Participatory mapping and communication

A guide to developing a participatory communication strategy to support participatory mapping

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Foreword

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency dedicated to eradicating poverty in rural areas of developing countries. Working with poor rural people, governments, donors, non-governmental organizations and many other partners, IFAD focuses on country-specific solutions to empower poor rural women and men to achieve higher incomes and improved food security. One of the challenges IFAD continues to face in its work is identifying effective ways to involve poor communities, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, in planning, management and decision-making about their natural resources.

This is especially important in working with pastoralists, indigenous peoples and forest communities, whose livelihoods are disproportionately threatened by climate change, environmental degradation and conflict related to access to land and natural resources. To address these concerns, IFAD, in collaboration with the International Land Coalition (ILC), implemented the project for the 'Development of Decision Tools for Participatory Mapping in Specific Livelihood Systems (Pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples Forest Dwellers) – Phase I', which ran from 2006 to 2009. The project produced *Good practices in participatory mapping*, a review intended to strengthen IFAD's knowledge base on participatory mapping, and *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping*, which provides guidance on the steps needed to implement participatory mapping in IFAD-supported initiatives.

Phase II of the project, 'Piloting IFAD's Participatory Mapping Approach for Specific Livelihoods (Pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, Forest Dwellers) through Innovative Twinning Arrangements', aimed to promote knowledge sharing among different projects on participatory mapping, with a view to strengthening the impact of participatory mapping initiatives. In this regard, the project focused on: i) the role of participatory communication in supporting the empowerment of local communities, in particular by helping them initiate dialogues with decision-makers and other stakeholders; and ii) the need to implement participatory monitoring and evaluation strategies to evaluate the impact of participatory mapping initiatives and to measure change at the community level.

This publication focuses on participatory communication and seeks to provide guidance to IFAD staff on developing a participatory communication strategy to strengthen the impact of participatory mapping initiatives. The publication is a follow-up to *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping* and has been developed to complement the adaptive approach. While this publication has been developed primarily to support participatory mapping initiatives, we hope that it also can be used as a guide for developing participatory communication strategies in general. The publication was prepared by Jon Corbett (University of British Columbia Okanagan), with input and support from members[1] of the Consultative Group[2] of the project.

At this stage, the publication is very much a working document and we encourage feedback from users.

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On behalf of the Consultative Group of the project
'Piloting IFAD's Participatory Mapping Approach
for Specific Livelihoods
through Innovative Twinning Arrangements'

Introduction

A number of IFAD projects employ participatory mapping processes to enhance the capacity of individuals and communities in rural areas to represent and plan the sustainable use of natural resources. While these participatory mapping processes must be carefully considered and implemented, it is also critical that a comprehensive approach be developed for documenting, disseminating and using the knowledge that is shared, generated and recorded through the maps. When the IFAD-supported project for the Development of Decision Tools for Participatory Mapping in Specific Livelihoods Systems was being implemented, field visits were made to three IFAD-supported projects. The field visits revealed that each of these projects lacked a coherent approach to the use and communication of community spatial knowledge presented on the communities' maps.

To address this gap, this publication has been created to provide guidance to IFAD project staff on developing a participatory communication strategy[3] that will support and enhance the impact of participatory mapping initiatives, especially among pastoralists, indigenous peoples and forest dwellers. The publication is designed for IFAD project staff to use as a supplement to the practices outlined in the IFAD publications *Good practices in participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2009) and *The IFAD adaptive approach to*

participatory mapping (IFAD, 2010). It also provides a list of tools for documenting and managing the knowledge that emerges from the mapping process.

The implementation of a participatory communication strategy is particularly relevant when engaging in mapping activities with pastoralists, indigenous peoples and forest dwellers. In these contexts, maps are used as a medium through which community members may more thoroughly express themselves. They can illustrate in a visual and broadly accessible manner the natural resources and sociocultural features that are important to them and their community. Since these groups often represent the world's most powerless and marginal groups, it is imperative that the communication process linked to the mapping activities also be structured around dialogue characterized by a two-way flow of information, as opposed to a linear, persuasive approach.

The first section of this publication provides a review of participatory mapping and communication. It discusses the rationale for developing a participatory communication strategy when undertaking participatory mapping initiatives in IFAD-supported projects. The second section outlines a four-stage process for developing and implementing a communication strategy to support a participatory mapping initiative. It includes a step-by-step guide for creating a communication action plan and implementing communication activities. The third section addresses knowledge management procedures that can be employed

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[3] This was one of the focuses of the IFAD-supported project for 'Piloting IFAD's Participatory Mapping Approach for Specific Livelihoods (Pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, Forest Dwellers) through Innovative Twinning Arrangements – Phase II'.

A women's theatre group performs songs as an innovative way to communicate messages to the local community. Inguri, Mozambique.

in collecting and documenting information to be included in the participatory map or to record the mapping process.

This is the third report of a four-part series that focuses on participatory mapping initiatives within IFAD-supported projects. The fourth and last publication of this series will provide guidance on the participatory monitoring and evaluation of participatory mapping initiatives in IFAD-supported projects.

1. Participatory mapping and communication

Throughout the participatory mapping process, from early project design activities to evaluation, it will be necessary to communicate the community's experiences and information relating to the mapping initiative (process, experiences, outcomes) and to the content that is displayed on the map(s). Information that is collected and recorded through the participatory mapping process, as well as the experience gained and outcomes achieved from the initiative itself, are best communicated in a manner that acknowledges the central role of community members. It is important to consider how community members wish to have information recorded and disseminated. It is for this reason that participatory mapping initiatives are best accompanied by a participatory communication strategy that supports the effective sharing of local spatial knowledge, thus strengthening the impact of the initiatives.

> **The primary goal of participatory communication is to support the expression of local people's knowledge, needs, priorities and decisions through effective communication processes.**

In practice, participatory communication seeks to facilitate the sharing and use of local people's knowledge with the explicit intent of influencing decision-making processes and stimulating social change. Quarry and Ramirez (2009) note the importance of a participatory communication strategy for its listening and advocacy dimensions. It is not more information that is needed to solve many problems at the community level, but rather an enhanced capacity to communicate across cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries. Participatory maps are an effective way to transcend these differences by presenting a commonly understandable, visual and engaging medium of communication.

Maps are an established medium for communicating spatial information. If maps are to be produced in a participatory manner, the methods through which the information presented on these maps is shared and used should also be developed and implemented by their creators (in most cases this means the members of a community involved in an IFAD project).

Individuals and communities benefit from a participatory approach to communication by developing a stronger connection with the problem and its solution. When individuals feel that they are integral to the development of a communication strategy, they are more likely to become involved, and to stay involved until the initiative has been completed and the issues facing their communities addressed.

A second benefit associated with adopting a participatory communication strategy is that it helps to develop new skills that will stay within the community. According to the IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping,[4] training and capacity

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[4] *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping* outlines the actions needed at each step of the project cycle to implement participatory mapping processes.

building in local languages are necessary for community members to take greater control of the mapping process (IFAD, 2010). Depending on the communication strategy that is adopted, community members will likely be engaged in a variety of forms of information documentation (these will be discussed in greater detail in the following section) and knowledge management. While some initial training may be required, the skills gained will be useful for entire communities, not only for the purposes of the mapping initiative, but also into the future. The capacity of communities may be strengthened simply as a result of individuals within the community coming together and recognizing their ability to achieve results by working together as a group. By strengthening their capacity, communities become more empowered and prepared to mobilize and undertake future development initiatives (Mozammel and Schechter, 2005). In addition, communities may become connected with other communities and organizations involved in the mapping initiative, resulting in expanded and ongoing communication (Mozammel and Schechter, 2005).

2. Developing and implementing a communication strategy

Maps are powerful and engaging visual tools that excel in communicating spatial knowledge. They offer a visual, readily understandable language that can be interpreted by people from all backgrounds, whether community members, government officials, non-governmental organizations, researchers or development practitioners. Both the audience(s) to whom the map is made available and the manner through which information is collected and displayed will depend on the objectives that community members, often in association with project staff, identify for the map. The objectives, in turn will shape how communities develop and implement an associated communication strategy. These objectives can range from archiving and preserving oral histories to communicating community spatial knowledge in order to influence decision-making processes involving government officials or other external agencies. The mapping objectives must be considered alongside the availability of resources and the acceptability and appropriateness of various techniques within the community.

This section will discuss four steps that facilitators and community members may wish to follow in order to formulate a procedure for collecting and communicating information related to a participatory mapping project.

It is important to keep in mind that the communication strategy will overlay the entire participatory mapping process, including each of the five steps outlined in *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2010). These five steps are:

- **Project design**, which involves choosing the most suitable participatory mapping tool, determining what needs the map will meet and how this will be achieved, as well as allocating sufficient funds to complete both mapping and communication objectives;

IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping

- Project design phase
- Pre-mapping phase
- Mapping phase
- Map use phase
- Evaluation phase
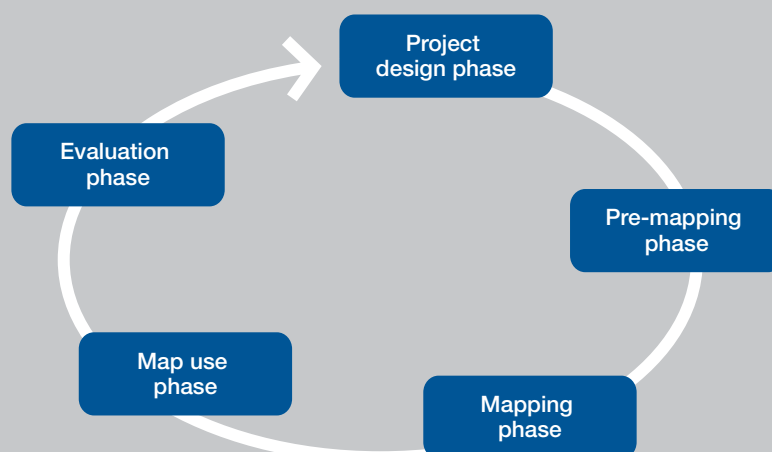
- **Pre-mapping activities**, including assembling resources, defining the roles that various stakeholders will play and engaging in training activities;
- **Mapping**, whereby community members work with stakeholders to develop the various components of the map;
- **Map use**, which involves considering who will have access to the map and to what uses it will be put; and
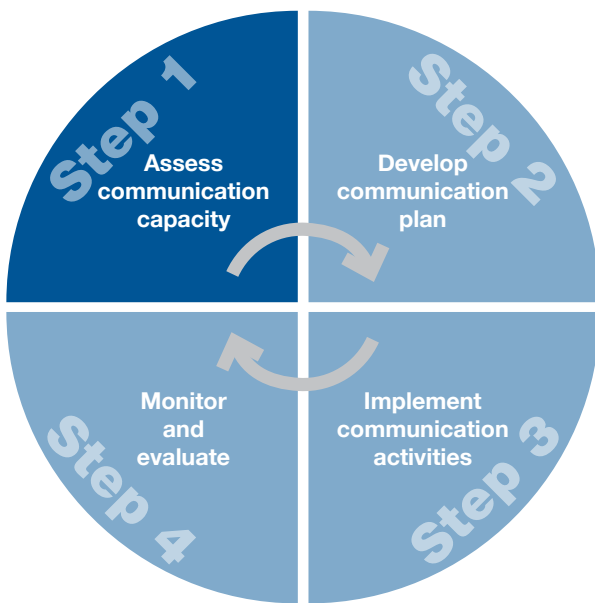- **Evaluation**, which enables community members and other stakeholders to 'weigh in' on both the process of creating the map, and the usefulness of the map itself.

Step 1: Assess communication capacity

Developing a participatory communication strategy should begin with an assessment of the local communication capacity. This includes having a clear understanding of the:

- Potential constraints to implementing a mapping project;
- Mapping resources available;
- Local organizations with participatory mapping facilitation skills and experience; and
- Previously completed mapping activities in the project area and within the partner country more broadly.

This assessment should be conducted during the preliminary stages (project design and pre-mapping phases) of a project and should involve all project stakeholders (IFAD design teams, project officers, government partners and community members).

From an IFAD project management perspective, it is important to have a **knowledge management officer** within the project management unit (PMU) to support, develop, manage and implement participatory communication activities (including participatory mapping activities) throughout the project cycle. As the World Bank (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009) notes, one of the biggest obstacles to successful communication interventions is the lack of continuous management of related activities. Therefore, creating a knowledge management officer position, and maintaining it throughout the project cycle, is of utmost importance. This will require allocating resources for such a position as well as for the communication strategy at the design stage of the project.

The knowledge management officer should assess the communication capacity at each level (national, provincial, district and community) of project implementation that might be used to communicate mapping-related activities, products and outcomes. More specifically, the officer should assess:

- **Traditional, legal and political constraints** and limitations to the creation and use of maps and their subsequent communication through mass media (for example, Malaysia and the Philippines have adopted legislation that restricts who has the right to create maps);
- **Conventional sources and types of messages** communicated to communities (predominantly by government or civil society and private sector), giving particular attention to the use and presentation of maps;
- **Existing media outlets** (e.g. newspaper, radio, pamphlets) **versus emerging media**, including information

technologies (e.g. Internet and mobile phones) and popular perceptions about the old versus the new media;

- **Geographic coverage** of existing media, especially newspaper, television and radio, considering the variance in reach between urban and rural media;
- **Communication style and scope** (e.g. literacy rate, interpersonal versus mass media, geographical and cultural diversity);
- **Existing communication capacity at each level** (traditional communication channels within and between government agencies and between government and communities), and opportunities to enhance this capacity;
- **Existing in-country organizational capacity**, especially local organizations with participatory mapping facilitation skills and experience; and
- **Other in-country participatory mapping communication efforts**, both past and present, as well as the organizations that have managed, funded and implemented these projects.
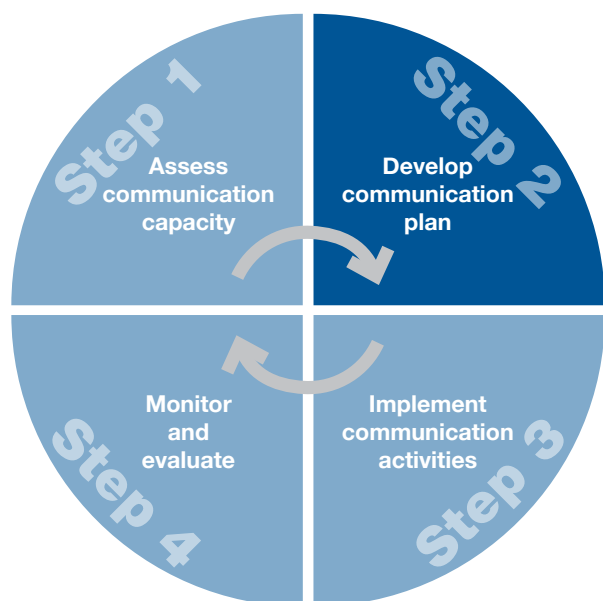
Adapted from Mozammel and Schechter (2005)

Community member records elder talking about community boundaries using a video camera.
Village of Benung, West Kutai, Indonesia.

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Step 2: Develop a communication strategy and action plan

Once the initial assessment (Step 1) has been completed, the communication strategy and action plan can be developed. This begins with crafting an overall strategy that provides a broad set of guiding objectives. Ideally this statement should be crafted directly with participating communities. This might be a very broad set of objectives that can be encapsulated in a single sentence. For example: "The project will implement a participatory mapping programme with partnering communities to identify and locate existing and desirable irrigation infrastructural needs. This information will be communicated to the PMU and local government in order to implement irrigation upgrades."

Once the overall strategy has been formulated, the communication action plan can be developed. The plan includes the following seven components:

1. Identify key communication objectives.
2. Identify the key stakeholders and audience.
3. Craft the messages.
4. Create activities, identify media outlets and determine timelines.
5. Identify those responsible for communication planning and delivery.
6. Prepare a budget.

7. Identify indicators to monitor and evaluate results.

These components are discussed in more detail below, and as they relate to participatory mapping projects.

Identify key communication objectives

In the context of IFAD-supported participatory mapping initiatives, key communication objectives might include the following:

- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience of the participatory mapping process among project stakeholders by partnering local communities and government organizations.
- Support and promote local communities' engagement in and influence over development interventions and planning processes using the spatial knowledge presented on their maps.
- Promote relationship-building among communities.
- Establish a channel for resolving conflict and sharing knowledge and experiences within and between communities.

Some questions to ask

- What is the purpose of making the map?
- What information/message(s) is the map communicating?
- Where will it be used, in what size and in what format?
- What is the desired life span of the map?
- Will information be added to the map in the future, or will the map be static?

Identify the key stakeholders and audience

In the context of participatory mapping, the audience for whom community members wish to create the map and the manner in which they hope to see the map used will need to be clearly outlined from the outset. Different stakeholders often require, or

else are disproportionately influenced by, different media. For example, sketch maps might be suitable to communicate spatial knowledge among community members, but might be considered too informal or imprecise by the government. On the other hand, geographic information systems (GIS) are a good tool to communicate information to the government but may be inappropriate when communicating information to a neighbouring community. The audience is therefore an important factor in choosing the most appropriate mapping tool; this will strongly influence the way in which maps are communicated.

One of the critical issues to keep in mind is the presence of unique groups within a community. In a community, perceptions, needs, ideas and conditions can be dramatically different depending on age, socio-economic status and gender, among other factors. Understanding the differences among and within stakeholder groups and approaching each with appropriate messages, media, methods and format is critical for maximizing inclusion, participation and empowerment (Mozammel and Schechter, 2005). Projects will need to create participatory maps[5] and associated communication activities in such a way that the diverse stakeholders feel sufficiently comfortable to express their views, share their concerns and provide input (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009).

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Some questions to ask

• Do stakeholders already use maps in their daily lives and/or work? This will help gauge the level of cartographic features that are presented on the map (e.g. coordinate systems, projections) as well as the selection of the most appropriate participatory mapping method.

• For whom will the map and associated products be available (e.g. only within the community, and to external organizations)?

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Craft the messages

As mentioned above, the perception of needs, ideas and conditions can vary among stakeholders and within a community. Using participatory methodologies, the knowledge management officer should work with representatives from each group (e.g. based on age, socio-economic status, gender) to determine suitable messages to include in a map and/or other medium for documenting the project process. For example, if a community is trying to communicate information about the difficulty in accessing water resources, women might focus on collecting drinking water, men might be concerned about water for their livestock and young people might be worried about water points along pastoral routes. Once again, engaging each group separately will help ensure inclusion, participation and empowerment of all groups within a community. A well-developed message should capture the perspectives of all community members in order to help achieve their desired objectives.

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[5] For guidance on how to implement a participatory mapping process and develop a participatory map in IFAD projects, refer to *Good practices in participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2009) and *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2010).

potential roles of all stakeholders, including local communities;

- **Gathering and assessment of relevant participatory mapping field manuals and experiences** of organizations and communities using mapping in the area;
- **Mapping activities in the field**, with a communication focus on reaching all community subgroups, together and separately, as well as communicating the maps to relevant stakeholders and decision-makers; and
- **Support to community-to-community learning and field visits** that promote learning and knowledge sharing.

Create activities, identify media outlets and determine timelines

Whether they serve as management tools or as value-added stand-alone activities, strategic communication activities should be mainstreamed into each stage of the participatory mapping process and should be a key element of the project's management component.

Major communication activities that should be undertaken in an IFAD-supported project that implements participatory mapping might include:

- **Engagement workshops** to inform stakeholders about the proposed project, including its objectives, procedures, stakeholders, timeframe and cycle, and how the participatory mapping activities fit within the overall project;
- **Stakeholder networking and knowledge exchange activities** (including between different communities involved in the project) to develop shared project objectives and processes;
- **Stakeholder consultation meetings and workshops** to explore the needs, concerns, capacity, experience and

Identifying appropriate media and their outlets depends primarily on the communicator (i.e. the community, in collaboration with the knowledge management personnel within the project) and the intended audience. Project officers will need to work directly with community members to consider the following when choosing mapping and documentation techniques:

- What is the budget of the project? Does the budget place any limitations on which media are appropriate?
- What kind of information do community members wish to share? How will it best be represented?
- What kind of technology is feasible? Is there consistent access to infrastructure (e.g. electricity)? Do community members have access to the Internet and mobile phones?
- Are there any cultural constraints to using certain techniques (e.g. discomfort with appearing on film)?
- For each approach to documenting information, how much time will need to be spent on training? Is there money in the budget for training?
- Will audiences all speak one language or multiple languages? Would it be best to use an approach that does not rely on language?

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[6] Ensure that community members agree whether sensitive information can be included on the map and with whom they wish to share it. For more information refer to *The IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2010).

From a community perspective, grassroots media outlets and technologies are possibly the most appropriate media for achieving its communication objectives. These include:

- Community workshops and theatre;
- Community radio;
- Telecentres that provide access to photocopy machines, telephones, faxes and information and communication services (often Internet services); and
- Information and communication technologies that are also a useful medium to communicate information, such as e-mail, blogging, Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets.

Other project stakeholders, including government partners or civil society, might be more likely to disseminate their messages using television, radio, newspapers, magazines, newsletters and mobile phones.

The effectiveness of a communication activity or success in reaching a target audience or objective also depends on timing. For example, when working with farmers, it would not be effective to conduct a mapping workshop during harvest season because the farmers will be busy in their fields. When planning for communication delivery, it is also important to consider the frequency of communication activities to avoid fatigue among community members. If communication is remote (for example, through websites or radio), then regular updating of information will help keep the community interested and engaged. In some cases, a mix of different communication tools and approaches might be most effective.

Identify those responsible for communication planning and delivery

Assigning responsibility within the project management unit (PMU), among stakeholders and in local communities for the communication activities is important to ensure their successful and timely implementation. Responsibilities need to be carefully matched to the capacity and

resources of individuals and groups. The people assigned responsibility need to be engaged in designing and delivering the communication strategy and plan from the outset of the project.

Responsibilities assigned to members of the PMU and other project stakeholders might include:

- Developing relationships with media outlets through social networks;
- Producing and making available documentation training materials and protocols; and
- Ensuring that recording tools and training materials are available and operational.

Responsibilities assigned to community members (who have been selected by the community as representatives) might include:

- Ensuring that community members are available and willing to share their experiences publicly and be included in photographs and video; and
- Liaising with PMU staff members to receive training for the documentation and recording of the process.

Prepare a budget

Ideally, during the project design phase, resources will have been allocated specifically for the implementation of participatory communication activities. During the pre-mapping phase, the PMU will need to develop a budget detailing costs associated with each communication activity recommended in the action plan. Once a budget is calculated for the various elements of each activity, a total budget for the entire communication component is estimated. Identifying the total cost of the operation is important in order to prevent the termination or delay of communication activities during the project because of lack of resources.

Identify indicators to monitor and evaluate results

Identifying appropriate indicators will make it possible to articulate the connection between

the participatory mapping initiative and associated communication objectives, and the overall project objectives. Moreover, the indicators will reveal whether the initiative's outcome (or outcomes) has been met. In this regard, it will be important for community members, as well as any project facilitators, to agree on what will be considered a successful outcome (or outcomes) of the initiative. The indicators can be monitored through surveys, focus groups and questionnaires. Determining how the project will be evaluated will require that a number of guidelines for the evaluation be outlined at the outset.

Some questions to ask

- Is the map being created to achieve a certain objective or meet a specific need? Has this objective or need been met?

- Do community members wish to develop or improve particular skills (such as video creation or photography)? Was this accomplished?

- Who should be responsible for creating and editing content? Did all stakeholders have a fair and equal opportunity to participate?

- To what use will the map be put in the future? Is the end product appropriate for these uses?

- Do community members wish to foster a greater sense of community cohesion through the process of creating the map? Was this achieved?

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) present a matrix that can help guide the design of this element. An example is given below to show the matrix being used to plan the communication requirements for a participatory mapping activity to locate project development interventions.

Step 3: Implement communication activities
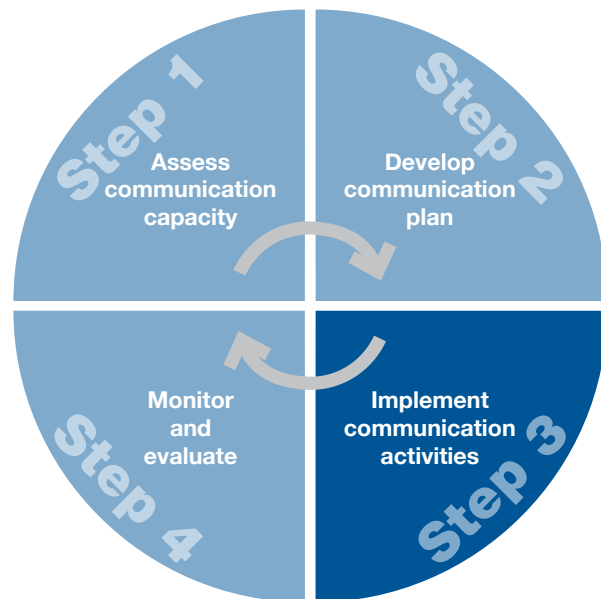
Once the communication strategy and action plan are developed, implementation can begin. Implementing the communication activities should run smoothly if the strategy and action plan are clearly articulated, the communication activities are directly relevant to the project's and communities' objectives and sufficient resources are in place. This step might entail hiring consultants and strengthening communication capacity among the project stakeholders, for example by providing training in documentation and knowledge management (see section 3 on knowledge documentation and management for specific training requirements).

Audience/ stakeholders	Activities	Media outlets	Resources	Party responsible	Timeframe	Indicators
Which actors are addressed by the initiative?	Which activities are needed?	What local media outlets are available?	What are the financial/ human resources needed?	Who is the party (person or institution) responsible?	What is the schedule for completion?	What are the indicators to assess and evaluate the impact?
Community members	Compile participatory training materials, deliver workshops and produce a training booklet on the process	Identify local media outlets	Funding for the compilation of relevant training materials, workshop delivery and booklet design, production and dissemination	PMU and NGO partners	12 months	Surveys with community members indicating satisfaction over determining the location of development interventions

Step 4: Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) enables the PMU to assess the impact of communication activities (these techniques can run parallel to broader monitoring and evaluation activities required by the adaptive approach on participatory mapping – see the beginning of this chapter). M&E should not occur only towards the end of the project. It needs to start at the beginning and be directly linked to each communication activity identified in the communication action plan. This will help to ensure that the communication can be refined and improved over the project lifespan. In line with the ethical considerations of participatory mapping practice, the M&E process needs to be developed in a participatory manner. This means developing indicators directly with all project stakeholders, from government partners to participating communities.

Project staff make a presentation on preventive
measures for soil protection to a group of villagers.
Antanetibe, Madagascar.

3. Knowledge documentation and management

A structured approach to documenting, managing, discussing and learning from the knowledge that is included in the map, and from experiences relating to the mapping process, will be necessary in order to effectively communicate the maps and outcomes/results of a participatory mapping initiative.

Throughout the communication process, project officers, in collaboration with community members, should identify the most appropriate and desirable tools for documenting the information that they would like to include in the map. They should take into consideration any cultural, political or geographic conditions that may affect the suitability of a given approach. Depending upon the techniques that are employed, documentation of local spatial knowledge provides a valuable opportunity for community members to develop a variety of skills. Additionally, community members may want to consider what skills they would like to develop, and how they might benefit from incorporating this capacity-building component into the initiative.

The way that information is documented is important for a number of reasons. Documentation will generate the material that will be used to inform and support a community's map. Material that is originally collected and recorded for inclusion on the map could also be useful for long-term archiving of local knowledge, and may therefore have uses beyond its original mapping purpose.

The documentation process is also important for keeping a record of the activities and events that occur throughout the lifespan of the mapping project. This can be useful during the evaluation stage of the project, when communicating information about a project's progress to external stakeholders such as governments or funding agencies.

The communication strategy employed must involve discussion about what community members wish to communicate, the methods used for relaying this information and who identifies and records this material. While members of the community will take a prominent role in managing the knowledge that is expressed through the map, it is likely that members of the PMU will also be involved, usually in a facilitating or training role. While certain individuals, such as community leaders, may play a larger role in the documentation process, communication with the entire community should be an open and ongoing process, identifying the materials to be recorded and the preferred approaches to documentation.

During the communication process, it is important for the PMU and any other facilitators to consider the unique ways that community members may have of expressing knowledge. Certain styles of communicating information may or may not be appropriate, depending on the ability of those styles to represent local spatial knowledge in a way that is meaningful to community members. Furthermore, a variety of cultural factors may influence the process of documentation in a mapping project. Cultural appropriateness,

including the ways that certain approaches to documentation may affect the intellectual property rights related to knowledge management and transfer, as well as the personal feelings of some individuals, should be discussed during the communication process. For example, many indigenous communities have protocols related to which local spatial knowledge can be shared between knowledge holders and others. This might relate to the location of specific cultural sites or of certain natural resources. Any documentation process would have to ensure that these protocols are respected.

Project facilitators should recognize that perspectives surrounding preferred approaches to documentation may not be homogeneous throughout the entire community. For this reason, multiple approaches and methods may be required to obtain input from all parts of the community. It is important for members

of the PMU, or other project facilitators, to ensure that all perspectives are included in the communication process, as well as throughout the process of collecting and sharing information. One way to begin thinking about this is in how the documentation team is formed. It should be comprised of outsiders and community members, women and men, young, middle-aged and elderly people, rich and poor and those from different ethnic groups, schools and churches within the community.

Some approaches to documenting information that community members and development intermediaries may wish to consider include note-taking, conducting interviews, creating audio-recordings, taking photographs, participatory video, participatory radio and social networking

media. These are discussed below in more detail. The choice of media will be largely determined by the overall purpose of the mapping project, as well as the appropriateness of a particular medium in a given environment.

Note-taking

Note-taking involves listening, watching and writing – throughout the entire participatory mapping process. It requires that those individuals responsible for collecting data pay attention to the things that people are doing and saying. It is important that note-takers remain impartial, and avoid bias or presenting information that reflects their own opinions or desires. It is likely that some notes will be taken regardless of the other communication techniques that are used since note-taking is very important for recording observations and documenting procedures that are employed. However, it is unlikely that notes alone will be able to effectively communicate items such as traditional practices, including ceremonies, dancing or singing. Furthermore, note-taking will be inappropriate for individuals who are non-literate or who are not familiar with the language in which the notes are to be written.

Interviewing

Interviews involve a dialogue between two or more people to explore a theme or topic, or to gain insight into a broad subject. They are useful for determining the direction the mapping project will take, as well as for collecting information to be included on the map. In fact, conducting interviews may be integrated into the communication process itself in order to ensure that the map is meeting the desires of diverse stakeholders within and outside of the community. Interviews are intrinsic to several other documentation approaches, included creating audio-recordings and working with video.

Audio-recording

Audio-recordings can be created based on interviews. However, it may be useful to record other activities such as talks given by key individuals, singing or other cultural performances. Audio-recordings may also be more appropriate when individuals do not feel comfortable appearing on film or in a photograph. Stakeholders also may want to consider recording meetings or other discussions surrounding the mapping initiative, in order to better document the process of creating the map and communicate some of the non-mapping outcomes of a participatory mapping initiative. Non-mapping outcomes might include a mapping workshop acting as a catalyst to establish new relationships between different stakeholder groups.

Radio

A variation of using an audio-recording as a means of communicating information is the use of radio. In many communities, where access to technologies such as the Internet or television is limited, radio provides an effective and accessible means of sharing and exchanging knowledge. Radio can be used to mobilize communities, spread information about knowledge-sharing meetings and information sessions and make community perspectives more widely known. However, radio generally operates as a one-way communication of information, and the way that knowledge is presented is ultimately at the discretion of the radio announcer.

Digital photography

Community stakeholders and development intermediaries may wish to include photographs, which can significantly enhance the aesthetics and content of a participatory map. Photographs are particularly useful if the map is digital. People, places, objects or events can be photographed by community

members and other people involved in the mapping project, and later added to the map. Historic photos or pictures from community members' personal collections also can be included. It may be useful to provide community members with some training on photography techniques and methods to enhance the images that they capture.

Participatory video

Stakeholders may want to discuss the option of using participatory video to communicate certain information that is included on the map. Participatory video is a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating its own film. Making a video is easy and accessible, and it is a great way of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply be creative and tell stories. Film is a powerful tool for conveying events, sentiments or the everyday affairs that characterize life in a particular place. Through the use of film, community members are able to demonstrate actions, practices or beliefs related to the land that may take many words to adequately explain. Furthermore, film is a great equalizer because ideas can be conveyed between groups that may not share the same

written or spoken language. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may be significant costs associated with using participatory video, and training time may be considerable.

Social networking media

When developing a communication strategy for disseminating knowledge collected and displayed on a map, project officers, in collaboration with community members, may wish to use a variety of social networking media. Social media include web-based and mobile phone applications used for displaying and sharing information, such as blogs, interactive maps, discussion forums or wikis. Information that is communicated in this manner can be made available to only specific individuals and groups, or can be publicly available for any interested party. Social media, which are effective for democratizing the process of collecting and communicating information, may be preferable when working with geographically dispersed stakeholders. However, this approach will not be suitable for communities lacking a reliable connection to the Internet.

4. Conclusion

Participatory mapping is increasingly playing a role in the empowerment of local communities by supporting their involvement in decision-making over natural resources. Participatory maps are effective and powerful tools for communicating reality as perceived by local communities (by representing both natural physical features and resources as well as sociocultural ones). Through the mapping process, community members collect, share and record information. To ensure effective sharing of the knowledge generated through this process, it is critical for participatory mapping initiatives to be supported by a participatory communication strategy.

By supporting community members in articulating and communicating their needs and priorities and sharing their experience, participatory communication help communities connect with other communities and support a two-way dialogue with decision-makers and external organizations. In addition, individuals and communities benefit from a participatory approach to communication by developing a stronger connection with existing problems and their solutions. The implementation of a participatory communication strategy will support the participatory mapping initiative in achieving its objective, whether it be to archive and preserve oral histories, or to influence decision-making processes. Community members will be more likely to become involved, and to stay involved, until the initiative has been completed and the issues facing their communities addressed. In addition, a participatory communication strategy helps communities develop new skills that will stay within the community.

This publication has presented four main steps for the development of a participatory communication strategy – assessing local communication capacity, developing a communication strategy and action plan, implementing the strategy and monitoring the activities. These steps should be seen as an integral component of the IFAD adaptive approach to participatory mapping. A carefully developed participatory communication strategy, combined with a participatory mapping initiative, can unleash the enormous potential of participatory mapping, and local knowledge can be harnessed to influence decisions and stimulate social change.

Women in the village of Tepulang, West Kutai, Indonesia, use
video cameras to record elders knowledge of plant resources.

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