

Looking at a glass half-full: the asset approach in public health

- Impressions from the ETC Summer Course 2017 in Alicante, Spain -

From 16th – 28th July 2017, Janine Bröder participated in the *Concha Colomer Symposium* and the annual Summer Course on ‘mapping and mobilizing public health assets’ organised by the European Training Consortium in Public Health and Health Promotion (ETC-PHHP). The ETC-PHHP, established in 1991, aims to promote the development of practical and theoretical tools to enhance health promotion strategies in Europe by bringing together interdisciplinary public health professionals and researchers.

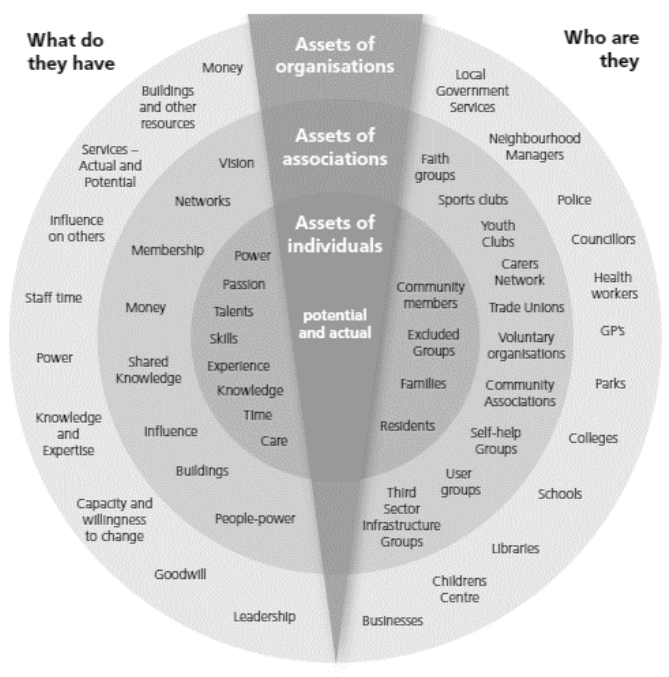


Figure 1: Asset Mapping Model by Foot & Hopkins (2010)

health can be established at personal and societal level” by valuing and mobilizing the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potentials in a community. The asset approach values citizens and communities as co-producers of health and well-being, rather than as recipients of (public) services. An aim is to promote effective participatory, people-centred decision-making at local level through empowering individuals and local communities. The community assets and the citizenship that evolve need to be regarded as complementary and, hence, not replace structural public services and investments for tackling health inequalities.

How to implement it into practice? Applying the asset approach involves discovering and mobilizing assets in the community by using participatory community building methods, for instance the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model. The ABCD model suggests to start with (1) mapping or locating the assets, skills and capacities of residents, citizens associations and local institutions (Kretzman & McKnight 1993, see Figure 1), (2) building relationships between community members, organisations, (3) mobilizing assets by fostering community driven development and enabling the community to take up ownership of their assets. While there are many effective case examples of asset-based projects, the evidence base is still scarce. One major challenge is to adopt available and established evaluation methods and assess their effects and input measures.

