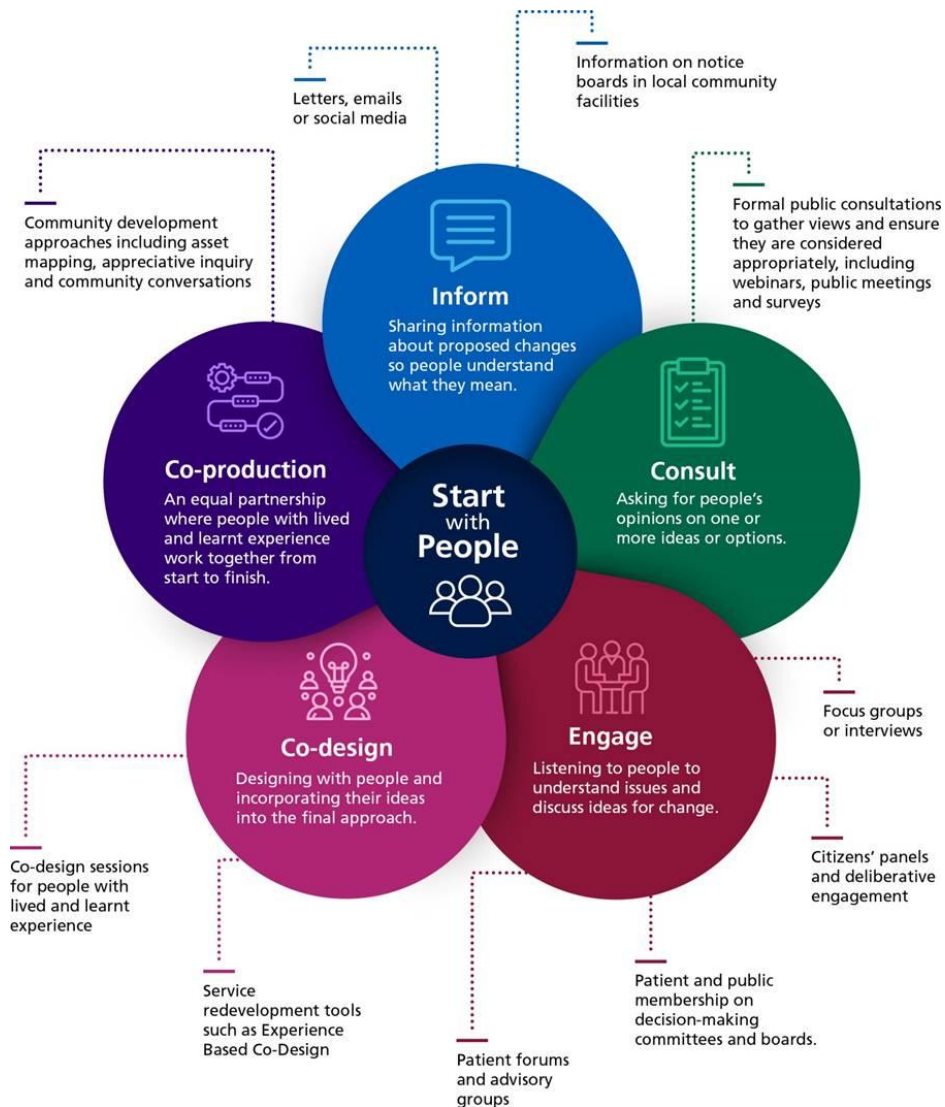
ABCD Policy

Policy and theory on the ABCD approach engages not only with community engagement and development, but also with **public health:**

“Community life, the places where people live, and having social connections and a voice in local decisions, are all factors that make a vital contribution to health and wellbeing and help buffer against disease”

(Community-centred public health: Taking a whole system approach, Public Health England 2020)

ABCD contributes to moves towards more integrated care by delivering positive health and wellbeing outcomes, such as in reducing isolation, encouraging better mental and physical health, building learning, skills and confidence, and in other areas that are generated by community-led projects.



ABCD Policy

ABCD works with people to build confidence, skills, resources and connections to take action for themselves. This provides a foundation that supports core aspirations and objectives for statutory organisations around working with people and communities in order to reflect local circumstances and population needs.

Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/working-in-partnership-with-people-and-communities-statutory-guidance/>

The principles and values of ABCD

Build relationships



Start small



Make connections



Champion equality and justice



Support communities to take a lead



Lead by stepping back



How to Make it Happen



GRANTS, ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES





Grants Programme

Making it Happen's grants programme has focused on three levels of award:

Small Sparks (£0-£500) – Smaller scale bright ideas by individuals or small groups

Next Steps (£501-£3000) – Helping individuals, groups and communities continue to develop existing positive local change.

Grow Grants (£3001-£15000) – Larger scale, longer-term and more organised projects.

Next Steps and Grow Grants have now been phased out, to allow a focus on more, smaller projects as we approach the end of funding.



363
Grants



£913k
Awarded

Between May 2020 and April 2025



Activity Types

41%

Coming Together

Events, mutual support, wellbeing, activity and friendship

15% - Community space and events

12% - Peer support groups: parents of children with SEN; mental health; LGBTQ+; diverse ethnic communities; for people who are lonely or isolated.

7% - Mental health and mental wellbeing (as an explicit aim of the activity)

4% - Friendship groups

4% - Sport, physical activity and physical wellbeing

21%

Environment

including sustainability, food, and growing

18%

Arts

including art, crafts, photography, music, choirs, animation and graffiti.

16%

Children & Young People

4%

Other

Activity Outcomes

People and communities
have the capacity to
recognise their own
strengths and assets and
to create positive change
47% (56)

Public, private, and voluntary
sectors working collaboratively
with communities to build on
each others strengths
and assets
36% (43)

People feel more connected to
their community
17% (20)

(Q4 2023-24)

Evaluation Findings





Programme Evaluation

Making it Happen works with Collaborate CIC, a leading social consultancy organisation, as our evaluation partners.

Through this partnership, Collaborate produced the Stage Two Report, exploring the second phase of the Making it Happen programme. This report drew on a range of sources and evidence, including from the large scale Four Shifts workshop bringing together public health, statutory, and community leaders, to small scale learning conversations, workshops, activity reflections, case studies and grant reviews.

Central to the report is findings on community building, impact, challenges, and recommendations for future ABCD programmes.



Evaluation Findings

Community-building
& health and wellbeing

IMPACT: INDIVIDUALS

Focus on what gives someone purpose, enjoyment and belonging:

- No shortage of **ideas and passions**
- Increase in **self confidence** and **self esteem**; lifestyle changes including exercising and socialising more, leading to self reported **improvements in physical and mental wellbeing**
- Developing new **skills and capabilities** translating for some into jobs and greater sustainability of projects
- Anecdotal reference to people feeling **less of a need** to engage with statutory services



Evaluation Findings

Community-building
& health and wellbeing

IMPACT: PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER

- **Deeper connections** with others, feeling **joy** together, positive shared experiences – contribute to sense of **community, belonging** and **wellbeing**
- Gateway to other things and **making new connections**
- Less evidence of improvements in social capital across **demographic differences** – where this has been most effective, the activities have had that deliberate purpose in mind
- Type and depth of connections have changed – more likely to reach out to others and to **learn, work and take action collectively**



Evaluation Findings

The ABCD Approach

WHAT IS WORKING?

- **Role of Community Development Workers** – completely community focused rather than having other agendas or focus
- **Learning culture** – allowed to fail, taking the time that is needed and focus on learning
- People have an active role in **making decisions** about the activities they are part of – confidence to exercise greater voice and participation
- Grants – accessible, flexible and relational: '**adult to adult**'
- Working as **equal partners** with community
- Flipping deficits and **strengths**
- **Community led** change
- Building on **lived experience**



Evaluation Findings

Challenges

CHALLENGES

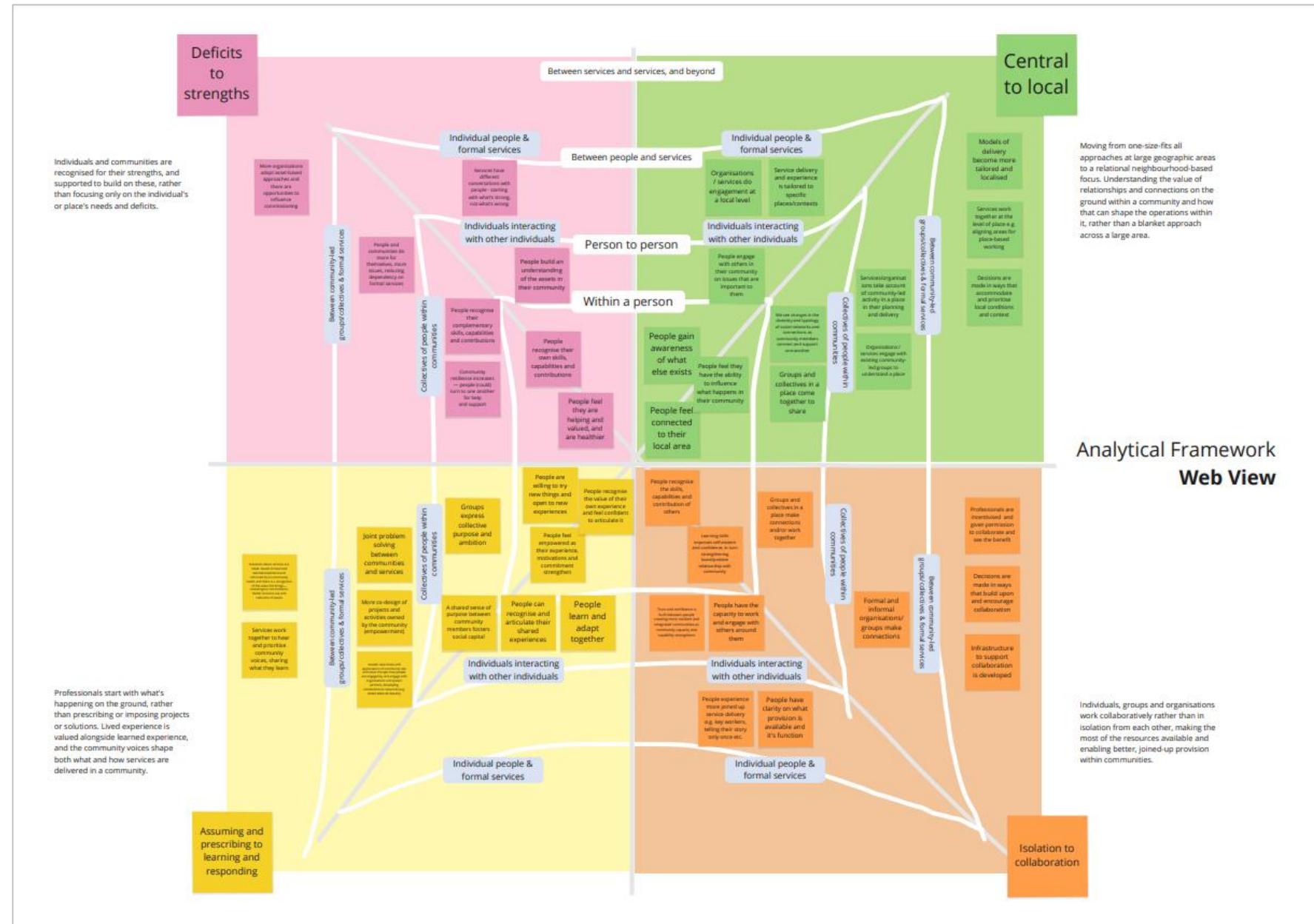
- Navigating formal / statutory structures is difficult
- Interactions between strategic stakeholders largely one way – looking to benefit from MIH community connections
- Communities want to feel they have a say in what happens in their local area
- Shared spaces are vital – lack of access to physical spaces is one of the greatest sources of anxiety and frustration
- Navigating red tape

Four Shifts Framework

A simplification of the Four Shifts framework with example indicators.

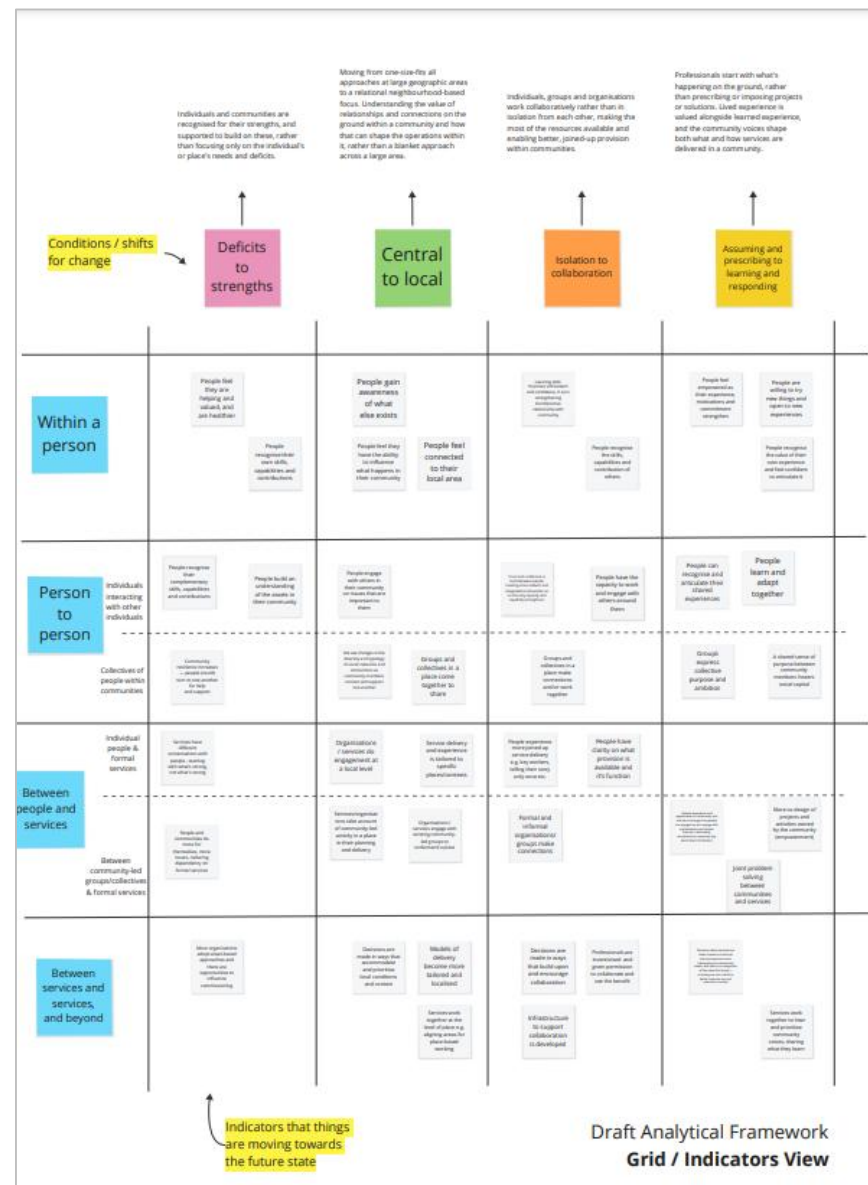
	Deficits to Strengths	Central to Local	Isolation to Collaboration	Assuming and prescribing to listening and responding
Within a Person	People feel they are helping and valued, and are healthier.	People gain awareness of what else exists.		
Person to Person			People have the capacity to work and engage with others around them.	A shared sense of purpose between community members fosters social capital.
Between People and Services		Services engage with existing community-led groups to understand a place.	Infrastructure to support collaboration is developed.	Joint problem-solving between communities and services.
Between Services and Services, and beyond	More organisations adapt asset-based approaches and there are opportunities to influence commissioning.		Infrastructure to support collaboration is developed.	

Four Shifts Framework



More info: <https://making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report/>

Four Shifts Framework



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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



Success Stories

Phenomenal Happenings

Phenomenal Happenings

making-it-happen.org.uk/latest-tv

Making it Happen recently worked with local TV station Latest TV, who produced and broadcast a series of programmes showcasing projects across the county that Making it Happen has supported:



More success stories available at: making-it-happen.org.uk/success-stories

Case Study

Bexhill Men's Shed – Connections and Collaboration

- Community Interest Organisation set up by local residents in Bexhill
- Connections with other local groups, organisations and services including Social Prescribers and local GP practices who make referrals.
- Other connections include:
 - Links to Right Path Hikes – recovery walks
 - Created planters for the Wave Arts Compound
 - Supported a new Ladies Shed
 - Links with Just Friends
 - Support and training for a young person interested in a carpentry apprenticeship



I have chosen
this recipe because
it was a dessert
made by my mother
when I was young.
It conjures up
memories of the
happiness and
warmth of my
family.

Method
peel and chop the sweet potatoes into small cubes
and pound the ginger.
In a pot and add the ginger cubes and the
oil. Stir well. Add the sweet potatoes and cook for 10 minutes.

Success Stories

Diversity Resource International – Partnership

- DRI is a not-for-profit social enterprise empowering ethnically diverse communities in East Sussex
- DRI received a MIH Grow Grant to deliver flexible and inclusive English as a Second Language classes in Uckfield and Peacehaven in partnership with MIH. Alongside learning English, the classes sought to build confidence to access services, activities and information, as well as to make new connections and develop projects.
- With support from MIH Community Development Workers, class participants produced a collective cookbook drawing on recipes and ideas from participants and their different backgrounds and cuisines, and a pop-up volunteer café at the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven serving dishes inspired by the cookbook. The Uckfield students made connections with the local volunteer centre to find buddies to practice their English.

making-it-happen.org.uk/success-stories-dri/





Learning Programme

- Learning and improving has been at the heart of Making it Happen since the start. Learning activities have included:
 - Local networking, peer support, and ABCD workshops
 - Neighbourhood Sparks events and participatory budgeting
 - County-wide events such as Big Sparks in Nov 2022, which saw 500+ public attendees and showcased ABCD and East Sussex assets.



Toolkit

- Drawing together, templates, tools and practical examples to produce a long-term learning resource for communities, individuals and projects.

Summary of Key Messages



Summary

WE KNOW THAT

- Community building leads to better health and wellbeing
- The interests, passions and priorities of communities mirror strategic priorities and feed into every aspect of civil and civic society
- Community action complements and adds value by enriching opportunities for voice, influence, collaboration and co-production, thereby encouraging more joined up ways of working

WHAT IS NEEDED

- Change is needed for this to happen effectively
- The Four Shifts Framework – a tool to evidence how ABCD supports that change
- Ongoing collaboration to build a common sense of purpose and to embed asset based approaches

We'd love to hear your thoughts

- How do we encourage a dialogue?
- How do we embed a culture of learning and improving across roles and sectors?
- How do you become an alonsider?
- How can you complement and add value to what communities are already doing?

making-it-happen.org.uk | facebook.com/makingithappen

makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk | angie.greany@sussexcommunity.org.uk