BEST
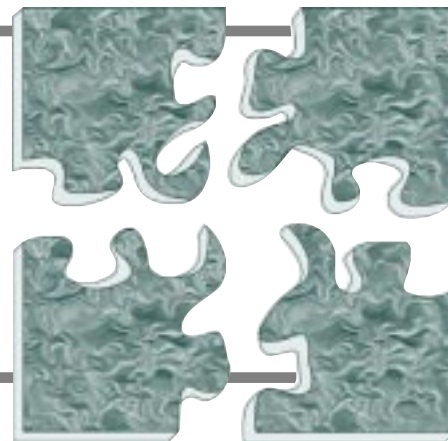## PRACTICE
BRIEFS

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

CONTEXT determines if mapping is geographic or conceptual

BEFOERE YOU MAP
- know your purpose
- define issues
- know your strategy:
  - set up an action committee
  - have a game plan

USE DATA to
- create enthusiasm
- organize community to
  - identify informal resources
  - increase individual income
  - increase individual assets
- increase community connectedness

USE YOUTH to survey and input data—for assets and employment

OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

THE SEVERAL FORMS OF "COMMUNITY MAPPING"—2

This second BRIEF on Community Mapping explores conceptual mapping of community assets, public capital, cultural resources, and relationships.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to visual presentation of data on maps described in the previous issue, the term "**Community Mapping**" is used conceptually to refer to a process of inventorying the resources or assets available to a specified neighborhood or community. This conceptual approach is identified as "**Community Asset Mapping.**" It includes the identification of community assets for individual development and the inventorying of public capital and cultural resources.

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Community Mapping can also refer to a graphic "abstract" presentation of relationships within a specific geographic area, but without reference to a geographic grid. This visual presentation of relationships, generally known as ecomapping, is identified as "**Community Relationship Mapping.**"

Considerations

- **Community Asset Mapping** and **Community Relationship Mapping** could be undertaken with a non-geographically based community. However, in the discussion that follows, "community" is understood to be a geographic place: a neighborhood, a city, a township, a county, or other area where there is a need to understand relationships.

- For other considerations, see *Things to Think About* in **BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS No. 3**

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

Community Asset Mapping is the inventorying of the assets of individuals and organizations.

As presented by John B. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight (1993), Community Asset Mapping is a capacity-focused way of redeveloping devastated communities. This positive approach is proposed as a substitute for the traditional deficits focus on a community's needs and problems. Using problems to formulate human service interventions, the authors maintain, targets resources to service providers rather than residents, fragments efforts

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to provide solutions, places reliance on outside resources and outside experts, and leads to a maintenance and survival mentality rather than to community development.

Instead, they propose the development of policies and activities based on an understanding, or "map," of the community's resources — individual capacities and abilities, and organizational resources with the potential for promoting personal and community development. This "mapping" is designed to promote connections or relationships between individuals, between individuals and organizations, and between organizations and organizations. The asset-based approach, the authors maintain, does not remove the need for outside resources, but makes their use more effective.

The community assets approach

▮ starts with what is present in the community
▮ concentrates on the agenda-building and problem-solving capacity of the residents
▮ stresses local determination, investment, creativity, and control

In this context, spatial mapping may or may not be used. Within any given neighborhood or community, most assets as defined by Kretzmann and McKnight do not have a spatial quality. Commu-nity Asset Mapping has very little to do with spatial mapping as outlined in the previous BRIEF, and much more to do with a community survey and the mobilizing of individuals and organizations to make connections and build capacity. The information obtained through the survey process must be organized and accessed in an inventory format. It can be computerized as a data base inventory. Computer-ized mapping can be used, showing the location of assets on a geographic map, as well as the attributes attached to each asset.

The Community Asset Mapping process as outlined by Kretzmann and McKnight is intended to initiate a process that will fully mobilize a community to use its assets around a vision and a plan to solve its own problems. Their guidebook provides considerable detail about how this might be accomplished, with numerous examples of the types of connections that can be developed.

USE OF MAPPING FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

While the focus for Kretzmann and McKnight is community economic and social development, the community assets concept has also emerged as an attractive approach for building developmental assets in adolescents to avoid risky behaviors. The Search Institute's finding, that the number of risky behaviors is related inversely to the number of assets, has initiated efforts in numerous communities to consciously increase the adult connections and learning opportunities available to youth. Emphasis is on energizing parents, other adults, churches, civic

Youth are employed to survey the neighborhood residents and organizations.

organizations, etc. to change practices in a way that will create more caring support from adults, establish boundaries and expectations, and promote social competency skills, positive values, and identity. (See BEST PRACTICE BRIEF No. 2.)

The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development, uses community asset mapping in a coherent strategy for youth development (although the word "assets" is not mentioned in their materials).

Community Youth Mapping uses a community resource survey as a mechanism for youth development, providing a small group of youth with employment, and an opportunity to learn skills and become knowledgeable about and be connected to their community. Thus, low-income youth are recruited as staff to survey the neighborhood in teams of 5-8 persons. The purpose of the survey is to identify resources in the community that could be useful to youth—formal services, places to go for recreation, employment possibilities, and adults who can teach skills. This approach requires funding to pay the youth and a staff person to supervise the teams.
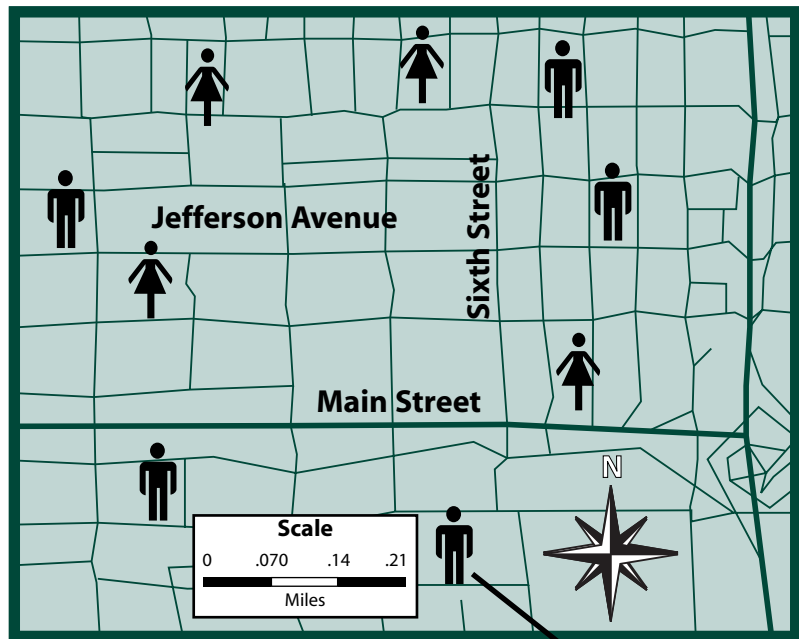
The formulation of the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research involves a clear game plan for use of the information. The survey results in an information infrastructure, using desktop mapping to organize the survey information on a geographic grid, as well as a computerized inventory. Youth are employed to enter and analyze the data gathered during the mapping process.

The information can then be disseminated in various ways. The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research outlines the following possibilities:

- ■ **YouthLine.** A round-the-clock, toll-free confidential telephone service, staffed by trained high school and college students to provide information and support. YouthLine links young callers to a peer who is able to listen and to use a computer to locate geographically appropriate crisis intervention services or to identify community resources and opportunities. Adult supervisors circulate on site.

- ■ **YouthStation.** Similar to bank automated teller machines, a YouthStation is a conveniently located, user friendly, interactive computer kiosk, where young people can access information concerning services and opportunities for employment, volunteering, education, or recreation.

- ■ **YouthLink.** Essentially places the YouthStation on a bus.

- ■ **Planning** documents and reports, generated from the survey information and census data, can be used to promote community action in support of youth.

This organized community mapping directed at youth development is an inventorying of individual and organizational resources. And again, the inventorying is irrelevant unless there are plans for building assets by connecting youth to individuals and organizations.

LOCATION OF PERSONS WITH SKILLS

Name: John Smith
Address: 570 N. 8th Street
Skills: Baseball coach, Electric repair
Misc.:   Call after 5

OTHER FORMS OF CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Mapping Public Capital

Another form of conceptual mapping is referenced in the 1997 report, *Back to Basics: Creating New Possibilities for Flint,* developed by the Harwood Group for the Mott Foundation. They "mapped public capital" in Flint by bringing together citizens, civic leaders, and connective leaders (those engaged in a variety of community activities) to review collective insights derived from focus group conversations and leader interviews. They were asked to fill in gaps and identify action points and obstacles to overcome. Public capital is identified as:
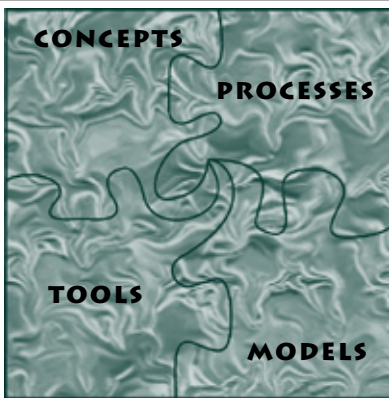
- ▌ social gatherings that enable people to learn about what is happening in the community
- ▌ organized spaces for interaction where people can learn about, discuss, and act on community challenges
- ▌ catalytic organizations that spur discussion on community challenges and marshall a community's resource to move ahead;
- ▌ safe havens for decision makers to meet for unofficial candid discussions.

The report does not include any spatial maps.

Cultural Mapping

Cultural mapping—i.e., the documentation of cultural resources in the community—is another example of conceptual mapping. Cultural mapping consists of examining long-term customs, behaviors, and activities that have meaning to individuals and to the community. Information for cultural mapping is gathered by face-to-face interviews. Communities can use cultural mapping as a tool for self-awareness to promote understanding of the diversity within a community and to protect and conserve traditions, customs, and resources.

Example: In the absence of cultural mapping, an Upper Peninsula community did not recognize that Indian basket weavers made nationally-recognized, unique baskets out of sweet grass. Consequently, development of the swamp in which the sweet grass grew was permitted to take place, thus unintentionally destroying resources and a part of Indian culture.

Cultural Mapping as a community assets assessment is being piloted by Michigan State University faculty through the Museum and in the Dexter–Elmhurst neighborhood, Detroit, as a Community Partnership.

Community Relationship Mapping

Ecomapping was initially developed as an effective way for a therapist to identify relationships within a family. The mapping of inter-organizational linkages is a form of ecomapping designed to show the relationships that one organization has with other organizations within the community. Relationships with other organizations may relate to funding, referrals, access to resources, joint service planning, collaborative projects with contributed staff or funds, etc. Ecomapping may be undertaken to clarify the place of an organization in the community spectrum, to identify gaps in linkages, to indicate the multiple relationships between organizations, etc.

Example: Penny Foster–Fishman, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Michigan State University, undertook an inter-organizational linkage study of agencies in Calhoun County to assess whether agencies that were involved with the multi-purpose collaborative body had more inter-organizational linkages than those that were not.

REFERENCES

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- See also references in **BEST PRACTICE BRIEF** No. 2.

CONCEPTS

TOOLS

PROCESSES

MODELS

BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS—FOR FUNDERS, POLICY MAKERS, PLANNERS, MANAGERS

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