



Community **Futures**  
Community **Lore**

# 05



## Stepping Stone 5

*in the CFCL Youth Participatory Action Research Series*

**Practice Research Skills**

# Stepping Stones



**5**

### PRACTICE RESEARCH SKILLS

Learn & practice core research skills

Develop specialized research skills

Try out & strengthen our research tools

**6**

### CONDUCT RESEARCH

**7**

### ANALYZE YOUR DATA

**8**

### CREATE & SHARE FINAL PRODUCT

**9**

### TAKE ACTION



# Stepping Stone 5

## Practice Research Skills

It's time to develop the skills you'll need to do your research! Stepping Stone 5 includes activities that will build your skills in facilitation, note-taking, active listening, asking questions, understanding data, and mapping.



### Develop core skills you'll need to do your research

#### For surveys and working with data:

- » Resource 5.1: Tips for Conducting Surveys (practicing how to do surveys)
- » Activity 5.2: The Data-ing Game (generating accurate, meaningful data)

#### For interviews and focus groups:

- » Activity 5.3: Red Light Green Light - Follow-up Questions (creating and using good follow-up questions)
- » Activity 5.4: Challenging Participants (developing facilitation skills)
- » Activity 5.5: Getting It Down: Note-Taking (building note-taking skills)
- » Activity 5.6: Outlining Thoughts - Taking Notes in Outline Form (exploring more note-taking methods)

#### For observations:

- » Activity 5.7: Show Don't Tell - Observations Practice (documenting unbiased observations)

#### For working with maps:

- » Activity 5.8: Participatory Mapping (creating your own maps with data)

# 2



Practice your research method and perfect your tool before data collection

- » Resource 5.9: Tips for Testing Your Research Tool (trying out & fine-tuning what you designed)

## Stepping Stone Tips

- » Skill development should happen throughout the project, but it's especially important right now so you are ready to do your research.
- » Depending on your project's goals, research method(s) and final product, you will want to identify and practice other technical, communication, critical thinking, organizing and/or artistic skills that you will need for your project.

**Time Commitment:** 3 – 6 sessions.



# 5.1

## TIPS FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS

### » **Introduce Yourselves!**

- Introduce your name and who you are representing.
- Give a brief project introduction and why the survey is important.

### » **Tell them it is anonymous, and they should be honest.**

- No one will know who said what, but un-named quotes that don't reveal identities may be used.
- You may want to collect optional contact information for follow-up.

### » **Tell them how much time they have to complete the survey.**

- Make sure they are not rushed, so they can give thoughtful answers.
- Giving a time limit can help to make sure they are focused.

### » **Let them know how the survey results will be used.**

- People will take the survey more seriously if they know it will make an impact.

### » **Do something interactive to get their attention.**

- If you are going into a classroom and students are unfocused or sleepy, you can ask questions about the topic you're surveying them about to get dialogue going before they fill out the survey.
- You can show them a video, slideshow, or diagram as an opportunity to educate them about the issue you are working on.

### » **Bring the energy!**

- If you are excited about the survey and the issue, they will be too!
- If you are boring, they will not care about the survey.

### » **Make sure to bring:**

- Extra pens or pencils.
- Extra surveys, in case there are more people than expected.
- Information about your project and contact information in case they want to get more information.

### » **Say Thanks!**

- Thank participants for taking time to fill out the survey and helping you with your evaluation/research.
- Thank the teacher or coordinator who gave you time to do the survey in their classroom or meeting.

# 5.2 ACTIVITY

## The Data-ing Game

Adapted from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change's Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum:  
<https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/Making%20Youth%20Data%20Matter%20Curriculum.pdf>



### Objectives

- » Learn what makes data "good" and/or "bad"
- » Become more critical consumers and producers of data
- » Improve how we collect, use and share data

### Time Needed

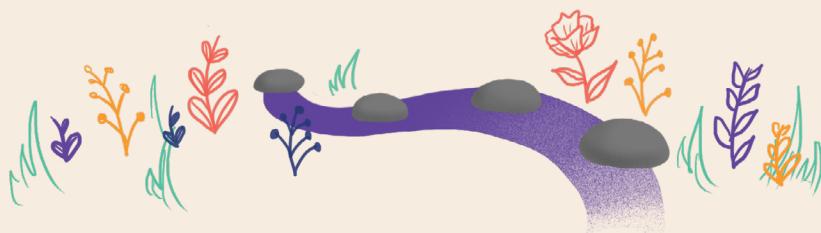
60 minutes

### Materials

- » Projector or large screen connected to computer to display Game Show PowerPoint
- » Data Criteria flip chart
- » The following items can be found here: <https://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu/resources/Activity5.2Materials>
  - Participant Roles and Scripts (Appendix 3.6.A)
  - Trainer Notes for the Data-ing Game (Appendix 3.6.B)
  - Data Criteria Handout (Appendix 3.6.E)
- » The following items can be downloaded from the Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum Supplemental Materials link here: [https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/Supplementary\\_Materials.zip](https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/Supplementary_Materials.zip)
  - Data-ing Game Roles Packet (Appendix 3.6.C)
  - Data-ing Game Show PowerPoint Slides (Appendix 3.6.F)

### Activity Preparation

- » Create Data Criteria flip chart (copy bold points from Data Criteria Handout onto a piece of flip chart paper or a white board)
- » Print out:
  - Participant Roles and Scripts
  - Data-ing Game Roles Packet
  - Trainer Notes for the Data-ing Game
- » Put together scripts for each map and contestant for every round (e.g. all the Round 1 answers for Data Contestant 1 in one role packet, all the Round 1 answers for Data Contestant 2 in another packet, etc.)
- » Set up Game Show PowerPoint
- » Familiarize yourself with the Trainer Notes

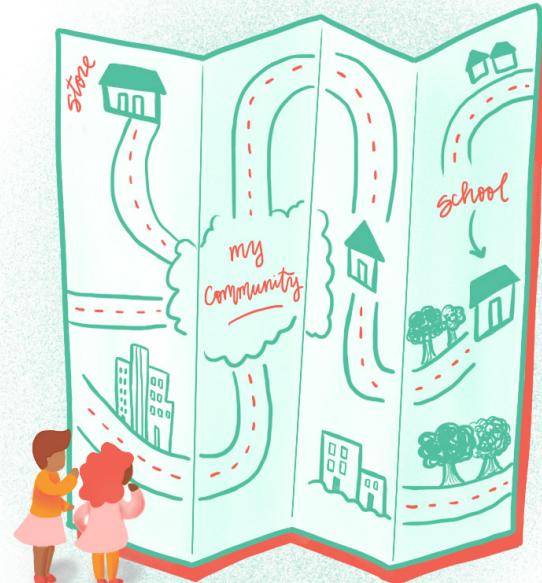


## Introduction

- » **Suggested Language:** It is time to think critically about data. Maps and data can be used to oppress and to make change. Data can be manipulated and used to support certain agendas. Data can also be inaccurate or only partially accurate. All data have limitations—there are almost always factors that prevent any dataset from telling the “full story.” So it’s important that we become conscious consumers of data, and that we look at our data critically to make sure that we use the best available data and that we account for limitations.
- » Here are some key concepts to think about when using data and maps:
  - **Source Trustworthiness**
    - What are the source’s biases (what is their agenda)?
    - Does the source have adequate skills/resources to collect/process the data?
  - **Data Accuracy**
    - Was the information collected likely correct/accurate (e.g. survey questions are not leading, participants likely provided accurate information)?
    - Was the information likely to be accurately entered into the data system?
    - Are the data up-to-date (or is the most recent data available)?
    - Are you confident that the analyses were done well (e.g. mathematical analyses are likely correct)?
  - **Representation**
    - Are the data representative enough of all locations and/or populations of interest (consider margins of error, participation rates, where surveys were/were not administered, whether data collection used strategies to reach people who speak limited/no English, etc.).
  - **Data Display**
    - How do map breakpoints affect the “story” told by the map?
    - Do the geographic units used for display visually distort interpretation? If yes, then how?
    - How do colors used for display affect visual interpretation?
- » **Suggested Language:** To practice our critical skills, we want to try and help our really good friend, Map, select the best Data match. We are going to play a little game called the Dating Game. Here is how it is going to work.

## Instructions

- » **Role Selection**
  - Select 4 participants to play the main roles of the game:
    - The Map
    - Data Contestant 1
    - Data Contestant 2
    - Data Contestant 3
  - The rest of the group will play the role of the live audience and will help the Map decide which Data Contestant is the best match.
- » **Note:** For each round of the game, you can have the same 4 participants be the Map and the Data participants, and have remaining group members be the audience. You can also switch the roles after each round to give everyone a chance to be a participant and to be part of the audience. If you would like your participants to only play the role of the audience, you can enlist the help of others to play the roles of the Map and Data participants. You can also make this activity livelier by creating props or costumes for the Map and Data participants.



## Game Preparation

- » Hand the 4 selected participants a role sheet and script packet for their roles.
- » Give them 5 minutes to read through the role play sheet and to read through their script individually.
- » Break the remaining “live audience” into 4 groups and hand each group an audience role sheet that coincides with the following 4 categories:
  - Source Trustworthiness
  - Data Accuracy
  - Representation
  - Data Display
- » Have each “live audience” group take 5 minutes to read through their role sheets on what they should look for in the contestants’ answers and how they should score the contestants.

## Game Show

- » You, the facilitator, will be the game show host! Using the game show script, conduct the following parts of this activity:
  - Welcome and Introduction to the Data-ing Game (*3 minutes*)
  - Introduce the Contestants (*3 minutes*)
  - Round 1 Questions (*10 minutes*)
  - Selecting the Data (*3 minutes*)
  - Round 2 Questions (*10 minutes*)
  - Selecting the Data (*3 minutes*)
  - Round 3 Questions (*10 minutes*)
  - Selecting the Data (*3 minutes*)

## Debrief

- » **Suggested Language:** It’s important to understand that all data have limitations—no dataset is 100% accurate for all people in all places at all times. You always have to make compromises with the data that you use. The key is to get the best available data, know as much as possible about their limitations, think through how those limitations might affect your analyses and recommendations and let your audience know about these issues.
- » Debrief the activity with the following questions:
  - What did you think of this activity?
  - How has your understanding changed about the importance of using the best possible data?
  - Do you feel that you can start differentiating between stronger and weaker data? Why or why not?
  - What steps might we want to take when sharing our research data to demonstrate the integrity and reliability of our work?



# 5.3 ACTIVITY

## Red Light Green Light (Follow-up Questions)



### Objectives

- » Create follow-up questions for interviews and focus groups
- » Develop skills to ask follow-up questions

### Time Needed

20 – 30 minutes

### Materials

- » Flip chart paper
- » Markers
- » Red and green cards for each participant

### Introduction

New researchers and evaluators often have difficulty asking follow-up questions in interviews and focus groups. Knowing when to ask a follow-up question, what to ask, and when you have enough information are skills that come with practice, and feedback.

### Instructions

- » Ask for 2 volunteers.
  - 1 person is the interviewer and the other is the interviewee. Give the interviewer a copy of their questions.
  - Hand everyone else red and green cards.
  - The interviewer will ask a question from the guide and the interviewee will answer.
  - The group will show a red card (a red light) until they feel that the interviewer has gotten enough information. Once that happens, they will show a green light. (You can ask group to write down follow-up questions that they hear.)

- The interviewer cannot move onto the next question, until they are given a green light from everyone.
- » Switch roles. Ask for new volunteers.

### Debrief

- » What went well?
- » What can be improved?
- » What do you need to work on for your focus groups?
- » What can the group work on?
- » What follow-up questions can you use in your actual focus groups?
- » Why is this activity important for our focus groups?



# 5.4 ACTIVITY

## Challenging Participants



### Objectives

- » Develop skills in interview/focus group facilitation
- » Build confidence in facilitation skills

### Time Needed

30 – 60 minutes

### Materials

- » Challenging participant roles, written on individual pieces of paper (attached)
- » Sample focus group guide (see attached, or use your group's own focus group questions)

### Introduction

Facilitation is challenging. It requires learning new skills and practicing them. In focus groups, you might be asking participants tough questions about their feelings, beliefs, ideas, and lives. For many reasons, participants are not always fully present during their focus groups. This can be difficult for the facilitator(s). It's important to practice and role-play scenarios before the real thing.

### Instructions

- » Ask for a volunteer.
- » They are the first focus group facilitator—have them come to the front of the room or head of the table.
- » Pass out challenging participant roles to everyone else. Ask them to embody the role given to them once the focus group starts.
- » Ask the facilitator to begin the focus group.
  - Encourage and support them as they try to manage the group.

- Tag team: once the facilitator has gone through a few questions, encourage a participant to take the facilitator's place. They can switch roles.
- If needed, have youth switch their roles when a new facilitator starts to keep things interesting!
- » Continue the process until everyone (at least all focus group facilitators) have had a chance to practice facilitating in challenging situations.

### Debrief

- » How did you see facilitators handling situations with challenging participants?
- » How could things be handled differently? What else would you do that you might not have seen here?
- » How can we prevent these challenges in the first place?
- » How does this relate to our own project?

## Challenging Participant Roles

PARTICIPANT ROLES	FACILITATOR APPROACHES
Everything the facilitator says makes you upset. You show your dislike for the facilitator in how you talk to them and how you answer their questions. You give them a lot of attitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Notice the participant's behavior in a way that respects them and the group.</li><li>» Ask the participant if they need something they're not getting from you or the group.</li><li>» Check the vibe of the whole group.</li><li>» Point out group agreements.</li><li>» Check-in with participant during a break.</li></ul>
You are <i>very</i> quiet. You don't answer any questions. When you do answer, you give one-word responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Encourage everyone to speak and encourage participants to encourage each other.</li><li>» Break out the large group into smaller groups.</li><li>» Don't single the participant out. Instead ask for "people wearing black shoes to give their ideas or people with a sister to speak."</li><li>» When the participant gives one-word answers, ask follow-up questions to bring out more of their thoughts.</li></ul>
You ask a lot of questions. You want clarification on everything the facilitator says. You answer a question with a question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Directly remind the participant of step up, step back.</li><li>» Turn the question over to group and ask someone else to answer.</li><li>» If questions are off-track, add them to a "bike rack," a place to save questions for later.</li></ul>
You are very eager. You interrupt the facilitator and always raise your hand first to try to answer all the questions. You make sure your opinion is heard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Directly remind participant of step up, step back.</li><li>» Thank the participant for their enthusiasm and ask them to use some of that to encourage others in the group.</li></ul>
You are very distracted. You answer your phone, ask to leave the room, write in your notebook, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Do a quick energizer to bring everyone's focus back into the group.</li><li>» Directly ask the participant to focus on the group.</li><li>» Refer to the group agreements if needed.</li><li>» Ask the participant if they need something in order to focus and see if you or other group members can fulfill request.</li></ul>



## Other Challenging Participant Roles:

**The Know It All:** This person tries to answer every question first and talks for a long time every time they answer.

**The Chatty Pair:** This person has a friend in the Focus Group and is often having little side conversations with that person or writing notes.

**The Hyper One:** This person has a lot of energy and interrupts often, talks on the phone, or gets up and moves around the room constantly.

Any other roles you want to create?



## Sample Focus Group Guide

1. How long have you lived in your community?
2. How has your community changed during the time you've lived there?
3. What do you think is the biggest challenge for youth in your community right now? How would you solve this problem?
4. What are your community's strengths?
5. What do you need to feel safe in your community?
6. Who do you turn to for support?
7. How are you actively involved in improving your community?
8. Where would you like to be in 5 years and what will it take to get there?



# 5.5 ACTIVITY

## Getting It Down: Note-Taking



### Objectives

- » Develop note-taking skills
- » Explore note-taking methods

### Time Needed

20 – 30 minutes

### Materials

- » Paper
- » Pens

### Introduction

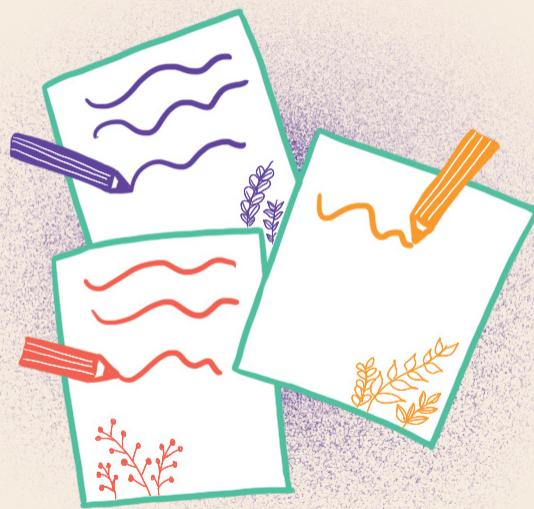
The notes from an interview or focus group are vital to the research project. In this activity, you and your team will compare different types of notes and create a list of advice to guide their note-taking.

### Instructions

- » Divide the group into 2 teams.
- » Group A will be an interviewer and an interviewee.
- » Group B will be note-takers, assigned a different note-taking style:
  - One person will just listen and try to remember the interview.
  - One person will take notes in outline form.
  - One person will take notes word-for-word.
- » After the interview is over, have the note-takers (Group B) leave the room. Bring them back in one at a time and have them try to relay the interview back to the group.
- » Add a twist: make the person with the outline switch notes with the word-for-word person and have them try to present the other's notes.

### Debrief

- » Which style of note-taking is the best for what we're doing? Why?
- » What else is important for us to capture in our notes? (i.e. quotes)
- » What will we need to do after our interviews/focus groups to make sure our notes will be useful?



# 5.6 ACTIVITY

## Outlining Thoughts (Taking Notes in Outline Form)



### Objectives

- » Build note-taking skills, specifically in an outline format
- » Learn and practice how to document the most significant and necessary information

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Materials

- » Flip chart paper
- » Markers
- » 2 different outline samples (one good, one bad – attached)
- » Blank outline form (attached)
- » Conversation starters written on separate slips of paper

### Introduction

Note-taking does not come naturally to most of us. It is a concrete skill that we actually have to learn somewhere. There are many different styles of notes you can take, as is demonstrated in Activity 5.5. This activity specifically focuses on how to take notes in outline form since it is one of the best ways to capture a lot of critical information quickly.

### Instructions

- » Pass out two different outline samples. Lead the group in the following discussion:
  - **Suggested Language:** Imagine you are standing at the front of a full room of people. Your research teammate is firing questions at the group and your job is to capture what they are saying. Do you think you can write fast enough to get every word on paper? Could you have written everything I just said word-for-word?

- » Unless you're exceptionally fast, probably not. Look at these 2 outline samples I have given you: What information do the samples provide? How is the information displayed? Why do you think the note-takers chose to document in the way they did? Does one give you more information than the other? Which one? Why do you say that?
- » Break the group into 2 teams. Ask each team to choose a note-taker and give each team a blank outline form. Have each team randomly choose a conversation starter from a container. Give instructions:
  - In your groups, use the conversation starter to begin a discussion between everyone except for the designated note-taker.
  - The note-taker will use the blank outline form to record the conversation in outline form.
  - Try to keep the conversation going until you hear that time is up (you'll have about 2 – 4 minutes to talk to each other).
- The note-taker should do their best to keep up with the conversation.
- » Once time is called, bring both teams back together. Have each one read their notes to each other. See if the other group can figure out what the group was talking about based only on their notes.
- » If there is more time, have 2 new people practice taking notes, using different conversation topics.

### Sample Conversation Starters

Use any of the following, or come up with your own:

- » How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
- » What's your biggest fear?
- » Describe your dream vacation.
- » What's the best Halloween costume you've ever worn?
- » Describe your favorite meal.
- » What's the most exciting thing that has happened to you this week?

### Debrief

Note-takers: How was that for you? What worked well? What was hard to do?

Everyone else: Based on what we talked about in the beginning, what do you think the note-takers did really well? What do you think might be hard for you when you take notes?

## Outlining Thoughts Samples

### Outline Sample A ("good"):

#### Focus Group #2

July 11, 2008, 2pm – 3pm

Facilitators: Juan and Sandi

**Participants: 7 people present, all filled out demographic surveys**

Research Question: Why do youth eat fast food?

- I. Location of restaurants and where we go.
  - A. FF restaurants on every corner of 'hood.
  - B. No other types of eating places.
  - C. No healthy food around.
    - a. "I love fruits and veggies, but they're hard to find on my block."  
– Kevin, 15 y.o.
- II. Taste important and it tastes good.
  - A. Grease and meat are yummy.
    - a. "It's addictive."
  - B. Tastes better & cheaper than cafeteria food.
  - C. Good and filling
    - a. "A burger and fries or pizza keeps me full during school."
- III. ....



### Outline Sample B ("bad"):

#### Focus Group

Fast Food:

- I. Location
  - A. bad
  - B. that's it
  - a. "hard to find"
- II. Good
  - A. Cool
  - B. Grease
  - a. "Burger and fries"





## Blank Outline Form

Focus Group/Interview #\_\_\_\_\_

### Note-Taking Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Critical Point #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Point A: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Point B: \_\_\_\_\_

Quote(s):

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: \_\_\_\_\_

C: \_\_\_\_\_

Quote(s):

#3: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

B: \_\_\_\_\_

C: \_\_\_\_\_

Quote(s):

# 5.7 ACTIVITY

## Show Don't Tell (Observations Practice)



### Objectives

- » Learn and practice how to document observations in an unbiased way
- » Understand how our feelings, judgments and biases can influence our observations
- » Understand how our observations are critical to data collection

### Time Needed

30 – 60 minutes

### Materials

- » Observations flip chart paper for each participant (see attached example)
- » Pens
- » Video or movie clip (optional)

### Introduction

Observation can be a powerful method for data collection. In this activity, you and your team will have the opportunity to practice observation and explore how your own judgment or bias may play into what you see. You will work on eliminating bias in your observations in order to report an accurate story.

### Instructions

- » Give everyone a blank piece of paper.
- » Have them observe a scene. If possible, take them somewhere to do this, like the mall or their school hallway or a park. If time or location prohibits this, then have them watch part of a movie or videos.
- » As they observe, ask them to write down answers in full sentences to the following questions:
  - What are you seeing? What is going on? What do you notice? Who is in the scene?
  - What are they doing?

- What are the people in the scene feeling? How do you know they are feeling this?
  - What cues are they giving (i.e. crying, laughing, yelling, etc.)?
  - What is the backdrop of the scene? Describe everything.
- » Once they have taken down notes for 5 – 10 minutes, gather in a central location.
  - » Give everyone an observations chart (see attached). Ask researchers to use their notes to fill in the chart:
    - Break down the sentences you have written in your observations. Put the pieces of the sentences into the categories that they fit .
    - Be sure to write across the line, so sentences don't get jumbled when you put them back together.
  - » Now, we are going to recreate the observations they made by eliminating any feelings that were attached to their notes.
  - » Ask them to take their chart to

create new sets of notes:

- Write out new sentences, but leave out the words or phrases that are in your *What are People Feeling?* column. (i.e. If that column includes "she was really angry at her boyfriend", leave that out of your new sentence and put together the other things you were saying about her. *How Did the Person Show their Feelings?* – "her face was bright red and she was yelling at the person with her".)
- » After everyone has worked through their sentences, have some people share a few things they came up with. Work with each other to remove the bias or judgment left in any of the statements.

### Debrief

- » What were some important things we practiced today about observations?
- » What do we need to be careful of or make sure we pay attention to?
- » What are we doing really well?
- » Why is it more powerful to show people what we see, rather than tell them what we thought while we watched it?

## Show Don't Tell (Observations Practice) Sample Flip Chart

Note #:	Who/What:	What's Going On/What are They Doing?	What are They Feeling?	How Do They Show Their Feelings?	Other Description of the Scene
Example	A man and a woman are sitting together on a bench in a park.	They are sitting facing each other and they are having an argument.	The woman is really angry. The man is frustrated and annoyed.	Her face is bright red and she is yelling at the man next to her.	They are in a public park that covers a whole city block. They sit in a grassy area with redwood trees.
Note 1					
Note 2					
Note 3					
Note 4					
Note 5					
Note 6					
Note 7					
Note 8					
Note 9					
Note 10					

# 5.8 ACTIVITY

## Participatory Mapping

Adapted from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change's Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum:

<https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/Making%20Youth%20Data%20Matter%20Curriculum.pdf>



### Objectives

- » Learn how to create your own maps with data
- » Explore how you might use participatory mapping as part of your YPAR project

### Time Needed

60 minutes

### Materials

- » Computers/tablets/smart phones with internet access
- » Projector or large screen connected to computer for online demo
- » Google Maps How-To Handout can be found here: <https://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu/resources/Activity5.8Materials>

### Introduction

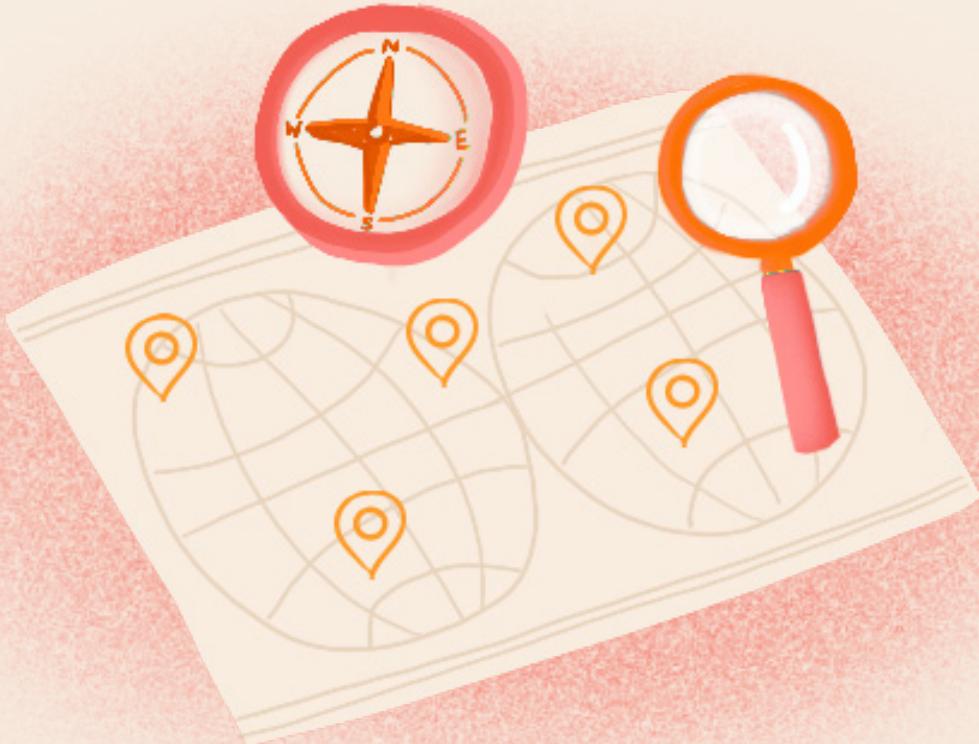
- » **Suggested Language:** Access to official data is important for community change work, but official data usually doesn't tell the whole story. Participatory mapping is one important tool to help us "talk back" to the officially available data.
- » This approach allows people to add their own data to maps to represent their spatial knowledge of communities. For example, maps can be used to show how issues affect certain community locations, highlight where resources can be found, identify special places, etc. Participatory mapping can involve techniques and skills ranging from hand-drawn maps to mural production to geographic information systems (GIS). The data you map can come in many forms, including information you've measured or counted, as well as pictures, drawings, videos and audio clips.
- » There are many online tools to help you get started with participatory mapping. This activity

will focus on one tool that might be familiar: Google Maps. We will go through a short tutorial to learn how to produce maps with Google Maps and brainstorm how we might use participatory mapping in our research effort.

- » **Note:** Google Maps requires a sign in with a Google account. If team members don't already have a Google account, one suggestion is to create a project-specific group account which they can use to create and save their work.

### Instructions

- » Do a walk through demonstration of the Google Maps site and the participatory mapping tool using a laptop/desktop computer connected to a projector. Refer to the Google Maps How-To Handout for help with this.
- » Break your team up into pairs or small groups of no more than four. Make sure each group has their own



laptop/desktop computer with internet access.

- » Pass out the Google Maps How-To handout to all participants.
- » Have team members follow the instructions on the handout to create their own maps.
- » After the groups have created their maps, ask them to present their work to the rest of the team.
- » Brainstorm how you might use participatory mapping in your research effort using the following questions:
  - How might we use participatory mapping in our YPAR project?
  - Does our research question or sample have a spatial component that we might want to explore and display?
  - Given the research method we've selected and the tool we've designed, what data might we want to visualize and map?

#### Debrief

- » Debrief the activity with the following questions:
  - What are the potential benefits of using visual maps to display data?
  - What are the possible downsides or challenges in using participatory mapping?

# 5.9

## TIPS FOR TESTING YOUR RESEARCH TOOL



Once you've developed your research tool, it's important to test it out before you start your data collection. Doing a test run allows you to strengthen your research tool and can also help your team members feel more ownership and confidence over the project and their skills.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when testing your research tool:

- » Develop the research tool as far as your team can take it. It doesn't have to be complete but it does need to be functional in order to be worth testing.
- » Do some role plays to try out using your research tool and help your team polish and practice their newly acquired skills.
- » Find a good test site where your team feels comfortable and has access to people.
- » Create a clear process for improving both the tool and the team's skills.
- » Consider the following questions when evaluating the effectiveness of your tool:
  - Which questions worked?
  - Which questions didn't work and why?
  - Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, how can it be improved?
  - Are we getting the data we need in order to answer our research question?
  - What key points do we want to keep in mind when we go out and use this tool to collect our data?



# About Community Futures, Community Lore **STEPPING STONE GUIDES**



The CFCL Stepping Stone guides were developed based on the original work of the Intercultural Oral History Project/Tibet, the Intercultural Oral History Project/Nepal, Community LORE, Youth In Focus and the Putting Youth on the Map program at the UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Many, many individuals, communities and projects contributed over a period of more than twenty years to CFCL's approach to YPAR (youth participatory action research). For the full set of Stepping Stone guides, YPAR stories, background on the CFCL approach, and a list of project credits visit the website: [ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu](http://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu)

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