
The Asset-based Approach To Community Development (ABCD)

ABCD approach originates from an evaluation of community development case studies. This approach focuses on enhancing the abilities, self-worth and communal relationships (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005:31). It helps to develop the assets in a community, using the community's abilities and capabilities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993:10). Based on this approach, the challenge in low-income communities is unused or underutilised assets (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:8).

The approach assumes that when people become aware of their strengths and resources (assets), then they are likely to reach their goals and realise their potential increases. This change is facilitated by the professionals, in cooperation with action committee members from the community, by surfacing or uncovering, reaffirming and enhancing the sometimes hidden abilities, interests, knowledge, resources, aspirations and hopes of individuals, families and groups in communities (Nel, 2015). The awareness of strengths increases the confidence people have to develop and as such they become energised and they start taking responsibility for their own development. It best complements the SLA, because it elaborates the process of asset discovery within the community which is lacking in SLA. The ABCD approach mainly concerned with capacity building of community members and associations (internal-looking) without reporting on structural changes (external-looking) brought about by the approach' (Pretorius & Nel, 2012:8). The ABCD will therefore help this study to analyse the participation of the community and individuals in mitigation the effects of climate change. It will provide a special lens to look at the capacity of the rural women farmers to cope with the effects of climate change on their livelihoods.

A third weakness of SLA approach is that in the livelihoods discourse, sustainability tended to refer to coping with immediate shocks and stresses, where local capacities and knowledge, if effectively supported, might be enough (scoones 2009). This critique posits that SLA looks at short term impacts of climate change and adaptive strategies yet fails to adaptation to long-term change (Adger et al. 2003). Hence integration of global environmental issues and long term change has been seen as a weakness of SLA. This gap is complemented with resilience theory.

Resilience theory

Resilience theory can be traced back to the 1970s in the field of ecology from the research of C.S. Holling, who defined resilience as "a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (Holling, 1973, p. 14). It is the ability of a system to persist and adapt despite shocks (Adger, 2003), or the ability of a system to absorb disturbances and still retain its basic function and structure" (Walker and Salt, 2006, p.1). It represents a livelihood system that is persistent or robust to disturbance, it also considers opportunities that disturbance opens up in terms of recombination of evolved structures and processes, renewal of the system and emergence of new trajectories (Folke, 2006). As a term, resilience also has a positive societal connotation (McEvoy, Fünfgeld, & Bosomworth, 2013; O'Hare & White, 2013)

The theory complements SLA since understanding of community resilience to disasters springs from the sustainable livelihoods approach where social, economic, human, physical and natural capital are seen as the determinants of resilience (Mayunga 2007). Each of these five capitals corresponds to a number of characteristics of resilient systems. For example, a strong base of social capital in the form of trust, norms and networks would lead to a high degree of coordination and cooperation in the community, evidenced by the presence of a large number of non-profit organisations. Similarly, human capital in the form of education, health, skills, knowledge and information will lead to, for instance, a high capacity to develop and implement an elective risk reduction strategy.

The resilience approach shifts policies from those that aspire to control change in systems assumed to be stable, to managing the capacity of social–ecological systems to cope with, adapt to, and shape change (Berkes et al., 2003, Smit and Wandel, 2006). It is argued that managing for resilience enhances the likelihood of sustaining desirable pathways for development, particularly in changing environments where the future is unpredictable and surprise is likely (Walker et al., 2004; Adger et al., 2005). As such resilience theory complements sustainable livelihoods since it is able to analyse long time historical changes. In this study, resilience theory will be instrumental in analysing long term adaptation changes and strategies.

In conclusion, the four approaches: SLA, feminist theory, ABCD and resilient theories complement each other and provides a strong analytical framework for analysing climate change. While the study is anchored on SLA approach, the approach noted to have a number of weaknesses that are complemented by other theories and approaches discussed above. This combination of theories therefore provides a strong and useful approach to analyse rural women's livelihoods.