

## People's Map

### I. Description:

The People's Map is a group exercise that guides people through a pictorial recognition of the physical, natural, social, livelihood, economic and spiritual assets within their community.

### II. Purpose:

The People's Map engages people in the identification and appreciation of the various assets within their community by drawing pictorial representation of it. This tool encourages people to think about their community or a specific location or aspect in a non-traditional manner, thus revealing resources that are used, as well as those that are under-used and unused. The exercises provides insight into people's perspectives and current realities. The People's Map is also effective in identifying and ensuring the inclusion of marginalized populations. Specific information may be collected to identify hazard-prone or hazard-vulnerable areas for disaster mitigation and longer term climate resilience interventions.

### III. Project Cycle Application:

1 - Assessment Phase	Can be used to help people recognize their assets as well as vulnerabilities that may not have been immediately recognizable (i.e., assets or vulnerabilities related to natural resources, infrastructure, services, livelihood skills, social groups, etc.).
2 - Planning Phase	Can be used to help people contribute their perspectives on project design, and to target the use of existing community assets and/or ensure participation of specific community groups. Can be used to help people administer a Community-led Baseline.
3 - Implementation & Monitoring Phase	Can be used to focus or redirect participants' activities to more effectively use an under or un-used asset within their community. Can be used by participants to verify their progress of planned activities by periodically tracking and recording changes on a new Monitoring Map.
4 - Evaluation Phase	Can be used by participants to identify results of their activities by comparing the difference between their pre- and post-project People's Map.
5 - Reporting Phase	Can be used by participants to draw a post-project People's Map that "reports" achievements and illustrates changes as compared to their pre-project map.

### IV. Facilitation Steps:

#### Step 1: Preparation

Prepare by identifying a space large enough to permit the group to gather and sit around a large sheet of paper and draw a map together. Materials include large sheets of paper, post-it notes and plenty of colored markers. A People's Map may also be done impromptu on the ground using sand/dirt, rocks, sticks, etc.

#### Step 2: Introduction

The exercise should take 1- 2 hours, depending upon the level of participation. Introduce the People's Map as a fun way to learn more about their community by sharing their important knowledge and experiences to draw their community. This is the opportunity to focus people's attention on a particular aspect of their community you would like them to highlight or uncover (e.g., a type of asset being used or un-used, infrastructure, relationships, existing vulnerabilities or hazards, etc.). Remind

participants that everyone is encouraged to add to the drawing, including the elderly and children. To facilitate the drawing process, it may be helpful to first identify one or two volunteers to document the key aspects of the community, such as major roads and landmarks. As a group they can decide a coding system, or symbols, that represent houses, fields, public space, etc.

### **Step 3: Exercise Instructions** (presented based on the availability of paper, markers and post-it notes)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Instruct the participants to sit in a circle, and place the large sheet of paper (or taped together sheets for a larger map) and markers in the center of the circle, accessible to everyone.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ask participants to name the center of their community, it could be a road, a building, a natural feature, etc. Ask a volunteer to draw this “center” on the map paper.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Then ask participants to name where North is, along with their own definition of the outer boundaries of their community. Ask the volunteer to mark these aspects on the map paper.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Share with each participant a post-it note (or stone or stick) and ask them to identify the location of their house on the map.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Ask participants to talk about the major landmarks or structures that are important to them (i.e., near their homes and/or frequently visited in town). Encourage everyone to share an idea. If necessary, guide the participants based on the following categories:
  - *Physical structures: roads, schools, faith institutions, government buildings, farms, livelihoods, markets, public buildings*
  - *Natural features: rivers, mountains, lakes, trees, plains, forests*
  - *Social services: health facilities, water sources, irrigation facilities, cooperatives, social groups, community sanitation facilities, electricity lines*
  - *Demographics: high/low economic areas, single-religious areas, vulnerable households (elderly, disable, female-headed), authority figures (village chief, government agents, those with relatives abroad, those with shops)*
- 6<sup>th</sup> If participants are hesitant to draw on the map, ask for volunteers to document each of the features on behalf of the group. This may involve using set symbols for houses, fields, roads, etc.
- 7<sup>th</sup> When participants are finished, ask them to share aloud the features of their map. This is the opportunity to listen carefully to what they present, as well as what they don't present.

### **Step 4: Debrief & Learning** (Look, Think, Plan)

After the participants' presentation, encourage a round of applause for everyone's participation and contributions. Then facilitate the identification of learning points with questions such as:

- What did you discover that was new? What surprised you?
- What types of resources appear to be most valued? Most used? Least used? And why?
- How did the exercise make you feel?
- What does your map tell you? What *new* opportunities or project ideas might you plan?

In line with your specific purpose behind your use of the People's Map, encourage the mapping of additional community features by asking questions such as:

- Are there any specific zones within your community (e.g., areas of commerce, housing, livelihood, agriculture, other)?
- Are there any areas more vulnerable to hazards, climate effects, good/bad sanitation than others?
- Are there any areas with unequal access to services (e.g., health care, clean water, etc.) or safety and protection?
- What does your map tell you? What *new* opportunities or project ideas might you plan?

## **V. Useful Hints:**

- **Do not worry** about scale or accuracy of the map. **Consistently reassure** participants that the purpose of the exercise is to identify assets within their community, **not** to produce a masterpiece.

- **Play can help people to overcome barriers** of social hierarchy or language. Encourage those who don't often express their opinion or are less articulate to join in on the mapping fun. If drawing is difficult, **remind people that the volunteers are there to draw for them.**
- Allow participants to lead the mapping process. Do not begin to ask about the elements that interest you until **after** all of the participant's own landmarks have been identified; then orient your questions according to the theme/issues you want to explore.
- Take a picture or make your own notes of the important features of the People's Map. Do not take the map out of the community. Rather, ensure it is entrusted to a community member for safekeeping.

## VI. Pairing Pathways:

The People's Map is useful when paired with:

- Other mapping exercises, such as Transect Walk, to triangulate data and identify patterns; and the Wellbeing Map to overlay areas or households of lower-wellbeing and ensure incorporation of these areas and learnings into program plans
- Analysis exercises, such as Resilience Equation, to facilitate the visual identification and labeling of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities directly on the People's Map and direct participants' analysis toward resilience-building interventions.
- Analysis Exercises, such as Seasonal Calendar and Historical Timeline, to highlight changes in activities, resources and patterns across time.

## VII. Examples of Tool Usage

Image 1: Disaster Risk Reduction People's Map from Burundi

Episcopal Relief & Development [Pastors and Disasters: A toolkit](#) for community-based disaster risk reduction & management for members and partners of the Anglican relief and development community, 2014

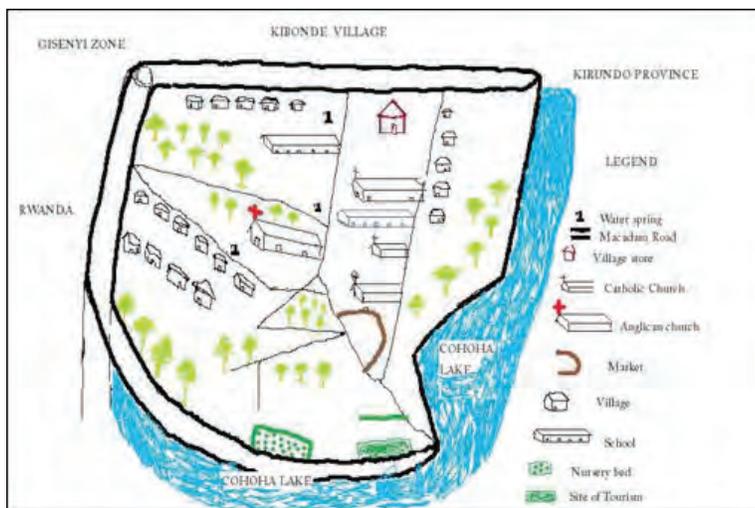


Image 2: Disaster Risk Reduction People's Map from Sri Lanka

Episcopal Relief & Development 2015



## **VII. Sources**

*BSR's Participatory Learning and Action Toolkit (2012)*

<https://herproject.org/files/toolkits/HERproject-Participatory-Learning.pdf>