

RP3011

LIVEWELL YARRA: STEWARDING LOW CARBON COMMUNITIES

Research Question

The objectives of this research is to understand how asset-based community development (ABCD) and appreciative inquiry can build capacity for Livewell Yarra participants to take actions that reduce their carbon emissions.

Methodology

This is a four phase action research project. The first 'plan' phase uses asset-based community development to reveal participants' latent strengths and build capacity to take action in the areas of carbon reduction.

The second 'act' phase uses co-design to enable Livewell participants to launch projects trough 'rapid prototyping'.

The third 'observe' phase will use Most Significant Change interviews to reveal Livewell participants' experiences to date and document qualitative changes to their capacity for action.

The fourth 'reflect' phase includes a review of the Livewell Yarra trial and analysis of the data collected to date.

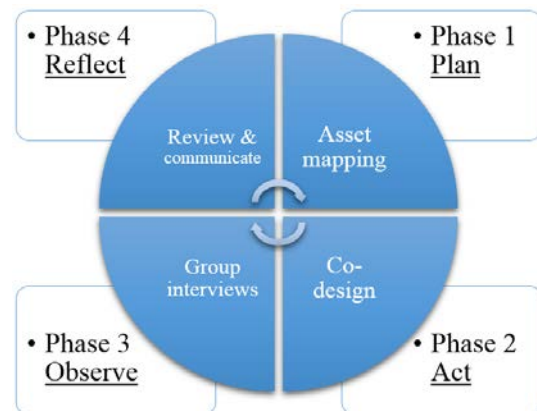


Figure 1: 4 phase action research cycle.

Results

Primary data collection commenced in August 2015 through two asset mapping workshops. Livewell participants mapped individual assets, referred to as gifts of the head (things I know about), heart (things I care about) and hands (skills I know how to do). These gifts can become an anchor for individual and collective decision-making around specific actions and help focus goal-setting based on existing capacities.



Image 1: Asset mapping workshop at Mark St Hall.

Co-design workshops have also begun with Livewell Yarra participants who are currently prototyping community-led projects for carbon reduction. The first of these is a buddy system for novice bike riders in the City of Yarra.



Image 2: Co-design workshop at Henley Club.

Most Significant Change interviews will be conducted towards the end of 2015 to evaluate the greatest impacts experienced by Livewell participants based on their involvement in the project.

The results of the Livewell Yarra research project will be documented and evaluated over the coming months.

Conclusions

This research uses a participatory and action research approach in which participants seek to reduce their own and the broader community's carbon emissions.

It rejects social marketing as being too individualistic for low carbon community trials and instead embraces strength-based approaches like asset-based community development and appreciative inquiry that are focused on capacity-building.

The project is in the midst of data collection. Conclusions will be developed over the course of the reflection phase.

Anticipated impacts

This research will provide industry, research and government with a model and case studies of how ABCD and co-design can be utilised to deploy low carbon community programs.

It will develop a collaborative approach to managing the local governance of carbon reduction through a Living Lab model based on multi-stakeholder engagement between academia, local government and the community.

Key statement

This research is using strength-based tools like asset-based community development and appreciative inquiry to reveal the assets of individuals and views communities as the starting point for change and abundant in capacity for sustainability interventions at the grassroots level.

Participatory co-design is being used to enable Livewell participants to develop social innovations for carbon reduction in their local community.



Image 3: Livewell Yarra core team at Carlton Library.

Further information

Contact

Darren Sharp

Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP) and Livewell Yarra

E: darren@livewell.net.au

M: 0419 314 655

Twitter: @dasharp