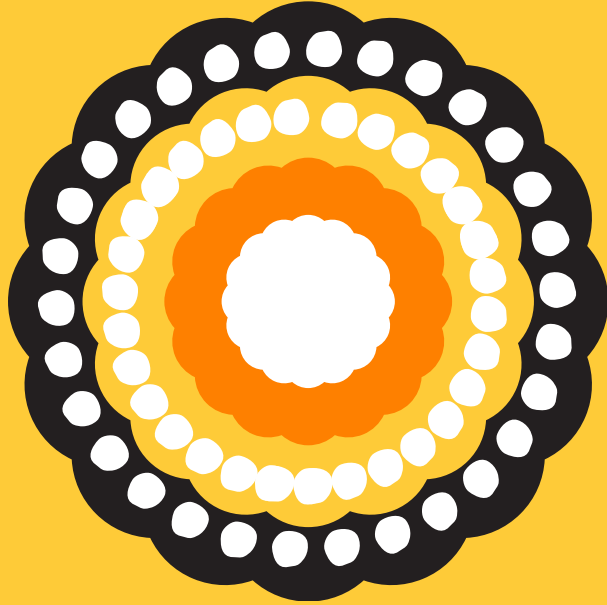Communities Inspiring and Teaching Youth (CITY)

Community-Building and Participation Toolkit

This resource was inspired by the CITY Project

Acknowledgment of Country

Youth Off The Streets acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

Youth Off The Streets acknowledges the Dharug people as the traditional owners of the land (City of Canterbury-Bankstown) on which the CITY Project initiatives took place, including the development of the toolkit.

Youth Off The Streets strives to be a culturally and socially inclusive organisation with strong connections to First Nations young people and partners in the wider community.

Acknowledgments

This toolkit was inspired by the Communities Inspiring and Teaching Youth Project (CITY), a Youth Off The Streets initiative that launched in 2020.

COMPACT looks to young people for solutions.

The COMPACT Program aims to safeguard Australia's peaceful and harmonious way of life by adopting a community resilience-building approach to countering hate, violence, fear and division in society. This is achieved by providing grants funding to locally-based projects focused on engaging with young people. Organisations funded to deliver the projects form part of the COMPACT Alliance, a sustainable network of community resilience-building initiatives.

The COMPACT Alliance is a state-wide network of community partners and allies who are standing united against hate and building a force for community harmony.
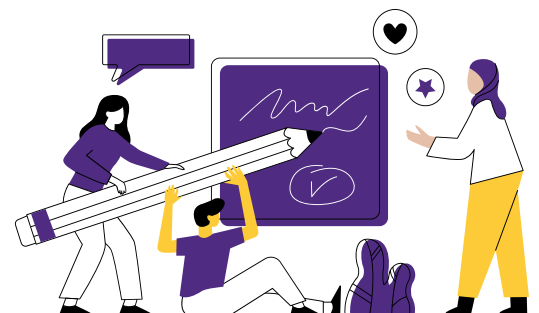
This toolkit was developed in 2023.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

ASSET/S: The positive strengths, qualities, attributes, benefits and characteristics embedded in a community. Assets refer to anything in a community that can be activated, harnessed or utilised for the benefit of others. Assets can be grouped into six broad categories (see page 12 for details of asset categories).

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD): ABCD values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community. It's a bottom-up approach, as opposed to a top-down approach, to building stronger communities. It focuses on community-driven development rather than development driven by 'professionals' and external agencies.

ABCD is an asset-based approach that uses methods to draw out strengths and successes in a community's shared history as its starting point for change (as in Appreciative Inquiry).

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (Ai): Ai is a strengths-based approach to change in organisations and communities. It focuses on strengths and successes, as opposed to deficits and failure. Through powerful questions, Ai helps shift our focus, attention, and energy from problems into opportunities and possibilities. When we ask Appreciative Inquiry questions, we don't ignore the problems. Rather, we use a different lens and approach to solve or reframe them.

COMMUNITY: A place, a neighbourhood (or suburb), a group of people with a common interest or a group of people working together.

SPARK/S: Sparks are personal or individual assets that may refer to a:
- skill or talent (e.g., music, writing, leading)
- commitment (e.g., social justice, environment)
- quality (e.g., empathy)

YOUTH: Youth is defined as the period from 12–24 years of age.

POSITIVE CORE: The Positive Core of an organisation or community is mostly unrecognised — it makes up the best of an organisation or community and its people. It's often a hidden and underutilised source. The Positive Core is the collective strengths and existing assets that help design and build the future.

ACRONYMS

ABCD: Asset-Based Community Development

Ai: Appreciative Inquiry

5Ds: Define, Discover, Dream, Design & Destiny/Delivery (Ai tool)

SOAR: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (Ai tool)

CEO **MESSAGE**

Judy Barraclough

Welcome to the Community-Building and Participation Toolkit – a resource designed to support the important work of passionate and dedicated community members like you.

At Youth Off The Streets, our purpose is not only to support and empower children and young people, but strengthen and transform the communities in which we work. We believe in creating networks of support that foster a strong sense of belonging – something every one of us needs to feel safe, set goals for the future, and thrive.

Community workers and volunteers are a vital part of that network.

Although the world has never been so connected, rates of loneliness and social isolation have never been higher. It's more important than ever that individuals come together to develop innovative solutions to local challenges, offer support to those who need it and empower younger generations to make positive contributions to their communities.

I hope this toolkit helps you to achieve all of this and more. Thank you for your commitment to changing lives and strengthening your community.

Judy Barraclough
CEO
Youth Off The Streets

> *Being more active in your local community not only strengthens the community but helps us, as individuals, be healthier and stronger.*

About the toolkit

This community-building toolkit is designed for citizens, volunteers and community workers who are passionate about building stronger, connected and thriving communities.

The toolkit was inspired by an innovative project called Communities Inspiring and Teaching Youth (CITY) that was created and facilitated by Youth Off The Streets. Youth Off The Streets partnered with Community Minds Ltd., a not-for-profit specialising in innovative strengths/asset-based community development, to develop the Project.

The CITY Project aims to strengthen the community's capacity to respond to social and youth issues. Volunteers recruited for the Bankstown CITY Project developed innovative initiatives and participated in regular community development workshops that focused on developing projects and events that highlighted the strengths and assets of their local area.

The tools and templates shared in this toolkit are reflective of the strengths-based methodologies covered in the workshops — namely, Asset-Based Community Development and Appreciative Inquiry.

What's in it for me?
Why volunteer or get involved in community initiatives?

There are many benefits associated with playing an active role in enhancing the community. It feels great to make the world a better place - but you get back so much when you give back.

The opportunity to inspire, teach and support young people enticed many community members to get involved in the CITY Project. It went beyond just support; it was about activating youth power and 'sparks'. It was an elevation and celebration of youth in a community that had endured multiple systemic challenges.

The fact that the Project was powered by the community and not just professionals appealed to community-minded citizens who wanted to make a difference.

It also allowed young people to get in the 'driver's seat' by designing events and projects that improved their lives. Simultaneously, the volunteers were enriched by the connections they made and the ability to learn more about their community.

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

ARTHUR ASHE

Benefits of volunteering and participating in your community

Purpose
Community participation (volunteering, helping, sharing, etc.) gives you a greater sense of purpose, where you can positively contribute to something that is greater than you.

A sense of purpose is important in our lives as we are not meant to just meet our self-interests. We can — but what a dull and unfulfilling life that would be! We are communal mammals and thrive when we are a part of something that serves others.

Advice: Find out what you are passionate about. What do you care about enough to act on? Once you know what that is, you can reach out to people and organisations in your community. You can also do a search online and scour social media to find out what is happening in that space.

Benefits of volunteering and participating in your community

Opportunities

Volunteering doesn't just serve other people and make the community a better place. It opens up more connections and helps you form more social relationships, in addition to opening a door to networks and organisations.

Developing more connections improves your access to resources, education and employment pathways, as well as knowledge and information that may help and enrich you.

It also provides the opportunity to have fun and get creative with other people who care about the same things you do.

Advice: There are many ways to get connected and be part of a community initiative:

- Sign up as a volunteer for initiatives like the CITY Project. Youth Off The Streets have multiple projects that would benefit from your skills, involvement and support
- Volunteer at a local community organisation/association
- Gather people who are interested in your idea/cause and have a brainstorming session. You don't need to start big — sometimes a conversation between two people is enough to spark change
- If you are time-poor, get involved in events, food-drives or fundraisers that don't require ongoing commitment. Everyone can play a part in some way!

Things to consider or ask yourself before volunteering

- **How much time and energy can I commit?**
- **What skills or knowledge do I have that could benefit my community?**
- **Is my goal to save others or build their capacity?**
- **What do I know about my community (or young people in my community) ?**
- **What assumptions am I making?**
- **Am I open to learning from others ?**
- **What are my goals or expectations?**

Be the CHANGE You Want to SEE

Focus on community resources and strengths

When working in and for the community, it is important to approach the work from a strengths-based perspective and an appreciative mindset. Ultimately, we want to create more of the things we want as opposed to focusing on what is broken or lacking in our communities.

When we leverage strengths and opportunities, we end up creating more positive results and more sustainable outcomes. For example, if we are leveraging community assets and strengths, then there is more of a chance that an initiative or community project can be sustained. For real community engagement and participation to occur, we cannot rely solely on external professionals, advice or resources.

In the CITY Project, we didn't ignore the issues and challenges faced and experienced by marginalised youth in the community. We did acknowledge these issues, but they weren't the starting point or focus for conversations and planning.

The two community development approaches that the volunteers learnt about were **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** and **Appreciative Inquiry (Ai).** Both methodologies focus on what is working well, leverage successes, strengths, and assets and tap into the potential of people and communities. (See the glossary for a full definition of these approaches).

The following pages of this toolkit contain ABCD and Ai tools and templates that were utilised by CITY Project volunteers.

Deficit Vs Asset-based thinking

Deficit-based thinking focuses on	Asset-based thinking focuses on
WHAT IS WRONG	WHAT IS STRONG
PEOPLE AS CONSUMERS	PEOPLE AS CONTRIBUTORS
FIXING PROBLEMS	EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES AND SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES
SHORTCOMINGS AND WHAT IS LACKING	ASSETS AND STRENGTHS AND WHAT IS ABUNDANT

- *Analyse the causes of the problems*
- *Treat the problems*

- *Identify the factors that enable our success*
- *Identify current successes and strengths*

Discovering What We Have Before We Instigate Change

ASSET MAP
YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

What are assets?

Assets are more than what you can physically see around you.
When drawing an asset map, you'll want to consider six types of assets in your community:

1. The gifts, talents and skills of the residents/people: the community members' skills, experiences, passions, capacities and willingness to contribute to the project.

2. Your network of relationships, connected gifts and associations, clubs and networks: all of the sporting, cultural, social and faith-based groups powered by volunteer members that might contribute to the project.

3. Institutions and professional entities: public institutions such as schools, libraries and police stations, along with local businesses and non-profits, that might contribute to the project.

4. Physical assets: land, property, buildings and equipment, as well as infrastructure and transportation, that might contribute to the project.

5. Economic assets: what people produce and consume, businesses, informal economic exchanges and barter relationships that might contribute to the project.

6. The culture, stories and heritage of a community.

Remember: you are not creating a list of assets. You are discovering what exists and finding ways to connect and mobilise these assets!

YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

IMPORTANCE OF ASSET MAPPING

Create awareness of local resources

Use resources to identify community connections, meet community needs and complete other activities

Recognise and value the resources within communities. We will always find what we look for and communities have an abundance of resources waiting to be discovered.

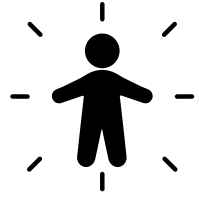*If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.*

Dr. Wayne Dyer

ASSET MAP
YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

① INDIVIDUALS: MAPPING PEOPLE'S ASSETS
Sparks and gifts that can spark change

Assets of the head:
What knowledge do you have that could benefit the community? What things do you know something about and would enjoy taking about or teaching to others?

Assets of the heart:
What do you care deeply about (other than yourself, friends, family and pets)? What are you passionate about and are willing to commit actions or time towards (e.g., causes, issues, aspirations)?
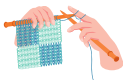
Assets of the hands:
What do you do well? What skill, talent or ability do you possess that could be utilised for the benefit of the community (or a specific project or initiative)?

Assets of human connections:
To whom are you connected? Of which networks and groups are you a member? (Think about how you can tap into these connections, networks and relationships to support community initiatives or issues that you care about.)

Remember: Asset mapping works well when you ask someone questions and have them ask you questions in kind. It is not meant to be a formal interview, so relax, be open to listening and learning and enjoy the conversation. Remember not to share too much if you are the one asking questions, as listening is an important skill!

ASSET MAP
YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

② Associational assets:

Discover groups, clubs and associations that could support your community project idea or established initiative. You may also want to support them or work together on a joint project. Examples of associations are cultural groups, faith-based groups, charitable groups, youth clubs, neighbourhood improvement groups and parents and citizens' organisations (P&Cs).
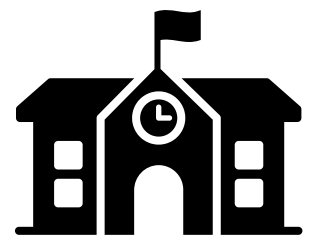
③ Institutional assets:

Discover groups, clubs and associations that could support your community project idea or established initiative. You may also want to support them or work together on a joint project.

ASSET MAP
YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS
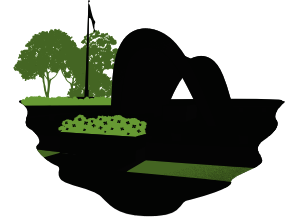
4 **Physical assets:**
Discover the various natural and built assets such as parks and recreational facilities, gardens, picnic areas, bushland and rivers. Other physical spaces like carparks and laneways could also be utilised in unconventional ways.

5 **Economic assets:**
Discover the sources of funding programs, These sources could include banks, private foundations, chambers of commerce, social enterprises, local businesses and other forms of exchange or bartering like time banking.
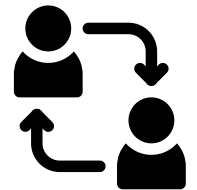
DID YOU KNOW?

Time banking refers to connecting communities, using time as the main currency for exchanges and support among community members.

What are SPARKS?

Sparks is another word for assets that individuals have. According to the late Peter L Benson, "a spark is something that gives your life meaning and purpose. It's an interest, a passion, or a gift." He developed the assets approach, which is focused on building strengths as opposed to focusing on what is wrong or deficient in young people.

Benson was a pioneer who helped people to find their sparks. He believed that children and young people want to be known for their sparks.

Benson's legacy is showing us how to look at young people in terms of strengths, not deficits; a way of treating young people not as problems but as resources, as assets.

According to Benson, a spark —

- gives energy and joy
- provides the feeling of being alive, useful and purposeful
- is absorbing to the point that you "lose yourself in the moment"
- originates from inside a person
- is a skill, talent, interest or gift
- is a person's prime source of meaning, self-directed action and purpose
- has the potential to make the world a better place for others.

Three types of sparks

- Skill, talent, 'gift' (something you are good at)

- Something you care about deeply – a commitment/cause (e.g., social justice, the environment, helping people, serving the community)

- A quality that you know is special (e.g., showing empathy, listening to others effectively, caring, being a friend etc.)

The idea of spark is very much like the idea of spirit. The word spirit comes from Latin and means 'my breath, put into the world with vigour and courage.'
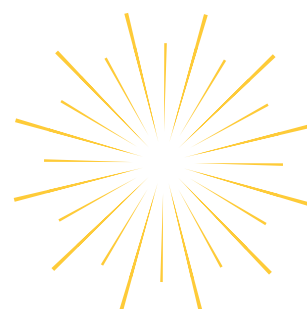
Map a young person's sparks

Come up with your own questions to learn about a young person's sparks.

Name: _____ Date: _____

● **Skill, talent, 'gift' (something you are good at)**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

● **Something you care about deeply**

_____

_____

_____

_____

● **A quality that you know is special**

_____

_____

_____

_____

REMEMBER! → Remember, this isn't about collecting information. It is about recognising and celebrating the sparks of young people. Make sure you read and repeat the sparks back to the interviewee. Demonstrate that you appreciate their sparks and believe that they are needed in the world.
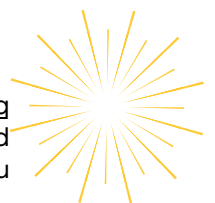
My awesome community idea!
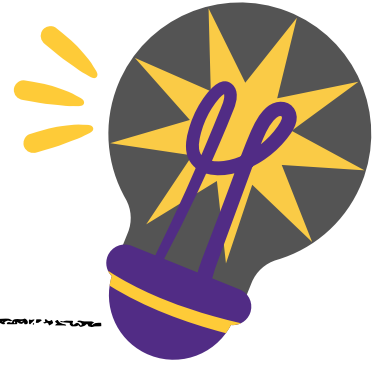
MY BIG IDEA FOR OUR COMMUNITY IS...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE GIFTS/SKILLS/ASSETS THAT I COULD CONTRIBUTE ARE...

_____

MY CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKS THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE OR SUPPORT THIS IDEA...

_____

_____

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS I CAN TAKE TO GET IT STARTED ARE...

_____

_____

_____

19

My awesome community idea!

Think, Find, QUESTION and RESEARCH...

WHAT ALREADY EXISTS? ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR PROJECTS, EVENTS OR INITIATIVES LIKE THIS IN THE COMMUNITY? LIST ANY YOU COME ACROSS.
CONSIDER HOW THEY ARE SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT.

If there is a similar initiative, is there an opportunity for us to join forces/consolidate our efforts? how could my proposed idea enhance what already is happening in the community?

What assumptions am I making?

What matters to you?

USE YOUR **voice** FOR CHANGE

SAVE THE EARTH

CONNECT PEOPLE

HOUSING *is a* HUMAN RIGHT

CLIMATE *change*

HUMAN RIGHTS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION
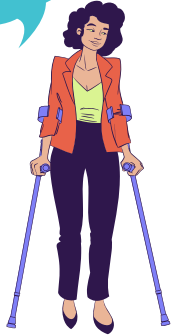
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
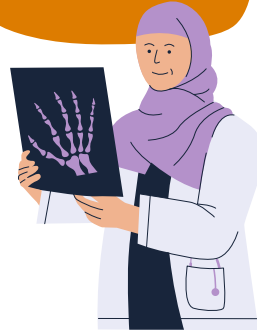
BE KIND TO ALL KIND

Break the BIAS

EQUAL RIGHTS

RESPECT

REDUCE · REUSE - RECYCLE

BLACK LIVES MATTER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

CRUELTY FREE CRUELTY FREE

STRONGER TOGETHER

SAFE SPACES *for* EVERYONE

Ai TOOL

SOAR IS AN ACRONYM THAT STANDS FOR
Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results.
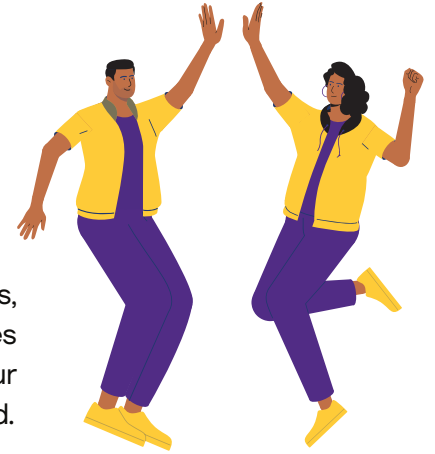
SOAR analysis

Albert Einstein once said, **"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."** One way to get a different perspective on things is by using a SOAR analysis.

A SOAR analysis is a strategic planning tool that individuals, groups, organisations, businesses and communities can use. It combines information about our current position with ideas and dreams about our future, so that we can build an energising, inspiring vision to work toward.

In 2023, CITY Project volunteers undertook the SOAR process as a group. This is a summary of their responses.

Strengths: what can we build on?

Q: What strengths and assets can we build on? What makes us unique?
A: *Different lived experiences, dedication, age — young age*

Q: What is our proudest achievement during the CITY Project?
A: *Collaboration, ideas have been great, volunteers' dedication*

Q: How do we use our strengths to get results?
A: *Creating relationships with people and working off that, connection to others, adapting to changes, staying positive*

Opportunities: leveraging strengths and successes

Q: What are the top three opportunities we focused our efforts on?
A: *Local youth, Intergenerational relationships/gaps, multicultural connections*

Q: How did we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
A: *Consultations, communication, participation; analysing what the community needed; utilising existing tools and uplifting this [sic]*

Q: Who are possible new customers?
A: *Homeless community, local business owners, older community members*

Q: What new skills do we need to move forward?
A: *Implementing more effort into design and logistics, resources, more realistic timeframe*

Aspirations: what do we care deeply about?

Q: When we explore our values and aspirations, what are we deeply passionate about?
A: *Social justice, community development, allowing young people to gain confidence, building connections between stakeholders and community*

Q: What strategic initiatives would support our aspirations?
A: *Funding, more time/longer timeframes, volunteer capacity, specific targeting - narrow focus on what we want to change (program was too broad), engaging more people*

Results: how will we know we are succeeding?

Q: What meaningful measures would indicate that we are on track to achieving our goals?
A: *Number of participants/attendees, general feedback from community members/participants*

Q: What resources are needed to implement vital projects?
A: *Funding, more time/longer timeframes, volunteer capacity, specific targeting (program was too broad), more staff*

Q: What are the best rewards to support those who achieve our goals?
A: *Awards (facilitator of the year, as voted by participants), acknowledgement of contribution/participation, celebratory dinner*

SOAR analysis

When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions you need to answer are, "What are my/our greatest strengths/assets?", "What are my/our best opportunities?", "What sort of (person/community/organisation) do I/we aspire to be?", and "What results will I/we see when I/we get there?"

S trengths: What can I/we build on?

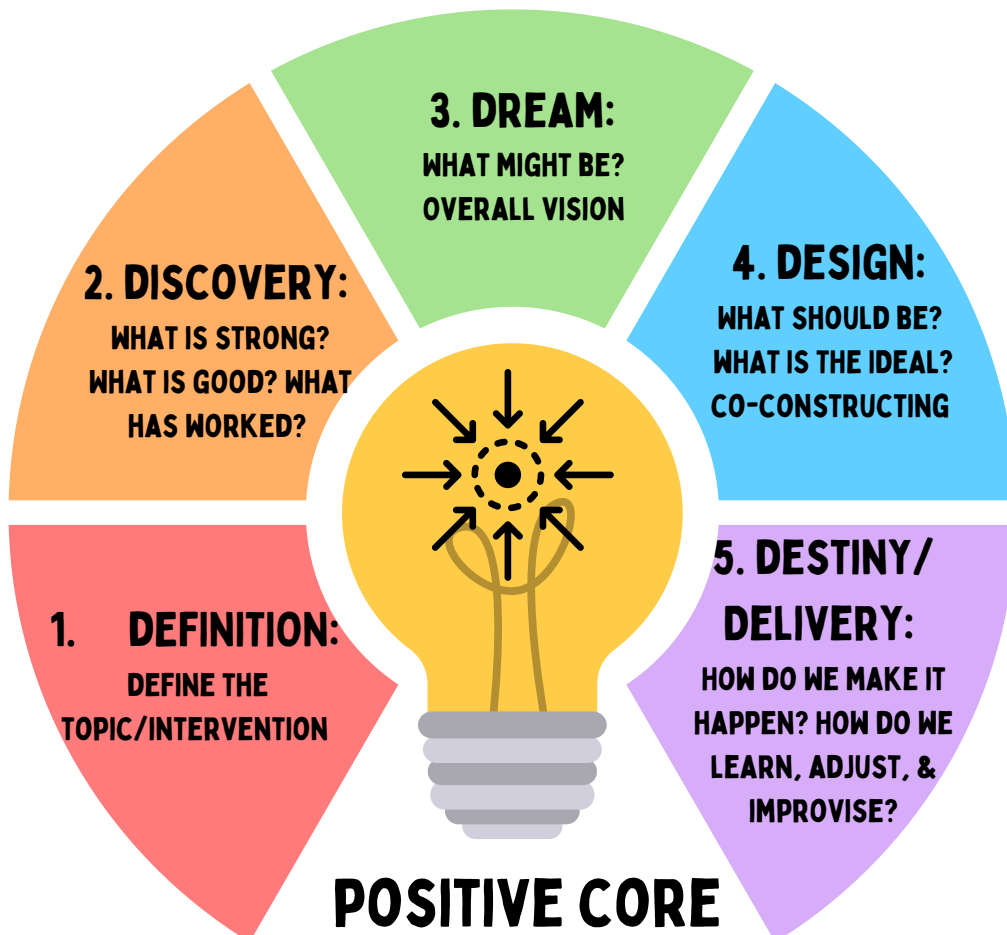**O pportunities:** leveraging strengths and successes

A spirations: What do I/we care deeply about?

R esults: How will we know I/we are succeeding?

Ai 5D cycle model

The Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) 5D model helps groups plan a practical pathway for approaching change. In the case of the CITY Project, the 5D model was applied to community projects that aimed to create positive change in the Canterbury-Bankstown area. The overall purpose of this implementation was to activate young people's sparks and engage them in community-building. In so doing, it aimed to explore diverse ways of participation and inspire youth-led action in the community.

Given that the CITY Project was led by passionate community members, some of whom were also young people, it was the volunteers themselves who embarked on the 5D journey. Here in this toolkit, we outline the key questions that the volunteers articulated for each phase. Powerful, generative questions propelled us in the right direction; while questions were continually asked throughout the 5D cycle, asking the right questions at the beginning determined the direction and focus of what we did, who we involved and how we got there. Simultaneously, effective questioning assisted us to sustain what we were doing while allowing enough space to re-create, learn, evolve and generate more of the good things that served us.

3. DREAM: WHAT MIGHT BE? OVERALL VISION

2. DISCOVERY: WHAT IS STRONG? WHAT IS GOOD? WHAT HAS WORKED?

4. DESIGN: WHAT SHOULD BE? WHAT IS THE IDEAL? CO-CONSTRUCTING

1. DEFINITION: DEFINE THE TOPIC/INTERVENTION

5. DESTINY/ DELIVERY: HOW DO WE MAKE IT HAPPEN? HOW DO WE LEARN, ADJUST, & IMPROVISE?

POSITIVE CORE

Ai 5D model

The Ai 5D model was used as a tool to instigate change and implement a plan that could bring the CITY Project to life. Volunteers went through the 5Ds to discover, dream, design and deliver on projects that allowed the Community to Inspire and Teach Youth (hence the acronym CITY).

Five different phases make up the 5D model: Definition, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny/Delivery. Once an affirmative topic was defined, the participants moved through the remaining four phases. As the 5D cycle is not a linear process, participants were encouraged to revisit, refine and add to its different phases.

Whilst the 5D model was applied to specific CITY projects, CITY participants more general example of what discoveries, questions and actions could be considered for each stage, so in this example we will be looking at the Affirmative Topic Choice (ATC) "Community Inspiring & Teaching Youth" which is the essentially the CITY project name.

1- Define (Affirmative topic)

You can get clarity in regard to your topic by asking:

- What is the problem and what do you want to grow? (Reframe the problem into an opportunity or articulate what the ideal is in a positive fashion.)
- What do you want to see, hear, feel, or do more of?
- What will success look like?

> **NOTE:**
>
> The affirmative topic (Define stage) is a statement or question that defines the area you want to improve in a way that is likely to engage people, get them thinking in productive and creative ways and lead to a successful result.

What is a Positive Core?

The Positive Core is separate from, yet central to, the 5D cycle.

"The Positive Core lies at the heart of the Ai process. In this respect... the community's Positive Core is the beginning and the end of the inquiry. This is where a community has an opportunity to value its history and embrace novelty in transitioning into positive possibilities." - David Cooperider

The Positive Core is the collective strengths and existing assets that help design and build the community we want.

DEFINE STAGE: when participating in the 5D process, CITY Project volunteers decided that the topic would be identical to the project name. Hence, the topic selected for the 5D planning process was:

A Community Inspiring and Teaching Youth

Ideas and thoughts discussed in the Define stage:
- What inspiring youth looks like
- The community as a place-based community, given that The CITY Project is about bringing people together and creating more community harmony and solidarity
- Asking the community what we can do together with them as opposed to being their saviour
- The community as a place that is inclusive of everyone
- Volunteers who are passionate about making positive change in their community
- Youth opportunities
- The community as a place where youth thrive
- Social justice

What does 'inspiring' mean?
Shining a light on our sparks and strengths and those of other people
Getting people passionate and excited about something
Leading by example and 'being the change we want to see in the world' — qualities that the volunteers observed in the CITY Project manager

What does 'teaching' mean?
Sharing knowledge and information
Exchanging ideas
Providing information and useful tools, such as this toolkit
Sharing our experiences and lessons we have learnt
Teaching others skills

What do we mean by 'youth'?
In the case of the CITY Project, 'youth' referred to young people aged 16 to 24

what is the focus of the inquiry?

2 – Discover (discovery questions)
overarching question: "What makes things work well?"

The Discovery phase is about appreciating the Positive Core. During this phase, participants ask questions that explore and identify strengths of their community, group and/or individual selves. Before we decide on solutions and answers, we need to ask the right questions.
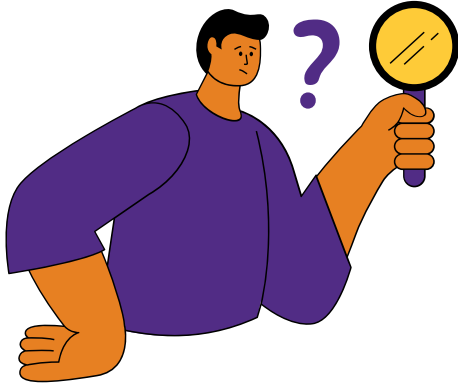
What are the assets and sparks of young people in Canterbury-Bankstown?

- What are the assets and sparks of volunteers participating in the CITY Project? What are their assets of the head, heart, hands and human connections?

- Are there currently any projects or initiatives where community members and volunteers are inspiring and teaching youth?

- Reflecting on the past, where have there been examples of community inspiring and teaching youth?

- Where have there been examples of the community inspiring and teaching youth? What made them successful? What were the conditions that ensured their success?

- What was happening when young people felt inspired, appreciated, celebrated and included?

- What inspires young people in our community? Who or what is inspiring them?

- How do young people learn from others outside of school, college or university?

- How does the Community Inspiring and Teaching Youth differ from formal education and programs? Why is this difference important?

- What are the skills, wisdom and guidance young people can gain from others in their community that home or school may not provide? Why are these skills and support systems so important?

- What excites our young people? What gives them the inspiration and motivation to to take action on things that matter to them?

3 Dream – overarching question is "What might be?"

In the Discover phase, we inquired into what things worked and what made them successful.

The Dream phase is an invitation for a community to amplify its Positive Core by imagining the future possibilities that emerged in the Discovery phase.

- What does a Community Inspiring and Teaching Youth look and feel like? Who would be there? What would be happening? How would people feel?

- If you had a magic wand, what would you want to make happen in your community?

What is the ideal?

- How are volunteers making a difference?

- What are we teaching young people?

- What are young people teaching us?

- How are we inspiring young people?

- How are we learning about young people's sparks?

- What sparks are we discovering?

- How are people coming together and connecting?

- Based on our 'dream' and the possibilities we envisage, what are outsiders going to say about our community?

Remember that, in the Dream phase, we are imagining things as if they are the current reality. The vision should be so compelling that it feels like it is already happening!

Hand-draw your ideal community. There is no limit to what you can create!

DREAM BIG

4 - Design

The Design phase of the 5D process is the key to sustaining positive change and responding to a community's past, highest and most positive potential.
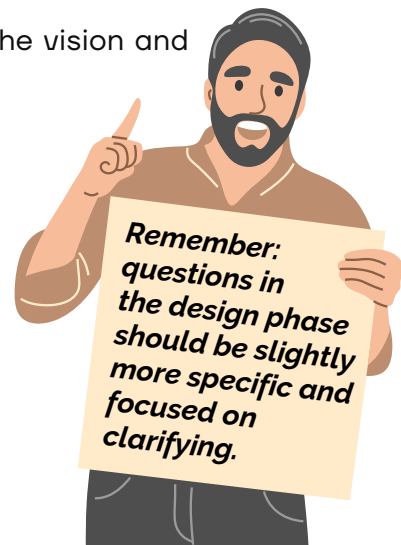
The design starts by crafting provocative propositions. Provocative propositions are sometimes referred to as possibility propositions, as they bridge "the best of what is" (as identified in Discovery) with "what might be" (as imagined in Dream).

- Looking at our current connections, who could we engage and invite to join us in this initiative?

- Who could we involve? Who do we need to involve to make this project a success? What are their responsibilities?

- Thinking about the six different categories of community assets, what resources do we need? What assets can be accessed or activated?

- What timeframe or timeline do we want to establish? What are the key milestones we want to achieve?

- What is the frequency of our meetings and gatherings? What is realistic based on the availability of the volunteers?

✓ Good news and positive stories are used to craft provocative propositions that challenge the status quo and encourage new ways of thinking (as well as fresh eyes in regard to seeing our communities).

✓ These stories highlight the positive outcomes and experiences that people want to see in their ideal community (as articulated in the Dream phase).

✓ Participants collectively co-design or shape the vision and action plans for the future.

Remember: questions in the design phase should be slightly more specific and focused on clarifying.

5 – DESTINY/DELIVERY

MAKE IT HAPPEN

- What happens after we receive funding? What do we need to keep doing to keep the project or initiative going?

- How do we sustain this momentum?

- Is this what the community wants? What assumptions are we making?

- What should we do more and less of?

- How do we keep our key stakeholders inspired and interested?

How do we continue learning and inspiring each other?

- What are some ways to recognise or reward people for their time, commitment and contributions?

- When and how are we going to celebrate our milestones and successes?

- Whose stories haven't we heard? How do we entice these people to share their story?

- Who else do we need to involve to build on the project momentum? How do we entice and inspire them to get involved?

How do we create a culture of inspiring and teaching young people in our community?

Stop Dreaming Start Doing

Asking powerful questions

Appreciative inquiry (Ai) has two important elements: becoming mindful of the questions we ask and directing those questions towards our strengths and the achievement of positive outcomes. Ultimately, our questions determine the focus of our inquiry or intervention. Our efforts and energy are expended on this focus. If we ask the right questions, focusing on leveraging strengths and uncovering assets and successes, then we are more likely to grow and build upon these strengths, assets and successes.

> APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY ENCOURAGES US TO ASK POWERFUL AND POSITIVE QUESTIONS. THIS WAY, WE CAN CREATE MORE OF WHAT WE WANT AND LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WORKS INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON WHAT IS BROKEN AND NOT WORKING.

The kinds of questions you ask can have a big impact on the way people engage with you and the type of information you gather, as well as the involvement or action that follows.

Strengths-based questions bring out community pride and help identify assets for addressing challenges. These questions invite conversations about community issues that need to be addressed, but don't start by focusing on a problem or something that's missing.

Closed questions generally elicit yes/no responses. The more open-ended your questions, the more powerful they are in triggering deeper conversations and encouraging people to think more creatively. As a result, new possibilities can emerge and provoke additional questions.

Here are a few questions that could help get community conversations started:

- What assets do we already have?
- What makes our community a great place to live, work and play?
- What do we love about this place (e.g., about its history, culture, physical/natural environment, people or facilities)?
- What's happening when things are going well in our community?
- What matters to people?
- What is working well? How is it working well?
- Who are key people helping to make the community a great place?
- How will you assist in making this community a better place?
- Tell me about a time when you felt most connected to your community.
- Tell me about a time when you felt a strong sense of belonging in your community.
- If you had a magic wand, what are three wishes you would want granted for your community?

WRITE AT LEAST FIVE POSITIVE AND GENERATIVE QUESTIONS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY. THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT HOW YOU CONSTRUCT YOUR QUESTIONS.

1

2

3

4

5

What are the diverse assets of our community?

Who haven't we included? Whose gifts have we failed to recognise?

What are the strengths of our community?

How can we cultivate and mobilise these strengths and assets ?

When our community faces challenges, what assets are activated? What strengths do we show?

How can we celebrate our strengths and successes?
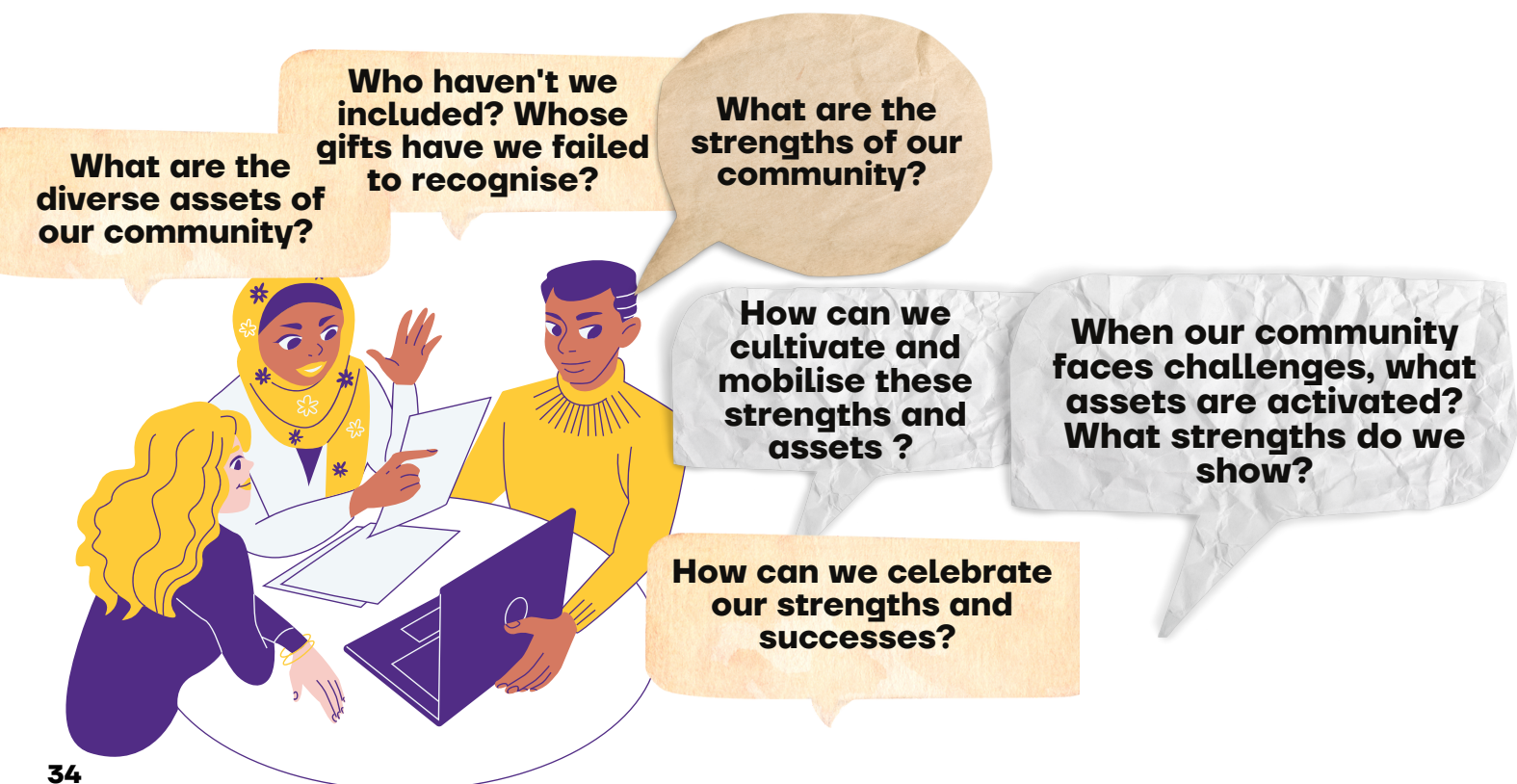
Why?   What?   How?

Creating our future

What would make your suburb an even better place to live?
What are your hopes and dreams for this place? i.e., If Bankstown was the coolest possible neighbourhood for you and your family to live, work and play, what would it be like?
What needs to change? Why?

Making it happen

If we could take action on one thing to strengthen the Fairfield community, what would be most important to you?
What do people care enough about to take action?
If we are successful, what will you see three years from now?
What opportunities do you see to improve the Fairfield (your) community?
What do people have the energy to achieve?

How will we do it?

How would you like to be involved?
What would you love to be a part of?
What sparks/assets can you contribute to spark change?
What's important about how we work together?
What are some practical next steps that we can take?
Who else in this space might be interested in helping us?
How can we draw on what assets we already have here?

Where?   Who?

Reframing our questions

How? What? Why?

The challenge we have here is to reframe our questions, so as to focus on what we value, what we want to grow and what we're willing to take responsibility to make happen.

Less powerful questions	More powerful questions
Do you feel like a part of the community? *Why don't you feel like you belong?*	• **Can you share a time where you felt like a part of a community?** • **What made you feel like you belong?** • **What would help you feel more connected to your community?**
Looking to the future, what worries you most about life in your community? *Does the current situation make you feel despair and hopelessness?*	• **Looking to the future, what do you think will excite you most about life in your community?** • **What is it about your community that inspires you?**
Do you think you can make your community a better place for young people? *How do we keep young people out of trouble?*	• **What can you teach or share with young people in our community?** • **How do we as a community move from controlling or fearing young people to inspiring and supporting them?** • **When you were young, what conditions helped you thrive? How can we provide those supportive conditions for young people in our community?**
Why is there a high crime rate in this suburb? *How safe do you feel in your community?*	• **What does a safe and welcoming community look and feel like? What is happening? Who is involved?** • **How does your community create safety?** • **What helps your community feel safe and harmonious?** • **How do you contribute to the safety and wellbeing of your community?**
What is the matter? *What is making you feel despair?*	• **What matters to you?** • **What excites you and makes you feel alive?**

THINK Positive

Practicing genuine inclusion and diversity

Ensuring that your approach is inclusive and engaged with diverse people and groups is key to the success of any community-building effort. It is also the right thing to do; as a community, we are better off and richer for it!

Whether recruiting volunteers or inviting attendees to your events, ensuring diverse involvement and representation will go a long way where creating genuine, sustainable outcomes for your community is concerned.

You should plan to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. Ideally, different cultures, faiths, ages, incomes and lifestyles will be included at the inception of the project or initiative. Consider what groups are currently missing.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS WE MAY ASK ARE:
- WHO ARE THE 'UNUSUAL' SUSPECTS, CURRENTLY UNREPRESENTED IN THE INITIATIVE, THAT WE COULD INVOLVE?
- HOW CAN WE REACH THEM? WHERE CAN THEY BE FOUND?
- HAVE WE ENSURED ACCESSIBILITY FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS AND ABILITIES?

HOW CAN WE GET TO THE PEOPLE, INSTEAD OF EXPECTING THEM TO COME TO US?

Organise your group or effort in such a way that all participants and members have equal power and responsibility. What changes can you make to distribute power and responsibility more evenly? Recognise the diverse abilities and experiences of community members. What kinds of knowledge and experience do community members have that could benefit your communitybuilding efforts?

Key message: Invite, honour and respect difference. Ensure accessibility and inclusion. Never assume people know how to participate.

DIVERSITY IS AN ASSET IN OUR COMMUNITIES. WE ARE BETTER, STRONGER AND SMARTER WHEN WE ENGAGE WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND PERSPECTIVES.

Practicing genuine inclusion and diversity

Organise your group or effort in such a way that all participants and members have equal power and responsibility.

What changes can you make to distribute power and responsibility more evenly?

Recognise the diverse abilities and experiences of community members.

What kinds of knowledge and experience do community members have that could benefit your community building efforts?

Key message and goals
- Get curious about differences
- Educate yourself
- Get better at asking questions with the purpose of learning
- Honour and respect differences
- Ensure accessibility
- Never assume people know how to participate
- Challenge assumptions or stereotypes
- Think about the voices that are and aren't being heard
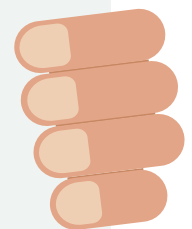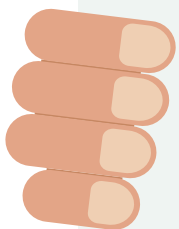- Help create a sense of belonging for others

Some key questions we may ask:

Who are the 'unusual suspects', who are not represented in our initiative but could be involved?

How can we reach them?

Where are they hanging out?

Have we ensured accessibility for different groups and abilities?

How can we get to the people, instead of expecting them to come to us?

Engaging community

☑ There are six central principles of genuine community engagement. The principles are as follows: relationships, reciprocity, equity, continuity, openness to learning, and commitment to action.

☑ Integrity of every action: community engagement demands that every step of the process, as well as every action involved, is done with integrity. Examples of integrity are protecting people's privacy, taking accountability for our wrongdoings, doing the right thing when no one is looking and telling the truth.

☑ People want to be needed, rather than made to feel needy. Engage community members by helping them identify their assets and sparks and explore different ways that they can apply their assets to the project or community initiative.

☑ Have fun- activate joy! One of the best ways to engage people and entice them to get involved is to make interactions and events fun. People respond well to fun and thrive in happy, positive environments! Have fun, because building community should be a joy and not a burden.


If you are trying to recruit volunteers, inquiring into what people care about is a great place to start a conversation.

Once you know what people care about, you can ask more questions about their interests and assets.

If there is a connection between what they care about and your initiative, you can invite them to get involved!

Get to know people before you try to get them to do something.

Build trust and connections
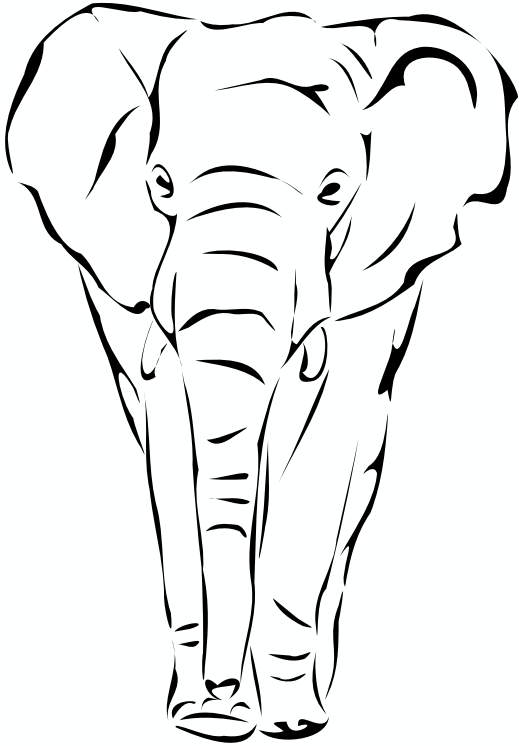
When talking about the idea of change, Desmond Tutu once said that, "there is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time.".

1 Have meaningful conversation. Be curious, listen and give people time to tell their stories. Hesitate to jump and add commentary; give people time and space to express themselves.

2 Build connections as a person; not a professional. Share your passion for the community and tell people your story. When you share your humanity with others, people are more likely to trust and work with you.

3 Change the way you label things. Call your meetings 'parties' and interviews 'conversations'. Language is important. If you change your words, you change your world. Positive language helps you break down barriers and build trust between you and others in your community.

4 Take time. Don't rush any work you do in the community. Host a dinner; schedule a 'party' (fun meeting) and have conversations with community members on the main streets and in other public places. Go out of your way to be a welcoming presence.

5 Keep your promises and honour your commitments. Be true to your word. Be realistic and transparent and communicate changes when they arise.

How can I inspire others?

INSPIRE

- Shift your own perspective to focus on strengths and opportunities. Pay attention to the strengths and sparks of people you are wanting to engage.

- Ask for participants' ideas, stories and experiences in regard to solutions for your current challenges. Uncover the knowledge and wisdom that people already have.

- Ask powerful, open, solution-focused questions that help others find answers and insights. Questions are your best tool!

- Ask what people want more of and what they recommend, rather than just settling for a description of the problems.

- Appreciate good ideas and react to them with praise and affirmation.

- Invite the positive. Create a work environment where good ideas can flourish.

- Be yourself! People trust and appreciate authenticity.

- Value relationships and aim to make genuine connections with people.

- Be the change you want to see in the world. When we take control of our lives, embody community-minded values and become agents of positive change, nothing is more inspiring!

Positive VIBES

We are attracted to people who exude good vibes. Be aware of your energy and embrace a positive worldview!

Remember:
Fall in love with the process; not just the intended outcome.

The most important outcomes that we can achieve through our community work are the connections we form with others.

Life is full of Possibilities

Pen to Paper

Pen to Paper

Pen to Paper

Pen to Paper

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Pen to Paper

KINDNESS IS FREE spread that stuff everywhere

THANK You

We appreciate all the people involved in developing this practical resource for instigating community-led projects. Toolkits like this are made possible due to Youth Off The Streets volunteers, CITY Project workers, our project partner Community Minds Ltd., and our funders, COMPACT initiative partner Multicultural NSW.

This toolkit is one of many community assets that can be utilised in future projects. Continue learning and listening, but more importantly, continue to inspire and teach youth. May we together as a community help young people bring sparks to life so that they may spark change in our communities.