



CENTRE FOR COMMUNITIES

**SIVIO INSTITUTE  
CENTER FOR  
COMMUNITIES**

P R O F I L E



*"I would rather argue, that we need to mobilise the right mindset, rather than more funding. Africa has everything it needs, in real terms, but African remain mentally married to the idea that nothing can get moving, without external finance. We are even begging for things we already have. That is absolutely a failure mindset",*

*Paul Kagame.*

# 1.1 WHAT DOES CENTER FOR COMMUNITIES DO?

The Centre for Communities (C4C) is a programming centre within SIVIO Institute as per figure below. The centre promotes and nurtures citizen-based agency and development through catalysis of community borne efforts to resolve their common problems. The centre is premised on the assertion that 'citizens have the capacities to drive their own economic development using their local assets and resources.' The centre focuses on what citizens are doing with each other through horizontal interactions to resolve common problems, and the manner in which they engage with public institutions. The C4C collaborates and seeks to strengthen the efforts of various associations and community based organisations (CBOs) whose formations are inspired by real needs, interests and knowledge at community level.

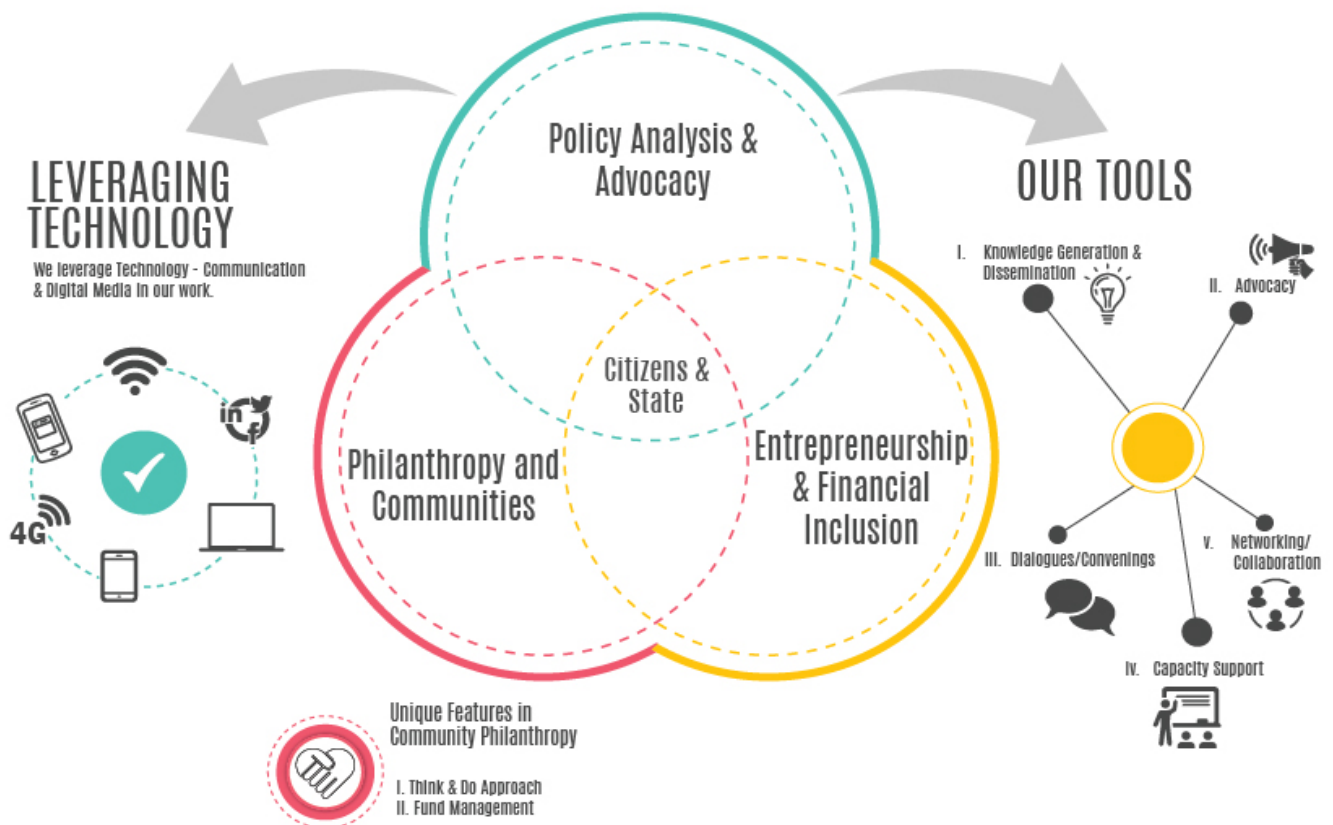


Fig 1: SI programming areas

A number of studies on associational life (see for instance Arnaiz, 1998; Moyo, 2002, Barr 2004, Dekker 2004, Murisa 2009,2011) has shown that most associations were formed to drive the agenda of concerned citizen across urban and rural setups, and in most cases they are led by underprivileged groups such as women and youths. Murisa (2009,2011,2013) using case study material, has discussed in a detailed manner in which associations were being established on newly resettled farms to resolve problems of productivity on the farms, as a defensive measure against farm evictions and also creating a community/network of care and welfare. This shows that associations are a true example through which communities identify their local assets and build relationships in a way that multiply their power and effectiveness to resolve their challenges. Learning from these experiences, the Centre seeks to catalyse enhancement of capabilities and capacities of associations with the aim to ensure active mobilisation of local resources, knowledge, skills and experiences to create economic opportunities that are locally defined. For example, there's a Women's group in Mutoko that extracts oils from baobab seeds for sale and several other groups that are engaged in varying forms of collective agriculture in Goromonzi and Banket with whom the institute has been investigating pragmatic ways of capacity building.

During the associations mapping study (2018), SIVIO Institute came across a number of associations. In our interactions with these associations we learnt that many communities and associations need support in the following areas:

- Improving internal governance systems
- Creating an asset based-mindset
- Identification of value chain opportunities
- Creation of viable associational formations that strengthen community solidarity

## 1.1 WHAT DOES CENTER FOR COMMUNITIES DO?

We celebrate the previous work done by both the government and NGOs in Community Development. We realize though that some of the interventions have unintentionally created some levels of community development within communities. Our initiative expands on the notion of financial literacy to Asset Literacy which essentially suggests the need for one or a community to understand the natural, oral and physical resources that they are endowed with. The asset mapping will lead to comprehensive studies of the income opportunities that exist for the communities and the final stage entails identification of the organisational form that will be best suited to leverage the assets for the community (see Fig below). The Asset-literacy support will contribute towards building the capacities of communities to identify and leverage local resources and eventually create Community owned and supported foundations.



Our focus is on enhancing community agency to levels where communities are able to carry out the following:

- Leverage local resources for household and community development
- Create diverse sources of incomes
- Enter into new viable partnerships with development actors that acknowledge what communities already have
- Build viable associational forms that are responsive to local needs

## **ASSET INVENTORY**

Our approach to asset literacy reinforces what John Macknight (2005) defined as the classis 5 assets, that helps communities to map local resources as a building block for developing Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Each and every community has unique skills, resources and associations which have often been ignored due to sustained poverty experiences. The asset inventory process tries to challenge the mindset of the citizens to start to appreciate their local strengths and assets that are drawn from not only the physical nature but also individuals skills, the power and influence characterised by associations, knowledge derived from technocrats and relationships that are exchanged between individuals. The diagram below shows the the forms of community resources that contributes towards community assets and social capital.



## 2.0 PROGRAMME GOAL

To enhance Community Asset Based (CAB) approaches and processes that leverage collective local assets and resources to create economic opportunities that help citizens to resolve their own immediate and long term challenges.

## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

- Improved understanding on asset based approaches to community development in Zimbabwe.
- To generate knowledge on the effectiveness of asset based initiatives in creating economic opportunities for poor communities in Zimbabwe.

- To increase community agency in economic development
- Improve capacity to identify and mobilise local assets that help community driven economic development.
- To improve knowledge on already existing associational forms and their activities
- To influence policy analysis and advocacy on asset based initiatives that support women and youths.

## 3.0 ACTIVITIES:

The C4C uses a number of strategic interventions. These include the the use of knowledge generation, convenings, trainings, Integrated Technology Platform (ITPs) and policy analysis and advocacy.

## 3.1 RESEARCH

Identify models that work to promote Asset Literacy among the associations and CBOs. These associations include:

- Natural resource focused associations,
- Asset and labour pooling associations
- Cooperatives.
- Mapping of associations and CBOs that are focused on economic development to facilitate the creation of a database.
- Detailed mapping of value-chain opportunities and economic analyses of viability of proposed ventures

Mapping of community assets that include existing threats, strengths and opportunities which communities can use for economic development. These include:

- Community landscape
- Physical resources
- Livelihoods
- Impact on environment.

## **3.2. CONVENINGS, NETWORKING & COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

- Provide platforms to discuss opportunities and challenges that are faced by associational forms in leveraging local assets.
- Create learning opportunities from best practices developed elsewhere
- Develop a loose network of groups/associations that are using the asset based approach
- Create a platform for interaction with policymakers to address obstacles

## **3.3 TRAININGS**

- Develop Asset Literacy modules that help communities to identify their assets and local resources.
- Offer on-going bespoke training on Asset-based approach.
- Create a Faculty from Communities on Asset Based Approaches

## **3.4 INTEGRATED-TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM**

- Develop a web-based platform for associations to interact and exchange information on asset based initiatives.

## **3.5 POLICY ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY**

- Identify policy based constraints to leveraging local assets
- Integrate training on advocacy with the Asset Based Approach Modules





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