

Handout | Guiding questions to map your community and issue

A community mapping activity will allow you to have a better 'feel' for the community you're looking to organise in. A map of your community and issue will give you a good understanding of your issue within a particular community. This includes potential organising opportunities, potential campaign partners, potential threats and the political climate. This information can be useful when you're developing outreach and recruitment plans, building a coalition or alliance, developing a power map and deciding on your messaging. A map can provide an overall sense of direction.

Use the Internet for data, but a community mapping exercise should always be done *in* the community you're mapping. Likewise, an Issue map should be done in the community, city or region you will be working in and talking (face to face) with stakeholders, activists and others.

You should allow a good amount of time for an initial mapping process, keeping in mind that the process is on-going and you will continue to learn more about the community and issue you're organising in as time goes by.

1. What do you know?

- Our organisation or movement's history in this community and/or this issue
- What are we currently doing locally?
- Current and potential allies and partners

2. Who's in the area? Who cares about this issue and why?

- Demographics (Race, class, socio economic, nationality, languages spoken, faiths, religions, etc.)
- Organisations/groups that advocate on behalf of these communities

3. What's in the area?

- Resources or organisations
- Institutions (churches, schools, hospitals, universities, city hall, etc.)
- Unique or problematic features (amusement parks, factories, etc.)
- Landmarks

4. What are issues and/or tensions? What are issues that relate to your campaign issue?

- Race, immigration, law enforcement
- Hot button issues
- Organisations/groups prioritising these issues (same or similar to the issue you're organising around)

5. What are issues people care about?

- Jobs, recreation, health, etc.
- Organisations/groups that prioritise these issues

6. Who are the local decision makers?

- Mayors, city councils, utilities, etc.

7. Who influences decision makers?

- Community leaders/activists
- Community groups/organisations
- Local businesses and/or business groups

8. Environmental and/or environmental justice groups and issues they prioritise

9. "Low hanging fruit"

10. Potential roadblocks and/or threats

- Leaders with a bad environmental track record
- Decision makers
- Business, etc.

11. Public places of congregation

- Parks, community centres, etc.

12. What is happening in the community?

- Calendar of cultural events and activities

Source

Dave Muhly, Sierra Club. This resource is included, with Dave's permission, in the Community Organising training guide published by the Change Agency and Pasifika. The 296 page training guide can be purchased in hard copy or downloaded as a pdf from

<https://www.thechangeagency.org>

Handout | Getting started on your community mapping work

1. Define the community: (Remember: not always by geography)
2. Identify the key things you need to learn.
3. Identify the <u>initial</u> time-frame for this work.
4. List the people you think that could help you.
5. Identify how you will track your findings.
6. Identify how you will start (Reminder: Begin with what you know and is easy to answer).

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