

Getting to know our community (mapping and transect walk)



Why use this activity?

Community mapping helps a group to think about their environment and who lives there, and to record different land uses, buildings, economic activities and natural resources.

These basic maps can then be used to identify potential hazards in a community and the risks to people, buildings and livelihoods, and can help the community identify the resources it has to face disaster, such as areas of high land, forest and alternative water sources. See **Tool A2: Identifying potential hazards** and **Tool A2: Vulnerability and capacity assessment**.



A brief description

This tool is in three parts. Part 1 is a community mapping exercise where people draw a map of their community onto paper - including buildings, land use, roads, waterways etc. Part 2 is a transect walk, whereby a group walks through a community along a planned route, noting what they see. These findings are drawn onto a large piece of paper. Part 3 is a time of discussion to analyse the findings of the mapping and transect walk.



You will need

- Large pieces of paper
- Pens



Timeline

This activity takes up to 3 hours.



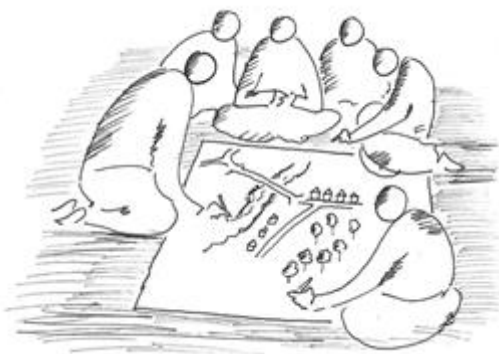


What to do

Before starting: Depending on how much time you have available, you may ask half of the participants to carry out Part 1 (community mapping) and half to carry out Part 2 (the transect walk) at the same time. Be aware of anyone who will be unable to carry out the transect walk and ensure that they are included in the community mapping group, or if the whole group does the transect walk, that they are given the option to undertake a separate activity.

Part 1: community mapping

- Put some large pieces of paper together on some tables, on the floor or on a wall - allow the group to choose. This is where the map will be drawn.
- Divide the group into smaller groups according to gender and age. Each group will draw their own map. The more groups you have, the more space you will need and the more you will need to facilitate (especially with groups of children).
- The map should show:
 - natural resources and how they are used – rivers, forests, grazing land, water sources, fields for crops
 - Physical or man-made features – areas of housing, roads, bridges, churches, mosques, schools, clinics, markets etc



Part 2: Transect walk

- Plan the route of the transect walk beforehand. The route should pass through areas of different land use. Ideally walk from one side of the community to the other. In a rural context, this may mean from one side of the village to the other. In an urban context it might mean a physical place bounded by a road or river. It should be decided in consultation with the community.
- Plan beforehand how this activity will be carried out. Will it be done by one big group, mixing women, men, girls and boys? Or would it be better to divide into smaller groups with men and women doing the transect walk separately?
- Explain the activity to the group(s). Explain that the transect walk will start at one side of the community and describe the route. Ask the group(s) to draw or note everything that they see as they walk directly on the line they are walking along, or up to an agreed distance on either side of it. They will already be familiar with the surroundings, but ask them to record everything they see - even the very obvious things. Include features such as slopes, tree cover, crops, houses, waste sites, buildings and water sources. Ask the group(s) to also record issues that they know about, such as soil fertility, waste disposal, crop failure, land tenure, weather biodiversity or disease.

- Accompany the group as they walk. Ask questions to help encourage observation.
- Once the walk is completed, allow time for the group to draw or re-draw their findings.
- A transect walk is usually drawn as a 'side-on' view - as if you had cut away the land and were looking at it from the side - see the example below.

Part 3: Discussion and analysis

- Bring everyone together with all of the maps and pictures they have drawn. Allow each group an opportunity to explain their map, and encourage discussion. You could use the following questions:
 - How do the maps and the transect walk pictures compare?
 - What are the differences between them? Why are these differences there?
 - What are the similarities between the maps and pictures?
 - What new things have we learnt about our community through these activities?
- The different results can be very revealing. Use all the information to make a final detailed map. However, keep hold of all of the maps so that a record of the detail – and differences – is kept.

Next steps: these maps can be used with **Tool A2: Identifying potential hazards** and **Tool A2: Assessing vulnerabilities and capacities**.