

**The ABCD's of Character Development and Urban Renewal  
Proposal**

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### **Introduction**

The two fold work of Character Development and Inclusive Community Building is about renewal. On the one hand, it's about individuals renewing themselves with the aid of a mentor whose character is beyond reproach. The mentor serves as a teacher and guide to the one in search of renewal. Renewal is viewed as an inward act of the heart where character is developed and where change begins. The inward renewal then drives the outward renewal which is revealed in changed behavior. On the other hand, it's about communities empowering their residents to collectively renew themselves. This aspect of renewal is often referred to as physical renewal or urban renewal. The training will discuss urban renewal in its physical dimensions focusing on its good and bad qualities as a bridge to the more substantive discussion on character development.

The Urban Renewal Training is based on a unique model developed by Dr. Deryl G. Hunt. It makes use of The Alicia Gwynn Character Development Creed. Alicia Gwynn and her famous husband, baseball great Tony Gwynn, are currently using Dr. Hunt's model in their community building work in California. The Creed is the foundation for successful positive character development. Trainees will also be introduced to GOMA, an acronym where G stands for goal, O for objective, M for method and A for attitude. The training unites GOMA and the ABCD's of character development and community building as a 7- Step Process developed by Hunt and is being used among other places in the K and A Brown Community Center in Cordele, Georgia. Additionally, the training will make use of the PACE/CEAP urban renewal concept of the Turks and Caicos Islands where Patterson William, President of The Grand Bahama Community Builders Club and Hunt are consultant to the government training their PACE Workers. PACE stands for Poverty Alleviation and Citizen Empowerment. CEAP stands for Citizens Empowered to Alleviate Power. PACE is driven by government aiding citizens with skills training and other assistance to make their condition better. CEAP is driven by citizens who received government help, but are now assisting government to alleviate poverty.

The training is spearheaded by the Grand Bahama Community Builders Club (GBCBC) and ICB Productions Inc. of Miami, Florida. The Grand Bahama Community Builders Club is an NGO (non governmental organization) with deep roots in the Bahamas as a community building organization. Their work as an NGO is under study by the Turks and Caicos Islands as they seek to implement their PACE/CEAP project. ICB Productions Inc. is no stranger to the Bahamas. Working with GBCBC, and MMPMAC, ICB Productions has provided training in the Bahamas for the nearly a decade.

### **Urban Renewal**

Under the heading Urban Renewal, we unfold the theory and practice undergirding our training approach. We see urban renewal as focusing on renewing people. Though infrastructures are necessary for an urban society to exist, urban at its heart is the people

living in a densely populated area, all too often on the margin of society. How do these marginalized people, with less than a sound positive character, renew themselves? The training will answer this question by showing how any person lacking in sound positive character is renewed. To be sure, renewal does not begin with buying a new suit of clothing or a new car or even a new house. While these items maybe important in the renewal process, in many cases they are out of the reach to those living on the margin of society.

To renew the urban area, one must work from the individual to the group from the internal to the external. Renewal begins with a right spirit or attitude. In some cases, however, people don't have the right attitude toward renewal. In those cases where people live on the margin of society, their marginalized status has contributed to them losing hope. Others lacking in sound positive character have been traumatized based on natural disasters like a hurricane. Seeing their prized possessions destroyed and loved ones lost, they too have given up hope. The training emphasizes hope as an indispensable balm both groups need if renewal is to take place. The simple fact is that they must first believe renewal is desirable and that it is obtainable. Through a process call Community Tables trainees will learn how to work out solutions to urban problems focusing on mentoring to assist those who lack the will to renew themselves. A mentor is needed to intercede on their behalf and to guide them in the renewal process.

The ABCD'S of Character Development and Urban Renewal training leading to renewal embraces core values: integrity, accountability and openness. These values are tied to a method of service delivery characterized by caring, sharing and loving principles. This approach, while behaviorally directed, is rooted in an inward disposition of the heart where sound positive character is desired. Working to assure the one in need of renewal has the right attitude, meaning he or she desires renewal and believes it is possible for them; character development renewal training can then proceed to a higher level. When the behavior of the ones in need of assistance conforms to that modeled by the mentors, they will also communicate a positive message, and ultimately display the discipline to sustain what is learned over time.

The right Attitude is the starting point in any successful urban renewal training because attitude reflects how people feel or think about what is presented to them. A person's attitude is influenced by a number of factors among which are their perceptions of whether those seeking to renew them believe in their renewal. It is therefore critical that the mentor leaves no doubt in the minds of the people that he/she fully endorses their renewal. This is not done only by words alone because people say one thing but do another; renewal must be demonstrated in the personal character of the mentors.

Right Behavior is driven by right attitude, but attitudes are not as observable as behavior. When words spoken by mentors are not verified in their deeds (behavior), their character is not what it should be. The mentors must not send mixed signal to those they hope to mentor because mix signals lead to confusion among those in need of renewal, and they are left to their own devices in dealing with life's daily issues. Therefore mentors' behavior looms large in determining the extent the mentees buy in to the renewal process.

In a word, those in need of renewal need to know that their mentors are renewed. They therefore watch their mentors for signs. When mentors treat those in need of renewal in a caring, sharing and loving manner, they demonstrate through behavior that their attitude is right and that they are effective communicators.

Communication is a necessary condition in renewal. Communication relates to the message the mentors send to those in need of renewal. The right message communicates sound positive character in those communicating. Effective communication can not be over stressed. Those in need of renewal will be able to see through pretentious behaviors by mentors. In the proposed training, trainers (mentors) will communicate their moral and ethical standards as a function of sound positive character development because those in need of renewal must hear from their mentors the message of renewal. A positive message that renewal is a good thing and is indeed possible is necessary for a successful urban renewal project. With this message being communicated, those in need of renewal are then challenged to discipline themselves accordingly.

Discipline is a character trait mentors demonstrate by being patience toward those in need of renewal. Mentors have passed over the same terrain those in need of renewal are seeking to traverse, and they know that there will be some setbacks. Mentors can only demonstrate sound positive character development they want those in need of renewal to mimic over time. Time gives those in need of renewal the opportunity to see their mentors under different conditions and how they maintain sound character under stressful and trying circumstances. With proper discipline, mentors and those in need of renewal come to trust each other and time verifies renewal as a valued commodity in them.

### **Urban Renewal Training as a Process**

The proposed training is in three phases: 1) General Urban Renewal Training (\$3,500) 2) Specialized Training for a Select Group Urban Renewal Workers (\$ TBA) and 3) An Urban Renewal Community Forum (\$ TBA).

- 1) **The General Urban Renewal Training** will take place during the third or fourth week of November, 2007. It will involve those who will receive the second phase of training as well as their supervisors and other stakeholders. This training will take place over a three day period beginning on Wednesday evening and ending on Friday afternoon. The training will be held at a site provided by the Urban Renewal Program and they will be responsible for providing travel and hotel accommodations for two trainers from South Florida plus food for the trainees and equipment. All materials will be provided by the Training Organizations.
- 2) **Specialized Inclusive Community Building Urban Renewal Training** for a Select Group will involve a series of training modules to address specific problems areas gleamed from the General Training to include Conflict Resolution, Leadership, Community Building, Strategic Planning, Character Development, etc. This training is expected to last for six months and upon successful completion, trainees will received the ICB (Inclusive Community Building) Urban Renewal Training Certificate. It is expected that trainees will be comprise two groups with each group meeting 4 days a month.

- 3) **The Urban Renewal Community Forum** is a demonstration project where trainees get to demonstrate what they learned from the training to the community at-large. Certificates will be awarded at this time.