

## MAP YOUR AREA!

Students draw a map of their school or local area, highlighting resources, challenges and improvements they would like to see.

This methodology is often used in international development to represent an area starting from the perceptions of those who live there is fairly simple to use.

**Aims** Students will gain a better understanding of resources and

challenges in their local area and their partner school's.

### Steps

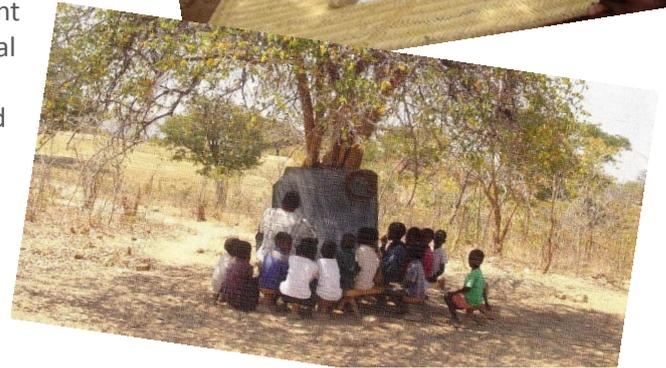
1. Choose a focus area (the school grounds or wider area) and a topic (e.g. key resources and their use, key problem areas, proposed innovations...) for exploration.
2. Ask the group to draw the boundaries of the geographic unit being discussed. Participants can decide how they want to represent this – on paper with writing or using local materials such as sticks, stones or seeds. Alternatively, prepare a map and ask students to add information about it, especially if you are working with younger students.
3. Ask the participants to draw the outline of the local area, for example, roads, towns, rivers and property boundaries. One way to do this, if you have the proper resources, is to project an overhead map onto a large sheet of paper and then to trace the required information.
4. Having prepared the map, which could be as large as a wall, people can then add their information either directly or by using sticky notes. Let them record what is most significant to them, and then ask for more detail if something you are interested in is missing.

### For exchange

Exchange maps with your partner school and reflect about similarities and differences in your struggles and resources.

### Tip

Be aware of dominant participants. In order to allow everybody to participate, you can assign different roles to students: e.g. moderator, person who takes notes, person(s) who writes on the map, person(s) who draws...



Top Problem-solving map on food, by Amy Youngs Centre Benin field work, participatory mapping, by the International Livestock Research Institute (both photos under a Creative Commons Licence).

Bottom a class under the trees for students in Zambia.