

# ASSET MAPPING WITH YOUTH

## A Community Environmental Inventory

### OVERVIEW:

In part one of this activity, youth will create maps of their communities that highlight locations and activities that are significant to them, their family and neighbors. They will then share their personal maps in small groups, document their findings and share them with the larger group. Subsequently, a facilitator will document the assets and issues uncovered as a part of this activity.

As an extension, in part two, the group will make a large community map that contains all the assets and issues from the previous exercise. The larger map will allow the whole group to visualize the local assets and issues identified. Both the data from the smaller maps and the larger classroom map is part of their community environmental & social inventory and a tool for youth to use as they select a community issue as a project topic and consider assets they could deploy in their solution.

Leading youth in this activity at the beginning of a community environmental inventory will capture young peoples' pre-existing knowledge of community environmental issue and/or assets. Near the end of the community environmental inventory (we suggest that you use at least three inventory methods), young people can revisit this map and add in any new information they've learned through the inventory as a way to summarize all the information they have learned through the process.

The concept of community assets goes beyond the physical places that residents value. It is the experiences and activities that happen in these places that make them assets. These activities address the concerns of individuals and neighborhoods. Through this activity, youth can think about how to extend these assets to address community challenges in new ways.

### DIRECTIONS

#### Part 1 (50-60 minutes)

1. Explain to each student that they are going to draw a map of their neighborhood. On the map they are going to show the places that are important to people in their community, places where people, for example, get food or other things for their home, go to worship or meditate, get together with friends, create art, learn, find services, or just have fun. They will also include on the map places where there are environmental and social issues that face the neighborhood. Hand out a photocopy to each student of the Asset Mapping Questions and a copy of handout 1D What We Found:

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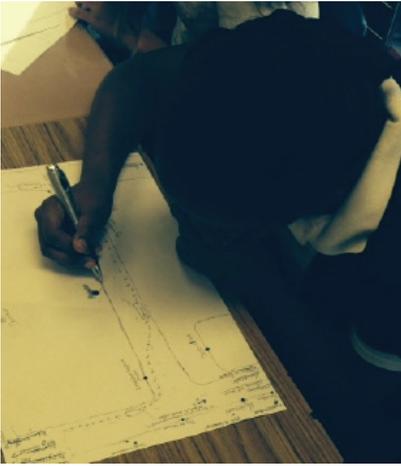
### MATERIALS

[Earth Force: A Curriculum for Community Action and Problem Solving](#), Handout 1D What We Found: Inventory Results, one per small group  
11 x17 sheets of paper, one for each participant

Pencils

Roll of White Craft Paper (for large classroom map)

Masking tape for hanging larger map on the wall



Middle school student creates a map of his neighborhood that includes social and environmental assets and issues.

*Photo Credit: Angie Viands*

Inventory Results (both included in this activity) to each small group.

2. Have each student sit down and answer the questions below (p. 4) about his/her community (ten minutes).
3. Once all the questions have been answered, give each student a piece of ledger paper 11 x 17 and have them draw a map of the community places they listed when they answer the questions. Give them adequate time (at least 15-20 minutes) to draw the map.
4. In small groups of 4-6 have students share their maps with each other.
5. As they share their maps, have youth create small group lists of community assets and issues with the *What We Found: Inventory Results* handout.
6. If you are only completing part one of the exercise, move forward with steps eight through ten. If you plan on using part two of this lesson, skip to part two.
7. Come together as a large group. On chart paper, make a large version of the chart on handout 1D *What We Found: Inventory Results*, from page 45 of *Earth Force: A Curriculum for Community Action and Problem Solving*. Hang this on the wall and use it to document all the community issues and assets identified by the small groups. Solicit their findings by having a representative of each group report them to you orally, while everyone sees what others found being written on the large chart.
8. Note that every community has assets and they can be built upon or used when they design their community environmental action project. This is important because many youth have a negative view of their neighborhood so it's good to emphasize that every neighborhood has assets.

Youth can save their individual maps and put them in their *Earth Force* project folder or journal for future reference.

### **Part 2 (optional, 60-90 minutes)**

1. Tape up a large square piece of paper on the wall of the classroom

(approximately 6ft x 6ft) for drawing a community map.

2. Next to the paper for the map, hang up a large piece of chart paper or butcher paper on the wall and write assets on the top left side and issues on the top right side like handout 1D in the *Earth Force: A Curriculum for Community Action and Problem Solving*.
3. Let the youth know that the entire group or class will be creating one big community map from the information they first generated in small groups.
4. One way to do this is to ask that each group assign at least one artist (depending on how big the group is you can add more artists, one presenter, and one scribe) .
5. One at a time, have each group come up to the area with the map and chart paper list. Explain that the presenter will read off several assets and issues that the small group found, as they read off each one, one of the artists will quickly sketch it on the map. The scribe will write the asset or issue on the master class list. Do this with each group.  
**Note:** it's likely that it will take the first group longer and the following groups a shorter amount of time to do this as the class may have come up with similar assets and issues and the first groups will add them before subsequent groups have their turn.
6. After all of the features on the small group lists are added to the the community map and the master list, ask the youth to share their reflections with the larger group.
7. Note that every community has assets and they can be built upon or used when they design their community environmental action project. This is important because many youth have a negative view of their neighborhood so it's good to emphasize that every neighborhood has assets.
8. You can leave the finished map up on the wall for the entire length of the project, so you can add newly discovered issues and assets to it throughout the community environmental inventory or refer back to it as needed in the additional project steps.

This lesson was developed by Madeline Tudor, Applied Cultural Research Manager, Mario Longoni, Urban Anthropology Manager and Angie Viands, Urban Conservation Educator with The Field Museum's Science Action Center.

# ASSET MAPPING QUESTIONS

## DIRECTIONS:

Answer these questions. Use your answers to guide the construction of your community map. Include the places below in your map.

- *What are the places that are important to you and your family in your neighborhood?*
- *Where do you go in your neighborhood? Why?*
- *What places do you avoid? Why do you avoid them?*
- *Where is your school?*
- *Where do you go after school? What do you do there?*
- *What activities does your family do at home [ex. Cook, garden, celebrations, home repairs, ect.]*
- *Are there places people get together in large groups? This could be for community meetings, celebrations, or other big events. Where is your house?*
- *Where is your church, library or community center?*
- *Where does your family go for outings?*
- *Where do you play or hang out outside?*
- *Where are the parks, natural areas, gardens and green spaces?*
- *Are there any important buildings, intersections, or shops that should go on the map?*
- *What is happening in your community that is good for the environment?*
- *What is happening that in your community that is not so good for the environment?*
- *Are there any major sources of pollution in your neighborhood? What are they?*
- *What other neighborhood social and environmental benefits and issues should go on the map?*

# What We Found: Inventory Results



STRENGTHS	ISSUES