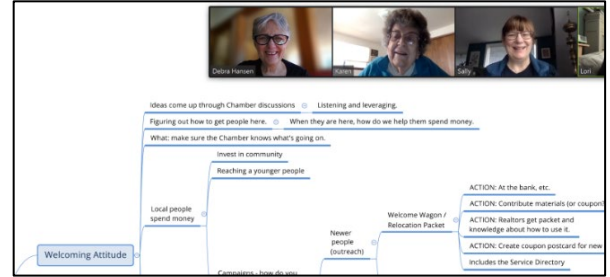# Ripple Effects MAPPING

A participatory evaluation technique to discover *intended* and *unintended* outcomes of your work.

Ripple Effects Mapping in a Live or Virtual Setting

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is a useful tool to use when total program impact is difficult to conceptualize and measure with other evaluation methods. It can also be used in mixed methods evaluation strategies, as it can complement and ground truth quantitative methods. You can share your outcomes with funders, partners, and decision makers. REM benefits include:

- It's a participatory and appreciative approach that engages stakeholders;
- You can achieve group validation of results;
- Activities can be connected to a larger purpose for participants to see emerging patterns and trends;
- Provides an opportunity for reflection, growth and celebration; participants are often more positive and hopeful when they see what they have accomplished; and
- It is adaptable to a wide range of ages, cultures, communities and content areas.

What can you do with the information?

One of the most powerful aspects of using Ripple Effects Mapping as an evaluation tool is that it enables you to gather detailed stories from a group or program. As you report your findings to funders, program participants, and other stakeholders, it is highly recommended that you take advantage of this rich and comprehensive data.

Where is it appropriate to use?

Ripple Effects Mapping can be conducted with a variety of groups and constituents and has been used with coalitions, arts groups, community groups and agencies (see case studies in the *Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping*).

Because REM is very interactive and low cost, it is easy for participants of all ages and for small and large organizations with any resources and abilities.

> *"I love how Ripple Effect Mapping supports the way adults like to learn. Learning together, sharing their experience, learning in context, and being self-directed."*
>
> Steve Siegelin, Montana State University Extenion, retired

> *We found the Ripple Effects Mapping fit our evaluation needs perfectly! We brought together diverse participants from a complex regional pilot project and, in a short amount of time, gained a comprehensive overview and a plethora of rich details. We learned specifics well beyond what our standard surveys would reveal.*

Step 1: Appreciative Inquiry conversations (in Breakout Rooms for virtual)

Appreciative Inquiry (positive-framed) conversations guide participants in telling their stories of success paired up in using the following types of questions:

As a result of participating in this program…
- What action steps have you taken?
- What changes are you most proud of?
- Have you shared your knowledge?

Step 2: Virtual Ripple Effects Mapping

After the breakout discussions, a facilitator helps draw out the stories, and a mapper types the accomplishments onto a paper copy, or into the software shown on the screen. These stories build on each other as participants others can add details, insights and interconnections. Using a mind-mapping technique, partnerships, unique contributions and outcomes start visually appearing in front of the group. The display of program results reveals multiple ripples and clusters of positive feedback to program members and leaders.

Step 3: Digitizing to software: print for sharing; organize for coding


The software we use is Xmind, that allows for digitizing the map to show expanded clusters of activity – demonstrating to participants where their passion and activity was most apparent. This can be a topic of discussion when presenting the results back to participants. The map can be shared in a pdf format with participants, funders, partners or other stakeholders.

Step 4: Export and code the qualitative data

Community Capitals Framework (short, medium, long-term)	Social	Cultural	Human	Financial
Provide a wide variety of opportunities	S	S	S	
Helps youth develop in an environment of acceptance	S	S		
This is inclusive and accessible to all in the community	S			
There is a cultural value of enrichment		M		
Has developed the theater into a legitimate organization				M
One youth received a degree from Yale Theater			M	
Now earning his living in Europe performing.				M
"A huge amount of community support."	M			

You can export data from the mind-mapping software into a spreadsheet, and code it to a framework that best fits the group's activities and impact. Shown here are short, medium, and long-term impacts, using the Community Capitals Framework, which identifies the assets within a community.
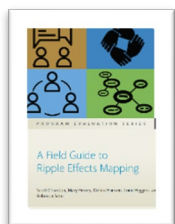
Additional resources:

The Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping, free PDF or $10 print copy
https://publishing.lib.umn.edu/publication/a-field-guide-to-ripple-effects-mapping

Debra Hansen, debra.hansen@wsu.edu | Rebecca Sero, r.sero@outlook.com | Lorie Higgins, higgins@uidaho.edu