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PartiØatory Approaches: A guide 
MAPS AND MAPPING 
LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION 
5 Supporting action 
4 Acting together 
3 Deciding together 
2 Consulting 
1 Informing 
PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS 
people easy access, but the precise 
technique can adapted to the audience. 
VSO volunteers in Nigeria used chalk on 
a cement floor. 
A cross-section of the community is 
required to validate the map. 
Identify people with the skills to make a 
paper copy of the map when t is finished, 
add the names of participants and the date, 
and display prominently. 
Ocal artists may help to add illustrations, 
or create a 30 sculpture of the area. 
The map can be used to record data generated 
by other tools, plan actions, monitor change, 
or evaluate the result of development activity. 
It is a dynamic tool rather thana finished' 
product 
Resources 
use anything that comes to hand. Let 
people decide. Their choice of objects and 
symbols may reveal Illum nating information 
and attitudes. 
Pmvide pens and paper for record ng the map. 
Attitude checklist 
et the participants create the map 
themselves. 
Do not expect accuracy — exaggerated or 
detailed areas will ndicate where knowledge 
is greater or priorities are higher. 
Observe who seems to know most about 
certain areas for follow-up questioning. 
Benefits 
Maps give a broad overview of the evolutbn 
of community land use and social 
infrastructure, and therefore have specific 
benefits for planning and monitor ng work 
with natural resources, land use, watershed 
management, infrastructure and service 
provision. 
ANALYSE 
Analysis 
Planning 
Doing 
Reviewing 
Purpose 
REVIEW 
Community mapphg focuses on maps 
produced by the group to assist with 
planning, assessing change, constructhg 
commun ty/institutional profiles, monitoring 
or evaluation. The aim here is not for 
cartographic accuracy, but to find out what 
people know, and how they see their own 
territory and situation. This allows insight 
into ocel perceptions, and the process of 
group work opens opportunities for 
discussion and rapport-building. 
Technique 
1 _ Introduce the purpose or focus of the map 
to the group, making sure that this is clear 
to all Participants create a map of their 
community territory, marking key features. 
These may nclude natural resources, land 
use, housing, services, facilities, 
infrastructure. People may use symbols or 
objects to represent features. It may help to 
identify common landmarks first (local 
names for Lakes, rivers, roads, buildings,) 
and then identify other areas and features 
relative to these. 
2. The map is best done on the floor to allow Machine generated alternative text:
The finished map is a versatile teaching 
resource for education volunteers 
Many different interventions can be 
dentified using the one tool. 
Communities, some for the first time, can 
analyse the Links, patterns and inter- 
relationships of different issues and uses 
of Land. t builds a vital sense of place and 
belong ng. 
Historical mappr.g stimulates discussion of 
why and how a problem arises and prov des 
community insight nto root causes. 
Maps and mapping can be a multipurpose 
tool, useful for extension, assessment, 
planning, monitoring, baselines, and 
evaluation. 
Variations 
If this tool is used for planning, the various 
activities can de Edded tc the map or overlaid. 
If it is used for mcn toring, changes can be 
periodically recorded on the maps. 
If it is used for evaluation, a comparison of 
maps and other drawings or photographs at 
different times will be most useful. 
• The exercise can be carr ed out with 
distinct groups leg old men, young women, 
farmers, traders) to record different 
perceptions. This helps to capture the views 
of disadvantaged stakeholders who may 
other-vise find it d fficult to express their 
opinions freely. 
Potential pitfalls 
A comparison of individual maps may 
bring out feelings of inadequacy, or 
unwillingness to acknowledge specific 
ownership of lancL 
Conflicts may result inequities become 
apparent or underlying conflicts are 
brought to the surface. 
One person may dominate or direct the 
drawing if mapping is done by the group 
as a whole. 
Facilitation may be needed to encourage 
participation and verification, or to move 
the group past sticking points, sens tive 
ssues or deep discussion. 
Participatory Approaches: A facilitators guide 
Sample applications 
historical mapping of changes in land use, 
village growth or decline, and their effects 
identification of 'safe. and 'dangerous. areas 
by street children 
planning the best Location for new buildings 
or infrastructure 
to establish a baseline: "this is where we 
are - where do we want to be?" 
to identify the location and type of Livelihood 
activities, migration routes, trading links etc. 
Links to other tools 
• Timelines complement historical mapping 
and future plann ng, monitor ng and 
evaluation. 
Transects allow you to @nter the map. and 
verify the features and proportions. 
REAL EXPERIENCE 
Daniel Foster: social forestry volunteer, 
Malawi, Nepal, China 
"I used sketch napp ng when I was a volunteer in 
Nepal. as a raining tool for communityfcrest%' The 
activities were done in the village or the forest itself 
The purpose Of the sketch maps was to select suitable 
sites for: 
demonstrating techniques afforest management 
estimating the quantio. and qualio. Of the resource. 
Another aim was to help forest users glan forest 
management 
We used pens and paper. which was appropriate in the 
conten Of the course ard seemed acceptable to everyone. 
We did the maps in small groups Of mixed gender. 
The only difficulties I recall were that sometimes the 
more educated memåers Of the grou; would try and 
make a "roger' Tnap. with scale etc - until we 
explained that this wasn't the point. 
Tie activity was highly appreciated by the participants 
and the forest rangers alike.' 
Daniel continues to use these methods as a VSO 
trainer. 
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