

Asset Based Guidelines for Foundations

To clarify our asset-oriented focus, the following guidelines may be helpful.

First, what are the skills, abilities, capacities and assets of the local residents and citizens you propose to involve in the proposal? Who among these people or organizations has been successful in dealing with the issues you seek to address? How are their capacities and problem solving skills to be involved? To answer these questions, you may want to develop an inventory of the capacities and skills of local people and their organizations. Also useful is an inventory of local assets such as institutions, property public expenditure, etc.

Second, having identified the capacities and assets of the local people and their community, how will your proposal enhance, mobilize, use or expand these capacities. We are especially interested in supporting groups that are designed for local asset development. How is your group designed to perform this function?

Third, will this specific proposal contribute directly to the power and economy of local people and their community? Do local people hold the majority of positions on the governing board of your organization or any other groups involved? Will local people be employed with money provided by this proposal? If contracts or purchase of services are involved, will local businesses and enterprises be the providers? Basically, the question is how will the money in this proposal be used to strengthen local governance, associations, businesses and enterprises?

Forth, especially important in building the community are those people who are most easily overlooked because of labels such as disadvantaged, underclass, elderly, developmentally disabled, ex-offender, physically disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill, etc. Often, these people's greatest "need" is to contribute rather than be isolated clients dependent on services. How does this proposal meet the need to contribute and build the community by incorporating the gifts and skills of those labeled people previously excluded from community life?

Fifth, a critical asset of every community is its associations of citizens. These associations can take on new tasks, join in problem solving and participate in the governance of community groups. They include associations such as arts organizations, business associations, church groups, organizations of the elderly, organizations of men or women, ethnic associations, health groups, self-help groups, outdoor organizations, block clubs, school groups, political organizations, unions, service clubs, youth groups, veteran's organizations, etc. How are local associations being involved in this proposal?

Sixth, we are committed to investing in the capacities and assets of local people and their communities. We now know that our investment won't make much difference

unless local people and organizations are also investing and investing first. Therefore, let us know how your local people and their associations are investing their time and resources in the issue, development or problem you address.