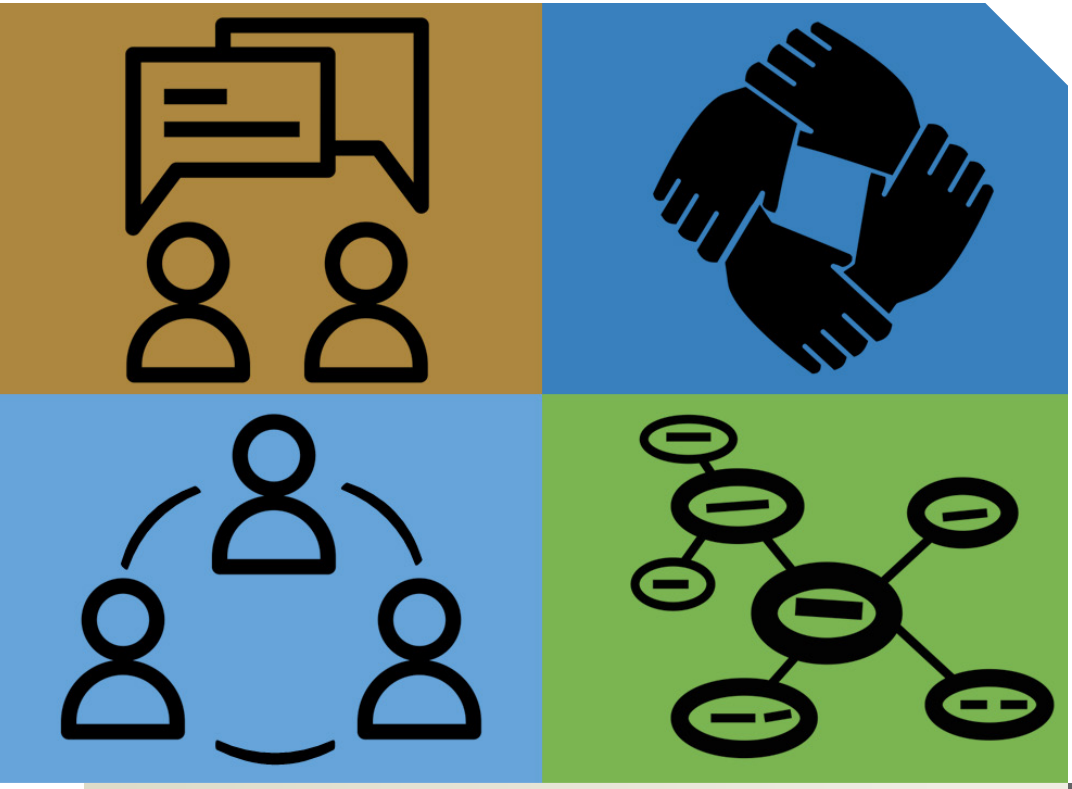

PROGRAM EVALUATION SERIES

# A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping

Scott Chazdon, Mary Emery, Debra Hansen, Lorie Higgins, and Rebecca Sero

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Scott Chazdon, Mary Emery, Debra Hansen,
Lorie Higgins, and Rebecca Sero (Eds.)


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A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping



The Program Evaluation Series is made possible by the expertise and support of the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI) at the University of Minnesota.

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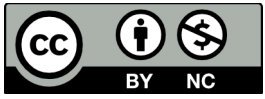



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## Comments from participants in REM sessions

The process helped to communicate the impact of the coalition to new audiences and led to a renewed commitment to public education based on the successful cultural shifts observed from past efforts.

Member of the Pierce-St. Croix County CARES Coalition

REM seems to be a particularly effective tool in documenting initiatives that are of a grassroots or organic nature and where the actions and outcomes are planned along the way rather than being a known goal at the onset. Additionally, the process itself creates a deliverable, a picture of the community's work together. This tangible product seems to validate the community's work and also spur new ideas and energy.

Team member for the Turning the Tide on Poverty Project

I was inspired and empowered by the reaction of the REM facilitator – two times we made her cry because of the impacts we had accomplished. The smallest stories became a thread for others in the room—telling stories and details they would not have known. . . .

Horizons community member

Now that we have all of this information, it's already been useful for talking to prospective donors for our capital campaign—it has become much more than just a building.

Member of the Chewelah Arts Guild

REM does a great job acknowledging and honoring the accomplishments of existing urban agriculture activities, showing how the roots of projects connect with new projects to form a healthy roadmap for growing the community into the future.

REM facilitator for the Ramsey County Extension Master Gardener program

REM is a positive and inclusive process, inviting community members to discuss successes and accomplishments. Using REM at two points in time allows participants to see how their efforts have unfolded over time and can refocus and reenergize participants around their progress.

Facilitator of the Healthy Communities Partnership

## Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board

The series Editor-in-Chief, Professor Jean A. King, lives in both the scholar's and the practitioner's evaluation worlds; she has taught at the University for over a quarter century while maintaining an active school- and community-based evaluation practice.

Similarly, the Program Evaluation Series Editorial Board includes diverse representatives from both the university and the evaluation practitioner communities:

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# INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce the second volume of the Program Evaluation Series, an occasional publication of the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI), which has its home in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota. Owing to the lengthy history of its evaluation training programs (extending back to the late 1960s when the field originated), the University of Minnesota has a strong reputation for evaluation, both nationally and internationally. For over two decades, MESI has sponsored exceptional professional development on program evaluation and provided graduate students hands-on opportunities to hone their skills on evaluation projects in a variety of organizations. This new endeavor, the Program Evaluation Series, seeks to broaden the number of people who can benefit from MESI activities by providing high quality, up-to-date, and extremely affordable materials on critical developments in the field.

Why now? There are three reasons we are launching the e-book series at this time:

- As the field of evaluation continues to grow around the world, it increasingly relies on on-line electronic materials to keep people up-to-date. The benefit of a series of e-books is clear since these books can be downloaded and re-produced for only the cost of the printing or formally printed for a nominal fee.
- The practice of program evaluation is a growing activity internationally, and the number of novice evaluators and people conducting evaluations who do not consider themselves professional evaluators is expanding. Knowing that only a small number of colleagues nationally

and globally are able to attend trainings in person, this series of e-books will enable MESI to provide useful materials to a broader array of individuals engaged in the field.

- An e-book series provides a vehicle for dispersing innovative evaluation content stemming both from academic settings like universities and, equally important, from the world of practice, including the multiple communities in which evaluators ply their trade. Practicing evaluators, many of whom write weekly or monthly blogs, routinely develop materials that they would like to share widely. The Program Evaluation Series provides a mechanism for such dissemination.

We hope you find this publication of value to your evaluation practice and sincerely invite your feedback (mesi@umn.edu) and suggestions for additional volumes.

Jean A. King, PhD
Director, MESI

PS: Each volume in the Program Evaluation Series will include one example of a signature MESI product: A top-ten list that compares program evaluation to something else. These lists are created collaboratively at our Spring Training each year and highlight the fact that evaluation really can be fun.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE REM E-BOOK

*A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping* is the second volume in the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute's Program Evaluation Series. Lead editor Scott Chazdon, a regular presenter at MESI Spring Trainings, was a prime mover in discussions that ultimately led to the e-book series. Ripple Effects Mapping is a group participatory evaluation method that engages program and community stakeholders to retrospectively and visually map the chain of effects resulting from a program or complex collaboration. In this volume, Chazdon and Extension colleagues in several states, all of whom are experienced with Ripple Effects Mapping (REM), provide a hands-on guide for this innovative approach to community outcomes measurement. Topics include the origins of REM, its grounding theory, practical how-to's, thirteen examples, and specific tools to facilitate the process. At a time when community-based programs more than ever need to document what happens as a result of their activities, REM provides a collaborative and cost-effective means for community members—even including those not engaged in a specific program—to detail program outcomes. As the book's conclusion explains, the REM process ultimately may hold the potential for personal, field, organizational, and community transformation.

# PART I
# The Origins of Ripple Effects Mapping

Debra A. Hansen

> Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.
>
> Robert Kennedy, 1966

People who work to effect lasting and positive change can lose hope that they are making the kind of difference they hope for, especially when a large group of people is involved in a change effort or when a project is long-term and complex. When external funding is involved, increasing calls to understand and report impacts of such work add pressure.

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) emerged as a distinctively powerful tool to help build community awareness and meet an ever-intensifying evaluation challenge. REM's evolution was convergent, emerging from two separate efforts that the following section will describe: the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) evaluation (Emery, 2008), and the evaluation of the Horizons Program (2008, Washington State University, University of Idaho, and North Dakota State). Its creators designed this participatory group process to document the results of program efforts within complex, real-life settings. Ripple Effects

Mapping uses its core elements to engage program participants and other community stakeholders to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes. The REM process documents impacts and offers a way to celebrate and re-energize program participants. REM is comparatively straightforward, cost-effective, and, most importantly, has the potential to generate momentum toward meeting future group, organizational, and community goals.

Experience has shown that REM is engaging and interactive; it is iterative and conclusive; and it is adaptable to unique contexts. This promising method for conducting impact evaluation engages program and community stakeholders to map the "performance story" of a program or collaboration retrospectively and visually (Mayne, 1999; Baker, Calvert, Emery, Enfield, & Williams, 2011). REM employs four core elements: (1) appreciative inquiry, (2) a participatory approach, (3) interactive group interviewing and reflection, and (4) "radiant thinking" (also known as mind mapping). At each stage, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques are available for use. Since its inception, the process has been tested in programs across the United States.

## 1. The Intersection of Capitals Origin

On one path in its evolution, ripple mapping emerged as an extension of the Community Capitals Framework. This framework employs seven indicators of a community's "capital:" natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capitals. (See the "Tools" section of this monograph, 164, for a one-page description and examples of the Community Capital Framework for REM).

On this path in REM's evolution, ripple mapping originated as a way to study how using assets in one capital could build assets in others. The first maps focused on tracing how increases in social capital could lead to increased assets in other capitals. From there, people used REM to answer two questions: "How has our work made a difference?" and "How is the world different as a result of our work?" Using the capitals to frame the map ensured that participants thought deeply about how their "pebble" in the community pond affected other elements. Diagramming capitals in this way also helped unintended consequences surface, and guaranteed that key elements of the ripple effect would not be missed. Developers presented ripple mapping at several Community Capitals Institutes where they further refined the process and formulated data analysis strategies.

Early in its history, this approach determined the impact of a small investment from the Lumina Foundation Project, focused on strengthening capacity in community and tribal colleges (Emery, 2008). Importantly, the use of ripple mapping on this project helped clarify and refine the three levels of change it helps identify. According to this process, an impact that occurs only in the first ripple represents a *transactional* change—an isolated transaction that

may not lead to additional changes. Impacts that cross two ripples indicate a *transitional* change affecting other elements in the same process or program. Ripples across three levels of change indicate *transformational* change—change that makes a difference in policy, institutional practice, or everyday thinking and acting. Ripple mapping revealed that, with adequate resources and coaching, the Lumina-supported project led to transformational change in most of the locations.

Community Development Extension Program leaders in the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) used ripple mapping to help them determine the impact of Community Economic Development programming on items such as volunteer hours, business development, and community capacity building across states. The Kellogg-funded community entrepreneurship program in Nebraska and the Community Progress Initiative in Wisconsin advanced this initial approach to mapping in evaluations.

Elsewhere, Extension staff used REM with young 4-H participants to demonstrate the value of engaging youth in reflecting on the results of their

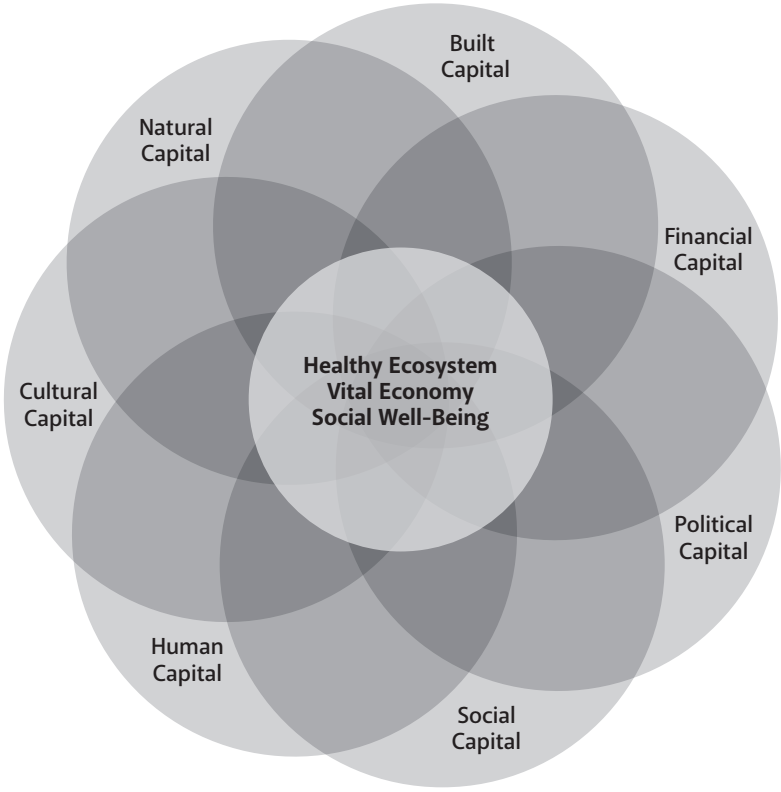



**FIGURE I.1** The Community Capitals Framework (Flora and Flora, 2008)

community-focused work and to explore metrics for demonstrating the impact of 4-H on its participants and the surrounding community. One comment illustrates the power of engaging young people in this process: "Mom! Mom! You won't believe what we have done!"

## 2. The Horizons Program Origin

A different approach to REM developed separately in work on a longitudinal impact analysis of Horizons, an 18-month community-based program designed to strengthen community leadership and subsequently reduce poverty (2008, Washington State University, University of Idaho, and North Dakota State). As part of this ripple mapping effort, participants from Horizon communities shared their individual stories from Horizons communities; stories were then coded to the CCF. This approach, piloted in Washington, Idaho, and North Dakota Horizons communities, involved minor process variations across states, but each employed maps to illustrate accomplishments to community members and to increase enthusiasm for action. This iteration of ripple mapping emerged from a central question: How do you evaluate the impacts of a program that lasts so long and has multiple players and several different activities?

After mapping the stories through a participatory group activity, facilitators digitized the data in mind-mapping software, exported it to a spreadsheet, and coded it to the CCF. This display and data analysis process allowed Extension faculty and participants to observe trends in capital growth within and across communities and among the three states.

The Horizons grant funder used traditional evaluation methods to paint program outcomes with a broad brush, gauging impacts across the seven states participating in all three phases of Horizons. Extension faculty in Idaho, North Dakota, and Washington participating in the project sought richer data from Horizons communities in their own states, and saw mind mapping techniques and the CCF as promising approaches toward that end. Ripple mapping, as they conceived and used it, allowed these faculty members to achieve their initial goals and to conduct a longitudinal analysis with the many Horizons communities continuing their work after the grant funding ended.

## Two Beginnings—One Valuable Tool

These two paths have now merged to advance one powerful, adaptable tool for documenting the results of programs. The authors who developed the core ingredients of Ripple Effects Mapping collectively wish to help readers create their own versions of REM on their way to discovering future detailed stories and program outcomes.

# PART II
# The Core Ingredients of Ripple Effects Mapping

Scott Chazdon and Samantha Langan

Because Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is an emerging approach, it is important at this early stage of development to clarify which elements of the method are truly core and indispensable and which are more flexible and adaptable based on the evaluation context. To use a recipe metaphor, if REM were like bread, there would be key ingredients–flour, yeast, water, salt–without which our product would not likely be known as bread. Other ingredients—raisins or seeds, for example—are optional additions.

There are four core elements or ingredients in Ripple Effects Mapping:

1. Appreciative Inquiry
2. A Participatory Approach
3. Interactive Group Interviewing and Reflection
4. Radiant Thinking (Mind Mapping)

In this chapter we describe these core elements as well as the reasons that each is key to REM. At the conclusion of this chapter, we compare REM to three other emerging impact approaches that share REM's "respectful attention to context" (Greene, 1994:538), yet lack some of the core elements that make REM unique: Outcome Mapping, Outcome Harvesting, and Most Significant Change. The examples later in this book provide a range of additional elements or ingre-

dients, to continue the cooking metaphor, that allow the basic recipe of REM to be seasoned and adjusted to a variety of evaluation contexts.

## Core Ingredient 1: Appreciative Inquiry

Ripple Effects Mapping sessions begin with participants interviewing each other using a series of Appreciative Inquiry questions. Coghlan et al. (2003) describe Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as "a process that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of what is in organizations in order to create a better future" (p. 5).

AI emerged along with social constructivist thought in the social sciences (see Berger and Luckmann, 1966, for a classic statement on the constructivist approach), and the notion that social reality is not only an objective set of forces that limit and constrain human action, but is also actively created or constructed by people creating meaning and acting together. Working at the Cleveland Clinic, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) first wrote of AI as a tool for understanding organizations based on life-giving factors, in contrast to deficiency-based approaches that focused on what went wrong. In a later publication, Cooperrider and Whitney (1999) described AI as the following:

> The cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system "life" when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an "unconditional positive question" often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. (p. 247)

A key influence in the development of AI was a paper by Gergen (1978) on *generative theory*, which argued that "the most important thing social science can do is give us new ways to think about social structures and institutions that lead to new options for action" (cited in Bushe, 2007, p. 1). The intention of AI is to generate new possibilities and transform organizations.

One of the common misunderstandings of AI is that it only focuses on the positive, bordering on being Pollyannaish, yet this notion of *generative knowledge* is not the same as *positive knowledge.* As Bushe argues, "A focus on the positive is useful for AI but it's not the purpose" (Busche, 2007, p. 4). The point of AI is not to create a biased focus on the positive as much as to create the opportunity for a group to uncover what *could be* (Busche, 2012, emphasis added). For evaluators charged with making judgments about the merits of a program, a purely positive perspective is seldom the goal. Instead, creating generative

energy around a program and its future can be a clear goal of evaluation efforts, especially those aligned with a more developmental approach.

AI is well suited for creating generative energy, especially if used early during a group process. It is often important to bring in critical, even negative reflections on a program during the REM process, but only after a group has come together to create generative energy at the beginning of the session. In our experience, conversations about negative consequences of programs can also be generative, as long as the discussion maintains the overall goal of moving towards a desired future.

The most common model for conducting AI is known as the *4-D model*, including questions that guide participants through the stages of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. The first stage of this process, Discovery, involves participants interviewing each other and sharing stories about some of their best, peak experiences with a program (Coghlan et al., 2003). With information from this Discovery phase, participants then flow through the Dream phase in which they think broadly about the desired future, the Design phase, in which they propose strategies that will lead to positive change, and then the final and ongoing Destiny phase, in which participants implement their overall visions for the organization.

As part of the REM session, the primary AI focus is mostly the Discovery phase, although aspects of the Dream, Design, and Destiny phases often emerge during the group conversation and certainly become part of the process as the completed mind map is returned to the group. During REM sessions, participants are asked to interview each other about peak experiences, including successes or achievements that have resulted from a program, deepened or new relationships, identification of types of *ripples* or new opportunities that have emerged from those relationships, and unexpected or surprising developments that may have been triggered by the program or by relationships built during the program.

Of course, the choice of which AI questions to use varies depending on the type and context of the programming. In a recent series of REM sessions focused on rural community tourism development efforts, we used the following three AI questions:

1. What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement with these efforts? What did this achievement lead to?
2. What new or deepened connections with others (individuals, community organizations, government, philanthropic) have you made as a result of these efforts? What did these connections lead to?
3. What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement in these efforts?

These questions were developed in consultation with core program staff. In many cases, it is appropriate to engage an even broader range of program stakeholders in drafting and thinking through the AI questions that will be part of a REM session. This consideration about broader stakeholder engagement in the REM design process leads us to the second core ingredient of REM: its participatory approach.

## Core Ingredient 2: A Participatory Approach

Participatory evaluation strategies (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Zukoski & Luluquisen, 2002) move beyond thinking of program stakeholders as recipients of evaluative information and integrate program stakeholders actively in the evaluation process. This participatory approach dramatically increases the potential for evaluation results to be useful for program stakeholders such as community-based organizations (Johnson et al, 2009; Patton 2012a).

The literature on participatory evaluation is closely linked to the broader literature on civic or public engagement and the notion that there is a range of depth for engaging the public in deliberation and decision-making processes. Arnstein (1969) first popularized the idea of participatory depth, and the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum (Figure II.1) has done so more recently. The IAP2 spectrum displays a continuum of engagement, with efforts to inform or consult with the public representing relatively low levels of participant control and efforts to involve, collaborate, or empower the public representing higher levels of participant control (International Association for Public Participation, 2007; Nabatchi, 2012).

Academic debates about what constitutes participatory, collaborative, and empowerment evaluation (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013; Fetterman, Rodríquez-Campos, Wandersman, & Goldfarb O'Sullivan, 2014) have heightened awareness and sensitivity to the different types of relationships that evaluators can have with program staff, program participants, and other stakeholders such as funders, community residents, or external organizations.

Over the years, Cousins and Whitmore (1998, 2013) developed increasingly sophisticated ways of understanding what they refer to as collaborative inquiry in evaluation. As noted by King (2007), the Cousins and Whitmore framework provides three useful dimensions with which to understand and support a continuum of participatory evaluation practices. These dimensions, seen in Table II.1 below, are a) control of technical decision making, which can range from total evaluator control to total stakeholder control; b) diversity among stakeholders selected for participation, which ranges from direct program participants to a highly diverse group of external stakeholders; and c) depth of participation, which ranges from consultation to deep participation, much like the IAP2 spectrum.

**FIGURE II.1** International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum (International Association for Public Participation, 2007)

Cousins, Whitmore, and Shulha (2013) distinguish Transformative Participatory Evaluation (T-PE) from Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) and Stakeholder-based Evaluation (SBE) based on these three dimensions (Table II.1). T-PE is oriented toward empowerment and self-determination for the participating organization. It involves shared control of decision making, a highly diverse group of stakeholders, and deep participation. P-PE is more focused on practical problem solving that promotes the use of evaluation results. It involves shared control of decision making, somewhat less diversity among stakeholders, and deep participation (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013, p. 9). Stakeholder-based Evaluation is characterized by a moderate level of diversity among stakeholders involved with the evaluation combined with firm evaluator control of decision making and a more consultative approach to participation.

So where does REM stand in these various dimensions of participatory evaluation? In terms of control of technical decision making, REM relies heavily on the expertise of the evaluator to design the two-hour group session and to facilitate the group process. The stages of the REM process—writing and sharing of the AI-based questions, peer-to-peer interviewing and group reporting, and group reflection to generate themes for the ripple map—are controlled by the evaluator, but it is not a tight control. Stakeholders, especially program staff, have many opportunities to influence the process, including how the AI questions are written, who is invited to the session, how and to whom participants are paired for peer-to-peer interviews, and what themes are prioritized from the data. In these ways, staff are considered key informants and sometimes, co-facilitators; while control of decision-making may lean towards the evaluator, it is somewhat balanced between the REM participants and facilitator.

**TABLE II.1** Dimensions of Form in Collaborative Inquiry (based on Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013)

| Dimension of Collaborative Inquiry | Stakeholder-based Evaluation | Practical Participatory Evaluation | Transformative Participatory Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Control of technical decision making | Evaluator control | Shared control | Shared control |
| Diversity of stakeholder participants | Moderate | Moderate | High |
| Depth of participation | Less depth—more consultative | Deep | Deep |

The second pole—diversity of stakeholders selected for participation—can be highly variable depending on how broad a reach the program is intended to have beyond the direct program participants. For instance, some programs may try to affect key stakeholder organizations, whereas others have a goal of promoting change beyond those organizations to broader communities or systems. Given these varying contexts, it is a goal of REM to include as diverse a group of stakeholders as possible, including those indirectly affected by the intervention. It is only through this diversity of perspectives that one creates the connections between more direct participant insights about a program's effects and the more distal insights that typically come from outside observers.

The third pole—depth of participation—can also vary based on REM contexts, but this is probably the most collaborative aspect of REM. The deepest stakeholder participation occurs when stakeholders actively participate in all aspects of the evaluation, from planning the evaluation, to data collection, to analysis and reporting. At minimum, stakeholders in REM are highly engaged in the data collection efforts, but they also may be heavily engaged in pre-session planning steps such as the identification of the core focus of the REM session and writing of the AI questions. Non-evaluator stakeholders may also contribute to data analysis, which is often an inductive process of generating themes from the data that flows from the AI process. The following section, on interactive group interviewing and reflection, explains how these data are collected.

## Core Ingredient 3: Interactive Group Interviewing and Reflection

Ripple Effects Mapping is a qualitative approach that relies on interactive group interviewing and reflection. Like other qualitative methods, a variety of practical and theoretical advantages are observed when implementing a REM session. For example, because participants use their own words to describe their experiences without the facilitator making a priori assumptions, in-depth knowledge is gained about the participants' backgrounds and programmatic experiences—information that can be missed from close-ended or quantitative methods. Other practical implications include uncovering new and unanticipated information about the effects of a program, which is especially useful for evaluations with a formative focus on program improvement, or for newer or innovative programs that are employing a developmental evaluation approach. A greater cultural understanding of phenomena is also gained when participants from varying backgrounds share their unique interpretations and perspectives (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Additionally, observed theoretical implications of using qualitative methods include better refining constructs and relationships, enhancing the quality of construct measurement, and developing or advancing social science theory (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011).

Through interactive group interviewing and reflection, REM helps generate new knowledge regarding the kind and extent of program impact. The facilitator

and participants work together to identify program effects, or ripples, that then become visualized through mind mapping. The following section details the two specific stages of this core ingredient.

### STAGE 1: PEER-TO-PEER INTERVIEWS AND REPORTING

REM is composed of two stages, the first being peer-to-peer interviews and group sharing of interview responses and the second being group reflection. The first stage lasts approximately 45 minutes to one hour, and is driven primarily by the participants.

After coming together to engage in a REM session, participants are asked to divide into pairs for peer-to-peer interviews. About 10 minutes are allotted for the interviews, allowing each participant roughly five minutes to interview his or her partner. During these interviews, participants ask one another a series of standardized open-ended questions that the facilitator developed previously with stakeholder input (see examples of Appreciative Inquiry questions in the section beginning on 6). Participants can ask tailored follow-up questions for clarification of their partner's responses, but the interviews tend to follow a structured versus semi-structured approach. This structured approach is ideal for minimizing interviewer effects and conducting a cross-sectional analysis to discern themes across a key set of questions (Yin, 2011).

Because the majority of participants tend to have little to no experience conducting interviews, the facilitator asks participants not to deviate from the interview protocol, to use active listening skills, and to take notes of their interviewee's responses. This tends to increase the rigor of the interviews, since it is unlikely participants would know how to effectively conduct semi-structured or unstructured interviews. If time allows, the facilitator may attempt to mitigate the limitation of having amateur interviewers collect data by leading a brief interview training session to demonstrate interview skills, though this is not a standard practice of the peer-to-peer interviewing process. Since the majority of participants tend to be new to interviewing, the facilitator monitors the peer-to-peer interviews to answer any procedural questions that arise, as well as checks on pairs to make sure they are adhering to the interview protocol.

After participants complete the peer-to-peer interviewing, they come back together as a group to discuss their responses to the interview questions. The facilitator oversees this discussion to make sure no participants dominate the group reflection, but stakeholders still drive the focus of the conversation. Participants share their replies to the interview questions, and can comment and add to others' responses to compare and contrast lived experiences. It is the aim of this activity that participants build off one another's thoughts and generate ideas collectively, leading to new insights and identification of common themes during the REM session. This discussion lasts about 45 minutes to one hour depending on the size of group and the group dynamics.

As with any method that uses program staff to collect data, the limitations of peer-to-peer interviewing include lack of formal training in interviewing techniques (e.g., not conveying empathic neutrality, getting off topic, wording open-ended questions inappropriately, etc.), concerns about confidentiality, threats to validity such as social desirability bias, and the use of leading questions that may elicit responses in which the interviewer has a vested interest (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2011). As Patton (2015, p. 427) notes, "The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer," and for peer-to-peer interviewing and group sharing of responses to be successful, it is recommended that the REM facilitator provide sufficient interview training beforehand (e.g., role modeling how to be an active listener) as well as monitor the peer-to-peer interviewing and group discussion processes.

### STAGE 2: GROUP REFLECTION

Following the peer-to-peer interviews and group sharing is a facilitator-led group discussion and reflection stage. While there are variations in how to facilitate this group reflection process (see Radiant Thinking section, below), the group process provides an important opportunity for the whole group to reflect on the effects of the program as well as how the effects are connected with one another.

Reflection is typically thought of as a process in which individuals think about past events and go back over these events in their minds. REM provides an opportunity not only for individuals to reflect on past events, but for a group to collectively reflect, creating a cumulative reflection process. As noted by Moon (2004), reflection is working out what is already known and adding new information. This opportunity to reflect draws out new knowledge, new meaning. and a higher level of understanding within a REM group. From experience, we have also found that REM solidifies a sense of common purpose among those participating in the process.

In his book *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schon (1983) drew an important distinction between *refection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action*. Reflection-on-action is retrospective and involves the thinking that goes on after the conclusion of an event. It can be described as the type of reflection that involves stepping back from a situation to examine it, almost as an outsider looking in. In the context of a REM session, reflection-on-action occurs when participants examine how the program affected them and their community after a program cycle has ended. REM participants may also reflect on the various strengths and challenges associated with the program. When conducted as a group, reflection-on-action makes it possible for individuals to identify differences in interpretations of past events.

Sometimes these interpretations differ slightly, and participants need to work to find a shared understanding of the events. This often leads to Schon's

(1983) other type of reflection, which is *reflection-in-action*. While practitioners of reflection-*on*-action view past events from a distance, practitioners of reflection-*in*-action bring the interpretation inward, applying acquired wisdom from past experience to the present moment. During a REM session, for instance, participants may reflect on how their own perspectives change by learning about others' experiences with the program. Through this process, participants gain greater knowledge that they can apply to current or future situations. Ultimately, both reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action exhibited during a REM session promote movement towards shared understandings, and also generate thinking about new directions and possibilities for a program.

Lastly, one of the major benefits of REM is its focus on greater program engagement. Like other evaluation methods that involve program stakeholders in data collection (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shula, 2014; Fetterman, Rodriguez-Campos, Wandersman, & O'Sullivan, 2014; King & Stevahn, 2013; Patton, 2011, 2012a), those participating in REM gain a deeper understanding of the program as well as learn how to collect and reflect on qualitative data. Additionally, after completing a REM session, participants tend to feel more engaged with the program and re-energized to pursue further collective action (Vitcenda, 2014). Participants often carry forward with the program's goals and create prolonged program impact for themselves and others (Vitcenda, 2014). The REM session thus acts as an intervention, helping participants learn how to think evaluatively and reflexively, increasing their engagement with the program, and increasing the program's impact.

Most of the literature on reflection focuses on processes within individuals' minds, and this *intrapersonal reflection* certainly occurs during a REM session, but there is an *interpersonal dynamic* in a REM session as well. Interpersonal or group reflection is valuable in that participants are able to influence one another with their ideas and comments, which is how humans naturally tend to form opinions in real life (Krueger, 1988). As Krueger (1988) explains, humans do not form attitudes or make decisions in isolation, but rather are influenced by their environment and the people in it. It is not uncommon for people's beliefs to shift once they learn about the social norms and attitudes of their group (Krueger, 1988; Patton, 2015). This phenomenon is often referred to as a *partner effect* (Ervin & Bonito, 2014), and can have important implications for group cross-validation, or getting feedback from others in one's group regarding the generalizability and accuracy of one's perspectives (Curry, Nembhard, & Bradley, 2009). The refining of participants' attitudes through group discussion provides a system of checks and balances on the accuracy of information; group members can comment on what others are saying and contradict or support other members' claims (Krueger & Casey, 2008). Thus the process discourages "group think" as it encourages inquiry and "what if" possibilities.

To facilitate a supportive and useful group reflection, the REM facilitator is charged with the task of being an effective leader so that the group can: (1) stay

focused and on task, (2) properly note changes in participants' beliefs, and (3) place equal weight on all group members' ideas and experiences. The facilitator also makes sure there is group consensus on the themes that are generated for the mind map so that participants who have an influential presence on others are not the only ones whose experiences are represented.

## Core Ingredient 4: Radiant Thinking (Mind Mapping)

We use the overall label of *radiant thinking* to describe the final core ingredient of Ripple Effects Mapping. As described above, towards the beginning of a REM session, participants interview each other in pairs using a series of AI-based questions. They are instructed to use active listening skills with each other, and usually take notes during the interviews. Once this peer-to-peer interview process is complete, participants are asked to report out some of the most important effects they heard in their interviews. The process of reporting out marks the beginning of the radiant thinking phase of REM.

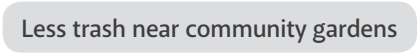
Perhaps the most notable aspect of REM is its use of mind mapping to visually depict the chain of effects resulting from a program. While data visualization has become a hot topic among evaluators, the appealing graphics usually are presented to stakeholders after the evaluation is over. Mind mapping allows participants to use data visualization to inform their judgments during the data collection process. Patton (2015, p. 484) notes the importance of creative modes of qualitative inquiry. Mind mapping gives participants who are visual learners an opportunity to view both the big picture and specific details simultaneously, and those who are not visual learners still appreciate the opportunity to see their words instantly reflected back to them on the screen.

Mind mapping is a diagramming process that represents connections among ideas hierarchically (Eppler, 2006, p. 203). A fundamental concept behind mind mapping is *radiant thinking* (Buzan, 2003), which refers to the brain's associative thought processes that derive from a central point and forms links between integrated concepts (Bernstein, et al., 2000). As described by Tony Buzan (2006), the British psychologist who popularized mind mapping, "thoughts radiate outward like the branches of a tree, the veins of a leaf or the blood vessels of the body that emanate from the heart" (p. 22).

Historically, mind mapping has been used for note taking, brainstorming, memorizing, and organizing. It is this organizing purpose that fits so well with program evaluation and the other core ingredients described above. In the case of REM, mind mapping makes it possible to capture causally-linked chains of effects. During a REM session, participants report out their program's effects after their AI peer-to-peer interviews. However, even when instructed to report out single effects, participants often move quickly into storytelling mode and begin to describe the chain of events that led to the effect or outcome they

are reporting. Mind mapping software can be used by the facilitator to graphically display these chains. For example, in a session focused on the impacts of community gardening efforts, a participant reported out that the areas near community gardens are noticeably cleaner, with less discarded trash. On the blank mind map, this would look like a single bubble of data:

**FIGURE II.2** Single bubble of data in a ripple effects map




Sometimes without prompting, and sometimes with, participants will begin to describe the chain of effects that either led to or was caused by the effect they initially report. In this case, the participant told a story about how the community gardening effort they worked in had engaged with several artists who volunteered to artistically paint the trash cans near the garden. What had been a single effect quickly became the following chain of effects using mind mapping software:

**FIGURE II.3** Chain of effects following from the single bubble of data

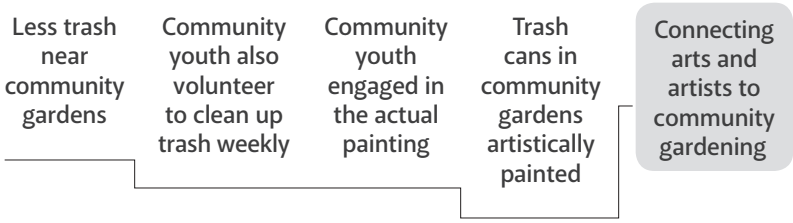

The facilitator's job during the REM session is to capture these chains of effects when they are reported, but it is also important to ask follow-up questions to participants to clarify the causal chains that either led to or were triggered by a reported effect. Given that REM is a group process, it is important not to spend too much time asking follow-up questions to a specific individual, so it may be necessary to follow-up with individuals after the session is complete in order to capture a comprehensive story using the mind mapping software.

One important facilitator role during a REM session is encouraging participants to challenge or ask questions about causal chains reported by others. It is even helpful to remind participants that there are three criteria that must be present in order to make assertions about cause-effect relationships (Neuman, 1994, p. 44):

1. Temporal order: The cause must precede the effect in time;
2. Association: The cause and effect must occur together in a patterned way; and
3. Elimination of plausible alternatives: There is no alternative factor that might be the ultimate cause or an intervening causal factor.

The advantage of having a group of stakeholders present is that other members of the group may know about other plausible explanations, or other factors, that need to be included in the causal chain and clearly portrayed on the mind map. As an illustration, consider the above example about artistic garbage cans. One of these artists may in fact have been part of the REM session and may suggest that the reason the garbage cans led to reduced littering was because the artists had directly engaged community youth in the process of painting the cans. As a result, the youth had taken more ownership for keeping the garden area clean. With the input from this other stakeholder, the ripple effect chain would be modified to look like this:

**FIGURE II.4** Ripple effect chain, modified to include more stakeholder input




The process of asking follow-up questions to create ripple effect chains depends greatly on audience composition and size. It is preferable for REM sessions to have 12 to 20 participants. If the group is on the small end of this range, it may be possible to spend more time with individuals asking follow-up questions and capturing ripple chains with great detail. If the group is larger, the focus needs to be more on capturing the full breadth of participant experiences shared in pairs during the peer-to-peer interviews. Either way, it is usually necessary to conduct some follow-up document analysis or interviews with participants after the session is over, and add these additional details to the ripple effects map.

Another important theme closely related to causality is attribution. When we gather people together for these sessions, participants often describe a wide range of effects or outcomes, some of which may have very little to do with the program being evaluated. As noted by Patton (2012), under conditions of complexity, with collaboration and overlapping interventions, it becomes difficult to identify if a particular program is the ultimate cause of desired outcomes. Patton references the work of Mayne (2008) and the notion that the key challenge in conditions of complexity is to identify *contributions* of a program rather than make causal claims attributing credit to a specific program. Attribution relies on traditional cause-effect questions such as, "Has the program caused the outcome?" or "How much of the outcome can be attributed to the program?" Contribution analysis is based on questions such as, "Has the program made an important contribution to the observed result?" or "Has the program influenced the observed result?" (Patton, 2012b, p. 366).

These contribution-oriented questions can easily be incorporated into the REM process. They can be part of the whole group session, or can be asked of certain key informants after the session. One strategy we have employed to conduct this type of contribution analysis is the "but-for" question (Morse, French, & Chazdon, 2016). The "but-for" question originated in tort law and is usually used to determine cause-effect relationships, but it is more a "proximate" cause-effect relationship. As applied to program evaluation, the "but-for" question is, "Would this effect have occurred if the program had not been delivered?" Asking this type of question in a room full of stakeholders often leads to great discussion of relationships that have been spurred or strengthened by the program being evaluated, or other programs or activities that have been impactful and should be included in the ripple map.

## Comparing REM to Other Emerging Impact Measurement Approaches

The four ingredients we have featured in this chapter—Appreciative Inquiry, Participatory Approach, Interactive Group Interviewing and Reflection, and Radiant Thinking—are the common ingredients of the Ripple Effects Mapping approach. While REM is a unique method, several other approaches to impact evaluation bear some resemblance to REM in their attention to program context and the complex chain of causal effects produced by programs. Here we contrast three approaches—Outcome Mapping, Outcome Harvesting, and Most Significant Change—to REM in order to highlight the particular uses and strengths of each.

**OUTCOME MAPPING** (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001) is a methodology used for the full range of planning, monitoring, and evaluation of complex international development initiatives. The core focus of Outcome Mapping is the insight that a single program is unlikely to be able to claim responsibility for the achievement of broader development impacts or changes in condition. The core focus, therefore, is on specific behavioral outcomes that are within the scope of a program's influence. "Outcome Mapping establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental betterment to which the program hopes to contribute and then focuses monitoring and evaluation on factors and actors within that program's direct sphere of influence" (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001, p. 2).

Like Ripple Effects Mapping, Outcome Mapping is a highly participatory process. All types of program stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the process of designing the monitoring framework and evaluation plan. Outcomes Mapping differs from REM in its deductive and prospective—rather than inductive and retrospective orientation—as well as in its focus exclusively on behavioral outcomes at the individual level. This focus on the intended outcomes of programming differs from REM's focus on both intended and unintended results, and from REM's inclusion of cognitive, relational, and other non-behavioral outcomes at the individual level and beyond.

**OUTCOME HARVESTING** (Wilson Grau & Britt, 2012) is a retrospective method for identifying, formulating, verifying, and making sense of a broad range of outcomes that may be associated with a program. In Outcome Harvesting, the evaluator reviews documents such as reports or other secondary sources and conducts interviews in order to assemble a retrospective chain of effects leading from the intervention to the outcome. All types of outcomes—intended or unintended, positive or negative, individual-level or beyond the individual—can be examined using this process. As stated by the creators of this approach, the evaluator "works backward to determine whether or how the project or intervention contributed to the change."

On the surface, the Outcome Harvesting approach sounds very similar to Ripple Effects Mapping. Certainly its overall intent is quite similar. The biggest difference between Outcome Harvesting and REM is the relationship of the evaluator to program stakeholders. In Outcome Harvesting, there is a clear separation between the evaluator and stakeholders in the interest of assembling an objective accounting of the chain of effects connecting the intervention to the outcome. In REM, this type of objectivity is not as important as the engagement of program stakeholders in creating a group narrative of the chain of effects. As a participatory evaluation method, the subjectivity of participants is given as much (or more) weight as the objectivity of the information gained.

The **MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE** method (Dart & Davies, 2003) is a participatory, story-based approach for exploring program impacts. Narratives are collected from people most directly involved in a program, including participants as well as staff. The stories are collected by asking a simple question, such as "During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?" Respondents are encouraged to reflect on why they consider a particular change for program beneficiaries to be the most significant one (Davies & Dart, 2005, p. 10).

The collected stories are then reviewed at different levels of an organization's hierarchy, and reviewers make decisions on the strongest stories. Every time stories are selected, the criteria used to select them are recorded and fed back to all interested stakeholders, so that each subsequent round of story collection and selection is informed by feedback from previous rounds. This process promotes organizational dialogue and learning about the outcomes that are deemed most desirable.

The Most Significant Change method shares with Ripple Effects Mapping its emphasis on qualitative data collection, group reflection, and a highly engaged approach to data collection and interpretation. It differs from REM in its use of narrative rather than mind mapping and its systematic procedure for selecting the most significant impacts of an intervention at different levels of an organizational hierarchy. However, as some of the examples suggest, the REM process

can include an opportunity for group participants to reflect on what they perceive to be the most significant ripple effects reporting during a session.

Now that we have shared the conceptual underpinnings of REM, and compared REM to its closest counterparts in the evaluation field, we turn to a discussion of REM implementation. The editors of this volume have developed three variations of the REM process, which we detail in the next chapter. Despite the differences in approach, all share the common ingredients of Appreciative Inquiry, a participatory approach, interactive group interviewing and reflection, and radiant thinking.

# PART III

## How to Conduct a REM session

Scott Chazdon, Mary Emery, Debra Hansen, Lorie Higgins, and Rebecca Sero

REM is just one tool that evaluators should combine with other program evaluation methods. Typically, a REM evaluation is most appropriate when the program or intervention is complex and involves a wide range of participants and stakeholders. Questions to ask include:

- Are both intended and unintended effects likely?
- Is the intervention something to which people can attribute their influence or at least identify their contributions?
- Do people already talk about the "ripples" from the intervention?

The entire REM process typically takes a minimum of two months for planning, implementation, analysis, and reporting.

Ripple Effects Mapping involves five steps:

1. **IDENTIFYING THE INTERVENTION** REM is best used for in-depth program interventions or collaborations that are expected to produce broad or deep changes in a group, organization, or community.

2. **SCHEDULING THE EVENT AND INVITING PARTICIPANTS** The REM process includes both direct program participants and non-participant stakeholders. This latter group offers a unique perspective and a form of external validation to verify the chain of effects that program participants report. Ultimately, a group of 12 to 20 participants is ideal.

3. **CONDUCTING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) INTERVIEWS** At the beginning of the REM event, participants pair up and interview each other about particular ways the program affected their lives or particular achievements or successes they have experienced as a result of the program.*

4. **MAPPING THE RIPPLES** The core of the session involves participants in visual mapping, using Mind Mapping software or chart paper and tape on a wall, to brainstorm and hierarchically map the effects or "ripples" of the intervention. This process engages the entire group and provides opportunities for participants to make connections among program effects. A facilitator and a "mapper" co-lead the process, which is typically completed in one to two hours. At the end, evaluators may ask participants to identify the "most significant change" revealed during the mapping (Dart & Davies, 2003).

5. **CLEANING, CODING, AND ANALYZING THE MIND MAP** After the session, the evaluator may need to reorganize the mind map and collect additional detail by interviewing other participants. The data produced in the mapping process can be downloaded into a spreadsheet program and coded in a variety of ways. For example, REM evaluators often code the "ripples" as short-term knowledge, skill, or attitude changes; medium-term behavior changes; and long-term changes in conditions. Additionally, those within the community development community frequently code the changes in conditions using the Community Capitals Framework (Emery & Flora, 2006; Rasmussen, Armstrong, & Chazdon, 2011).

## Variations in Approach

To date, the editors of this book have developed three distinct methods for facilitating and conducting REM sessions (Emery, Higgins, Chazdon, & Hansen, 2014):

1. Web mapping
2. In-depth rippling
3. Theming and rippling

The following table provides a brief comparison of these three approaches.

* For more information on the role of Appreciative Inquiry in REM, see Part II: The Core Ingredients of REM, 5.

**TABLE III.1** Comparison of Three REM Methods

| | **Web Mapping** | **In-Depth Rippling** | **Theming and Rippling** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overview of Method | Group examines short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts, and then maps them directly onto a Community Capitals mind map | Group focuses on the deepest and most impactful chains of events | Group captures the breadth of reporting impacts from all participants, generates impact themes, and examines ripples once themes are generated |
| Process Steps | Conduct Appreciative Interviews<br>Report and map outcomes to Community Capitals Framework<br>Discuss final reflections, including most significant change | Conduct Appreciative Interviews<br>Report and map ripples<br>Discuss final reflections, including most significant change | Conduct Appreciative Interviews<br>Report stories<br>Conduct theming<br>Discuss ripples and negative effects<br>Discuss final reflections |
| Creation of Map | Ripples are mapped onto butcher paper using the Community Capitals as a guideline. and are later transcribed into mind mapping software | Ripples are mapped onto butcher paper and are later transcribed into mind mapping software | Ripples are mapped directly into the mind mapping software, which is displayed in real-time on the wall |
| Data Analysis | During the mapping process, outcomes are categorized according to the Community Capitals Framework | Following the mapping process, short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes are coded using a chosen framework | During the mapping process, open coding is used to identify themes |

## STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

While overlap exists among the three methods, each one employs a unique set of process steps. The following sections explore the three different approaches in greater detail, providing step-by-step instructions for each REM variation.

## VARIATION 1: WEB MAPPING

Because REM emerged in community development program contexts, many REM efforts have employed the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) to organize participant data during the reporting-out process. (See Figure I.1 in Chapter 1). Flora and Flora (2008) developed the CCF and applied it to the evaluation of community development programs by Emery and others (Emery & Flora, 2006; Emery et al., 2007, Rasmussen et al., 2011). As noted above, Flora and Flora (2008) originally described seven different community capitals: cultural, human, social, political, financial, built, and natural capital. As a leader in using the CCF (Emery & Flora, 2006), Mary Emery begins the REM process with the community capitals to encourage participants to consider how change in one community sector may ripple into changes in others.

After the initial AI interviews between paired participants, the session follows a logic model structure in moving from discussion and mapping of short-term outcomes ("What are people doing differently?"), to medium-term outcomes ("How are these immediate changes impacting or benefitting others or changing what others do?"), to longer-term impacts ("Based on the short- and medium-term outcomes that have occurred so far, what is different in the community today?").

Practitioners have used the web mapping approach for both formative and summative evaluation purposes. This approach is especially useful in identifying opportunities to strengthen program outcomes by including an intentional focus on how people can tweak elements of the strategy, project, or program to take advantage of opportunities to build assets in the intangible capitals—social, cultural, political, and human.

The following is a detailed view of the steps taken during a two-hour web mapping REM session:

### *Process steps*

1. **WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW** (5 minutes)
2. **REVIEW OF PURPOSE** (5 minutes): The purpose of the activity is to look at how the work has made a difference in the community and to use that information to think about what we can learn from our work together, how we can use that information going forward, and how we can evaluate that work.

3. **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY** (15 minutes): Begin by asking people to share in pairs for about 5 minutes how they feel their work has made a difference in the community.

    A. Consider your work in the community and focus on a specific aspect of that work that you feel has made a positive difference in the community.

    B. Find a partner you have not talked with in a while and share your stories for about 5 minutes each.

    C. In the large group, ask people to list the impacts they discussed.

    D. Use the information shared to help the group come up with the main topic for the center of the map.

4. **INTRODUCE THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS** (5 minutes): Write the capitals around the edges of the map in black, and provide a brief explanation of each. Also write the main topic in the center of the map.

    A. Start with **natural capital** because it frames what is possible in a place. Natural capital includes natural resource assets as well as those in our environment. For communities interested in tourism or those focused on farming, natural capital is extremely important.

    B. We often think of **cultural capital** in terms of language, dress, traditions, music, etc., but it also includes our everyday ways of thinking and doing. Some community members might say, for example, "A great asset here is our work ethic." That is an example of cultural capital.

    C. **Human capital** refers to our health, knowledge, skills, and understanding. It also includes self-efficacy, or our belief that we can make things happen.

    D. When we talk about **social capital**, we are focusing in on connections and relationships. We want to look at the networks people are involved in—those where people know each other well and bond together, as well as those that are based on weak ties, but that link us to resources and information. Social capital exists where there are norms of reciprocity and trust.

    E. People often think of **political capital** in terms of policy, laws, and running for elective office. Political capital includes the carrots and sticks that encourage certain types of behavior, but it is also about whose voices are heard and respected.

    F. **Financial capital** is most often a focus of community development efforts. It includes not only loans and investments, but gifts and philanthropy. Investments in financial capital lead to increases in profits, jobs, and businesses.

G. **Built capital** is our infrastructure, from the roads we drive on to the towers that support our cell phone service and access to the Internet.

H. At the end of this introduction, confirm the topic for the center of the map.

5. **EXPLAIN THE THREE LEVELS OF RIPPLES** and that the purpose of this tool is to better understand the impact of our work by thinking about it as a pebble or boulder in the community pond. Using the capitals to frame this discussion helps us think about the whole community and avoid overlooking some aspects. Some find it helpful to draw three rings around the center topic with Ring 1 (the first ripple) around the central topic, Ring 2 (the second ripple) around the first ring, and Ring 3 (the third ripple) around the second. (5 minutes)

6. **BEGIN MAPPING THE FIRST RIPPLE** by asking, "What are people doing differently?" Put the items generated during the first ripple discussion near the center in the section of the map framed by the capital they represent. When the map is done, you should be able to see all the social capital impacts, for example, in one section of the map. Probe for more ideas by asking about changes in the capitals not yet mentioned. (10 minutes)

7. **BEGIN MAPPING THE SECOND RIPPLE** by focusing on items in the first ripple and using questions like "who is benefitting and how, and how is the fact that people are doing things differently affecting others?" (10-15 minutes)

   A. Use a different color, so the ripples are evident in the color scheme.

   B. Draw an arrow from the item in the first ripple to the item in the second. Sometimes there are multiple arrows. The arrows will show the process by which change was accomplished, which can inform new efforts.

8. **BEGIN MAPPING THE THIRD RIPPLE** by asking the question, "What changes are you seeing in the community's systems and institutions and organizations? Are everyday ways of thinking and doing changing? How?" (10 minutes)

   A. Use a new color so the ripples are evident in the color scheme.

   B. Use an arrow to link items in the second ripple to those in the third ripple.

9. Finally, ask, "What do you think is the **MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE** on the map? Why?" Use red to star those items. (5 minutes)

10. Initiate a brief discussion on **HOW THE MAP CAN HELP WITH EVALUATION**. Ask questions like: "Looking at the map and thinking about the impact of your work, what questions about your work would you like to have answered? Are there items on the map for which data are already available?" (5 minutes)

11. Initiate a brief discussion on **HOW THIS REFLECTION PROCESS COULD PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO NEXT STEPS**. "What are the implications of what we learned from the mapping about our impact that will be helpful in our next round of our work?" "What additional stakeholders should we add to our advisory committees or project committees based on how we are affecting the community?" (5–10 minutes)

Evaluators can also use ripple mapping in two other ways. First, groups can use REM to plan an initiative. Here the questions would be, "If we are successful, what will people be doing differently, how will that make a difference, and what changes do we hope to see in organizations, everyday ways of thinking and doing, and community/neighborhood characteristics?" Second, evaluators can use the results of a ripple mapping activity to populate a logic model. The first circle of effects captures short-term outcomes; the second usually equates well with long-term outcomes, and the third identifies existing and potential impacts.

### VARIATION 2: IN-DEPTH RIPPLING

The *in-depth rippling* approach emerged as an evaluation strategy for a community leadership program in several states. After the initial AI exercise, the facilitator asks participants to volunteer stories, using a large sheet of butcher paper to record the conversation. Prompts encourage participants to share their stories and outcomes, creating a rich and detailed narrative describing the project. Participants are invited to add to each other's reports, eliciting stories that emerge from focusing on a particular outcome. Each set of follow-up stories creates the ripple. Developing the map as stories unfold allows participants to control themes and see resulting ripples. They often see trends in their work. For example, members of one community noticed their most successful efforts started with more investments in human and social capital. Maps can be simultaneously digitized on mapping software such as XMind or digitized after the exercise.

Detailed facilitator instructions for the in-depth rippling REM process are below. (Adapt as you see fit, but we would appreciate knowing how your adaptations work.)

**ITEMS NEEDED** Large white paper posted on the wall, tape, markers, and AI questions printed on paper with space for participants to take notes during interviews.

*Process Steps*

1. **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION AND OBJECTIVES** (5 minutes): Introductory statement (edit to fit your group as needed): "This impact mapping evaluation project will help us better understand the ripple effects of the program on individual participants, groups, communities, and regions involved. This mapping process provides a method of visually illustrating to stakeholders the impact of this program, validating the effects of the program, and creating stronger support and public value. The purpose of this study is to explore overall (individual, group, community, or regional) changes that have taken place as a result of participating in the program."

2. **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW** (10 minutes, but listen for when the conversation decibel level begins to decline. Do not cut off interviews just when conversations really get rolling. Build in some extra time in case participants take a little longer to warm up.) 11.5

   - Find a partner who is not already a good friend
   - Share a story briefly about the program being evaluated using one of these sample Appreciative Inquiry questions:
     - Tell me a story about how you have used the information received in the program
     - Is there anything you are proud to share? Cost savings? New ways to work? Telling others about what you learned?
     - List any achievements or successes you had based on your learning through the program. What made them possible?

   **NOTE** Introductions, which should include the individual's role within the program or community, can happen either before the interviews or when it is the participant's turn to speak.

3. **MAPPING** (45–75 minutes): Ask each pair to offer one story (only one at a time, going around until all stories have been shared, so everyone has an opportunity to participate), then ripple it out (draw out some of the details), welcoming input from all. Use a different color for each story.

   - Probing questions can include:
     - Then what happened?
     - Who was involved?
     - How many people were there?
     - What was the dollar amount of the grant?
     - What is different in the community as a result (people, organizations, relationships?)

   Continue until all stories have been captured and rippled.

**FIGURE III.1** Probing questions and ripples example (**bold text** = probing question)


**TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MAPPING**

- It may be easiest to start with individual learning and action items.
- When mapping, get as detailed as possible. After collecting information for the "map," there will be opportunities for participants to add and embellish. This provides ideas about how to dig deeper.
- People may be shy about sharing their own successes, but may be more willing to talk about how others have used the information.

4. **REFLECTION AND CLOSING** (5–15 minutes): Ask group members to reflect on the mapping process.
   - Ask the group to identify what they see as the most significant change(s) on the map.
   - Other possible debrief questions:
     - What is most interesting about the map?
     - How might we use the map to help us tell our story about how we are making a difference?

- What should we do next? (can refer to use of mapped information or, with more time, use of the map to identify impact concentration and gaps)

- If appropriate, briefly describe the Community Capitals Framework and present it as one way to organize impacts. You can ask participants to give examples of where their work has affected different capitals.

5. **CLOSING** (5–10 minutes): Thank the participants for engaging in the Ripple Effects Mapping Exercise and discuss the next steps. Will the map be digitized and coded? Will it be photographed and shared? What ways will the data be shared with others?

### VARIATION 3: THEMING AND RIPPLING

The *theming and rippling* approach is an adaptation of in-depth rippling where the facilitator asks all participants to report out two or three of the most significant effects they heard about in their Appreciative Inquiry interviews. This ensures that all members of the group have the opportunity for people to hear their insights out loud and see them displayed on the initial mind map. The reported items are typed directly into mind mapping software and displayed as "floating topics."

Upon completion of the reporting-out phase, the facilitators engage the group in a conversation about core themes. One way to do this is to move similar items physically near each other on the mind map screen (or on the wall if using sticky notes). Then, once similar items are located near each other, the facilitator can suggest or invite participants to suggest a thematic label for the information. The core themes are useful for later sharing of the mind map, allowing facilitators to more easily simplify the map with a focus on major themes and examples of impacts in each. Given the importance of conducting the REM session in a limited amount of time so participants are not fatigued, it is often helpful for facilitators to suggest themes to the group, then try to organize the mind map so that participants can get a sense that the theme is a strong fit with the data they reported.

Facilitators can then go back to the original reported impacts and use prompts to encourage participants to fill in causal chains leading to and resulting from these items. It is helpful to go through this "rippling" process for some of the more significant stories that emerge from the Appreciative Inquiry. However, because the rippling discussion typically focuses on only one participant at a time, the facilitators do not spend a large part of the agenda on the rippling component. It is often necessary to do a deeper interview with individual participants during the weeks after the session to collect more detail on the chain of effects, and add this information to the mind map.

As part of this theming and rippling approach, facilitators also "probe for negatives" near the end of the session. This often leads to thoughtful discussion of not-so-positive events that may have occurred as a result of the intervention, as well as responses to identified challenges to date.

Below is a typical agenda for a Theming and Rippling REM session:

1. **INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF OVERVIEW** (15 minutes): The session begins with introductions led by a program organizer or an individual known by everyone present. The facilitator then provides an overview of the session and its use of a visual "mind mapping" method to help the group reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes produced by the program or initiative.
2. **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW** (15 minutes)
   - The facilitator will match core participants with other stakeholders.
   - Share a brief story about your experience with the program using one of these questions:

     Core Participants
     - What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement with the program?
     - What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement with the program?
     - What connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of the program?

     Other Stakeholders
     - What impressions do you have of the accomplishments program participants have made as a result of their participation in the program?
     - What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement with the program?
     - What connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of your involvement with program?
3. **REPORTING AND MAPPING** (90 minutes): Now we'll report out and build from the interviews to generate themes about the ways the program is having an impact. Our questions during this mapping exercise are intended to help draw out and categorize different types of "ripples," such as new knowledge or skills, new relationships or connections, new financial/economic opportunities, strengthened or new cultural activities, new or improved facilities, and maybe even strengthened or new efforts to conserve the natural environment. We also will be asking about negative consequences of the program and responses to these.

**GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD MAP**

- Review the way that your comments show up on the map. We invite you speak up if it does not reflect what you said, either in the wording or connections.
- At first, comments on the map may seem all over the place. Over time, the map will get clearer as we hear how things are connected.
- Today's map is only a rough draft. After the session, we will review and organize the map in consultation with core program staff.

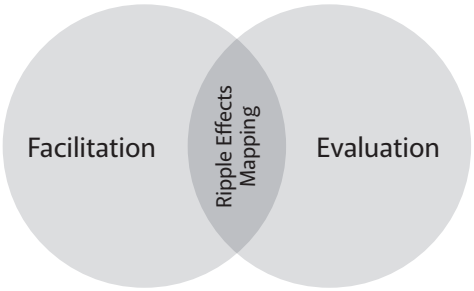
4. **REFLECTION AND CLOSING** (20 minutes)
   - Ask what is most interesting about the map to participants
   - Describe process for editing and sharing the map.

## THE SKILL SETS NEEDED

Because of its participatory nature, conducting a Ripple Effects Mapping session requires a combination of different skill sets. The two most critical sets of skills are that of facilitator and evaluator.

- **FACILITATION SKILLS** Session facilitators must be able to encourage the group to engage and discuss the topic in a meaningful way, ensure that open communication is occurring, and manage time in an efficient way.
- **EVALUATION SKILLS** A REM session has several similarities to a focus group, so a facilitator must use comparable evaluation skills. This includes managing a group interview process, as well as observing and reacting to nonverbal cues. Facilitators must also be prepared to analyze data on the spot, asking follow-up questions to exhaustively ripple an outcome and discover the underlying pathways within each of the ripples. In some cases, facilitators must also engage participants in creating and cultivating thematic categories.

**FIGURE III.2** The REM skill set at the intersection of facilitation and evaluation



While not required, additional useful skills include knowledge of technology and data analysis.

- **TECHNOLOGY SKILLS** Especially relevant for those using a Theming and Rippling approach, technical skills help session facilitators effectively and efficiently use the mind mapping software.
- **DATA ANALYSIS SKILLS** Understanding how to examine and dissect the data collected during the mapping is a critical part of using the results from a Ripple Effects Mapping session. Depending upon the intent and goals of the REM session, facilitators may be called upon to conduct a more thorough review of the data gathered. This requires the ability to analyze the data using an appropriately chosen framework.

#### ALL APPROACHES

Regardless of the radiant thinking approach used, evaluators can capture the final Ripple Effects Map using mind mapping software, such as XMind© (www.xmind.net). After a period of review and feedback with session participants, evaluators can export the mind map to a spreadsheet for coding and analysis. This is particularly easy with XMind, although it may be easy with other types of mind mapping software as well. In XMind, just click on the center of the mind map, select Copy from the menu, open a spreadsheet, and select Paste. Once the ripple effects information is pasted into a spreadsheet, the evaluator can use the Community Capitals or other relevant thematic framework to code the effects. In public health contexts, for example, a thematic framework of policy, systems, and environmental changes may be applicable. Other frameworks may emerge directly from a program's theory of change if one has been established for the program.

For the coding process, we strongly recommend having a pair of evaluators code together. This increases the reliability of the coding results because both evaluators must agree with coding decisions. The coders will need to create clear definitions of the coding categories and a decision framework for whether to allow coding of a particular reported effect under more than one category. For example, using the Community Capitals Framework, if a participant in a session reported that the program motivated her to run for elected office, this effect might be coded as a human capital effect as well as a civic/political capital effect.

## Conclusion

The implementation of REM may vary based on the program involved; the applications featured in this book exemplify how to use REM in practice and explore the array of innovative ways REM has been adjusted to fit new programmatic contexts and diverse audiences. The next chapter provides an overview of the thirteen applications, focusing on core categories of similarity and difference in approach. Following the examples, the editorial team members offer their

insights on the ways that REM has transformed their work, as well as the organizations and communities in which they work. The monograph concludes with thoughts on REM's future. Given the interest in REM among the Extension and program evaluation communities, it is easy to conceive of a future in which REM ripples or branches into multiple program contexts and becomes regularly used over time.

# PART IV
# REM in Practice

Rebecca Sero

This chapter provides a snapshot of the examples presented in this book. The intent of the following information is to frame the context for the three Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) approaches used. These brief snapshots are divided into six informational categories:

1. The context in which the Ripple Effects Mapping occurred
2. Why facilitators chose the REM tool
3. The session participants
4. The chosen REM design
5. How the results were analyzed
6. The reporting and/or follow-up to the mapping

## Example Snapshot Categories

### CONTEXT

The thirteen examples occurred within four types of contexts or levels: single community, multi-community, coalition, and system-level. In each case, the context played an important role in determining the decisions made about the specific REM approach used.

### WHY REM?

The case study authors offered a range of reasons why they chose to conduct REM evaluations. Most common among these reasons were the desire to document program impact in a way that involved multiple perspectives and participants, an interest in generating enthusiasm and energy for continued work, and a desire to help participants connect their efforts with those of others.

### WHO WAS INVITED

In all of the examples, program participants were part of nearly every Ripple Effects Mapping session. Other common invitees included board members and program staff. Coalitions typically included their coalition members as part of their REM sessions. Several groups also invited non-participants, with the thought that they could provide a unique perspective to the work accomplished.

### APPROACH USED

There were three possible approaches for each session: (1) In-Depth Rippling, (2) Theming and Rippling, or (3) Web Mapping. Most typically, the REM expert on the project dictated the approach; each researcher had a favored approach. As a result, there were some geographical location differences, with In-Depth Rippling occurring primarily in the West; Theming and Rippling and Web Mapping sites were largely concentrated in the Midwest and the South.

### DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Given the community context for many of the examples, the primary data analysis method used was to code the data to the Community Capitals Framework. Other sites found that open coding worked well to help reveal the findings from the mapping. Most of the data analysis occurred following the completion of the REM session. However, there were two examples in which the coding occurred during the session.

### REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP

The follow-up to the initial REM sessions included several engaged options, such as additional REM sessions, member checking, or presenting findings to the community, program, and/or coalition participants. Many groups were left with a copy of the map as evidence of their good work. There were several examples that did not indicate any reporting or follow-up. Although not specified, the original intent of the REM session may have pre-determined the follow-up. For example, those who only wanted to celebrate the success of the project would have been able to accomplish that objective without needing any additional summation.

## OVERALL REFLECTIONS

The table of case study snapshots shows the varied ways Ripple Effects Mapping can be used across multiple settings and with numerous types of participants. Well-suited to documenting the intended and unintended effects of community, coalition, and systems work, its benefits are wide-ranging. Most importantly, flexibility exists in how the method is implemented through each part of the process: design, event, analysis, and follow-up.

The examples in the next chapter appear in the same order as they are listed in Table IV.1. We encourage you to use this table to find examples addressing the program contexts that most interest you, and to get good ideas for variations in approach.

The examples are organized in a consistent manner, with a sidebar that provides a quick overview, a description of the program, a discussion of the decision to use Ripple Effects Mapping, a discussion of session planning and implementation, and final reflections by the author(s).

**TABLE IV.1** Snapshot table of REM examples

| Why REM? | Who Was Invited? | Approach | Data Analysis | Reporting/ Follow-Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXAMPLE **Mapping Levels of Impact in Tribal College Projects (43)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Document change as transactional, transitional, and/or transformational<br>Harvest stories and examples at each level of change | Employees from three Tribal Colleges and Universities | Web Mapping | During mapping process:<br>Ripples added according to Community Capitals Framework<br>Change type identified and considered | Findings reported to project staff and funders |
| EXAMPLE **Marketing Hometown America (47)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Surface both intended and unintended results<br>Generate energy | Seven communities<br>Program participants<br>Other community stakeholders | Web Mapping | Open coding based on actions and impacts | N/A |

| Why REM? | Who Was Invited? | Approach | Data Analysis | Reporting/ Follow-Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXAMPLE **Pierce-St. Croix County CARES Coalition: Addressing Child and Family Social and Emotional Wellbeing (57)**<br>CONTEXT **COALITION** | | | | |
| Identify and understand change as result of coalition | Members of the coalition | Web Mapping | During mapping process, Community Capitals Framework used to categorize outcomes | N/A |
| EXAMPLE **Turning the Tide on Poverty: Exploring REM in the Context of Civic Engagement (65)**<br>CONTEXT **COALITION** | | | | |
| Determine the civic engagement impacts | Six communities<br>Community members with a significant role | Web Mapping | Coded to the Community Capitals Framework<br>Matrix designed to document number of actions or impacts by capital | N/A |
| EXAMPLE **Youth/Adult Partnerships Impacting Rural Poverty: The Case of Lamar, Missouri (72)**<br>CONTEXT **COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Build Community | 4-H teen leaders<br>Adults (parents and/ or leaders)<br>Agency partners | Web Mapping | Results entered into spreadsheet | Spreadsheets and photos of map shared with participants<br>Outcomes influenced direction, strategy, and action plan of the team |

| Why REM? | Who Was Invited? | Approach | Data Analysis | Reporting/ Follow-Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXAMPLE **Looking at the Outcomes of a Coalition from Three Perspectives (80)**<br>CONTEXT **COALITION** | | | | |
| More in-depth evaluation of work accomplished<br>Help set future direction as part of strategic planning process | Three sessions with each of the following:<br>Board<br>Staff<br>Members | In-Depth Rippling | Open and then axial coding to determine primary and secondary impacts | Use findings to better engage with outside partners<br>Additional REM session scheduled to identify funding opportunities |
| EXAMPLE **Ripple Mapping the Impact of the Horizons Program in Three Northwestern States (88)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Give voice to broad swath of stakeholders<br>Collectively brainstorm positive impact<br>Collect more detailed stories | Multiple communities across Idaho, Washington, & North Dakota<br>Program participants within each of the communities | In-Depth Rippling | Coded to the Community Capitals Framework<br>Additional coding into short-, medium- and long-term outcome categories | Highlights and major themes presented to ND stakeholders<br>Idaho, Washington, and North Dakota communities received XMind maps |
| EXAMPLE **Three Arts Groups Collaborate Toward a More Creative Future (101)**<br>CONTEXT **COALITION** | | | | |
| Obtain multiple perspectives<br>Break down pre-existing barriers among groups | Board and members from each nonprofit arts organization | In-Depth Rippling | Priorities determined through review of digitized map | Using data to inform the joint strategic planning process |

| Why REM? | Who Was Invited? | Approach | Data Analysis | Reporting/ Follow-Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXAMPLE **Community Gardening Efforts in the Frogtown / Rondo neighborhoods of St. Paul, MN (108)**<br>CONTEXT **COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Document power of work to attract new volunteers and leverage resources | Program volunteers<br>Community members | Theming and Rippling | Open coding to themes<br>Follow-up interviews and information added to data | Map presented to community several months following REM<br>Follow-up REM session 2.5 years later |
| EXAMPLE **Measuring the Impact of Coalition Efforts to Improve Community Health Outcomes (116)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Enable participants to see how small changes lead to big changes | Four communities<br>Community partners<br>Other project stakeholders | Theming and Rippling | Open coding used to generate themes during session<br>Coded to the Community Capitals Framework | REM conducted pre and post<br>Handout created for each site |
| EXAMPLE **Sustainable Harvest International's Work in Two Rural Communities: Program Participants' Perceptions (125)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Better understand actions<br>Assess methodology and/or implementation of work | Two communities<br>Half program participants<br>Half non-participants with knowledge of program | Theming and Rippling | Four key themes identified through review of maps | N/A |

| Why REM? | Who Was Invited? | Approach | Data Analysis | Reporting/ Follow-Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXAMPLE **Using REM to Understand Statewide Systems Improvements in Child Care Quality (133)**<br>CONTEXT **SYSTEM** | | | | |
| Understand context of systems change | Nine states<br>Existing groups working on child care issues<br>Invited individuals | Theming and Rippling | Open codes developed during REM<br>Sub-categories grouped and themes identified | Draft map and narrative member-checked |
| EXAMPLE **Using Ripple Effects Mapping to Evaluate a Participatory Tourism Assessment Program (140)**<br>CONTEXT **MULTI-COMMUNITY** | | | | |
| Document program impact<br>Feedback for community leaders<br>Strengthen program | Three communities<br>Program participants<br>Tourism connected non-participants | Theming and Rippling | Coded to the Community Capitals Framework | Follow-up meetings to share map and coding results |

# PART V
## Examples of REM in Practice: Web Mapping

# Mapping Levels of Impact in Tribal College Projects[1]

Mary Emery

## Program Description

This project involved several funding sources that had invested in efforts to link community colleges to local and regional economic, community, and workforce development efforts. This case study focuses on the results of these efforts in three Tribal Colleges and Universities in the Great Plains region during the 2008–2010 period. The goal of this effort was to "encourage community-based, pro-active planning." Project partners were required to develop a local advisory committee to help them identify a strategy to increase interaction with the community. Each college also had access to a community coach from the state land-grant institution. During one phase of the project, participating institutions were able to apply for a small grant. Unlike many grants, this money could be used in any way they wanted to strengthen their institutions. The challenge, then, was to determine if this small amount of funding, participation in a network, and access to a community coach made a difference, and, if so, what kind.

While funders and project staff had many expectations about how this project would work, in actuality, local advisory committees met only once or twice and project foci were primarily determined by college staff. For often overworked

[1] This project was supported by USDA CSREES, The National Rural Funders Collaborative, the Ford Foundation's Rural Community College Initiative, and the Lumina Foundation for Education.

tribal college and university staff, this small project was an add-on to an already full plate requiring funders and staff to rethink expectations. We hoped the project would also strengthen relationships between state land-grant institutions and tribal land-grant institutions. Coaching did work well in some locations and not at all in others.

All maps were able to identify system-level changes, particularly related to culture and social capital.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

The funders and project advisory committee were not interested in efforts supporting the status quo; they wanted to see real change. Thus, evaluation questions focused on what change if any, and, if change, what kind occurred. Reflecting on types of change, we wanted to know if actions resulted in transactional change (more or less of something that already exists or a change in a specific practice), transitional change (a minor change in an existing project or program), or transformational change (remaking ourselves into something new and different). Secondly, because all of these projects were connected to other efforts, we wanted to tease out what changes could be attributed to this project and/or in what ways the project contributed to the change effort in process. Because the REM process moves from what people are doing differently, to changes in various community capitals levels, to looking at impacts of those changes in overall patterns and practices in organizations, institutions, and everyday life, we chose to use this method to harvest stories and examples at each level of change.

## Planning and Implementation

The same person conducted all mapping processes, so there was consistency in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Tribal College staff working on the project were charged with inviting people to attend sessions. All who participated worked at the Tribal College, so we did not get input from community members. Each session started with a welcome, agenda review, and meeting purpose. After agreement to proceed, the facilitator asked people to share a story or example of how the project made a difference and why. Information shared was then used to identify a focus for the map. Often the central focus emerged as something different from that mentioned in previous communication, indicating the effort had morphed and, as we came to understand through the mapping, become their own. Most sessions were very small, ranging from 2–7. In one case, individual maps were developed and triangulated with results of a small focus group.

The structured brainstorming process began with a brief introduction to community capitals and an explanation of why using the capitals gives us a way to be mindful of the larger context in which change occurs. In several settings, there was discussion about the importance of spirituality in local culture and everyday life, and in some cases that was added to the map as an eighth capital or as an amended capital of culture/spirituality.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Asking participants to identify the most significant change and to identify the level of change represented in the map as transactional, transitional, and transformational change.**

**Systems change is an incredibly hard thing to see when one is in the midst of it. The REM process really made systems change visible for participants.**

**CHALLENGES**

**It was difficult to recruit community members for a small project given already overworked staff at tribal colleges.**

The actual mapping process began when participants were asked to identify things people do differently in each capital as a result of work connected to the center focus. The facilitator used prompts to encourage participants to consider all the capitals. Each idea was added to the map in the vector associated with the identified capital, starting from the center and moving out. Groups then moved to considering how doing things differently impacted others or led to new things. The facilitator linked these additions to the map with the activities identified in the first ripple, using arrows showing direction, and locating them in the area of the associated capital. We were thus able to see how increasing assets in one capital can lead to increases in others. At this point, most maps were more densely populated in the intangibles: human, social, cultural, political, and natural capitals, indicating a number of transactional and transitional changes. Transactional changes included activities like expanding marketing to get more people to take classes. Transitional changes included doing interactive needs assessments on multiple locations within the reservation or requiring students to garden with elders.

They were also asked to reflect on the process of mapping, which they found useful and respectful of their culture. They liked that the mapping process lifted up their voices rather than those of outsiders.

Participants then considered how these changes impacted everyday ways of thinking and doing, organizational and community norms and practices, and institutional relationships. All maps were able to identify system-level changes, particularly related to culture and social capital. A project in one case focused on integrating inclusive practices from various tribes occupying the same reservation, including training everyone to say Hello in each language. They found this to be transformational, because it created an inclusive environment in a historically conflicted situation. Finally, participants were asked to identify the most significant change on the map. Most participants focused on changes in ways people interact, support, and build on local culture and history. A few also identified finding better ways to work together across districts, organizations, cultures, and/or institutions. These changes were starred.

Participants were then asked to reflect in terms of what can be learned from the mapping process, and to think through next steps. They were also asked to reflect on the process of mapping, which they found useful and respectful of their culture. They liked that the mapping process lifted up their voices rather than those of outsiders. The facilitator then asked them to consider to what extent

they saw the changes that had occurred over the two-year period as transactional, transitional, or transformational. Invariably, they were able to link small changes resulting from the project, and identified on the map, to larger, more transformational change, often in existing strategies or implementation efforts. In other words, small funding, without strings attached, was able to move a strategy or project to a tipping point that brought about transformational change.

## Final Reflections

Mapping results took some project staff and funders by surprise, as these small projects had seemed to drag on and on. Often, our focus on difficulties in getting committees to meet, coaches to engage, and reports submitted made it seem like nothing was happening. And indeed, traditional evaluation approaches may not have uncovered the same kind of information that emerged from the mapping process, particularly in regard to impacts of a small grant that could be used as grantees chose. Maps were able to demonstrate that project resources—coaching, networking, and funding with no strings—did contribute to transformational change. We also found that cultural and political differences in how work gets done and what impact it has often obscured our understanding of the change process—a realization that may not be easily captured by standard evaluation processes and practices—and that transformational change is often not recognized as such without a specific process of reflection.

Funders, participants, and the facilitator were all somewhat surprised by the results. In the flurry of everyday activity, they had not seen how much had changed and how that change process unfolded. The "aha: moment when people saw the map and the impact of their work strengthened their commitment to original goals and vision and invigorated these small groups to take the work forward. Without this opportunity for recognition and celebration, the actual transformation loses some of its impact in building individual and collective efficacy.

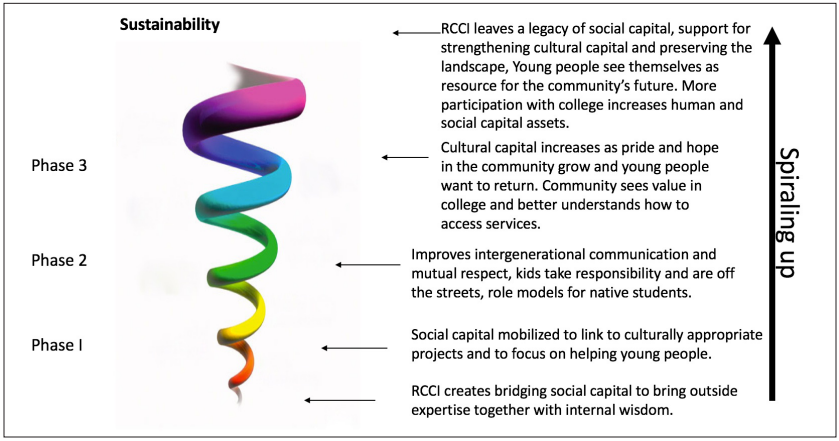



**FIGURE V.1** Native-serving Colleges: Spiraling Up of Community Capital Assets

# Marketing Hometown America: Ripple Effects Mapping Case Study

Kenneth Sherin, SDSU Extension;
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Nebraska Extension;
Jodi Bruns, NDSU Extension

## Program Description

Marketing Hometown America was developed as a result of two USDA funded research projects conducted from 2007–2012 in Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota on rural resident recruitment and retention. New residents told researchers that rural communities did not promote or showcase their communities in a way that matched the needs of today's potential new residents. People looking to relocate to rural areas surf the web to view community websites or related social media sites early in the decision-making process. The Internet is used as a filter—if they see a community that is interesting, they will dive deeper into the site and take a closer look. If the site is unappealing, potential new residents move on with their search. Unfortunately, developing and maintaining an engaging Internet presence at the community level may not be a priority, especially in very rural areas where paid staff are at a premium. This disconnect was the spark that launched, in 2013, the development of Marketing Hometown America through a grant funded by the University of Nebraska Rural Futures Institute.

Pilot communities were purposefully chosen to include diversity in population size and geographical location across the three-state region. They included Wessington Springs, Faith, and Hot Springs in South Dakota; Kimball and Neligh in Nebraska; and, in North Dakota, Ellendale and the High Plains Region (Adams, Edmore Lawton, Fairdale, Nekoma and Hampden).

The goal of the program is to help communities market themselves to improve new resident recruitment and retention. As community members participate in the program, they 1) learn what new residents are looking for as they relocate to a rural community, 2) discover often overlooked local assets that attract potential new residents, 3) use positive conversations to begin or expand community marketing, 4) create a welcoming spirit needed to attract new residents, and 5) build and implement a marketing action plan.

The program follows the study circle process developed by the national organization *Everyday Democracy*. After a community coalition or sponsoring group is developed, a kickoff community event is held. Small groups or study circles are formed and led by locally trained facilitators. These groups of 8–10 people meet four times, about two and one-half hours each time, using a guidebook that directs participants through discussion questions and activities. After the fourth session the groups come together for an Action Forum, where everyone shares their plans and votes on their favorite parts of the plans and activities. Community members then volunteer to either lead or help with one of the future actions that were chosen.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Marketing Hometown America incorporates a community engagement process where community members interact in guided discussions focused on promoting their community to potential new residents. The intended product from the process is the development of a community marketing plan. An evaluative measure could simply be whether a community completed the development of the plan. Originally the grant proposal's program evaluation plan suggested using a standard focus group interview process to capture this specific outcome. However, the Extension professionals involved in the program wanted to know more—they wanted to know how the process of engagement changed the community. Ripple Effects Mapping appeared to be a better technique to capture those outcomes.

Originally the grant proposal's program evaluation plan suggested using a standard focus group interview process to capture this specific outcome. However, the Extension professionals involved in the program wanted to know more—they wanted to know how the process of engagement changed the community.

REM was chosen because it can be used to capture both the intended consequences (e.g., how the community plans to pro-

mote itself) and unintended consequences (e.g., the creation of support groups for soon-to-be/current new mothers that will impact new resident retention in the long term). The community is allowed to share what happened in an intuitive process that can give the community and the evaluator much better documentation about the scope of the actual changes as a result of the program.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**A group coding and theming process was developed and used to analyze ripple mapped data. A good example of mapping a program delivered across multiple states.**

**CHALLENGES**

**Having different facilitators across groups creates coding and analysis challenges. Going back to discuss the map and data with the community is challenging when ripple mapping is conducted across multiple states.**

Ripple effects mapping events were also known to bring affirmation and create excitement in the community. Some team members had previous experience with the process and they noted it was wonderful to hear community members say at the end of the session, "Look at how much we accomplished!" This ultimately turned the process into a unique celebratory event.

## Planning and Implementation

Community coaches from all seven Marketing Hometown America pilot communities met in May, 2014, to develop the protocol and to discuss implementation details to strengthen process consistency across the pilot sites. The backbone of the development discussion centered around methodology created through consultations with Dr. Mary Emery, SDSU professor of Sociology, for another Extension-based community program, the Horizons Project. In addition to the South Dakota example, ripple effects mapping protocols were reviewed from Washington State University Extension and University of Minnesota Extension. The resulting Marketing Hometown America protocol differed from the Minnesota and South Dakota examples in that it did not 1) enter information into software until after the community session was conducted, and 2) include a listing of Community Capitals on the map as the session was being held.

The group agreed upon a set of common questions—or protocol—and discussed aspects of implementation to achieve a common look and feel across all locations in the three states. For instance, the group decided sessions should be conducted in a room with tables and chairs located in a horseshoe shape, if possible. Two people were encouraged to facilitate each session, with one leading discussion and one recording ripples on butcher paper. This allowed participants to refer back to previous comments and see the depth and breadth of the conversation. After sessions were over, notes were entered into a mapping software program.

Listed below under each protocol step below are the questions and prompts available to facilitators, and facilitator notes for conducting the session. (Although this protocol was established, the actual mapping process varied slightly between

the facilitators. For example, there were differences in meeting space set-up, number of facilitators doing the mapping, and facilitator experience levels).

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

**NOTES**

- In several locations the session was attended by people actively and not actively involved in the program. Having a mix of perspectives contributed positively to the discussion.
- Groups varied in size from 6 to 15, and lasted between one and two hours.
- A sign-in sheet was distributed for post-meeting follow-up.
- In accordance with each state's IRB stipulations, a formal consent form was sometimes required. If so, they were sent to participants prior to the session and signed before participating in the session. Facilitators collected all needed forms at the end of the session.

2. **Overview of the Session**

**QUESTION** What is the purpose of this session? It is to document community progress and improve the program.

**NOTES**

- Review the mapping process, and share what the end result will look like.
- Review the general program process. This was done instead of initiating a more formal appreciative inquiry approach to help members reflect on the entire community effort and to reduce the overall time commitment of participants in the mapping session.

3. **Ripple Mapping Questions**

**QUESTIONS**

- What happened as a result of the Marketing Hometown America program?
- Were there actions or efforts in the community that came about or were linked to the program that surprised you?
- How did these actions benefit the community?

**NOTE** Listed below is a series of topics that can be used as prompts:

- Were there new resources or opportunities? Attitudes and behavior changes? New connections with other people or organizations? Changes in skills and attitudes? New businesses? More resources to attract businesses, retain students, attract newcomers, centralize communication, improve retail infrastructure and

tourism opportunities? Changes in leadership roles? Changes to preserve or enhance the region's natural assets or parks? Changes in infrastructure (roads, buildings, signs)? Changes in the local economy? Changes in cultural events and opportunities?

Are there any final comments from participants?

One final question: do you have program suggestions for improvement?

**NOTE** In South Dakota two additional questions were asked:

- What changes are you seeing you seeing in community systems, institutions and organizations?
- What do you think is the most significant change on the map?

4. **Conclusion**

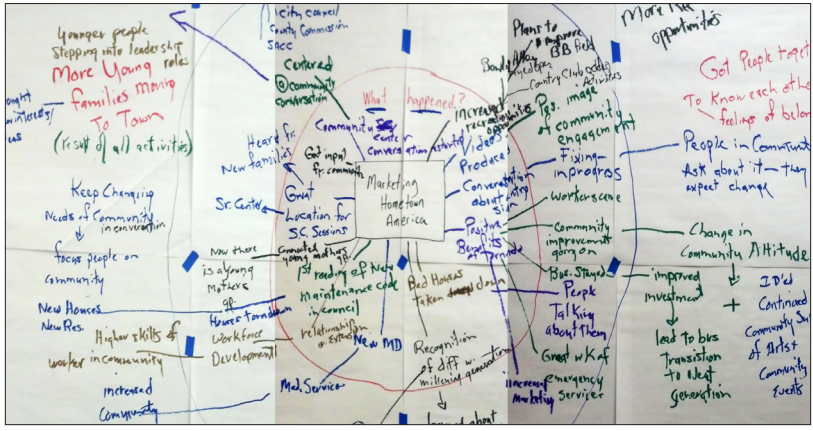
Thank you for attending.

**NOTES**

- Offer to share results via email or in person.
- Have business cards available for those who may want to contact the facilitator.

## Analysis Across Multiple Sites

Coaches met with pilot communities in the fall of 2014 to start the mapping process, with all maps being completed by the end of November (the Marketing Hometown America program had ended, on average, 8–12 months prior to the mapping process). Stories captured on butcher paper were then entered into a mapping software program, XMind Pro, which generated a digitized map (as a PDF or JPG).




**Initial ripple mapping outcomes captured from the community discussion**

Resulting maps were printed using a large format printer and brought to a retreat held in Pierre, South Dakota, on December 18–19, 2014. All maps were placed around a large meeting room in view of the ten research team members in attendance.

- **STEP 1** Each coach verbally described the maps they were responsible for creating.
- **STEP 2** The group brainstormed possible codes that could be used across maps/locations to capture all program-related actions and impacts. An initial list of codes was then consolidated through a consensus process.
- **STEP 3** Entries on maps were grouped using color-coded sticky notes. Each note also had a written word or phrase linked to each resulting code.
- **STEP 4** Codes were again reviewed, and through a process of consensus building the group developed a topology where themes emerged. Since each coach was able to present his/her ripple map, some variances involved in the mapping process were mitigated.

Six themes that emerged and a sample of actions/behaviors linked to the theme are listed below:

1. **Marketing Actions, Intended**
    - Entrance signs created/renovated
    - Videos produced showcasing the community
    - New logos and brands created
    - Group of communities banded together to develop a web presence
    - Social media tools developed

**The research team analyzing outcomes for themes across multiple locations**

- Community brochures, guidebooks, and community calendars created
- Mailings were targeted to high school alumni

2. **Amenity Improvements, Intended**
   - Variety of visual improvements were made
   - Downtown murals and a depot painted
   - Lots cleared

3. **Adult & Youth Engagement, Unintended**
   - Increase in volunteerism
   - Young mothers connected to key resources
   - New people involved in activities; increased support for a volunteer fire department
   - Expanded recruitment of new professionals
   - Enhancement of community arts efforts
   - High school students developed a community brochure in Spanish


**FIGURE V.2** Common themes that emerged in a pilot program

- Youth planned and implemented a youth scavenger hunt via traditional methods and GPS
- Playgrounds created and renovated
- Summer school opportunity developed

4. **Expanded Leadership, Unintended**
   - New people stepped up to play a role and lead the Marketing Hometown America process
   - Change in the leadership continuum, with new people supporting/replacing traditional leadership
   - People saw a value to the program beyond the immediate marketing focus

5. **Increased Networking, Unintended**
   - Communication expanded in new and different ways
   - New connections made with Federal agencies, tourism boards, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development groups, University Extension, schools, and other higher education institutions
   - Students from local private college began talking about staying and making the community their "home"
   - Program information was integrated into other groups producing several plans across the community focused on new resident recruitment

6. **Expanded Civic Awareness/Community Spirit, Unintended**
   - People noted a heightened sense of urgency and began to question the "status quo"
   - A "can do" perspective was strengthened
   - Intergenerational interaction increased during community improvement activities
   - Groups recognized a need to fill key leadership positions
   - The need to improve communication between organizations was acknowledged
   - Recognition that we *can* make a difference
   - Importance of communities learning from each other

It may be one of the few ways one can really capture the unintended impacts that happen as a result of community development programming.

## Final Reflections

Upon reflection, the team felt ripple effects mapping offered communities a unique tool to document both intended and unintended outcomes resulting from an educational program. They saw real strengths and advantages as well as a few challenges or "future opportunities" in implementing this tool with other programs.

> "Originally I saw the ripple mapping process just as a tool for the pilot communities. Now, I can't imagine not doing one in every Marketing Hometown American community. We would be cheating the community out of seeing all the fruits of their labor—they would never know how much got accomplished if a ripple map was not a part of the process."

### STRENGTHS/ADVANTAGES

It is a very engaging and organic process that allows people to think beyond the obvious outcomes.

The process generates enthusiasm and excitement as people start documenting all of the things that happened as a result of the program, and actions they did not know about. It can pull a lot of pieces together to show an overall impact.

It may be one of the few ways one can really capture the unintended impacts that happen as a result of community development programming.

It is a low-cost technique that relies on a facilitator's basic group process skills. From a facilitator's perspective, it is a non-threatening approach to evaluation.

### CHALLENGES/FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Facilitators need to be comfortable with asking probing questions and allow ing participants to reflect. A bit of group silence can be your friend in this process.

For the purpose of a summative evaluation that covered three states and multiple pilot communities, multiple facilitators functioned well. Ideally, however, a single team of facilitators would bring more consistency and rigor to the effort and should be considered if resources are available.

It is difficult to know how long to wait following an educational program before initiating this process. If one begins the process too soon, outcomes can be missed. If one waits too long, program outcomes can be forgotten.

Most locations had participants who had been involved in the program. But in one location, community members who had heard about the program but had not participated also attended the ripple mapping session. Once new people understood the process and heard some of the outcomes, they added another perspective to the discussion. But it did require extra time for reviewing the program in more detail.

After maps were developed, only a few locations conducted a follow-up session to explain them to participants or sponsoring organizations. Facilitators emailed results and talked informally to key stakeholders, but a more deliberate feedback approach should be considered.

In a few locations, additional questions were asked: "What changes are you seeing in the community's systems, institutions and organizations? and "What do you think is the most significant change on the map?" These questions elicited additional insights.

Connecting identified ripples to the Community Capitals Framework is another opportunity to increase insights into the community as a whole. The additional facilitator skill and time needed to make those connections during the session may be an important trade-off in knowledge gained.

Team members were extremely pleased with results of the ripple mapping process. During group conversations, facilitators could see the surprise in people's eyes as they began to realize the volume of actions and outcomes that were generated from the program. One team member commented, "*This discussion helps to visualize their work, it becomes the art of their work in this community*." Another said, "*Originally I saw the ripple mapping process just as a tool for the pilot communities. Now, I can't imagine not doing one in every Marketing Hometown American community. We would be cheating the community out of seeing all the fruits of their labor—they would never know how much got accomplished if a ripple map was not a part of the process*."

# Pierce-St. Croix County CARES Coalition: Addressing Child and Family Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Matthew Calvert, Lori Zierl, & Stephen Small

## Program Description

Addressing child maltreatment and wellbeing can be overwhelming for counties and communities, especially in times of shrinking resources. Positive change depends on harnessing the shared resources, commitment, and experience of a range of stakeholders working together toward the same goal. The Wisconsin CARES initiative (Creating a Responsive and Effective System for Protecting and Promoting our Children's Wellbeing), a partnership among the University of Wisconsin-Extension, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, county child- and family-serving agencies, and community leaders, sets the stage for such collaborative work.

The Pierce-St. Croix (P-SC) CARES Coalition was officially formed in the summer of 2012 to provide leadership for the development of a comprehensive, science-based system of care and support for children and families customized to reflect local needs and strengths. Its mission is to "lead and engage a network of partners to advance best practices, collaborative strategies, and policies that promote the social-emotional (SE) wellbeing of children, youth,` and families." The coalition's stated vision is for "every child in Pierce and St. Croix Counties to grow up in a safe, nurturing, stable family and caring, supportive community."

In addition to contributions from service providers, the P-SC CARES gathered input from families before they set forth an action plan. UW-Extension provided leadership in developing and implementing a Family Needs Survey for families in Pierce and St. Croix Counties in November, 2012. A total of 1,334 useable surveys were completed, and final report findings were used to help determine additional program goals, directions, and actions.

P-SC CARES has implemented a number of programs and strategies to address the socio-emotional needs of children and their families, with the largest impacts resulting from the following four initiatives:

1. A day-long educational summit titled "How are the Children? A Summit on the Social-Emotional Wellbeing of Children and Families in Pierce and St. Croix Counties," held in the spring of 2013. The summit's goals were to assess county needs and strengths, garner local interest and commitment to the coalition, set priorities, and provide a common science-based framework for understanding child socio-emotional well-being and for taking collective community action to address identified needs. Over 100 professionals from family-serving organizations and concerned citizens from across the two sponsoring counties attended.
2. A second day-long summit titled "The Faces of ACES: A Summit on the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Pierce and St. Croix Counties' Families and Providers" was held in the spring of 2015. The focus of this summit was on sharing the latest science in an effort to establish a common understanding of the problem of childhood trauma and how it can be most effectively addressed. Approximately 120 family professionals and concerned citizens attended this educational event.
3. Implementation of the *Positive Solutions for Families*, an evidence-informed parent education program developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) at Vanderbilt University. The program targets the social-emotional (SE) development of preschool children. As a result of the work of the early childhood workgroup, this program has grown from implementation in one school district to six school districts throughout the two counties, and there are plans for expansion.
4. The development and implementation of the *Understanding Your Adolescent* seminar. This seminar was created in response to the Family Needs Survey (discussed above), which indicated that many parents lacked knowledge about and confidence in raising teens. The adolescent workgroup of P-SC CARES reached out to a local child and family therapist who joined the coalition and developed a 3-hour *Understanding Your Adolescent* seminar. It has been piloted in three local communities with promising evaluation results, and grant funds will support five additional seminars across the two counties through the spring of 2016.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Wisconsin CARES incorporates the core elements of a Collective Impact (CI) approach, which involves a group of people from different sectors working together to solve a complex social problem with the underlying premise that no single organization can create large-scale, lasting change alone. The approach is built on five core elements: a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, shared measures, continuous communication, and a backbone organization.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Provided framework for capturing impacts that until then had only been shared informally in conversations among coalition members.

The Community Capitals Framework broadened the discussion in beneficial ways.

Participants built a shared understanding of the program's history.

Helped them identify areas to expand their efforts.

**CHALLENGES**

Some thought the process seemed mechanical until the last ripple; some did not participate as much as others.

Because the coalition has been guided by the CI framework, many of the intended impacts of the shared coalition work were not assumed to be linear or expected to affect traditional, narrowly-focused behavioral outcomes. For instance, the CI approach involves creating a *common agenda* that not only directs coalition work, but can have an effect on how individual partner organizations conduct their own work. Similarly, CI encourages the formation of new working relationships among members as well as *mutually reinforcing activities* that can lead to transformations in how county or community organizations work together to address the larger issues targeted by the coalition. In addition, many of the coalition's goals focused on building greater community capital across a range of areas, something that can be difficult to assess by more traditional evaluation methods. Consequently, a REM process using a Community Capitals Framework seemed to be an excellent fit for assessing the types of impacts and "ripples" we hoped to generate.

This mapping evaluation was intended to illustrate the ripple effects of the various activities and processes of the coalition in order to validate the effects of the coalition, demonstrate the public value of their programming, provide insights into strengthening existing efforts, and suggest new directions for the coalition. The purpose of the mapping activity was to identify and understand the individual, group, organizational, and community changes that have taken place as a result of the Pierce and St. Croix CARES Coalition efforts. The REM process complemented other evaluative and educational efforts.

Finally, the participatory nature of the REM process was especially compatible with the CI approach that emphasizes the value of shared work. Bringing coalition members together for the process made them feel like fully engaged partners rather than outsiders who were being evaluated. We also believed that their involvement in the REM process would lead to a greater likelihood that they would better understand and appreciate what they had accomplished

thus far as well as contribute to a stronger commitment to future action.

Wisconsin CARES incorporates the core elements of a Collective Impact (CI) approach. Collective Impact involves a group of people from different sectors working together to solve a complex social problem with the underlying premise that no single organization can create large-scale, lasting change alone.

## Other Evaluation Methods

Coalition events and activities have been evaluated individually. For example, 34 participants in the Faces of Aces Summit completed an online survey that documented perceived changes resulting from the summit in their work with individual clients, information shared with colleagues, and, for many, the benefits of a new guiding framework. These program-level evaluations focused on changes in practices and programs.

A REM process using a Community Capitals framework seemed to be an excellent fit for assessing the types of impacts and "ripples" we hoped to generate.

In addition to assessing individual events and activities, the state CARES team developed the *Assessing Coalition Progress from a Collective Impact Framework* survey based on the five tenets of CI. The instrument was adapted to meet the needs of our local initiatives and implemented in the beginning of 2014. We plan to conduct the same survey every year to assess the coalition's progress.

## Planning and Implementation

The project team of two state Extension specialists and two county educators in Pierce and St. Croix contacted Extension Youth Development Specialist Matt Calvert to determine whether the Ripple Effects Mapping process based on the Community Capitals framework would help the CARES sites evaluate their community impact. Two planning meetings were held by teleconference to discuss the purpose and process of the evaluation.

All members of the S-C CARES coalition were invited to participate, and a total of 16 people actually did. The REM process was conducted in a single 3-hour session held in a convenient public location. Those present represented a good cross section of the coalition membership, and included a range of professionals and organizations. In addition, several new coalition members attended the session. While this was initially a concern, as we discuss below, their involvement had several unexpected benefits.

To provide a better understanding of the process we used, we present below a detailed description of the agenda and the activities that were implemented to conduct the REM process.

### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS)

Question: What activity, aspect, or process of the P/SC CARES Coalition has made the most difference or been the most significant (to you, families you work with, your organization, or the community?)

Ask group members to introduce themselves and share their responses, which are captured on a flip chart.

*Level 1*
Describe the mapping process.

Define Community Capitals (describe the seven: Built, Cultural, Financial, Human, Natural, Political, and Social, but eliminate Built and Natural from the activity since they are less relevant to the Coalition's work).

Begin mapping of Appreciative Inquiry answers from above (asking first for a consensus about which are the most significant), and identify capitals with the initial letter (e.g., H = Human).

*Level 2*
Questions: How are things different as a result of each particular AI answer? Who else benefits directly from P/SC CARES?

*Level 3*
Question: How does the fact that people are doing things differently as a result of P/sc Co. CARES affect others?

*Level 4: Systems Change*
Question: What community and/or institutional changes have occurred as a result of the efforts of P/SC CARES?

*New Opportunities/Possibilities*
Use color-coded stickers so that each participant puts a sticker on:

- The most significant finding,
- The most connection to other people or organizations
- A place to expand

Discuss.

*Summation*
Question: Which of the things that we have talked about today have the most value to the community? (State specialist observers added comments after participants have shared.)

The participatory nature of the REM process was especially compatible with the CI approach that emphasizes the value of shared work. Bringing coalition members together for the process made them feel like fully engaged partners rather than outsiders who were being evaluated.

Use answers to direct process of:

- Framing the issue for that specific stakeholder
- Identifying where to go next

Matt Calvert facilitated the Ripple Effects Mapping process. Calvert is highly experienced in the process, having facilitated numerous REMs over the past five years. He captured the conversation for participants on large sheets of paper, and two observers (state specialists involved in the statewide leadership of the CARES project) kept notes to capture more detailed responses and quotations from participants. Because non-coalition members facilitated and documented the REM process, the local coalition leaders (the county Extension Family Living Educators from the participating counties) were able to be fully involved in the process and contribute their insights and observations as coalition members.

Participants proposed several coalition efforts that might be a focus for the ripple mapping process, and we decided to take several in turn, starting with a recent broad community training effort. This was chosen because it was of interest as a recent experience and because the ACES summit involved a broad community cross-section. We added two other coalition efforts identified in the initial appreciative inquiry process (a Positive Solutions program focused on parents and an *Understanding Your Adolescent* seminar focused on broadening the child well-being discussion beyond early childhood) to diversify the conversation during the second half of the session.

> The community impact focused on building integrated systems to support families that go beyond any individual program, but are built on the networks, trust, and shared resources of coalition members.

Some reported that the process seemed a little mechanical, putting up ideas that were self-evident to most in the group, particularly


**Participants in the CARES coalition review the ripple map**

when discussing the immediate program outcomes. The interest level appeared higher when discussing the last ripple of community change and thinking about outcomes other than human capital and knowledge outcomes that have been the explicit focus of coalition efforts and other evaluation processes.

The community impact focused on building integrated systems to support families that go beyond any individual program, but are built on the networks, trust, and shared resources of coalition members. Participants recognized that social capital development among providers from different sectors and communities has facilitated increasingly substantial collaborative efforts. The second major focus was on changes in social norms, in particular the change in the framing of programming focused on adolescents, from being "too late to have much impact" to being "vital to their positive development." There has been so much emphasis and attention given to the early years being so critical to positive child outcomes that parents and providers alike often overlook the needs of adolescents until they become problematic; members of the CARES Coalition have refocused on supports for adolescents' positive development.

Participation was well-distributed, with a good balance of members offering their input and comments. Some of the newer members of the coalition spoke less, but reported afterwards that they found listening to the discussion informative and that it helped to energize them about the work of the coalition. The newer participants also reinforced the power of the coalition's reputation and strength of partnerships, which they reported were perceived as a tangible asset in systems like Public Health

The second major focus was on changes in social norms, in particular the change in the framing of programming focused on adolescents, from being "too late to have much impact" to being "vital to their positive development."


**Participants vote for the most significant finding, the strongest connection to other people or organizations, and places to expand the work**

as well as among political leaders seeking to reduce duplication and increase effectiveness of services.

## Final Reflections

The REM process provided a structure that placed comments we have heard during informal conversations about coalition progress and impact into a more systematic format. This provided another type of evidence to draw upon in documenting the outcomes of the coalition's work. In particular, the process reinforced the public value of the work being done through coalition efforts. Using the Community Capitals framework helped to broaden the discussion about impact to include social networks and cultural shifts in addition to the changes in treatment and prevention practices that are most evident to coalition members.

The process helped to communicate the impact of the coalition to new audiences and led to a renewed commitment to public education based on the successful cultural shifts observed from past efforts. Some of the newest members participated and learned about the history of the coalition and its efforts to date, and reportedly became more energized and committed to the effort. In addition, the state specialists who acted as observers heard firsthand from local coalition members and learned more about the coalition's activities and successes. Further, as a result of the REM process, the group identified places to expand their efforts. In particular, the process helped identify other sectors and groups where the work and successes of the coalition should be shared. Some of these (e.g., schools and businesses) were also identified as potential partners and stakeholders who should be sought out and invited to join the coalition. In sum, participants found the REM process to be valuable in increasing attention to shifts in conceptualizing issues and community-level change while building energy among participants as they planned future educational efforts.

# Turning the Tide on Poverty: Exploring REM in the Context of Civic Engagement

Rachel Welborn

## Program Description

Turning the Tide on Poverty (Tide) was developed in 2009 by a regional team of land-grant Extension and research professionals in the South along with a number of key partners, including the Kettering Foundation, Everyday-Democracy, and the Farm Foundation. The project was designed to aid local citizens in finding their voices in matters of importance to them in their communities. Modeling the program after the successful Horizons initiative conducted in the nation's northwestern region (Herrera and Hoelting, 2010), Tide was built around a community (study) circles model in which citizens from all walks of life were invited to engage in a five-week series of dialogues culminating in an Action Forum during which top priorities were identified. From the Forum, action teams were formed from the volunteer citizens who had taken part in the dialogue, generating a truly citizen-led initiative.

Over the next four years, Tide took shape in eight of the South's 13 states. Given that the topic for the community dialogue was poverty, sites for the project were all rural with a 20% or greater poverty rate.

The Tide process, in short, begins with a kick-off event in which community members are encouraged to attend and learn about the process. Participants are invited to this event through a broad spectrum of avenues, intentionally seeking

to reach many different sectors of the community. A diverse group of citizens serving on a planning team shape the invitation methods for each community. At the close of the event, those who wish to participate select a small group to join for the five weeks that follow. During those weeks, each of the small groups meets and examines a set of discussion questions from a common guidebook. During the last session, each small group identifies its top three ideas for helping the community address concerns around poverty in the community. All circles then join together for an Action Forum, during which each group shares its three ideas. Through a prioritization process, the Action Forum participants collectively select the top ideas on which to act. Action teams composed of community volunteers then take responsibility for moving the ideas to reality.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Civic engagement efforts create unique impact measurement challenges. Deciding what counts as success is often contested, and finding the right measurement approach can be difficult. However, REM seemed well suited for the challenge of determining the impact of Tide, whose predominant mission was to improve civic engagement efforts that lead to meaningful citizen-led actions. This open-ended approach gave flexibility to capture the variety of outcomes that civic engagement may foster. Additionally, since these were all high poverty, struggling communities, more traditional evaluation methods such as surveys or other formal assessments may have held too academic a feel for this more grassroots effort. In many of these locations, some participants lacked a formal education, which might have potentially led to feelings of intimidation with the more academic approaches. Finally, the inclusive nature of REM was a natural fit to the environment Tide helped to generate. Both Tide and REM invite active involvement of all participants on an equal plane and center on the importance of dialogue.

During the initiation of Tide, focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to establish a baseline understanding of the communities in which Tide was being launched. Thus, in addition to REM, researchers reached out to those who had participated in these earlier connections for a follow-up interview. While not all of the individuals were still living in the communities, those who were provided a comparative backdrop for the REM results.

Since these were all high poverty, struggling communities, more traditional evaluation methods such as surveys or other formal assessments may have held too academic a feel for this more grassroots effort. In many of these locations, some participants lacked a formal education, which might have potentially led to feelings of intimidation with the more academic approaches.

## Planning and Implementation

For this project, the purpose of the REM session was to document impacts of Turning the Tide on

Poverty. Thus, "Tide" was the center circle. For most of the selected communities, Tide had been conducted at least two years from the time of the REM session.

REM was selected as the Tide team began to learn about how the Horizons team was evaluating their work. The Tide team learned of the process from Horizons coaches, and, given that the roots of Tide are in Horizons, the Tide team decided to mirror the REM process for the sake of comparison. Mary Emery, of South Dakota State University, trained the Tide team on the "web mapping" process used in their communities.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

A less academic approach to evaluation, which works better for some audiences—more participatory. REM was coherent with the inclusive philosophy of the program. People didn't realize all they had accomplished until seeing it all together on a map. The value of visualization! SRDC is integrating REM into evaluating other Extension programs.

**CHALLENGES**

Some initial disagreements about whether Tide had been at the root of some actions offered by participants. Participants sometimes disagreed about which community capitals were most relevant.

Not all of the Tide communities participated in REM. As initial outreach to the Tide coaches, typically County Extension Agents, occurred, a number of factors prohibited conducting REM in some communities. For instance, in some places, the Tide coach was no longer in that community, making connections to the project originators difficult or impossible. In other places, the funding time constraints of the REM event did not fit within the timing of the target community. Finally, some of the communities that had initiated Tide had not seen much success, according to the Tide coaches. However, for those places, the Tide team did follow through with interviews and focus groups where possible, but did not conduct the REM assessment. In the end, six communities were selected for REM.

Within these Tide communities, the local Extension agent who had served as the community's coach led the REM participation. The Tide research team asked the coach to reach out to community members who had, at some point, played a significant role in Tide. These could be people who assisted in planning, were circle facilitators or action team members, or played any other role that contributed to the success of the process. For some of the communities, identification of these individuals was a simple process as some of the key contributors were continuing to meet together, supporting ongoing work that flowed from Tide. For other communities where ongoing work was lest centralized, the coach was responsible for reaching out to participants.

REM was conducted in a single session in each of the six communities selected. The protocol used for each session was identical, and one individual from the Tide team (the author) was able to attend all six sessions, serving as the recorder. This provided one level of assurance that the maps could be compared.

As each session began, participants were encouraged to visit in small groups of two to three persons to brainstorm actions that took place as a result of

Tide. Given that the actual process had been conducted two or more years previously, this time of reflection seemed to help participants gather important thoughts and details. After the moments of reflection, the facilitator gave a brief overview of the REM process and explained the Community Capitals that were written around the edges of the map paper. With "Tide" as the center "pebble" in the map, participants were asked to share actions resulting from Tide that they had brainstormed in the first few minutes. The facilitator began placing these on the first circle, or ripple, out from Tide nearest to the capital that the action built. Once all of the actions were documented in the first circle, participants were asked to think about who benefited from each action and how they benefited. These responses were documented in the second ripple out, drawing lines from the action and to the capital that was built in the process. The third ripple was in response to the question "What changes are you seeing in the community as a result of Tide and the actions we have mapped so far?" Again, these responses were charted near the capital that was being described or built. Finally, participants were asked to identify the most significant change(s) on the map. These responses were marked with a star.

The session took place over the span of about 90 minutes in each location. During this time, participants in each site seemed to be mostly in agreement with the items suggested at each level. However, on a few occasions, participants disagreed on whether a particular item was attributable to Tide. For instance, if an action took place that was not directly established at the Action Forum, participants sometimes had to trace the action back to its roots to determine whether or not Tide had been there. In some cases, one or more participant could clearly trace that pathway back. However, in other cases, the path was not as clear, or another initiative or organization was given credit for the suggested action. If the group did not definitively agree to Tide as the starting point to an action, all groups agreed to leave it off the maps, resolving any disagreements on this level.

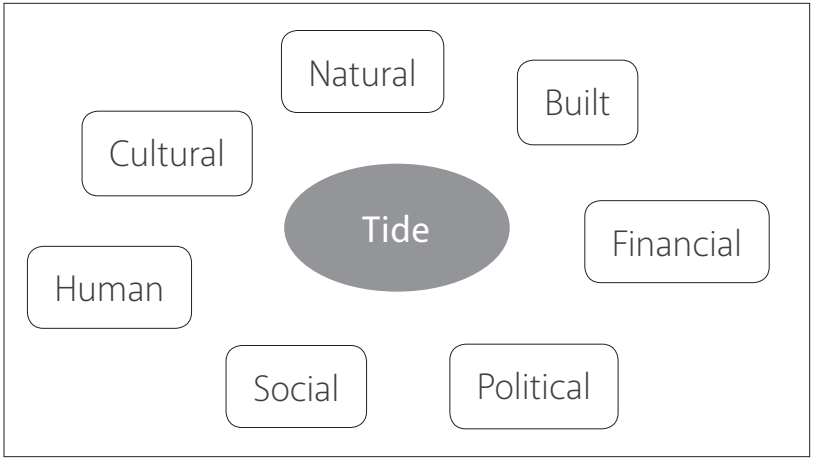
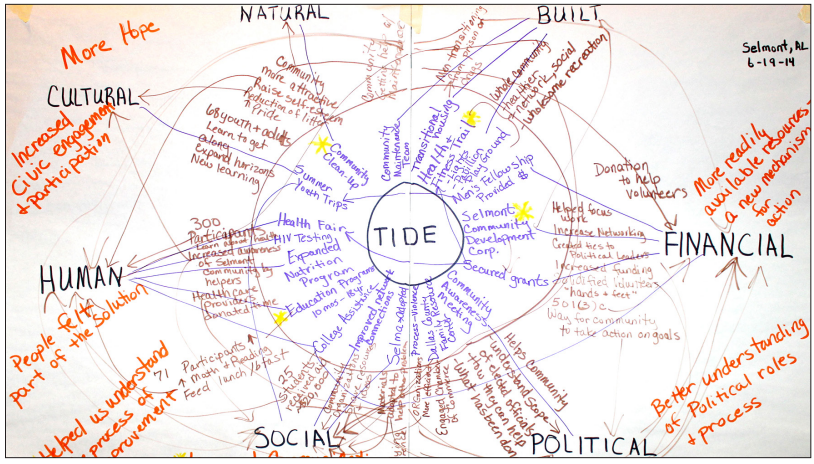



**FIGURE V.3** Mapping template

This collaborative process made for a climate of congeniality as people reflected on a common past. Additionally, they gained a deep familiarity with the community capitals framework as a way to think about the impacts of Tide in their communities.

The only other type of disagreement that surfaced in the process was in determining which of the Community Capitals a particular action or impact built. In these cases, participants were asked to talk about how they saw the action or impact building the capitals. In most of these cases, they presented clear evidence showing how an action/impact had actually built more than one capital, resulting simply in multiple arrows showing the connections. In a few cases, the group decided together that the action had more clearly supported one capital over another. In all of these cases, the participants were led to examine and determine their own resolutions to disagreements so that anything on the final map reflected only the action and impacts on which the participants agreed. This collaborative process made for a climate of congeniality as people reflected on a common past. Additionally, they gained a deep familiarity with the Community Capitals Framework as a way to think about the impacts of Tide in their communities.

As the sessions came to a close, the facilitator asked participants to consider what the logical next steps might be, whether that was sharing the map or considering actions that might build upon the documented steps. At least three of the groups scheduled a meeting to showcase their maps to stakeholders in the community. These meetings took different shapes, ranging from a formal lunch to an informal reconvening of Tide planners and stakeholders who were not able to join the REM session. Some of the sessions led to immediate discussions of next steps to advance the documented work. Across the communities, participants reported they had no idea how much they had collectively achieved until seeing it all on the map together. REM had enormous value in helping com-




**Selmont, Alabama ripple map**

munities gain a greater appreciation for their own accomplishments.

> Across the communities, participants reported they had no idea how much they had collectively achieved until seeing it all on the map together. REM had enormous value in helping communities gain a greater appreciation for their own accomplishments.

In each of the six communities, the actual Ripple Map was left in the hands of the community members. The facilitators took pictures of the map to ensure that the details were captured for later analysis and also took pictures of the map with the participants to document participation. However, the map was given to the community as a record of its work. Participants seemed to value this gift as discussions of where to display it and how to preserve and share it ensued.

Analysis of the map involved coding of the various ripples by community capitals. A simple matrix was designed that allowed for the number of actions or impacts by capital to be counted and documented. Additionally, attention was given to the items that the community most valued (most significant change). These were sorted by ripple as well as by capital, providing some sense of how community change happened and where these places were most affected by Tide.

## Final Reflections

As used in Tide, REM provides a number of key benefits to program evaluation. As noted above, some of the participants in the Tide communities had limited literacy. Yet the REM process allowed all participants to contribute equally, a significant benefit for working with low literacy audiences. Additionally, participants reported the process to be engaging and beneficial as they began to see the mapping of their efforts unfold. Too, given that all the action and impacts documented on the map were theirs, ownership of the process was strong.

REM seems to be a particularly effective tool in documenting initiatives that are of a grassroots or organic nature where the actions and outcomes are planned


**Choctaw County, Mississippi REM participants**

along the way rather than being a known goal at the onset. Additionally, the process itself creates a deliverable, a picture of the community's work together. This tangible product seems to validate the community's work and also spur new ideas and energy.

One lesson learned in the process came from communities that were not mapped. In a number of these places, previous evidence from coaches' reports indicated that significant accomplishments took place. However, because REM was introduced so long past the initiating event, important connections to individuals who knew the story of how Tide had unfolded within the community were lost. Thus, evaluators should be careful to consider the timing of REM relative to the process being evaluated. If the map falls too close to the program's initiation, the various ripples may be underdeveloped. Yet moving the process too far out may mean that the linkages among the various outcomes and impacts are lost. While a perfect answer may not exist, for Tide, a one-year window would probably have been adequate to begin to capture robust impacts while still having adequate ties to the people who knew the connections. Possibly, follow-up sessions on an annual basis could continue to develop the REM content.

Overall, REM provides an engaging process resulting in a visual picture of the important impacts resulting from a particular program. It is particularly well suited to civic engagement processes like Tide, where the start to finish plan cannot be foreseen at the initiation of the project given that the participants themselves set the course along the way.

Because of these experiences with REM, the Southern Rural Development Center has integrated REM into other programs for use in the coming year as an evaluation tool. The same protocol used for Tide will be used in these other settings to further explore the ways in which Cooperative Extension investments change lives and communities


**Selmont, Alabama REM participants**

# Youth/Adult Partnerships Impacting Rural Poverty: The Case of Lamar, Missouri

Steven A. Henness and Mary Jo Moncheski

## Program Description

Lamar, Missouri is a small rural community—and birthplace of President Harry S. Truman—on the edge of the Ozark region in southwest Missouri. The community participated as a site in the USDA Rural Youth Development program, beginning in 2010 and finishing in 2014.

The USDA program, National 4-H Engaging Youth Serving Community (EYSC), provided seed funding and a model for youth and adult leadership development and community engagement toward improved quality of life. Through EYSC, young people and adult leaders worked together to expand civic engagement in their rural community and to build capacity for involving more members of the community.

Community forums were an initial step in the project cycle. Youth team members learned to facilitate public forums and guided other youth and community members in discussing concerns, identifying an issue, weighing options, and determining a strategy for impact. A leadership team made up of 4-H youth, adults, and organizational allies was formed to ensure support and buy-in for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of action plans.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Youth co-facilitated. Mapping done three years in a row. Allowed participants to identify connections between various elements of the program. Youth co-facilitators encouraged youth participation.

**CHALLENGES**

Communities not compared with each other. Needed a "think-pair-share" step to equalize participation. Group energy wanes by the third ripple. Map is messy and can be hard to decipher. Different facilitators for different communities—impacted comparability of the data.

The Lamar community's primary identified need was addressing a growing poverty rate adversely affecting families and educational and developmental opportunities for youth. The leadership team set goals to raise awareness of poverty in the community and to support youth-led initiatives aimed at reversing poverty and creating economic opportunity for youth and families.

The Barton County EYSC project in Lamar joined forces with local community organizations to address the issue of poverty. Core team youth applied leadership skills and knowledge learned through 4-H and three high school classes to conduct service-learning projects with local organizations targeting the needs of those affected by poverty (pre-school children, food insecure students, young victims of homeless/domestic abuse, veterans and disabled elders, and sheltered workshop employees). Through school backpacks, community food drives, community gardens, cooking classes, financial literacy programs for children, and outreach to farmers and agriculture organizations, core team projects built human and social capital among 4-H, schools, and community groups, and boosted the level of community response and collaboration around ending poverty.

Results included impacts on the lives of target audiences, as well as young people and adults developing a more positive attitude toward the role of youth in the community. Barton County EYSC projects catalyzed the community in generating over $34,000 in food and financial resources to support groups adversely affected by poverty. The community contributed over $325,000 in cash, in-kind, and time value resources to projects, a return on investment of nearly $30 for every dollar spent in federal funds. One youth, due to her leadership and involvement with the core team, went on to serve on the National 4-H Healthy Living Task Force. Three core team youth received youth leadership awards, and Lamar was recognized as the community of the year by the Missouri Community Betterment program.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

The Ripple Effects Mapping method was applied as part of an evaluation toolkit for communities participating in EYSC. A key rationale for using this method was building community by bringing youth and adult leaders and stakeholders together to talk about the issue, the strategy, the work, and the impacts on the community. The mapping was co-facilitated once a year by a state core team of University of Missouri 4-H faculty, students, and youth trainers. (Teens

co-facilitated the mapping process with Extension faculty.) The team shared facilitation in order to model youth-adult partnerships and to create a setting in which community youth and adult voices could be shared and heard on equal terms. This approach differed from what community participants had previously experienced. Another benefit of mapping was the visual nature of the process, which allowed the group to see the ripple effect impacts they were having on their community through their antipoverty projects and to make connections between various elements of the program which may not have been as apparent with reflective discussions or other methods.

Through school backpacks, community food drives, community gardens, cooking classes, financial literacy programs for children, and outreach to farmers and agriculture organizations, core team projects built human and social capital among 4-H, schools, and community groups and boosted the level of community response and collaboration around ending poverty.

Evaluation also included a leadership skills survey of all active youth and adult core team members and a project outcomes survey completed by two adults and two youth. Both surveys were part of an evaluation toolkit and methodology for EYSC grantees. The evaluation approach aimed to measure human and social capital development among community core team members, as well as collect data on intermediate outcomes such as changes in community attitudes, practices, and policies.

## Planning and Implementation

The University of Missouri state core team facilitated Ripple Effects Mapping with Lamar and other EYSC communities annually over three years. Communities were encouraged to compare their mapping results with the previous year's results to see how their efforts and impact grew and evolved. Because EYSC community projects were so different, mapping results were not compared between communities.

Community core teams determined the focus of each ripple effects map. At the beginning of the mapping session, this was written at the center of the ripple map in their words. The Lamar group's mapping remained focused on addressing the root causes of poverty throughout the program cycle.

Mapping participants included 4-H teen leaders, adults who were often in dual roles as parents and school and community organization leaders, and agency directors partnering on projects. These stakeholders were recruited through existing relationships with Barton County 4-H and collectively made up the community core team.

The Ripple Effects Mapping process, excerpted from the EYSC Evaluation Toolkit, included the following steps.

**STEP 1** Write the name of the project activity the group chose in the middle of a large piece of poster board or flipchart paper. The titles of each of the seven community capitals are written around the outside of the paper. Briefly review the Community Capitals Framework, which was introduced during initial community core training.

**STEP 2** Have the group brainstorm answers to the following questions:

- How are things different as a result of our activity?
- What are people doing differently as a result of our activity? (Continue to brainstorm other results after the initial examples have been shared.)
- Ask the group which capital(s) fits best with the answers to the brainstorming statements.
- Add a capital letter denoting the Community Capital in front of the statement.

The mapping was co-facilitated once a year by a state core team of University of Missouri 4-H faculty, students, and youth trainers. (Teens co-facilitated the mapping process with Extension faculty.) The team shared facilitation in order to model youth-adult partnerships and to create a setting in which community youth and adult voices could be shared and heard on equal terms.

**STEP 3** Draw arrows connecting the resulting word group from Step 2 to a community capital. Some may fit into two capitals. This is your first ripple.

**STEP 4** Next ask the group the following questions:

- Who benefits from the project and how? How does the fact that people are doing things differently make a difference?
- Write the answers with a new color of marker in a second ring around the middle. This is the second ripple in the pond.

**STEP 5** Relate the answers to the second set of questions (Step 4) to the answers to the first set of questions in Step 2 to elicit ideas. Be sure to draw the second set of arrows in a new color to the capitals that relate to those answers. Sometimes one answer may relate to more than one capital. Sometimes one answer may relate to more than one capital.

**STEP 6** Next, move on to the third and last ripple. The answers that make up the last ring or ripple are from the question: "As a result of the mapping you have done so far, what changes do you see in the way community groups and institutions do things?" Draw the arrows to the related capitals to create the third ripple.

**STEP 7** Once the third ripple is completed, look at the map as a whole group and reflect on the answers for each of the ripples. Ask the group to decide which change or impact was most significant and indicate that activity with a star (or two). Have the group think about whether they can expand the story so others will be convinced of the significance of this impact. Discuss ways the group can gather further evidence of impact. Discuss ways you will share the impact results you have for your project.

**STEP 8** Gather everyone around the map to take a picture.

**STEP 9** Record the data from the mapping process and share back with the group.

The facilitator team varied slightly each time mapping was conducted, but overall was made up of two Extension faculty, two college students, and three 4-H teens. The materials used for mapping included the EYSC resource guide and evaluation toolkit materials. Microsoft Excel was the software used to compile mapping results and share back with the community.

Overall, the observed dynamic among participants and between participants and facilitators was engaging, positive, and energizing. The majority of the discussion involved participants agreeing with each other's points, echoing or restating observations, and, most importantly, building off of each other's statements to further develop and branch each ripple. Facilitators did not experience disagreements or conflicts between participants. The process allowed for organic discovery, created a-ha moments, and caused participants to remark how they were seeing the project and themselves in a new light.

Outcomes of the mapping process influenced the group's direction. Originally, the biggest impact the group identified was "people's needs being met," and

**A 2011 photo of the first of several Ripple Effects Mapping sessions with Lamar youth-adult partnership over several years.**

this was reflected in more of the "band-aid" approaches they took initially. Later, after the group had finished several projects that took on more of a long-term preventative approach to poverty, the group identified "organizations collaborating together" as the biggest impact. The mapping process supported the community core team in going deeper into the issue and becoming more complex in their thinking on strategies. The community core team began to see itself and redefine its purpose on a broader scale, which led to new ideas such as creating a communitywide resource directory for low-income families and supporting families and institutions with growing more of their own food vs. donating food collected through drives. This may have never happened without the mapping experience.

> The majority of the discussion involved participants agreeing with each other's points, echoing or restating observations, and, most importantly, building off of each other's statements to further develop and branch each ripple.... The process allowed for organic discovery, created a-ha moments, and caused participants to remark how they were seeing the project and themselves in a new light.

Following the mapping session, the map remained with the community core team. State core team members took photos of the map and with these created a spreadsheet of the results, which was also shared back with the community. The map continues to be used as a reference for the community core team in terms of revisiting its strategy and creating an action plan. It also served as a focus for follow-up conversations the state core team had with the community.

## Final Reflections

Adults and youth sharing facilitation worked well. Having youth work with adults in visible leadership roles, whether recording ripples or asking questions, engaged other youth and adult participants on a higher level than if adult facilitators worked alone. If we had it to do over, we would do a think-pair-share step prior to asking the group to identify the core theme. This would result in getting all participants talking at the outset (rather than just the vocal ones) and set the tone for more robust responses to the ripple questions.

One key in planning is to determine how the group will use the results of the mapping. While the process works essentially the same regardless of the intended use, how facilitators process results with the group would look different depending on whether the goal is identifying outcomes for data collection, revisiting the action plan, or seeking validation of the existing strategy. Another key in planning is to allot enough time for groups to fully complete the process (45-90 minutes). A rushed map is not a complete map, and will be of diminished use. At the same time, facilitators should keep the process moving forward. We observed that group energy tends to decline by the time groups reach the third

ripple question. Facilitators should be prepared to refocus and re-energize the group if the process goes longer than one hour.

The strengths of Ripple Effects Mapping are in how it allows mixed groups (youth and adults) to participate together in evaluation of community projects. It is highly visual and allows participants to see the ripples of their work on various sectors of the community. It is highly effective in helping groups understand community-level outcomes and how they were attained.

One limitation may be the messiness of the resulting map, which can be difficult for participants and outsiders to decipher or understand in terms of the complex relationships between variables. However, outsiders seemed intrigued by this, particularly when they pick up on the enthusiasm of those who participated in the process and are eager to break it all down.

Ripple-effects mapping is being included as an integral part of a "Community Capitals for Kids" toolkit being developed Missouri 4-H. We can envision it being used in the future with 4-H service-learning groups, as well as any community working with youth-adult partnerships.

# PART VI
# Examples of REM in Practice: In-Depth Rippling

# Looking at the Outcomes of a Coalition from Three Perspectives

Rebecca Sero & Debra Hansen

## Program Description

The Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition (the Coalition) was created in 2012 to "resolve the issue of hunger in our community." Since the Chief Executive of Providence Health–Stevens County put forth that directive, fourteen food banks and nine dedicated community organization partners have been working together to get more healthy food in the homes of hungry families. The Coalition is a nonprofit 501(c)3 in rural Northeast Washington working towards stabilizing and strengthening the emergency food system while working to address the root causes of hunger in rural communities.

The pounds of new food delivered, number of clients served, or amount of dollars invested as a result of this new coalition are easy numbers to collect—but do they tell the whole story?

The Coalition develops, coordinates, and helps fund initiatives that included the following outcomes in 2015:

- Served 15,407 documented individuals (5,607 households)
- Delivered 264,649 pounds of fresh produce through partner agreements
- Purchased or gleaned 17,990 pounds of fresh produce from local farmers

- Helped five community gardens grow food for their local food banks
- Developed Plant-a-Row programs for community members to participate
- Supported healthy eating and summer nutrition educational opportunities
- Increased food bank volunteer effectiveness, efficiency, and training
- Found funding for additional refrigeration needs

The challenges of "resolving hunger" involve understanding individual and community perspectives while building the capacity, skills, and knowledge of the people who work to improve this system.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Three perspectives of one coalition provide a view that demonstrates similarities and differences from each of the groups, which creates a more complete picture of the value proposition. Including all three involved groups resulted in a contextual and holistic picture of the Coalition impact. Focusing on only one of these perspectives would have resulted in a significant amount of information not collected.

**CHALLENGES**

There are several participants engaged in the multiple roles within the Coalition. As a result, they attended more than one REM session, resulting in some duplicative reporting of impacts.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

As a relatively new nonprofit, the NEW Hunger Coalition has focused on building initiatives identified through their goals, with the primary two being "we need more fresh fruits and vegetables" and "we need more refrigeration." Staff have not taken the time to deploy any methods of evaluation for the work they have done since its inception.

The Coalition does track some data, but it is output-focused, with the intent to use data for grant reports. As a result, information such as the number of clients served and pounds of food donated or gleaned are collected and reported. However, this information tells only a small part of the story. There are so many pieces to the Coalition that it is difficult to frame a holistic perception of "who they are."

Previous strategic planning efforts have indicated a need to diversify the portfolio of donors and foundations that support this work. As part of its effort to better understand its current impact and future direction, the Coalition decided to undergo another strategic planning process and created a committee to spearhead the effort. This strategic planning process revealed that the Coalition was moving from a formation group to a mid-level group (Nichols, Riffe, Pick, Kaczor, Nix, & Faulkner-Van Deysen, 2014). This understanding led the committee to recognize that it would be a beneficial time to conduct a more involved evaluation of the Coalition's impacts; they felt they needed to be able to capture the breadth and depth of the outcomes the Coalition has achieved.

After considering a variety of evaluation options, the Coalition chose to use Ripple Effects Mapping. Electing to use REM for their evaluation provided Coalition members with a participatory evaluation tool that was low in cost and high in engagement. It enabled multiple participants to come together at one time, and was useful in gathering information from multiple levels of understanding of the organization. Additionally, the use of Appreciative Inquiry within REM meant that the Coalition could collect a broad array of affirmatively focused information. This served to re-energize and create excitement within its board, staff, and members, as the Coalition made plans for the future. Finally, given the complexity of coalition work, using REM was an ideal method to meet the challenge of evaluating a system that has many partners and moving pieces within it.

## Planning and Implementation

At previously discussed, the Coalition has been an ongoing initiative within the region for nearly four years. Its outputs, such as pounds of food donated, have been documented and have demonstrated that the Coalition has increased the amount of food available in the region. However, there have been no additional attempts to evaluate the Coalition's work, including its impact beyond food donations. The intent of using REM, therefore, was to determine other ways in which the Coalition has affected the region.

To gain the most accurate information, three REM sessions were held: one with the Board of the Coalition, one with the staff, and one with Coalition members. This was done to determine if the positive outcomes, engaged work, and messaging were common across all three Coalition entities. If not, staff would use the information gathered to identify where the unique perspectives revealed the value proposition to clients as well as funders.

The process for each of the three REM sessions was similar in format. Debra Hansen facilitated each session, while support staff took electronic notes. The sessions were each approximately 90 minutes long, with 60 minutes devoted to the mapping of the ripples.

The protocol for each session included the following components:

1. **Introductions and Establishing Ground Rules** (5 minutes)

   Each person in the room was asked to introduce themselves and state their relationship to the group.

The critical part of this project was conducting three Ripple Effects Mappings of the members, the staff, and the board, in order to gather the unique perspective of each critical aspect of the coalition. Using information gained through the Ripple Effects Mapping, the Board of the Coalition has prioritized building group capacity and empowering individual food bank leaders.

During this time, participants were also advised of the ground rules for the process, which included such items as each member of the group feeling free to share; it is important to avoid interrupting; being respectful of others' stories is expected; and so forth.

2. **Brief Overview of the Session and Objectives** (2 minutes)

The participants were provided with a brief overview about why they had been invited to participate and the intent of the REM session.

For each session, this included information similar to the following:

> **The Washington State University Extension staff is leading an impact mapping evaluation project to better understand the ripple effect of the Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition. As you may be aware, this group is currently working through a strategic planning process.**
>
> **This mapping evaluation provides a method of illustrating to stakeholders the ripple effects of these programs, validating the effects of the programs, and creating stronger support and public value. The purpose of this process is to explore the overall regional impacts that have taken place since the formation of the Coalition in 2012. The information shared today will be used to inform decisions about the future of the Coalition. Your participation is greatly appreciated.**

3. **Appreciative Inquiry Interview** (10 minutes)

First, participants were asked to find a partner and share a story about their participation in the Coalition. This piece, the "Appreciative Inquiry" conversation, served as an icebreaker. It enabled participants to begin talking and thinking about their connection to the Coalition. The same set of Appreciative Inquiry questions were used for all three sessions. Examples of the questions included:

A. List any achievements or successes the Coalition has had.

B. Is there anything you are proud to share? Cost savings? New ways to work? Telling others about what you have achieved?

The Appreciative Inquiry process was concluded when the session facilitator could sense the dynamic of the room shifting from discussion to more casual conversation.

4. **Mapping** (60 minutes)

Next, participants were asked to share a few of the stories that were uncovered during the Appreciative Inquiry interview. This was done to assist with getting the first few ideas on the map, as well as to stimulate discussion of the concepts associated with the Coalition.

Using butcher block paper taped to the wall, the facilitator managed the discussion and mapped the respondents' answers to the Appreciative Inquiry portion onto the sheet. As participants generated additional related ideas, the facilitator branched them from the center concepts. The facilitator used probing questions such as "How are things different as a result of the activities and events you planned?" "What are people doing differently?" and "What effect did participation have on attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and action?"

For each session, over 50 concepts were generated, some unique to the specific audience and others that were discussed by all three groups.

5. **Reflection** (5–15 minutes)

   Prior to concluding for the day, participants were asked to reflect on how the mapping processes made them feel, as well as to reflect on the map itself. The group was asked such questions as:

   A. What is most interesting about the map?
   B. How might you use the map to tell your story about how we are making a difference?
   C. Where are there significant areas of overlap (which might lead to easier collaborative opportunities)?
   D. What recommendations do you have for the collaborative effort?
   E. What should be done next? Consider such options as additional evaluation (talking to other people in the community), sharing this information with stakeholders, taking new action, etc.

   This conversation led to a natural wrap-up of what the session entailed and allowed the participants to think about potential future steps. For example, one participant was eager to share the results with funders:

   > **I'm amazed by the result of this mapping exercise! I hadn't realized the degree to which one early project collaboration lead to another collaboration which led to more and more collaborations. I need to show this ripple map to our funders so they understand the depth and breadth of leverage they're getting with their dollars.**

6. **Summary and Post-Mapping Follow-Up**

   The evaluation and strategic planning of the Coalition are still currently in process. Each participant will be provided with a summary report of the mapping process and findings once they are complete.

Following the three sessions, Hansen mapped the information discussed into XMind, an online mapping software. The session notes were used to fill in details of what the participants shared. Next, the XMind data was downloaded into a spreadsheet format and qualitatively coded by Hansen and Sero for Coalition impact. Using axial coding to review the data showed that there were three primary impacts, as identified by all three Coalition groups:

- Coalition impact on partnerships
- Coalition impact on program development
- Coalition impact on relationships

Additional impacts discussed included:

- Coalition impact on capacity
- Coalition impact on clients
- Coalition impact on involved individuals
- Coalition impact on itself

Work with the Coalition continues. One upcoming phase of this action-oriented participatory evaluation will be to meet with a sub-group of original participants to ask for their perspectives on the interpretation of the results. They will be asked to conduct a member check on the coded data, and identify which impacts are most important to the Coalition. Once the work has been completed, each partner will receive a summary report of the REM process and findings.

An animated PowerPoint (where the ripples appeared sequentially) was shared at the Annual Gala,where the REM process created a way to tell their stories of success.


**An animated PowerPoint (where the ripples appeared sequentially) was shared at the Annual Gala. The REM process created a way to tell their stories of success.**

## Final Reflections

Ripple Effects Mapping is a participatory action evaluation method, which was well-suited for investigating the Coalition outcomes. This method strongly values participant input and interpretation toward a shared understanding of the program's strengths and capacity.

The critical part of this project was conducting three Ripple Effects Mappings of the members, the staff, and the board, in order to gather the unique perspective of each critical aspect of the coalition. Using information gained through the Ripple Effects Mapping, the Board of the Coalition has prioritized building group capacity and empowering individual food bank leaders. To help them accomplish these priorities, future activities include working on both an organizational and individual staff level.

The Coalition is hoping that results from the Ripple Effects Mapping help provide future direction to these engaged regional partners, so everyone can work together to ensure the Coalition continues to be an effective and functional player within the regional food system.

Clear places of intersection were identified that could not only lead to increased funding, but also improve inter-coalition relations. Ways to better develop each group were also determined, which will ultimately create a stronger coalition moving forward.

On the organizational level, the Board of the Coalition has taken the first step and identified where gaps currently exist in knowledge and capacity. They will be using the information gathered to determine next steps for the Coalition. The information from each of the REM sessions will also be used in the strategic planning process, which will continue throughout the year.

Additionally, after analysis and reporting of all the REM data have been completed, the Board will be meeting with regional health partners and nonprofits to tell the Coalition's story. Their goal will be to solicit additional advice about how the Coalition can effectively expand in the region, working to reduce hunger on an even larger scale. The Coalition is hoping that results from the Ripple Effects Mapping help provide future direction to these engaged regional partners, so everyone can work together to ensure the Coalition continues to be an effective and functional player within the regional food system.

In addition to plans set by the Board, individual staff will also participate in a follow-up Ripple Effects Mapping. That mapping will be conducted with the goal of assisting staff in identifying funding opportunities and developing additional partnerships in the region.

Beyond helping to set priorities and identify the next steps for the Board and the staff, other key findings were discovered through the multiple REM pro-

cess. First, clear places of intersection were identified that could not only lead to increased funding, but also improve inter-coalition relations. Ways to better develop each group were also determined, which will ultimately create a stronger coalition moving forward.

This method of using Ripple Effects Mapping with multiple groups in an organization has shown that REM can be effectively deployed to discover outcomes from a complex community endeavor. It is highly recommended that, if work with a coalition is underway, mapping multiple perspectives at unique events will help provide a more accurate representation of the work being completed, the messages being delivered, and the important priorities.

# Ripple Mapping the Impact of the Horizons Program in Three Northwestern States

**IDAHO** Lorie Higgins and Kathee Tifft

**WASHINGTON** Debra Hansen, Rayna Sage, and Rebecca Sero

**NORTH DAKOTA** Lynette Flage

**CHAPTER EDITOR** Lorie Higgins

## Program Description

Horizons was a Northwest Area Foundation (NWAF) funded program that focused on leadership capacity in small rural communities with high poverty rates, and worked to promote community action on poverty. It was delivered across seven states (Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa, with Oregon participating in the pilot phase) in three phases between 2003 and 2010, with each phase lasting approximately 18 months. During this time, a total of 283 communities completed the program, with over 100,000 residents of small, rural, and reservation communities participating.

Horizons focused on poverty reduction, leadership development, and community mobilization in order to foster leadership broadly and inclusively among community members in under-resourced rural areas. During a year and a half of coaching and training activities, communities were to develop visions, plans,

and an organizational infrastructure in order to create communities where everyone can thrive. Major program components were coordinated by a coach hired by delivery organizations (largely land-grant universities) and by steering committees comprised of local individual volunteers. These components included a visioning process, leadership training, community conversations about poverty, and the creation of action teams.

Horizons' "Theory of Change" initially focused on empowering rural communities to take action on poverty reduction, but then evolved from improving leadership capacity alone to adding a structured focus on poverty reduction. This was accomplished with a community conversation curriculum co-developed with Everyday Democracy (then the Studies Circles Resource Center). Everyday Democracy's dialogue-to-change discussion guide, "Thriving Communities Working Together to Move from Poverty to Prosperity for All" fostered open discussion between community members about poverty-related issues and how to move people from "talking about poverty" to working on specific actions to address poverty. Following these community conversations and planning activities, communities participated in the Pew Partnership's program, "LeadershipPlenty: Equipping Citizens to Work for Change." This curriculum focused on community leadership (working together) as well as individual leadership skill building.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The In-Depth Rippling approach allows for a natural flow of discussion and ripple development without any interruption or constraints from the facilitators.

**IDAHO:** Small participation incentives, such as gas cards, were provided.

**WASHINGTON:** The In-Depth Rippling approach, and the term "Ripple Effects Mapping," were developed in Washington.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** One mapping session was conducted using video-conferencing equipment.

**CHALLENGES**

Coding is time consuming with an open mapping approach.

**IDAHO:** It was difficult to schedule REM sessions in communities with non-Extension coaches as they had moved on, leaving a gap between Extension and the community.

**WASHINGTON:** Not having both a facilitator and computer-based note-taker at each site meant there were different levels of detail to the maps for each community.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** In some locales facilitators probed deeply into each story as it was told, while in others they had many more examples but not as deep.

A traditional evaluation of the full seven state Horizons program showed significant increases in community awareness of poverty, civic life participation, and community leadership, engagement, and decision-making. Communities considered the 18-month timeframe to be a good start, but believed they would see and experience measurable and meaningful poverty outcomes in future years by continuing and expanding work begun through Horizons.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

NWAF conducted its own extensive evaluation using traditional methods that painted program outcomes with a broad brush, identifying impacts across the

seven states that participated in all three phases of Horizons. Leaders in Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington delivery organizations, desiring more detailed stories from their own states, decided to combine Appreciative Inquiry, mind mapping techniques, and the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) to generate a deeper understanding of Horizons outcomes. Moreover, Horizons communities were continuing their work, and there was value in seeing how programs and impacts evolved over time. In Idaho, an added incentive was a hope that additional evaluation would inform development of a Horizons-like program that the Extension system could continue to implement in Idaho's rural communities. In all states, group synergy during REM helped energize and inspire further community building and poverty reduction work. This motivational impact was an unanticipated benefit of using REM for delivery organizations that had little previous experience with the tool.

In all states, group synergy during REM helped energize and inspire further community building and poverty reduction work.

Using Ripple Effects Mapping allowed Extension staff to give voice to community members who otherwise may not have the opportunity to speak about their experiences. REM provided an effective method to hear from a broad swath of stakeholders, while simultaneously allowing those stakeholders to listen to each other. The use of other methods, such as focus groups or key informant interviews, would have limited the number of stakeholders to whom evaluators spoke. The participatory group process involved in REM meant the conversation was participant-led, not evaluator-driven. Appreciative Inquiry enabled stakeholders in each community talk about the unique ways Horizons impacted their individual communities and to reflect on their personal experiences. Finally, by having everyone in the room at the same time, community members were able to collectively brainstorm all the ways Horizons positively impacted their communities. Again, other traditional evaluation methods are limited in allowing this group dynamic to function as well as it does with REM.

## Planning and Implementation

In all three states, ripple mapping focused on program impacts of the entire 18-month program for each community. In some cases, names of groups that grew out of Horizons were written in the middle of the map, as it was an underlying goal of the REM process to acknowledge and celebrate the work of the communities. Using adopted group names (e.g., "Weston Community Action Network") helped focus participants on their own contributions to program successes. Although valuable to University Extension, the opportunity was framed as a celebration of what communities did with the opportunities and expanded capitals afforded by Horizons.

Horizons was a lengthy, multi-phased program, and participants weren't always involved in each phase of the program (i.e., community conversations about pov-

erty, LeadershipPlenty, other trainings). Those who had been involved in one or more phase, as well as those who were observers of program implementation, such as local news writers, were invited to mapping sessions. Recruiters were primarily Extension staff who had been community coaches, but in some cases, external coaches had to be hired instead.

### IDAHO

In Idaho, a decision to use a mind mapping evaluation approach was made toward the end of Phase II. In each of 14 Phase II Idaho communities, ripple maps were created immediately following an NWAF exit survey conducted with key Horizons participants in a group setting. Initially in Idaho, impacts were mapped in each community using a hybrid CCF web-mapping approach (described in the sessions details section below). Lorie Higgins conducted mapping in most Phase II communities, and trained coaches mapped remaining communities.

After Phase III had been concluded for over a year, ripple mapping using the "in-depth rippling" approach was done with six Phase III communities in Idaho. In addition, three Phase II communities were re-mapped in order to identify impacts since concluding the program and to compare mapping approaches. Some internal funding allowed for providing gas card incentives to participate in the mapping process. Lorie Higgins facilitated and mapped participants' ideas onto butcher paper while Kathee Tifft entered data into XMind Pro software.

Horizons community coaches could attend mapping sessions if they wished and participated as needed, such as when participants required help recalling details. Extension coaches all chose to participate. None of the external coaches opted to participate, and it was much more difficult to set up ripple mapping sessions in these communities.

### WASHINGTON

Ripple Effects Mapping was deployed in all 40 Washington Horizons communities after they had completed all of the required components. Debra Hansen trained and worked with all nine community coaches on the process, and assisted in the coordination of mapping meetings across the state with members from each of the communities. For each mapping, community coaches were asked to code each map concept into one of the seven community capitals. For instance, the building of a community center would be considered built capital while a new partnership between two organizations would be considered social or political capital, depending on the nature of the organizations and relationship.

### NORTH DAKOTA

REM was completed post-program in 27 communities in North Dakota. Communities that continued to share information and stories were all asked to

participate in the REM process. The individual serving as community contact in each location was asked to recruit 10-12 individuals who had participated in the program as a steering committee member, participant in one of the activities, or someone familiar with the program.

## The Ripple Mapping Process

In all cases, with an exception of the initial phase of mapping conducted in Idaho, the REM process was described, and facilitators provided a short introduction to appreciative inquiry and explained why a positive focus was being used. Participants then paired up to conduct Appreciative Inquiry interviews (see questions below), with each having the interview questions on a sheet of paper (front and back), spaced so that there was room to write between questions. They were told to view the questions as a tool for guiding their conversations, rather than focus on answering each one in detail. After about 15 minutes, facilitators called time and began capturing ideas on a large sheet of butcher paper. Another facilitator typed items into mind mapping software simultaneously, but this was not projected for the audience to see.

#### QUESTIONS USED DURING REM

In each state, facilitators used a round robin approach: each pair shared one story at a time, but anyone in the room could add to stories before moving to the next pair. This approach focuses on rippling one story at a time. Prompts included, "What was the dollar amount of the grant?" "Who was involved?" "What happened as a result?" "How did it change perceptions / attitudes / behaviors / systems in the community?" If details could not be recalled or a person with critical information was not present, a note was made to follow up with phone calls or emails after the session.

*Idaho Questions*

- Tell a story about how you and/or others have used information from Horizons.t
- Is there anything you are especially proud of you'd like to share?
- Are there any specific achievements or successes you can think of?
- Have you shared what you've learned with anyone?
- What new resources or opportunities do you (and/or the community) have?
- Has your and/or others' attitudes or behaviors changed? If so, in what way?

*Washington Questions*

- Tell me a story about a highpoint in Horizons
- What are the most outstanding moments/stories from Horizon's that make you most proud to be a member of the organization?
- List an achievement or a success – what made it possible?
- What went particularly well?

*North Dakota Questions*

- Tell me a story about a highpoint in Horizons.
- What are the most outstanding moments/stories from Horizon's that make you most proud to be a member of the community?
- List an achievement or a success – what made it possible?
- What went particularly well? What changed?

## REM SESSION DETAILS

In most cases, the level of participant enthusiasm increased as more stories of success were mapped on the wall. The most often reported benefit to participants is in seeing all the work they did, directly or indirectly, displayed on the wall. The power of this visual validation of successes cannot be overstated.

Sessions typically ended with participants being asked to share their observations about the map, what was mapped, what could be done with the information, and so forth. This was often where interesting participant insights were shared. In Idaho, an additional debrief question during initial mapping efforts at

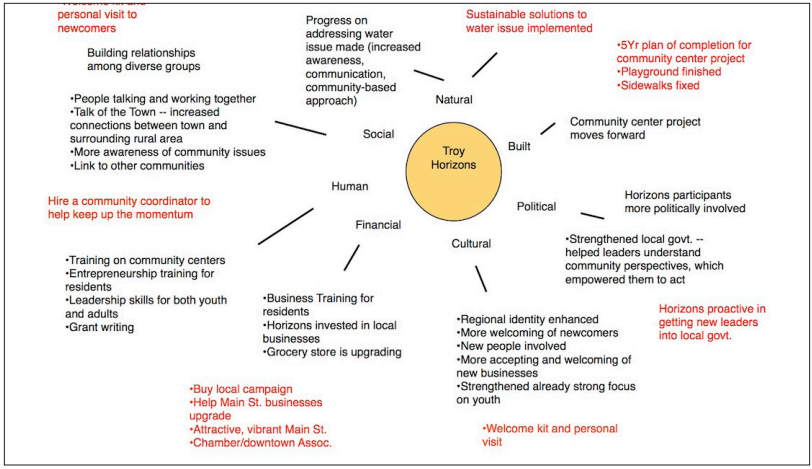



**FIGURE VI.1** Example of hybrid CCF—web mapping approach used initially in Idaho

the end of Phase II was "What additional capital impacts would you like to see in the future?" Red text on the map below shows responses to this question.

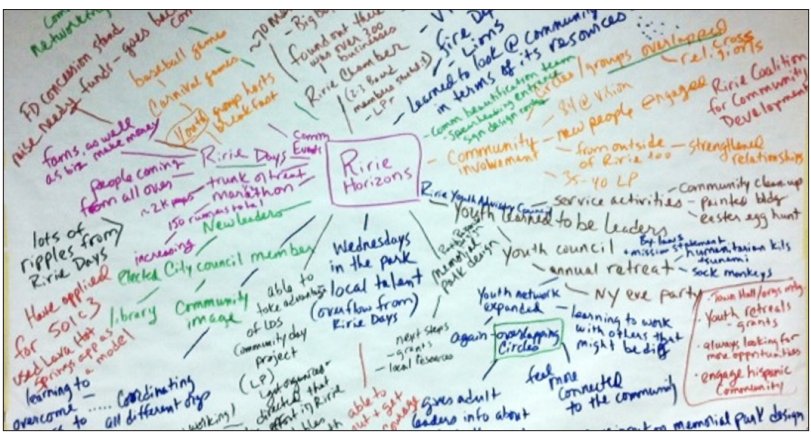
### *Idaho*

In Idaho, the first round of mapping at the end of Phase II Horizons was a hybrid approach, insofar as impacts were listed on flip chart paper, the Community Capitals Framework was described, and listed impacts were mapped by participants onto a capitals spider graph. Below is an example of a map created with this approach.

This approach allowed participants to clearly see where impacts clustered around certain capitals. Early during one of these sessions, a participant stated she was disappointed because she had most wanted to see more main street businesses as an outcome from Horizons but there didn't seem to be any real momentum in that area. During the debrief at the end of the session, she noted that impacts were clustered around human, social, and cultural capital and said "oh, I see now that we need to have all of those [social, human, and cultural] things happen first in order to build our capacity to bring more businesses to town." It was an "aha" moment when she realized that the relationships, skills, and shared values of a community have to be strong in order for economic development to occur.

### *Washington*

For most of the 40 communities, participating in the REM session was a positive time to reflect on the achievements of the group and celebrate what they had accomplished. The energy and excitement created by seeing their work "on the wall" was enough to respark their interest in continuing the hard work of moving forward with community development. One community was able to see their most successful projects and, based on the ripple effects they reported, identify why they were effective. This group determined that increasing human and social capital would help them move the project forward.




**Ririe, Idaho Horizons Map**

*North Dakota*

REM sessions in North Dakota were all very motivational, and in a number of cases helped communities jump-start efforts that originated during Horizons. Communities recognized their successes around grant-writing activity, and identified a number of grants received after the program ended. Other North Dakota communities had started a local community foundation for long-term giving or contemplated this activity. Communities in the conversation stage of developing a community foundation, which moved forward after the REM activity.

This REM-like process was an effective way to map impacts, and had the benefit of being organized by capitals in the process. During the second round of mapping, Idaho adopted the in-depth rippling approach to allow comparisons between Washington and Idaho community participants. Like the hybrid process used earlier in Idaho, this approach also allows participants to recognize that successes often start with a training, new partnership, or community event (human, social, and cultural capitals). The open mapping, in-depth rippling structure, however, provided a much more detailed narrative of how an intervention or project created ripples of activity and impacts, and allowed evaluators to track the flow and interaction of capitals.

## SESSION LOGISTICS

At most locales in North Dakota there was one facilitator and one recorder. The facilitator led the group, asked the probing questions, and drew the map on flip chart paper. The recorder simultaneously utilized XMind software to map stories and specifics. The recorder usually had their computer connected to a projector to show participants how the XMind map looked as they provided information. One location conducted REM with videoconference equipment. The facilitator was unable to travel to the location, so stakeholders were gathered at a distance, a videoconferencing system set-up, and the facilitator mapped on flip chart paper as the group provided feedback. While not an ideal setting, the group was still fully engaged and provided positive stories using the same protocol as all other sites.

## AFTER THE MAPPING (FINAL STEPS)

After mapping concluded, two or three individuals reviewed the data, coding it initially according to the community capitals and then again into short-, medium-. and long-term outcome categories in each of the states. Highlights and major themes from across North Dakota were presented to stakeholders that included Horizons community members in multiple venues. Each community in North Dakota and many in Idaho and Washington also received a large, laminated copy of their XMind map.

> By far, Horizons impacted social and human capital the most in communities.

## Findings

By far, Horizons had the most impact on social and human capitals. This makes sense, because program components were focused on community conversations and training. More surprising, significant political capital was generated in a couple of forms. First, people reported feeling more comfortable with approaching elected officials with requests and input, and many participants have run for local elected offices since the program ended. Cultural capital related to an awareness and collective commitment to address poverty was also often reported.

Below are selected examples of capitals generated as a result of Horizons:

- **NATURAL CAPITAL**
  - Community gardens
  - Walking trails
  - Recycling campaign and infrastructure
- **CULTURAL CAPITAL**
  - Communities participating in arts and heritage programs
  - More hope and positive attitudes
  - More awareness of and action on poverty
- **HUMAN CAPITAL**
  - Grant writing and nonprofit skills
  - New techniques learned
  - More people with leadership and other skills
- **SOCIAL CAPITAL**
  - New social activities to build sense of community
  - Newsletters
  - Network weaving between groups and communities
- **FINANCIAL CAPITAL**
  - Many local community foundations started for long-term philanthropy efforts
  - Over $21 million acquired through grants, gifts, and loans (in all seven states)
  - Business training
- **BUILT CAPITAL**
  - Closed rural schools converted to businesses incubators, lodges, fitness centers
  - Community Centers
  - Increased broadband
- **POLITICAL CAPITAL**
  - Youth appointed by mayor to city committees
  - People running for office
  - Community organizations and local government more engaged and connected

### FOCUSED FINDINGS

Results from REM sessions conducted in Washington provide an ideal case study example of descriptive findings. The chart below highlights coded findings from eight communities in Stevens County. As you can see, most communities recognized their growth in two main areas, human and social capital. When considering the goal of reducing poverty, it makes sense that these two areas would be well-represented in the capitals. Chewelah also focused on growing their financial capital through partnering with the Chewelah Economic Development Committee to support small businesses, while Horizon group members attended every Northport City Council meeting, asking the question "What can we do to help?" After several months they finally gained the trust of the Council and were tasked to write a grant to restore the town's boat launch. They were successful in procuring a $400,000 grant to rebuild and refurbish their only access to the Columbia River.

Horizon group members attended every Northport City Council meeting, asking the question "What can we do to help?" After several months they finally gained the trust of the Council and were tasked to write a grant to restore the town's boat launch. They were successful in procuring a $400,000 grant to rebuild and refurbish their only access to the Columbia River.

## Final Reflections

### PROGRAM BENEFITS

While REM is likely too time intensive to use as a stand-alone evaluation for large, multi-site and multi-state programs like Horizons, it both ground truths and provides rich, narrative detail, complementing summary statistics such as how many participants report increased leadership skills, etc. REM is an effective mid-stream check for long-term programs and can be a cost-effective stand-alone evaluation for smaller scale programs. One advantage of using it during mid-program is that it functions well as a way to reinvigorate and

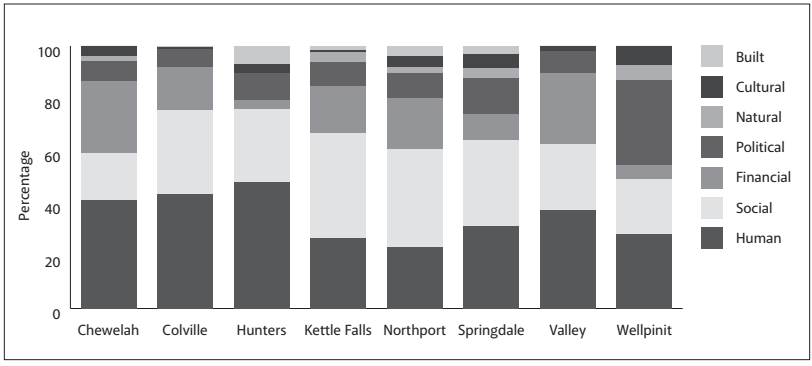



**FIGURE VI.2** Stevens County coded findings

redirect stakeholders. Using the process as a team-building exercise has been shown to get participants excited about completed work and to help illustrate potential next steps to the group.

### PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

The In-Depth Rippling approach to Ripple Effects Mapping is the least structured and most open-ended. The upside is that it allows for a natural flow of discussion and ripple development without any interruption or constraints from the facilitators. While participants do not have the opportunity to co-create the analytical interpretation of data, it does provide more time to delve into stories, focusing only on what happened and not on how events fit into a theme or capital category. Another benefit is that it allows communities and facilitators/researchers to see which program interventions and outcomes generate the thickest "nest" of ripples (see Figure VI.3, on page 100). This provides opportunities for groups to discover their particular areas of greatest effort and success. When ideas are mapped by themes or capitals, ripples from different activities and events can be grouped, which results in being able to see density by capital or theme. Each way is valuable, so facilitators should think about what is most important for different groups.

Another benefit is that it allows communities and facilitator/researchers to see which program interventions and outcomes generated the thickest "nest" of ripples.

This map in Figure VI.3 shows more density and ripples from some impacts than others. This is a digitized version of the handwritten map depicted at the beginning of this chapter.

One of the greatest values of REM is as a tool for reflection for program participants and for catalyzing further programmatic activities. Participants in com-

**Lincoln County, Idaho Horizons Team**

munity development efforts almost always underestimate the impacts their work has had, in part because people don't process new information in ways that allow them to keep a mental tally of impacts and because no one participant has a complete inventory of all the direct and indirect impacts of programs. It's like the blind men who could only "see" the elephant by sharing information. Only by communicating with each other can program participants "visualize" the myriad ways people have used, shared and leveraged skills, information, and resources.

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## Recommendations

### LOGISTICS

Recorders are challenged to simultaneously type data into a software program and record word-for-word quotes. Having a third observer/recorder for the process is helpful. A recent REM experience with a Horizons community in Montana utilized three facilitators, with one capturing direct quotes. Quotes were then inserted into the digital version of the map, an added value for evaluators and participants wishing to use the map for writing news articles or grant proposals. The third facilitator can focus on noting group dynamics, and help identify and record any needed follow-up for details when they can't be recalled or when key stakeholders are absent.

### DATA MANAGEMENT

Regardless of when Ripple Effects Mapping occurs during the program life cycle, it is recommended that coding and analysis be completed soon after the mapping session. Follow-up calls to capture additional information should be made within a few days of the session, and any information not captured in the software program during mapping should be entered. Triangulation should occur by comparing information on the wall map with notes and XMind, to ensure that all information shared by stakeholders has been captured. By completing coding and analysis soon after a mapping session, researchers can help ensure final reports provide an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the work that has been done.

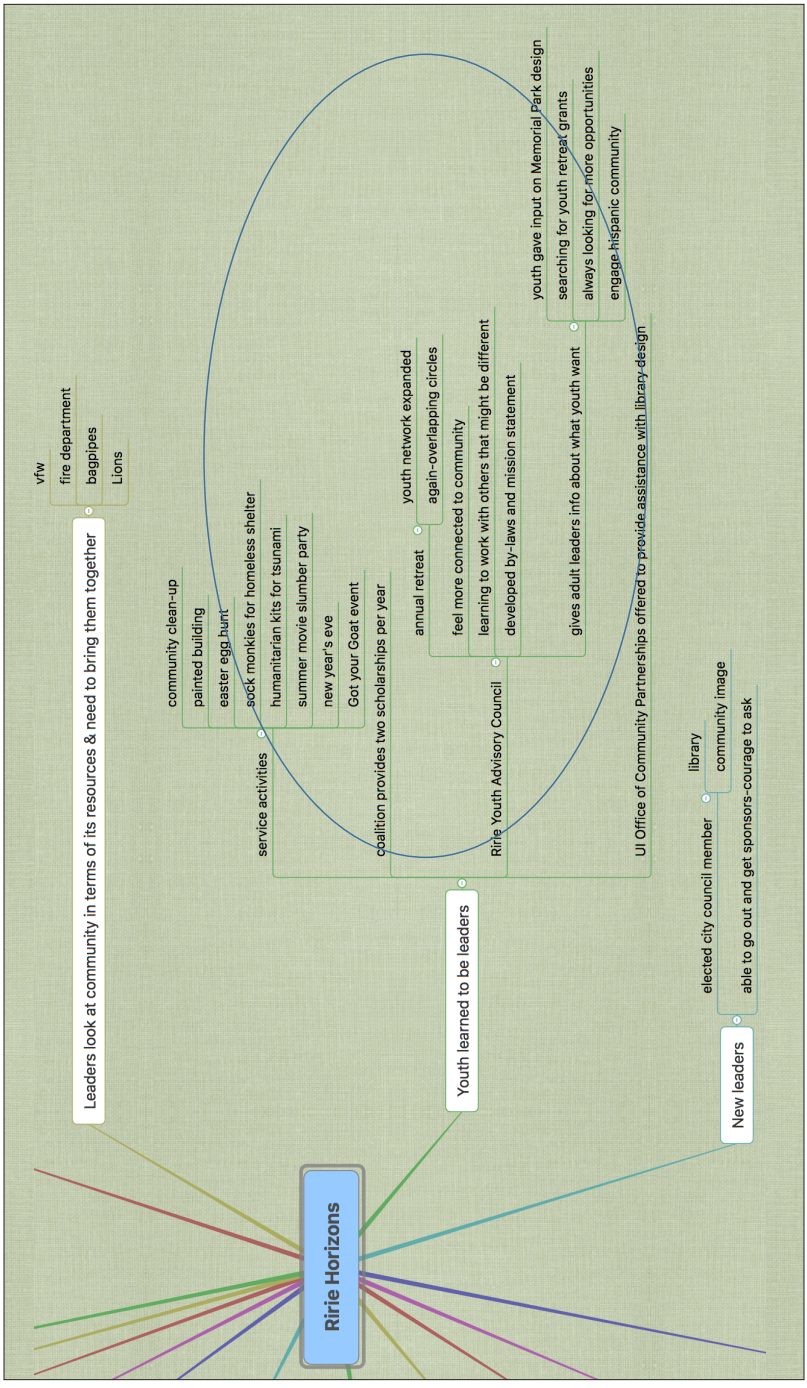



**FIGURE VI.3** Ririe Horizons Ripple Effects Map (created June, 2012)

# Three Arts Groups Collaborate Toward a More Creative Future

Debra Hansen, Rebecca Sero, & Lorie Higgins

## Program Description

Chewelah, Washington, was recently highlighted in national news as the "poorest town in the state of Washington." This news was alarming and disheartening, but also elicited a strong community response, especially among Chewelah's robust arts community. Immediately after this disappointing story, the Chewelah Arts Guild rallied the community together in its second attempt to break the Guinness World Record of the most jack-o'-lanterns in one line, and they succeeded on Saturday, October 24 at Light up the Park 2015. Thanks to the participation of hundreds of people from in and outside the community, nearly 2,000 glowing pumpkins wound through the city park, creating a line more than a quarter-mile long.

Chewelah is a small, rural town with many issues around its economic status, but also a rich history of outstanding performing and visual arts. Three major nonprofit organizations—Chewelah Performing and Cultural Arts (PACA), Chewelah Community Celebrations, and the Chewelah Arts Guild—have been engaged in growing a creative community culture, but have been historically operating in separate silos. At times this has created confusion, ill-will, and duplication of effort, while minimizing opportunities to collaborate on robust fundraising activities.

The mission statements of the three organizations are similar in nature, and all support the desire to improve the entire community of Chewelah:

"Chewelah Performing and Cultural Arts: Bring together leadership and resources to create and sustain a center of excellence to educate, inspire, and celebrate the performing and visual arts in Chewelah."

"Chewelah Community Celebrations: A volunteer group of dedicated people who believe in the community and wish to ensure that Chewelah is an outstanding place to live or visit with fun activities throughout the year."

"Chewelah Arts Guild: Supports the growth, development, appreciation, and understanding of the arts in their various forms and to make the arts accessible to all members of the greater Chewelah community."

A performing arts center has been on the minds and in the hearts of these organizations, local artists, and performers for more than 20 years. Various bonds that would have raised the necessary funds for an arts center were repeatedly rejected by taxpayers, with no one stepping forward with the money to make the center a reality. Finally, a local arts enthusiast generously donated a sizable sum, and Chewelah Cultural and Performing Arts (PACA) sprang to life. The search was started for a home, with the belief that a building reuse project would be less expensive than a from-scratch project. At present, PACA has mobilized to collaborate with the City of Chewelah to purchase a permanent arts facility with the goal of bringing these three groups and others into a collaborative environment for performance and co-location of appropriate activities.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

The monumental task of creating and sustaining a capital campaign in a small, rural community inspired the Chewelah Performing and Cultural Arts board members to look for all and any resources to help them. As a group, they realized that data, documentation, and a combined vision for the possibilities were

**Chewelah Arts' Guild and the community collaborate to smash the jack-o'-lantern world record**

paramount to their success. PACA's Executive Director, the primary catalyst behind purchasing the new arts facility, attended the Washington Nonprofit Conference to increase his knowledge and skills for managing the emerging Performing Arts Center and fund raising activities.

While there, he participated in the Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) session presented by the authors, and was immediately drawn to the visual and artistic aspects of this evaluation tool. He also saw the value of deploying a non-competitive, collaborative process for sharing stories of success to capitalize on the historical past successes of each group. He contacted Debra Hansen, the WSU County Extension director, and together they planned a REM event to bring stakeholders together.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**The group was energized by this highly visual and fun way to unearth the outcomes achieved. Using this method of REM allows the stories and ripples to be the dominant player in the room, with the data and organization of those data done at a separate time.**

**CHALLENGES**

**As we worked through the exercise, people articulated the desire to have more stories from more people. It seemed limiting with the group that convened.**

Sharing and mapping collective and overlapping stories allowed each group to have a voice and not get stuck in the task of taking credit.

## Planning and Implementation

### PREPARATION

The authors designed the REM agenda, including the development of the appreciative inquiry questions for the exercise. PACA's Executive Director was responsible for recruiting participants and ensuring that those with the most to contribute were in attendance. As a result, leadership from the three groups, plus stakeholders representing the Chamber of Commerce, Chewelah Farmers Market, and the Chewelah School District, were invited to participate in the REM event.

### MAPPING

Debra Hansen facilitated introduction of the Ripple Effects Mapping process, prompts, and conversations of the various ripples. Key words and related concepts were written on a wall-sized sheet of butcher paper as the topics were put forth. This interactive, colorful process allowed people to focus on their stories and how they interconnected. Rebecca Sero captured participant notes and quotations on a computer.

To start the event in the right tone, this thought was shared: "We believe that communities move in the direction of the stories they tell about themselves; Ripple Effects Mapping allows you to capture the impact of work within the community and helps you uncover your positive stories."

The group of 12 participants, from across all organizations, paired up and interviewed each other with the following Appreciative Inquiry questions:

1. What are your organization's greatest accomplishments?
2. What are you most proud of?
3. What are your organization's greatest strengths?

Sharing and mapping collective and overlapping stories allowed each group to have a voice and not get stuck in the task of taking credit. When prompted for the "so what" of their success stories, they were excited to see many long-term outcomes of their years of work. Mapping stories by category, instead of by organization, led them to realize the role their individual group played within each success story. It also helped to demonstrate many areas of already successful overlap in their work. This should prove to be especially beneficial as the groups move forward in a collaborative effort.

REM creates opportune teaching moments when the group is ready to hear them. In this case, when participants noted these common threads, facilitators were able to describe bonding and bridging social capital, offering a framework for interpreting the benefits of their efforts.

REM creates opportune teaching moments when the group is ready to hear them. In this case, when participants noted these common threads, facilitators were able to describe bonding and bridging social capital, offering a framework for interpreting the benefits of their efforts. Introducing elements of the community capitals framework during the post-mapping dialogue portion of the exercise was a just-in-time learning approach that sustained a natural flow to the process. This contrasts with a more academic lecture followed by discovery approach that does not always work well in community settings.

Questions used to conclude the exercise:

1. What is the thing you most want to accomplish in the community?
2. What new resources or opportunities do you expect to have as a result of greater communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among your organizations?

As mapping concluded, participants had identified a number of ways they plan to move forward, including:

- Clarifying each organization's mission
- Discovering ways to be more complementary in the future
- Finding ways to work together more toward common goals and increasing interaction
- Ensuring they are cooperating instead of competing

### NEXT STEPS

This Ripple Effects Mapping event was designed to be an initial step in developing a shared vision. The REM map has been digitized, creating a rich and revealing map of positive outcomes. Through conversations about the data, the facilitation team continues work with participants to:

1. Develop a shared vision based on the map
2. Develop focus areas based on the vision
3. Identify conceptual and practical goals or objectives for each focus area, and
4. Identify priority practical goals/projects for each focus area
5. For each practical (SMART) goal, identify tasks, timelines, and measures for success, as well as resources needed to meet the goal

The visual and descending order of the design makes it possible to immediately identify priority areas, even for those who were not part of the initial discussion and mapping. This enables additional group members to be engaged and involved in the process, therefore creating more buy-in across all of the arts groups in the community. Community members are inspired by the belief that arts are important in a robust economic development strategy that includes value-added experiences (Fiore et al., 2007.)

## Final Reflections

When reviewing the current research and literature, it was discovered that this REM work revealed all of the four key points included in "How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality" (APA, 2015.) A summary of the key points identified in the mapping exercise:

1. Economic development is enhanced by concentrating creativity through both physical density and human capital. By locating firms, artists, and cultural facilities together, a multiplier effect can result.
2. The recognition of a community's arts and culture assets is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life.
3. Arts and cultural activities can draw crowds from within and around the community. Increasing the number of visitors as well as enhancing resident participation helps build economic and social capital.
4. Planners can make deliberate connections between the arts and culture sector and other sectors, such as tourism and manufacturing, to improve economic outcomes by capitalizing on local assets.

Finding this resource to put a framework around the outcomes discovered through the REM exercise gave these groups a sense of pride to see that they are already moving in the right direction, and it has motivated them to aim toward their future goals with more intention.

Finding this resource to put a framework around the outcomes discovered through the REM exercise gave these groups a sense of pride to see that they are already moving in the right direction, and it has motivated them to aim toward their future goals with more intention.

By far the most important part of using REM for this group was the "aha" moments that created the desired convergence for the team. They identified several stories of youth engagement throughout all organizations, and when they rippled out the long-term outcomes for these individuals, they could see the community value they were providing. Now that they have a sense of the value of partnerships, they identified other groups to engage in their collective work, including local schools, churches, restaurants, and the veterans' group. The mapping enabled the three groups to connect their successes without concerning themselves with the issue of "credit." The session also provided the three groups with a common purpose and talking points about the groups' future goals. During a follow-up conversation, one participant noted: "Now that we have all of this information, it's already been useful for talking to prospective donors for our capital campaign—it has become much more than just a building." Finally, this process has also opened additional lines of communication among the groups. Instead of communicating only within individual groups, information is being shared among the three groups, helping further break down barriers.

Overall, the REM process enhanced people's ability to think as a cohesive arts coalition, while maintaining individual group identities. The groups are now ready to move forward on the strategic planning phase, which will help them most effectively plan for their blended future and move toward an even more robustly supported community of arts. During the REM exercise, one of the facilitators commented, "There's a lot of adaptability and creativity in this community."

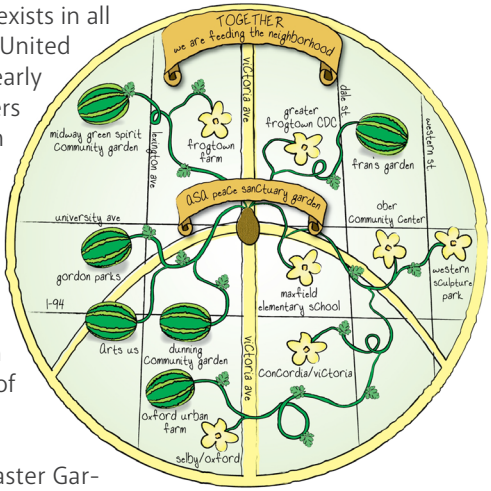
# PART VII
# Examples of REM in Practice: Theming and Rippling

# Community Gardening Efforts in the Frogtown/Rondo Neighborhoods of St. Paul, MN

Melvin Giles, Sarah Jaycocks, and Scott Chazdon

## Program Description

The Master Gardener program is an internationally recognized volunteer program. It exists in all fifty U.S. states, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Nationally, there are nearly 100,000 Master Gardener volunteers from all walks of life. They reach about 5 million people each year—the equivalent of more than $100 million in value to communities. In Minnesota, the Master Gardener program is coordinated by University of Minnesota Extension and has strong ties to the research and outreach of the Department of Horticultural Science.




The Ramsey County Extension Master Gardener program has been intentional about extending resources and services to all county residents, especially those living in the historically underserved Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods in St. Paul.

These neighborhoods are under-resourced, and residents experience a high number of health disparities. This area has a high poverty rate and a history of being "red-lined," segregated from housing, employment, and other resources and opportunities available to other citizens of St Paul.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Community member co-facilitated to avoid appearance of university domination. A follow-up session was conducted two and a half years after the initial session to document new accomplishments.

REM is a culturally appropriate method for a low-resource audience. Empowers people to share their knowledge (not just about "what the University did"). The participants wanted to do it again.

**CHALLENGES**

Could benefit from participation of more types of community stakeholders to better understand the ripple effects beyond those directly involved in gardening.

Because these neighborhoods are extremely diverse in population and the Extension Master Gardener program is not, a community organizer, Melvin Giles, was hired as a community liaison to guide the program. Melvin connected Master Gardener volunteers with community members and, perhaps most importantly, legitimized the program and the presence of volunteers in the community. He started the key process of building local relationships, something necessary before any programming could be successful. These relationships were founded on mutual learning and respect for the knowledge, resources, and programs already existing in the community. Side by side, Master Gardeners and community members worked to grow existing gardens and projects. Over time, they have created new gardens and new opportunities in the community.

The goal of this project is to provide access to and education about healthy food, as well as a safe, green space in which community members can gather and hold events. The project spans the entire Minnesota gardening season, approximately April-early November, and includes workshops, community potlucks, and summer classes for children. Daily outcomes are visible in the garden—for example, one little girl left our "pickle-making" class and went home and convinced her parents to make pickles with her, too. Staff try to codify these outcomes, and they write a formal report on the project twice a year.

Rather than using the traditional university model of "we are coming in to teach classes to this underserved area," staff have intentionally designed the project to allow for community residents' knowledge to surface and ultimately be celebrated. There are definitely goals for the project, but it has been equally important to focus on building strong, trusting relationships in the community.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

The decision to use REM came from both the community and the University. The lead organizer and residents of the community were interested in having evidence of the power of their work that they could use to draw attention to their efforts, attract new Master Gardener volunteers from the community,

and leverage resources from local government, non-profit groups, and foundations. The leaders of the Master Gardener program at the University and in Ramsey County knew that the work being undertaken in Frogtown/Rondo was valuable and could offer important insights about ways to effectively engage historically underserved audiences.

One of the ways in which REM evaluation can be more culturally responsive is that it is a relationship-based method, instead of a traditional task-based one.

The non-traditional nature of the REM evaluation method was well suited for this project and community. As compared with more traditional evaluation methods, REM could be made culturally appropriate and specific to the diverse community in the Frogtown/Rondo area of St. Paul. One reason REM evaluation can be more culturally responsive is that it is a relationship-based method, instead of a traditional task-based one. REM incorporates an element of Appreciative Inquiry, which highlights the potential assets of a project, not just project deficits. The REM method provided the opportunity for community members to share knowledge and experience they already had: knowledge about gardening and the community, and the history of both in the area.

The Extension Garden Teaching Project is a multi-year project, and the initial REM session was used as a developmental evaluation tool after it had been in place for roughly five years. The project continues today.

## Planning and Implementation

While the initial interest was in documenting the impact of the Ramsey County Master Gardener program in two neighborhoods, the REM session focus was broadened to broader community gardening efforts because many important gardening efforts pre-dated Extension's involvement and because other local universities were also involved in the work. It was clear that the group could

**Melvin Giles, community liaison, and Megan Phinney, Land Connector**

tease out findings from the REM session that were focused on the work of the Master Gardener program, but it was also clear that the context was broader than just the program.

> It was important that one of the facilitators came from the community so that it did not appear that, as many community members fear, "the University was coming into the neighborhood to study us again."

The initial REM session took place in March, 2013. Organizers invited a roughly even number of Master Gardener volunteers and members of the community. Community members included representatives of two large churches in the community that have gardens on site, community and non-profit organization members, a state representative, backyard gardeners, and local business people. All invited participants had participated in the garden somehow. Staff asked the Master Gardener volunteers to come as a part of their volunteer work. Melvin Giles, who is from the community, personally invited fellow community members by going to meetings and explaining what the REM process is and why it can potentially provide important information. The session also included a dinner donated from a local community coffee shop that serves as an important hub of community life. (The peach cobbler was excellent.)

We asked participants in paired interviews to share a brief story about their experience with any of gardening efforts in the community, using one of these questions:

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement with this effort?
- What is something about your involvement in this effort that you are proud to share?
- What connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of this effort?

The session had two facilitators, one of whom lived in the community, and one recorder.

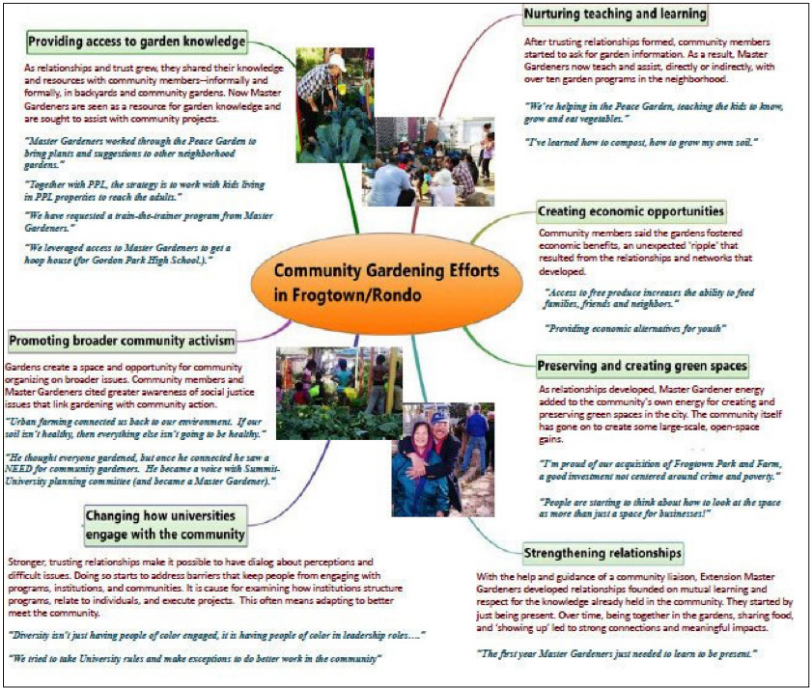
Participants had lively group discussion—much agreement, some disagreement, but handled respectfully. Participants felt comfortable sharing their various perspectives. The only main disagreement, which was handled quite respectfully and openly, was the sharing of different perspectives on the term "Master" within the title "Master Gardener." One participant eloquently noted that the use of the word "Master" implies a colonial relationship among people, as well as between people and the land. In response, the Frogtown/Rondo community gardeners have adopted the labels "Garden Educator" or "Land Connector" instead of "Master Gardener" to describe their role.

It was important that one of the facilitators came from the community so that it did not appear that, as many community members fear, "the University was coming into the neighborhood to study us again." Most participants were reasonably engaged, some a bit more than others. Language was a partial barrier for one couple, but there were people in attendance who could translate.

These core themes were generated during the March 2013 REM session:

- Nurturing teaching and learning
- Providing access to garden knowledge
- Creating economic opportunities
- Preserving and creating green spaces
- Strengthening relationships
- Changing how universities engage with the community
- Promoting broader community activism

The main facilitator conducted several follow-up interviews with REM participants for clarity and with important individuals who could not be present. He added the additional information to the map and coded the data with an assistant. The final REM map was presented to the community several months later




**A graphic display of the core themes from the baseline REM session**

and staff received feedback that was incorporated as needed. The community participants reportedly enjoyed the process.

After the session, participants were encouraged to attend the already-existing "Reconciliation Lunch Group" sessions in the area as a way of staying connected. These sessions are an open space where community members and others may freely discuss race and culture without worrying about feeling the typical judgment, guilt, shame, and anger.

Participants themselves requested to meet again at some point in the future for a follow-up REM session, and in the fall of 2015, two and half years after the initial REM session, members of the community were invited to a follow-up.

To facilitate the follow-up, staff printed posters of each major theme from the original ripple map. After a brief overview of the contents of the original ripple map, participants spent time circulating around the room adding new "ripples" to each of the original themes using colorful markers. The following questions were used to prompt the reporting:

- What new highlights, achievements, or successes have you had based on your involvement with this effort?
- What new aspects of your involvement in community gardening are you proud to share?
- What connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made since March 2013?

The follow-up session appeared energizing and fun, and included a higher proportion of community residents than the initial session. Participants reported being amazed at the amount of new impacts that were reported, including the creation of an Urban Farm and Garden Alliance organization, new gardens at

**Participants review and add to the original ripple map during the follow-up session**

local apartment complexes and schools, and much deeper connections with several local universities.

REM does a great job acknowledging and honoring the accomplishments of existing urban agriculture activities, showing how the roots of projects can connect with new projects to form a healthy roadmap for growing the community into the future.

## Final Reflections

The Master Gardeners involved with the project provided helpful insights. In a future REM session the plan is to gather feedback from more stakeholder groups in the community because, while we know that Master Gardeners support the project, it would be helpful to document any new changes in the community because of the project. Some examples of other stakeholders would be elders, backyard gardeners, community activists, community organizations, and local school representatives. To draw broad representation from the community, future sessions may need to be scheduled in the evening or on the weekend. Typically, only paid staff of community organizations can manage to attend one of these sessions during the day.

Based on these two experiences, it is clear that REM is an excellent process for teasing out unintended, but great results from a project, results that one might never have guessed. REM does a great job acknowledging and honoring the accomplishments of existing urban agriculture activities, showing how the roots of projects can connect with new projects to form a healthy roadmap for growing the community into the future. REM was not as helpful in determining specific measurable results of gardening efforts, such as increased yields or improved nutrition. Measuring these types of outcomes requires more traditional methods, such as surveys.

The follow-up was also a powerful way to sustain energy in the work. It was relatively easy to print large posters, arrange a time and a meal, and invite com-

**Adding new ripple effects during the follow-up session**

munity members to document and celebrate their successes. The REM process was a great fit for evaluating community gardening work. It is relatively easy for the community to feel a sense of ownership of the process. Like the work itself, the ripple map branches and grows. Sometimes surprising connections are discovered and built upon. And perhaps most importantly, both the community and the university benefited from the process.

> The follow-up was also a powerful way to sustain energy in the work. It was relatively easy to print large posters, arrange a time and a meal, and invite community members to document and celebrate their successes.

# Measuring the Impact of Coalition Efforts to Improve Community Health Outcomes: Using REM at Two Separate Times

Catherine Bosserman, Ann P. Zukoski, and Scott Chazdon

## Program Description

The Healthy Communities Partnership (HCP) was a three-year program funded by the George Family Foundation and Allina Health to improve the health of residents in 13 communities throughout Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Managed by the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing, the program aimed to help prevent deaths and chronic diseases related to poor nutrition, inadequate exercise, smoking, and hazardous drinking. Allina Health invested $5 million in the project through the George Family Foundation.

HCP funded 13 hospitals and health systems to focus on three core strategy areas: 1) Enhancing and strengthening their health system's role within the local community wellness infrastructure; 2) Improving community wellness through baseline biometric screening and annual rescreening activities; and 3) Developing strategies to sustain community health improvement efforts through changes in policies, practices, and systems and to identify resources to sustain project work. The long-term goal of this work was to improve community health outcomes.

Rainbow Research, Inc. a not for profit research and evaluation firm located in Minneapolis MN (www.rainbowresearch.org), conducted the evaluation of this program. The evaluation used a mixed methods design and included social network analysis, ripple effects mapping, case studies, telephone interviews, document review, and observations. Ripple effects mapping and social network analysis were conducted at the start and finish of the project to capture changes over time.

The evaluation questions focused on measuring short-term changes in collaboration, changes in health behavior, and shifts in policies and practices to strengthen community wellness infrastructures that support community health improvement.

Project impact was examined assessed at three levels:

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**REM at two points and in four communities.**

**REM was combined with other evaluation methods. Shows how incorporating REM into program planning from the beginning allows for a rigorous evaluation protocol. When programs are complex and extremely collaborative, it provides an opportunity to celebrate partners' accomplishments, even those not connected to the program.**

**CHALLENGES**

**Four of eight applicant sites didn't get to participate. It is challenging to communicate about REM and its purposes. Sometimes those less familiar with the technique do not translate recruitment messages (for example) well. Not all key participants were able to participate in the REM sessions. It can be challenging to attribute changes specifically to the program that is being evaluated.**

*Community Change*

1. How did HCP programs engage and contribute to the community wellness infrastructure in each of their communities?
2. How did HCP program components contribute to improving community wellness?

*Community Member Wellness*

3. How did screenings and community program components contribute to improving participant health and wellness?

*Sustainability*

4. How did HCP communities develop and implement policies, practices, and environmental changes to sustain a local community infrastructure?
5. What lessons were learned from this initiative that can inform the health field?

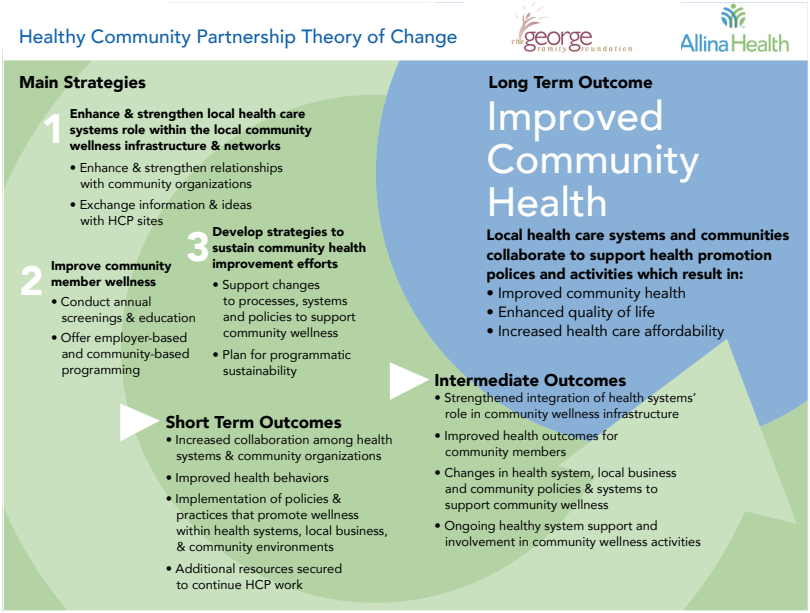
## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Research suggests that creating community partnerships representing multiple sectors is an effective strategy for improving community health outcomes (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006), yet it is challenging to measure the impact of these

strategies. Ripple Effects Mapping represents a type of participatory evaluation method that can capture community changes, including unintended and distal impacts of a collaborative effort. The process of bringing together community stakeholders with varying levels of involvement in an intervention or program to reflect on community-wide changes allows evaluators and participants to identify and celebrate accomplishments. The process enables participants to see a larger picture of how multiple community efforts, whether directly supported by a specific grant program or other funded projects, work synergistically leading to small changes within communities that support larger impact.

The process enables participants to see a larger picture of how multiple community efforts, whether directly supported by a specific grant program or other funded projects, work synergistically, leading to small changes within communities that support larger impact.

The HCP project was funded in 13 different communities, each with its own history, unique nature, and readiness for change. REM offered the evaluation team the opportunity to capture how four unique communities used the funds, and the impact of the grant program. This method also provided the team to use a participatory approach that engages stakeholders in an interactive method to explore and describe community change. The participatory nature of the process acts to build additional energy within a community, as well as creating an environment in which to capture rich detailed stories. Finally, the REM method was selected because the project funders were interested in identifying a wide




**The Healthy Communities Partnership Theory of Change**

set of project outcomes, including how funding like this can impact community outcomes, including social, economic, health, and community connectedness (Emery & Flora, 2006).

The length of the project also afforded the unique opportunity to use the method at two times. The evaluators were excited to be able to create a visual map of change at two points and visually depict where some efforts expanded and new efforts began. This picture offers a powerful way to demonstrate community change and depict how small activities can lead to improvements and other synergetic efforts.

## Planning and Implementation

### SITE SELECTION

- **Invitation**. At a grantee gathering of the 13 sites, the evaluation team provided an overview of the evaluation methods, including Ripple Effects Mapping. The team presented the process and what it would require to participate, and invited sites to apply.
- **Application to Participate**. Interested sites were asked to fill out a short application, discussing their interest in participating in REM and their capacity to engage participants and host REM events. Eight of 13 sites completed an application to participate in REM.
- **Selection**. The Evaluation Advisory Committee selected four sites based on a pre-determined set of criteria, including geographic diversity, cohort, partnership strategy, and level of interest and commitment.

**TWO REM SESSIONS** Each site participated in REM at two separate times. The 'baseline' session occurred at the end of the first year of funding and was intended to capture the baseline and early-implementation effects of the grant. The "post-implementation" session was held at the end of the third and final year of grant funding with the intention of examining how community health and wellness had changed over the grant's duration.

Each grantee hospital had an HCP project coordinator, called an Ambassador, who served a community outreach role on the project. The Ambassador for each REM site was charged with recruiting 12 to 20 REM participants from their community partners and other project stakeholders. Ambassadors were asked to invite representatives from local health systems, county and city government, schools, local public health organizations, collaborating businesses, religious and civic organizations, and other local health partnerships. Participants were to include individuals who were actively involved in and knowledgeable about the HCP project, as well as individuals having some familiarity with the project, but only peripheral involvement.

### BASELINE RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING

The baseline REM sessions began with an appreciative inquiry interview, in which participants were asked to partner with someone whom they did not know well and share a story in response to one of the following questions:

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you or your organization have had improving wellness through involvement with Healthy Communities Partnership?
- What connections with others in the community—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of Healthy Communities Partnership?

After a short interview process, the facilitator asked each individual to briefly report what their partner had shared. During this process a note taker began creating a map by transcribing each story onto an empty XMind mapping page projected on a wall or screen. Following the initial mapping, the facilitator posed probes encouraging participants to discuss the impacts of what they had shared, as well as downsides or negative consequences of the project. These responses were added to the mind map, and participants were invited to begin grouping the comments into themes.

### SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE BASELINE SESSIONS

Participants at each of these sites were eager to participate and share. At all sites, the REM session gave grantees the opportunity to discuss their first-year accomplishments and hear how they affected the community, as well as recognize and celebrate the work of other groups in their community also working on health and wellness activities. For some, the sessions allowed different organizations working in the community to express shared goals for community wellness. At one session in which the grantee had done most of their year one work internally in the hospital, the REM session served to educate community-based organizations about HCP, which led to new collaborations.

While all baseline sessions followed a similar protocol, the REM events all differed by content, participant engagement, pace, and logistics. At one site, the projection failed in the middle of the mapping session. The facilitator resumed the session using a white board and sticky notes to manually theme the comments. At another site the REM event was marketed as a community feedback session, with the effect of a less appropriate participant group and less relevant discussion. These variances highlighted the importance of flexibility on the part of the evaluators and participants.

For some, the sessions allowed different organizations working in the community to express shared goals for community wellness.

### REM ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Following the REM sessions, Rainbow staff organized the comments in to themes, finding that most themes overlapped by site:

- Strengthening organizational policies and practices related to health (4 sites)
- Increasing community opportunities, activities, and resources related to health (4 sites)
- Supporting new and strengthened collaboration and partnerships (3 sites)
- Fostering a culture of wellness in the community (3 sites)
- Ensuring that changes are sustainable (2 sites)
- Creating new models of healthcare delivery (1 site)

Rainbow worked with the Ambassador at each site to clarify points, validate themes, and indicate which items on the map were attributable to the HCP program. After several iterations of revision and feedback, Rainbow and the site Ambassador agreed on a final version of the REM, and Rainbow shared the document with the Ambassador to disseminate to community partners.

After completing the revision process, Rainbow Research Assistants downloaded the map data into Microsoft Excel files and worked in pairs to code the data using a framework adapted from the Community Capitals Framework (Emery & Flora, 2006). Thematic counts from each site and examples of the corresponding nodes were included in the annual report to funders and grantee hospitals.

### POST-IMPLEMENTATION RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING

The second REM session used the final version of the map created at that site in 2013. Each theme was isolated, enlarged, and printed on a sheet of 24" x 36" paper. Participants were divided into small groups consisting of 4-7 participants, a facilitator, and a note taker. Groups were asked to take 15 minutes to discuss and add to each of the themes, with the following prompts:

- Looking at the items already on the map, have there been any developments or changes since 2013?
- Are there any additional health and wellness activities or changes in the community that are missing from the map?

### SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE POST-IMPLEMENTATION SESSIONS

Again, the sessions varied by participant engagement and pace. In some small groups participants were comfortable adding their ideas to the map, while in others the participants discussed changes freely, but seemed hesitant to transcribe their thoughts. In these situations the facilitator stepped in to add their contributions to the map.

### REM ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Following the "Post-Implementation" Ripple Effects Mapping session, Rainbow Research staff entered the comments added by participants into the XMind program, using a different text color to distinguish new comments from baseline comments. Comments were downloaded into Excel, and new comments were coded using the adapted Capitals framework. Coding percentages were compared between baseline and post-implementation to explore growth over the period of the grant.

Rainbow will work closely with Ambassadors to create a two-page handout on the process and findings from their sites, including visualization and rich examples. The Ambassador may share these short reports with REM participants and other stakeholders.

## Final Reflections

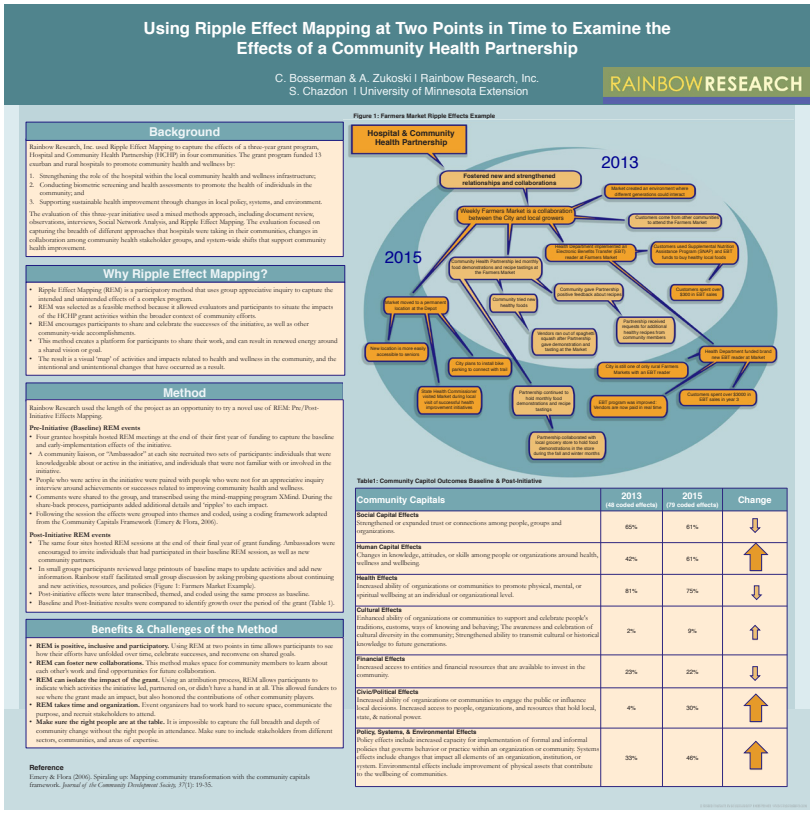
### ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING REM AT TWO SEPARATE TIMES

- REM is a positive and inclusive process, inviting community members to discuss successes and accomplishments. Using REM at two distinct

**REM follow-up session in Aitkin, Minnesota (photo by Ann Zukoski)**

times allows participants to see how their efforts have unfolded over time and can refocus and reenergize participants around their progress.

- REM creates a venue for community members to learn about each other's work and form new relationships. At one REM session, for example, two community members made plans to discuss a future collaboration.
- Using a contribution process, REM allows participants to indicate activities that the hospital led, as well as activities where the hospital was a collaborator or did not have a role. For each item on the map, participants were asked to consider: Did the hospital have a role in this activity or accomplishment (hospital as collaborator)? Would this activity or accomplishment have occurred without the hospital's leadership (hospital as leader)? Nodes with hospital participation were color coded according to the hospital's role as leader or collaborator. This allowed funders to see where the grant made an impact or added to the synergy of an activity that others led. This approach also honored the contributions of other players in the community by showing all




**Poster presented at the American Evaluation Association annual conference**

activities and accomplishments, not just those related to the grant.

- REM requires a significant time commitment for organizers and participants. Ambassadors were asked to recruit participants, secure a location, and provide food. Participants were asked to take two hours out of their busy schedules to participate. Many individuals who were active in the health partnerships were not able to attend the events, resulting in some incomplete data.
- It is challenging to communicate about the REM purpose, process, and findings. Rainbow Research staff are still trying to figure out the most effective way to communicate about this method.

While framing the topic of the REM session and the probing questions, it's important to remember the complexity of the system in which the programs operate.

**TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- Ensure that diverse voices are included in any REM session to capture the fully breadth and depth of community change. Participants should represent different cultures, sectors, and points of view.
- Communicate clearly with all partners about the purpose of REM. This will give them the tools to communicate the purpose clearly with participants and ensure that all appropriate stakeholders are invited to participate.
- Make room for the accomplishments of others. While framing the topic of the REM session and the probing questions, it's important to remember the complexity of the system in which the programs operate. Initially, Rainbow planned to frame the REM sessions around the HCP grants. However, the HCP grant operated within the rich history of each community, involving many health and wellness stakeholders. As the focus of the HCP grant was to create sustainability through bolstering community partnerships, it became evident that it was critical to recognize and honor the contributions of all stakeholders and invite participants to share about other health and wellness impacts that did not involve the grantee sites.

# Sustainable Harvest International's Work in Two Rural Communities: Program Participants' Perceptions

Ricardo Romero-Perezgrovas, Charlie French, Scott Chazdon, and Abner Mendoza

## Program Description

Sustainable Harvest International (SHI) is a U.S.-based nonprofit that has worked in Central America since 1997 (www.sustainableharvest.org). SHI's mission is to help rural farming families thrive while also preserving the environment. This mission is achieved through educational outreach and human capacity building aimed at providing farming families with the skills and knowledge to practice sustainable farming in a manner that improves their well-being (Reed & Romero-Perezgrovas, 2015).

SHI target communities have low Human Development Indices (Salas-Bourgoin, 2014), but also have rich natural resources that are threatened by land use change and other human factors. Both of the communities evaluated are located in the Cocle Province of Panama (with one of the lowest HDIs in the country) and belong to one of the world's most rich biodiversity hotspots—Cocle Province, which has several endemic species of flora and fauna, and several national parks that cover diverse ecosystems from mangroves to cloud forests. Changes in land use, overexploitation of natural resources, and open pit mining have been putting a lot of pressure on the local ecosystems (Carse, 2012).

The SHI program has five phases lasting five years on average in each community. The main rationale behind SHI's educational and capacity building is that environmental conservation cannot be achieved without economic development for local farmers who base their livelihood on sustainable agriculture systems. Such systems include diversified plots, agroforestry, permanent soil cover, and soil regeneration. In addition, the program tries to develop new sources of income for families through the introduction of micro credits, micro businesses, added value products, rural banks, etc. It also increases learning capacity by the facilitation of training and exchanges between neighbors and/or communities.

By the end of SHI's five-phase programming in a given community, participant families are expected to be successfully implementing sustainable agriculture resource management, reforestation projects, and cultivation of food staples that allow them to live a healthy life. As well, SHI's five-phase programming is intended to increase participant families' confidence and capacity to continue learning, adapting new technologies, accessing micro or community credit sources, and instilling pride in their work. The overall goal is to achieve and maintain a balance between human and ecological systems that enables participant families and future generations to thrive.

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Sustainable Harvest International has implemented some quantitative evaluation tools—including baselines, yield measurements, and soil quality—in addition to some qualitative evaluation tools. However, SHI staff were looking for a relatively easy and economical evaluation tool that could help track perceptions and subtle intended and unintended effects of the program in the communities in which it works.

The particular programs that the Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) exercise was used to evaluate took place between 2010 through 2014. The REM process was conducted in September, 2015, in two rural communities: El Cocal and La Tranquilla. The program being evaluated in these two communities focuses on five broad impact areas: 1) Agroforestry, 2) Environment, 3) Food Security and Nutrition, 4) Livelihood, and 5) Learning Capacity. Funding to support SHI's programming comes from foundations and private donors; no governmental or development agency grants were used. The staff decided to try REM because it appeared to have potential to become one of the agency's standard evaluation tools, help SHI better understand its actions, and guide in the modification of some aspects of methodology and implementation.

SHI staff were looking for a relatively easy and economical evaluation tool that could help track perceptions and subtle intended and unintended effects of the program in the communities in which it works.

## Planning and Implementation

Because SHI's program enjoys a long-standing relationship with the communities and has many different interventions within its methodology, staff planning the REM decided to leave the central point simply as "SHI in [name of the community]." The application of REM came as a post-intervention evaluation tool, although some conspicuous aspects collected during the sessions will be used to plan a series of new secondary interventions such as post-graduation trainings.

The way people were selected for inclusion in the REM evaluation session was to identify 10-12 participants, as well as 10-12 non-program participants, since it is recognized that non-participants may also accrue public value from a given program (French & Morse, 2015). From the non-participants, people who were aware of the program (e.g., neighbors or relatives of a participant) were selected as well as some community leaders who were not already active participants in the program, such as school teachers or local government representatives. One surprising aspect emerging from this approach was that, during the implementation stage for both groups, we had more attendants than originally invited, thanks to the interest and participation of partners (wives and husbands) and friends of the pre-established list of participants.

We ran two sessions in one day (one in each selected community), and were able to compare the results of both exercises. Although the communities were geographically close to each other (12 miles), they had two different field trainers who facilitated the majority of the activities during the five-year program.

Participants and non-participants were paired together, taking turns to interview each other using the same set of questions. The answers were written down by the interviewer on sticky notes. In cases of illiterate participants/non-participants, SHI local staff members were at hand to help

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**First international recorded use of REM; used sticky notes, and notes were read aloud to the group; notes went on flip chart paper while being typed into XMind. Also had two note takers registering the topics and subtopics that the group discussions produced.**

**Allows field staff to reconnect with program participants.**

**CHALLENGES**

**Implementation presented some challenges, such as language barriers (two of the researchers are Spanish native speakers, the two others are English native speakers, the four are bilingual), cultural context issues (none of the researchers is Panamanian), and engaging audiences without the ability to read or write—but the general feeling is that it could be replicated in all of the graduated communities within the SHI international network.**

One surprising aspect that emerged from this approach was that during the implementation stage for both groups, we had more attendants than originally invited, thanks to the interest and participation of partners (wives and husbands) and friends of the pre-established list of participants.

with writing. A group discussion then ensued, based on interview responses that were read out loud to the whole group by the interviewers; meanwhile the facilitator accommodated the sticky notes on a large white sheet of paper. The outcomes of the discussions and the information on the sticky notes were recorded in field notes by Charlie French and Abner Mendoza, and directly on xMind software by Scott Chazdon.

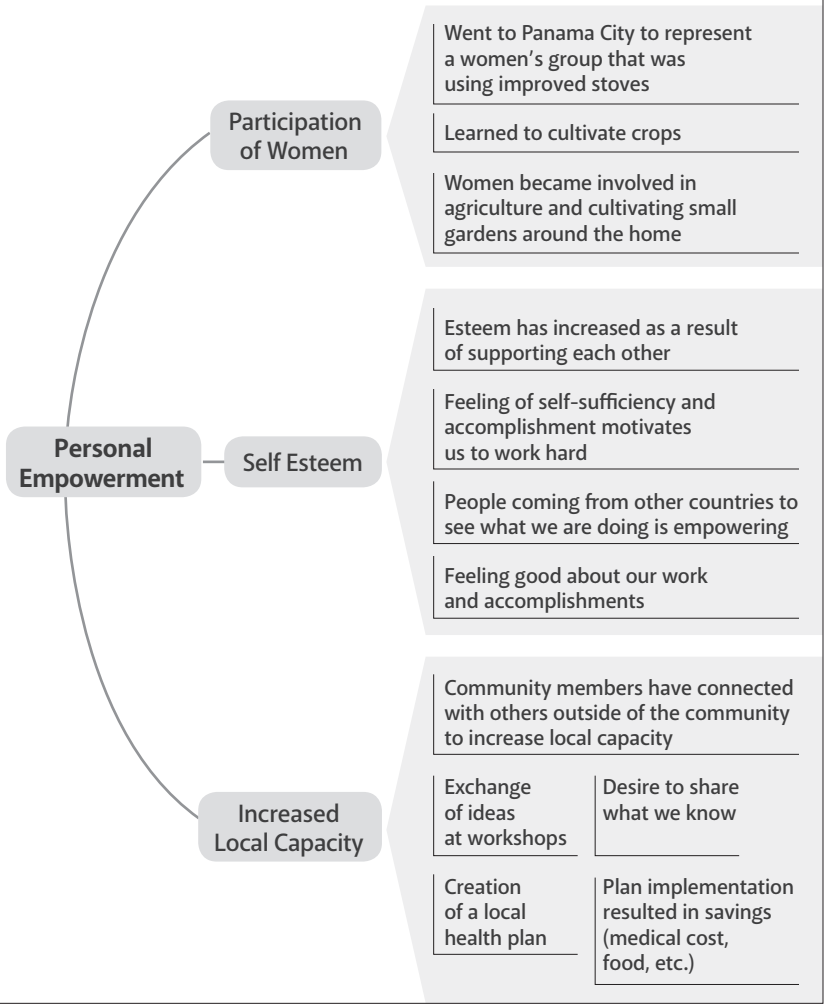
The questions used were:

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement with SHI program in your community?
- What did these achievements lead to?
- What new or deepened connections with others did you experience based on your involvement with SHI?
- What did these connections lead to?

**Beginning the Ripple Map in El Cocal**

**Participants in El Cocal conducting their Appreciative Inquiry interviews**

**FIGURE VII.1** The personal empowerment theme on the El Cocal ripple map




**The REM session generated enthusiasm among community members in Tranquilla**

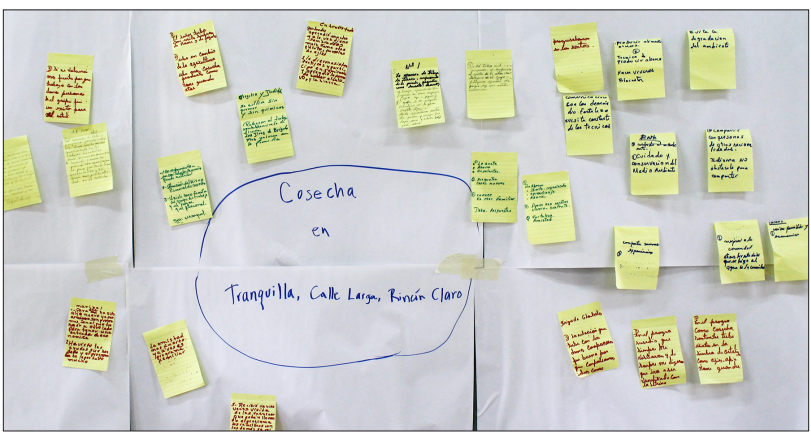
- What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement with SHI program?
- What are the challenges you are facing today or that you have faced with the project?

This would also provide the Field Trainers an opportunity to reconnect with families with whom they worked, whereby they can learn what the long-term impacts have been and what parts of the field program could perhaps be improved or modified.

The following four themes emerged from the REM session in El Cocal:

- Personal empowerment (e.g., to have a voice, organize people, and engage others in the community/region/country around key issues)
- Self-sufficiency (with respect to agricultural inputs, food security, economic situation, etc.)
- Skills gained and used to plant food in a sustainable manner that increases access to healthy fruits and vegetables while also sustaining ecosystem functions
- Community collaboration (SHI program participants learned to work together to leverage each other's skills, increase efficiency, learn from each other, and share knowledge and resources with neighbors and others in the community)

The process in Tranquilla was similar to the one in Cocal and resulted in the same four key themes. The only distinction was that the discussion around self-sufficiency focused primarily on economic self-sufficiency and the ability of farming families to earn income, reduce expenses for things like fertilizers, and parlay these revenues and savings into improving quality of life. A strong theme that resonated in both El Cocal and Tranquilla was that of "new skills gained in organic, sustainable agriculture."




**The beginning of the Tranquilla Ripple Effect Map**

One area that did elicit discussion in both communities was that of failures and challenges faced by SHI participant families. The biggest challenge identified in Tranquilla was that of climate change. Specifically, more intense periods of rain and prolonged droughts were perceived as threats to the agrarian way of life. Participants recognize the importance of protecting forests and other key ecosystem functions, but they felt that they had little control over these functions and that they were still vulnerable. One challenge identified in El Cocal that was specific to SHI's work was the lack of knowledge and skills to preserve fruits and vegetables, as well as convert them into value-added products that can earn income (e.g., hot pepper salsa, fruit marmalades).

## Final Reflections

SHI staff conclude that REM is a useful tool, and has the potential to be employed across all SHI graduate communities internationally (Belize, Honduras, and Panama) in the near future. Its implementation posed some challenges—such as language barriers, cultural context issues like cultivating trust between community members and outsiders, and engaging audiences who lack the ability to read or write—but the general feeling is that REM could be replicated with some adaptations to the local contexts in all of the graduated communities. This would also provide the Field Trainers an opportunity to reconnect with families with whom they worked, whereby they can learn what the long-term impacts have been and what parts of the field program could perhaps be improved or modified.

The advantages of REM are that it is low-cost, its implementation is relatively quick, and SHI staff could be trained to conduct the process without large investments of resources. Furthermore, the visual and qualitative data

### The Story of Gloria from El Cocal

**FROM HOUSEWIFE TO NATIONAL INSPIRATION**

Gloria and her husband maintain a small farm in El Cocal, Panama, to supplement their income. With children to raise and elders to look after, Gloria spent her time keeping the home. As such, she rarely ventured to Panama City or the provincial capital. During the REM forum, she said, "I spent all my time tending to my family and I didn't do anything else. I felt pretty low."

When Diomedes, Sustainable Harvest's Field Trainer, began working in El Cocal, Gloria learned about vegetable production. It wasn't long before she was producing peppers, squash, and other vegetables in her kitchen garden. Other women in town noticed and asked her if she could teach them to garden. This grew into a women's group that met regularly to learn from each other. Soon, women from outside El Cocal began inviting Gloria to meet with them. And last year, a group of women entrepreneurs in Panama City invited her to speak at a national conference. She said, "I feel good about myself and happy that I can inspire other women."

provided as part of the process complements all quantitative survey data analysis currently used by the organization. It is important to remember that REM is just one method for capturing some of the long-term, subtle impacts and perceptions about SHI's program. As such, it is not intended to stand alone, but rather it complements how SHI captures and communicates the impacts of its field programs.

# Using REM to Understand Statewide Systems Improvements in Child Care Quality

Mary Marczak, Kit Alviz, Alisha Hardman, Emily Becher, Tonia Durden, and Sara Croymans

## Program Description

The Military Child Care Expansion Initiative (MCCEI), funded jointly by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was comprised of two projects, the Military Child Care Liaison Initiative (MCCLI) and the Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project (CYTTAP). The initiative was designed to improve the awareness and availability of quality childcare for military children and families through increased collaboration among federal agencies and utilization of existing local, state, and federal resources. The two projects were expected to increase availability of quality, affordable childcare and professional development opportunities to direct care providers in states with high populations of off-installation military families.

This was a partnership between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL, overall project leadership), Penn State University (development of effective child care quality tools and resources), and the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development (evaluation). The University of Minnesota Extension was brought into support the evaluation of an ongoing initiative from 2011–2014.

The initial project targeted 13 states that were part of the Child Care Quality Sub-Inter-Agency Policy Committee (IPC) pilot project. The project developed

quality training resources and provided training and technical assistance to increase the knowledge and skills of child care providers. It also leveraged a comprehensive community capacity building model that included professional development, ongoing technical assistance and mentoring, and the strengthening of partnerships among educational leaders and statewide stakeholders in each state. Through this ongoing work, it was anticipated that models that increased access to high-quality child care would be developed and replicated elsewhere, as needed.

The project evaluated illustrates the characteristics of complex adaptive systems: nonlinear, adaptive, uncertain, and co-evolutionary (Patton, 2011). The evaluation context includes:

- Multiple states with diverse historical contexts in terms of support for quality childcare
- Existing cadres of professionals in each state with long collaborative histories
- Two initiatives infused into existing efforts
- Two federal funders
- Multiple land-grant university entities, all working together to promote systems change

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

The complexities and the multiple moving parts inherent in this evaluation context called for a more holistic approach to understanding processes and

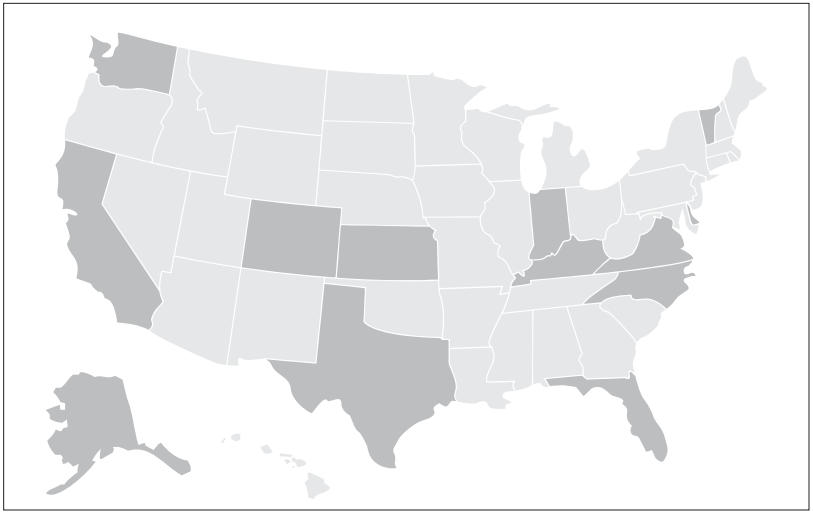


**FIGURE VII.2** States participating in the Child Care Quality pilot project

resulting effects. Every state had a lengthy history around and unique pathways to improving child care quality. To understand systems change contexts in each state, it was critical to hear from key informants within each state. One of the developmental evaluation approaches Michael Quinn Patton notes for understanding impacts is what he titles "retrospective developmental evaluation" (Patton, 2011, p. 294). When evaluating a context where people have a history of engagement in like-minded social change work, evaluators need to understand the emergent efforts and their effects within the context of their history. Rather than looking ahead, the evaluation story needs to look back and understand what has already occurred and how that history is connected to current efforts and related effects.

In addition to complexity, there was some anxiety and distrust by the key leadership within the states about the evaluation in general: "Why are you coming to our state to evaluate our efforts? You are not from here, so how would you understand our history and how things work in our state?" REM, with its foundation in Appreciative Inquiry techniques, eased the way by reducing this anxiety while enhancing the ability to gather important stories of impact.

REM was part of a larger, multi-method evaluation of this complex initiative. Other evaluations included:

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Did REM at the halfway point—enough time for impacts to have happened and enough time left to make changes based on the data.**

**Energizing, rewarding experience for participants. Helps them deepen connections with one another and problem solve as well as generate ideas for building on successes.**

**CHALLENGES**

**Sometimes it was difficult to get participants back on track due to forward thinking conversations about how individuals should connect their joint efforts in the future or one entity offering to help with a barrier another mentioned in passing. Explanations of how things came to be can be ambiguous. Concluded that REM can't be the only evaluation method used.**

When evaluating a context where people have a history of engagement in like-minded social change work, evaluators need to understand the emergent efforts and their effects within the context of their history. Rather than looking ahead, the evaluation story needs to look back and understand what has already occurred and how that history is connected to current efforts and related effects.

- a follow-up online survey for practitioners who completed the training to assess their current efforts implementing child care and after school programs;
- yearly phone/Skype interviews with key project leaders;
- an online survey of all statewide partners to assess processes, efforts, and accomplishments of the statewide partnership;
- an online survey of all participants who received one-on-one mentoring or technical assistance to assess the quality of assistance received, satisfaction with the assistance received, key learnings, ways they are

utilizing what they have learned, and how these experiences have improved their and their organizations' practices;

- exploration of existing data; and
- analysis of relevant program documents, including state strategic plans for training and for improving the quality and quantity of child care and after school programs, sustainability plans, training agendas, objectives, and protocols.

## Planning and Implementation

The University of Minnesota Extension evaluation team worked with partners at UNL and DOD to identify the focus of the REM session. Discussion about the central question for REM and approval by DOD was achieved through on-going project check-ins. In the end, the central theme was a natural one for the project: "Improving the quality and quantity of childcare in [state]." REM was conducted at approximately a half-way point of the larger project. This gave the projects enough time to have made changes (and understand ripple effects) as well as affording the opportunity for states to use the information to improve their efforts.

Buy-in from key decision makers as well as those on the ground who would facilitate the gathering was critical for building credibility and the overall success of the REM implementation. It was important that invitations for participation in REM came from someone within the state who had the trust of key leadership in the state. In this project, the REM session logistics were largely dependent on the systems-building project staff in the state, referred to as Military Child Care Liaisons (MCCLS). When contacted, the MCCLS and other project staff shared some initial concerns about whether the successes of the project would be accurately represented through the REM process. Once the MCCLS were assured about the strengths-based way to understand the unique landscape for quality childcare in each state, the evaluation team was able to work closely with the state MCCLS to identify existing working groups and committees that would bring partners to a central location, and, when possible, they scheduled a REM session with an existing meeting. Ultimately, MCCLS felt comfortable inviting their colleagues to the REM sessions because the process was inclusive of all participants' stories of statewide childcare efforts.

It was important that invitations for participation in REM came from someone within the state who had the trust of key leadership in the state.

After consultation with the evaluation team, the MCCLS in each state connected with stakeholders differently depending on state contexts: some worked with or developed new working groups, while others worked on an individual basis with agencies. Because of this, six of the nine REM sessions were conducted with existing groups working on child care issues, and three were conducted with

individuals invited by the MCCLS. The MCCLS scheduled each event, secured the location, organized the space, and invited participants who were key players in the childcare field in each state. The composition of each group was different depending on the state and represented various agencies (e.g., State Departments of Education or Health and Human Services, land-grant university project partners, military child and family organizations, and National Guard and Reserve). Group size ranged from nine to seventeen.

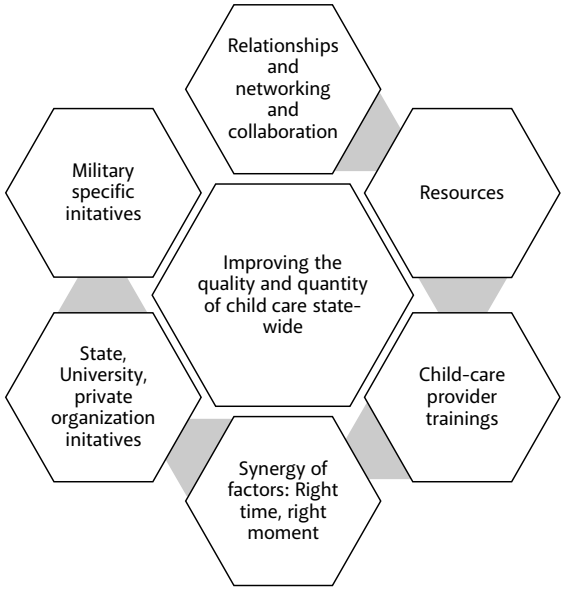



**FIGURE VII.3** General thematic map from the REM sessions

Two members of the evaluation team facilitated one REM session per state. The stories of past, present, and future efforts to improve quality child care were unique to each state, and thus the maps were created for each state and situated in their unique contexts. However, it was also agreed that cross-state analyses would be conducted to understand pathways and processes for larger systems change. States were afforded similar protections around confidentiality and member-checks.

The evaluation team developed a protocol, including a checklist of items to bring to the session, a schedule for the REM session, brief background information on the initiative, a script for each section of the process, and sample probes to use during the interviews to elicit more detailed responses. The REM session in each state was scheduled for two hours. Some went longer than scheduled. In one case, a major snow storm was beginning, and the REM participants asked to shorten the interview to one hour. However, once the interview began, most participants wanted to continue to discuss the issues and stayed the full two hours.

During the appreciative inquiry stage, participants were put into pairs and asked to interview each other using the following questions: "What is something about your involvement with this group [existing group working on child care quality issues] that you are excited about or proud to share?" or, if they were not part of an existing group, "What is a highlight, achievement or success you had in your work with improving the quality of childcare that you'd like to share?" Participants were instructed that after the one-on-one interviews, they would share their partner's story with the large group. Following the interviews, the group reconvened and each pair took turns reporting back to the group. One member

of the evaluation team served to facilitate the larger group discussion while the other mapped the discussion into key themes using a computer and overhead projector. After all pairs shared, the participants discussed the key themes for accuracy and relevance in reflecting the issue in their state and identifying gaps.

During the mapping stage, the map was broadcast live on a screen, allowing participants to watch it come to life and encouraging shared story-telling and meaning making. As each pair reported to the large group, the facilitator asked follow-up questions to gain clarification or to deepen group understanding of the "so what?" in terms of the impact the successes made for their work, the work of their organization, and systems within their state. Participants were encouraged to review their comments as they appeared on the map and to voice concerns if the map did not accurately reflect what they shared, either in the wording or through connections made. While time constraints did not allow for development of completed ripple maps, each state was able to generate the start of a map. Participants agreed that a full map could be developed by the evaluators using the audio recordings and later validated by member-checking.

The process at this point began to broadly follow the tradition of content analysis within qualitative research (Patton, 2002). The REM process is itself a form of open coding, with participants creating the codes placed upon the map. Following this, sub-categories were grouped into higher orders of categories and then into "themes" of how the larger categories inter-related and connected to the central organizing concept of "improving quality and quantity of childcare." This process was based both on how participants conceptually grouped the ripples and how the evaluation team saw the ripples relating logically. After the map was complete, a narrative was written to describe concepts and linkages on the map; this was followed by peer debriefing by the two evaluation team members who moderated the session. The draft ripple effect map and narrative was then sent to the state MCCL for member checking. The member-checking process was a group validation tool that was crucial for establishing the validity of the interpretation of each state's ripple effect map.

## Final Reflections

Evaluators' observations and participant comments indicated that, in all nine REM sessions, the appreciative inquiry and networking component were valuable experiences. The appreciative inquiry interview process, in particular, was a profound experience for many attendees. Most members were used to getting together to problem-solve issues and to figure out how to do things better in the future. However, they rarely had the opportunity to gather, stop, and look back to see how far they had come and appreciate and celebrate each other's successes towards a mutual vision. This sharing and affirmation of their hard work brought emotion (there was some crying in different groups), and noticeable change in energy amongst the participants (from caution and reservation at the beginning to excitement and recharged energy toward the end). In

addition to the added value of "recharging" the members, discussions across key stakeholders also fostered new connections and participants' broader understanding of what others were doing relative to the issue they all cared about. Sometimes it was difficult to get participants back on track due to forward thinking conversations about how individuals should connect their joint efforts in the future or to one entity offering to help with a barrier another mentioned in passing. There was an observed willingness and excitement to coordinate and share resources to improve the quality and quantity of childcare in each state.

Through creation of the map, states developed a collective story reflective of the landscape of the quality and quantity of childcare in their state, which could then be used by states to guide future endeavors and inform strategic decisions. One state printed a poster of their map to use as a tool for strategic planning. This meets a key feature of REM, which is "...the potential to generate further movement towards group, organizational, or community goals" (Hansen Kollock et al., 2012).

Likely the most important aspect was getting buy-in from key decision makers as well as those on the ground who would facilitate the gathering. This was critical for building credibility and the overall success of the REM implementation. It was important that invitations for participation in REM came from someone within the state who had the trust of key state leadership. Needless to say, ripple mapping, as an application of the engaging and empowering nature of the group interview in line with the tradition of participatory evaluation research (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Smits & Champagne, 2008), and appreciative inquiry aimed at capturing organizations' successes and strengths versus focusing on problems and weaknesses (Coughlan, Preskill & Catsambas, 2003), paved the way for our team to obtain invaluable buy-in.

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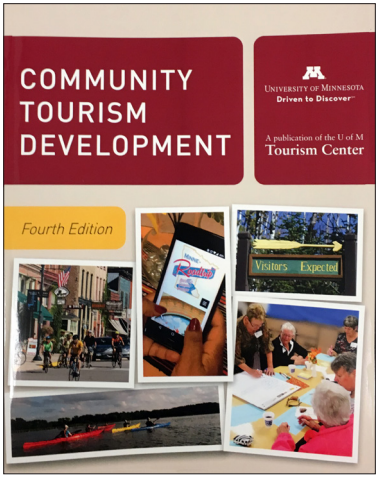
# Using Ripple Effects Mapping to Evaluate a Participatory Tourism Assessment Program

Cynthia C. Messer, Liz Templin, Scott Chazdon, & Rani Bhattacharyya[1]

## Program Description

Minnesota's Tourism Assessment Program (TAP) analyzes a community's tourism potential using an engaged community process. The University of Minnesota Tourism Center created the Tourism Assessment Program in 2007 using tools from the Center's Community Tourism Development manual. It was initially developed as a rapid assessment to inventory community attractions and assess potential in smaller, rural communities where leaders identified tourism as a development opportunity. The original program included:




- Identification of tourism assets by community teams

[1] Collaborators also included Lisa (Hermanson) Anderson, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota Extension's Center for Community Vitality

- A community visit and assessment by an external team of tourism specialists
- A community meeting to gather resident attitudes and perceptions of the community's tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- A written report of findings and recommendations for local action

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**The longer you wait to do REM, the more impacts there are to report. Recommends a longitudinal approach to address this (see WA/ID Horizons case study).**

**CHALLENGES**

**Wait too long to do REM, and you may lose memory and original participants.**

Program delivery is a collaboration of the Tourism Center and the University of Minnesota Extension's Center for Community Vitality. Communities pay a cost-share fee to cover out-of-pocket costs for travel, with government funding paying for Extension staff time. Frequently, communities obtain grants to cover at least a portion of this fee.

Torock (2009) suggests, "Quality educational programs require participants to recall prior knowledge, introduce new knowledge, and help participants make connections between prior and new information for individual internalization. Therefore it is the responsibility of Extension educators to ensure opportunities for reflection—not just program evaluation—are a part of the learning process"( p. 2).

## The Decision to Use Ripple Effects Mapping

Our interest was three-fold: (1) to accurately document program impacts in the three communities, 2) to provide feedback to community leaders as they continue to pursue tourism development strategies, and 3) to strengthen the program with new evaluation techniques. Several factors led the evaluation team to consider Ripple Effects Mapping (REM).

First, no formal impact evaluation had been done with the early versions of the program. Tourism Assessment Program efforts were briefly evaluated at the end of the engagement and summarized within internal program reporting, but no additional follow-up evaluation was conducted.

Second, as the program has evolved, the need for solid evaluation was identified both for the community and for program development. Universities are increasingly seeking to measure both outcomes and impacts of educational programming. REM was suggested as a tool for both developmental evaluation and program impact evaluation. The Tourism Assessment Program is an engaged, participatory program, and a participatory evaluation model is appropriate for impact evaluation. As noted in Bhattacharyya, R.A., Templin E., Messer C.C., and Chazdon, S.A. (2017), Cousins and Whitmore (1998) define practical participatory evaluation as supporting program refinement and problem solving, with decision making balanced between the evaluator and community members. Practical participatory education is a widely utilized approach

in land-grant University Extension programs. Torock (2009) suggests, "Quality educational programs require participants to recall prior knowledge, introduce new knowledge, and help participants make connections between prior and new information for individual internalization. Therefore it is the responsibility of Extension educators to ensure opportunities for reflection—not just program evaluation—are a part of the learning process" (p. 2).

Ripple Effects Mapping provided an opportunity to re-engage the community in looking at its progress in tourism development, and to provide needed outcome and impact evaluation to managers of this Extension program. The Community Capitals Framework by Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) was used to code the reported impacts in a manner that was both theoretically grounded and relevant to the community. Specifically, the Ripple Effects Mapping process, using the Community Capitals Framework, did the following:

- Introduced language (human, social, cultural, built, financial, political, and natural capitals) that captured impacts across examples and communities.
- Documented the anticipated building of social capital through enhanced relationships- Tourism development is collaborative by nature. Collaborative programs often build social capital, but are not credited for it.
- Identified the other impacts resulting from the strengthened social capital.
- Captured intended and unintended impacts.
- Engaged stakeholders who validate results.

## Planning and Implementation

Ripple Effects Mapping was used to document outcomes identified by community residents and leaders after participating in the Tourism Assessment Program. REM workshops were conducted in 2013 with three communities that had participated in the program between 2007 and 2009. The communities have populations ranging from just under 1,000 to almost 5,000. Two communities, Fertile and New York Mills, are located in Northwest Minnesota, and the third, Chisago Lakes, is located near the Twin Cities metro area. These communities were selected because:


- They were early program participants, so several years had passed since their involvement, allowing for implementation of projects.

- Members of the program team were aware of community action following the tourism assessment program visits.
- Some of the community leaders involved in the Tourism Assessment Program were still engaged in the community.

Community members in each session included previous program participants as well as non-participants who were connected to tourism. Participants were recruited by a local contact who was actively involved in tourism development. The different points of view helped highlight connections between the direct activities of program and the resulting "ripples" of activities beyond the scope of the program. The REM sessions included 14–22 participants, divided approximately equally between program participants and non-participants. The number of participants in each REM session was as follows: 14 in New York Mills, 22 in Fertile, and 18 in Chisago Lakes.

The session began with a clarification of the definition of tourism used in the REM. Next, each program participants was paired with a non-participant stakeholder to share responses to one of three questions:

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement in tourism development during the past five years?
- What is something about your involvement in tourism development in the past five years that you are proud to share?
- What connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of tourism development work in the past five years?

Each pair shared its answers with the group, and the evaluation team recorded these on a mind map visible to the entire group. Participants then identified links between outcomes, adding additional ones that came to mind during the discussion. The mind maps created during each session were then vetted in a follow-up with community leaders to fill in gaps and confirm connections.

Next, the program evaluation team identified the following themes common across each of the three communities:

- Increased relationships developed either within the community or with partners outside the community.
- Increased awareness of the community's visitor markets.
- Expanded awareness and development of tourism infrastructure within the community.

Using these themes, teams of two evaluators coded each outcome to the Community Capitals Framework to identify patterns in how the communities allocated their resources to achieve these outcomes. The process allowed out-

comes to be coded into one or more community capital categories. Community Capital coded outcomes were then grouped according to each program theme:

- Recognized Relationship Building: Social and political capitals
- Recognized Awareness of Visitor Markets: Financial and human capitals
- Awareness and Development of Infrastructure: Cultural, built, natural, and health capitals

Each community's map yielded a broad range of reported effects. New York Mills reported 71 distinct effects, Fertile reported 80, and Chisago Lakes reported 90. While recorded as singular effects within each community, some ripple effects mobilized more than one type of community capital and thus were coded under multiple capitals. By recording these secondary effects, the larger impact of the initial event was captured and measured. New York Mills focused on mobilizing its cultural assets, Fertile on mobilizing its financial assets, and Chisago Lakes on mobilizing its social assets. Each community reported high percentages of financial effects. Additionally, New York Mills had a much higher proportion of political and cultural impacts than the other communities, and Fertile demonstrated the most human capital effects (Bhattacharyya et al., 2017).

A follow-up meeting was held with each community to share its completed Ripple Effects Map and the actions coded to the Community Capitals Framework. The goal was to deepen people's understanding of the data and encourage continued tourism development efforts. Participant evaluations indicate that

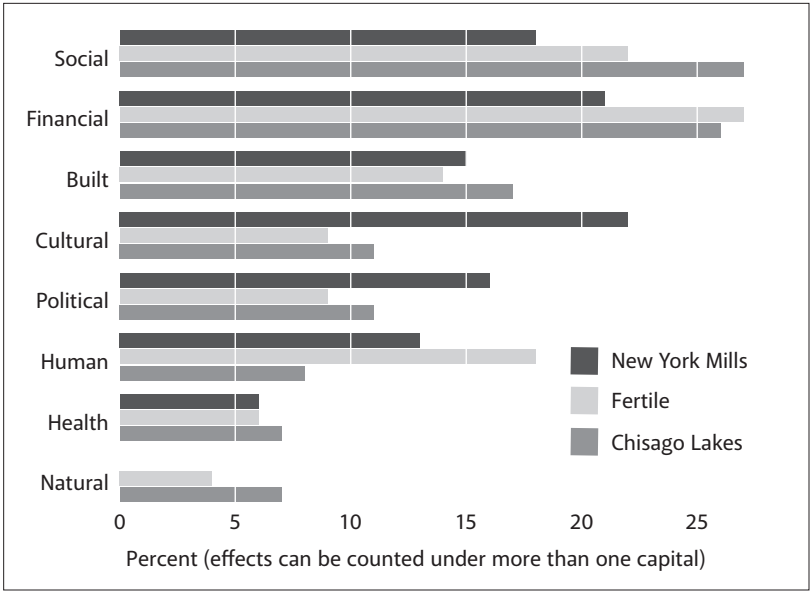



**FIGURE VII.4** Comparison of coded effects across all three communities

the workshop helped community members contextualize their recent tourism development efforts within the Community Capitals Framework.

The evaluation team included two Extension educators, one Extension tourism specialist, and one Extension program evaluation specialist. They were assisted by a graduate student during the data collection and coding portions of the project. The roles were as follows:

- One Extension Educator facilitated the discussions / questions.
- At the beginning of the REM session, the Tourism Specialist introduced the program and facilitated discussion to reach a shared understanding of tourism.
- One of the Extension Educators or the graduate student served as the recorder, entering the data directly into the software projected onto a screen in the room.

The Community Capitals framework was familiar to two of the three communities prior to conducting the TAP, so when the REM was shared with them, it reinforced their understanding of their strengths. It was new terminology for one community who valued its REM, but did not appreciate this framework. Therefore, our advice is to introduce the framework early in the program and not just in the evaluation phase.

## Final Reflections

Ripple Effects Mapping has now been integrated into the Tourism Assessment Program. It will not only allow the program team to engage the community throughout the program, but will continue the engagement in post-program evaluation. Of particular interest is the potential to use REM longitudinally to follow participating communities' success in their tourism development efforts.

The strength of REM is its participatory methodology. It engages community residents in thinking about what they are doing to keep moving forward with tourism development efforts. This has both generated community pride and rallied residents to get involved. One city administrator commented that there is limited time to reflect on what has all happened—it is energizing to see the progress made over time. This enthusiastic engagement was seen in each community, to the point that it was sometimes a challenge for the recorder to keep up with the information being shared.

A weakness of REM is that it is often difficult for residents to parse out what can be specifically attributed to the Tourism Assessment Program. Often residents identified activities that were either in process or were identified prior to the program. While this is important for Extension, it is less so for community residents who are looking at the bigger role of tourism in their community.

Providing food at each of the mapping sessions helped ensure participation. It made scheduling easier because participants didn't need to squeeze in eating between appointments. The food was served first, providing social time for residents and a transition from the day's activities. It set a positive tone for the meeting.

A challenge was getting the same people who were involved in the Tourism Assessment Program to come to the REM session. The TAP was a short-term intervention, so it was more challenging bringing the same people together several years later. Also, they may or may not remember the name of the program they were involved in. Since these early applications of the program and building on these findings, the program has been revised to include a deeper engagement over a longer period of time.

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Timing is another challenge. Tourism development happens over time. The REMs conducted in 2013 were for programs conducted in 2007. During the intervening years, there were changes in key staff positions in all three communities, making it difficult to identify and recruit the key players from the original program. As a result, some information was lost, but a greater number of impacts were reported due to the additional time for implementation. A shorter time frame between the conclusion of the program and the REM evaluation is suggested. This should make it easier to recruit original program participants with fresher memories of the program, but the downside may be fewer impacts because of the shorter time to implement tourism development efforts.

A longitudinal approach to REM may address this by including REM at the end of the program to set a baseline and then repeating the process 2-3 years later. University of Minnesota program team members are exploring this as part of a more integrated evaluation process for the enhanced Tourism Assessment Program.

# PART VIII

## Conclusion: REM as a Transformative Evaluation Tool

Scott Chazdon, Mary Emery,
Debra Hansen, Lorie Higgins, and Rebecca Sero

As the five individuals who have been the primary advocates, trainers, and practitioners of Ripple Effects Mapping, as well as editors of this publication, we thought our reflections on the transformative qualities of Ripple Effects Mapping would be an appropriate way to end this book. Below, we respond in round robin fashion to four questions about REM as a transformative evaluation tool:

1. How has REM been personally transformative?
2. How has REM transformed our field?
3. How has REM transformed our organizations?
4. How has REM transformed our communities?

We hope our excitement and passion for REM is catching and that you, too, will be inspired to use REM in your work.

## Personal Transformation

**EMERY** I have been absolutely captivated by the process of charting/graphing changes in the capitals as a way to understand the community change process. We all know the difference between a project that engages the community and "spirals up" to generate impacts across the community and a project that, once the funding has ended, leaves no trace. I want to figure out what goes on in the first project that makes it possible for others in the community to catch the energy and passion and get involved. I want to see how that change happens—how the small pebble/project can create ripples across the entire community pond. As a result of focusing on these questions, I have come to see that our notion of the roles of cultural and social capital needs to deepen and broaden if we want to really understand transformative system-level change and figure out strategies that foster transformations in communities and organizations. This focus has made me aware of the power of small changes in program implementation that can have larger impacts across the community and shown that we, as community development practitioners, have a great deal of influence on the possibility of spiraling up by nurturing opportunities to build transformative social and cultural capital assets in any interaction/project work with communities, organizations, and our colleagues. These insights further support the emerging vital role of coaching in community development practice (communitycoaching.com).

**HANSEN** Ripple Effects Mapping put energy back in my Extension work. At the end of the complex 18-month Horizons project, I was feeling that we had just ridden a wild ride, but I wasn't exactly clear whether we captured all of the good work that had happened in the communities. Designing our version of REM (the in-depth method) helped answer that question for Horizons, and then became a tool that I deployed on smaller and more varied projects. It is the work that gives me life, and if I had my druthers, I'd ditch all of the administrative work I do and ripple map all the time. Okay, that's not quite realistic, but I do find myself looking for opportunities to do REM or teach REM as much as possible. I'm a former graphic designer, so the visual aspect is right down my alley, and I love to facilitate group discussions with the Appreciative Inquiry approach. I will also freely admit that I don't love traditional evaluation, so the way REM engages and enthuses community participants and makes them excited about the work they have accomplished helps me feel great about my work, too.

**HIGGINS** I first used REM as a way to understand what happened in Idaho Horizons communities, and mapped every community that went through Phase 2 of the program. I had been interested in using the community capitals framework and wanted to identify the kind of capitals built by Horizons. I didn't anticipate the profound impact mapping would have on participants—the many "aha" moments it afforded, and the way it helped them visualize relationships between outcomes and program components was beyond my expectations. Increased levels of positive energy surprised me, too, and after a couple of sessions I remember thinking, "What is happening here?" In each community, the process unfolded similarly: at first there was marginal interest in delving into the "what happened" of it all, but as stories began to unfold and appear in words and color on the butcher paper, a perceptible rise in energy and enthusiasm occurred every time. Participants left feeling they had truly accomplished something and that volunteering time to their community was paying off. I'd like to map the impacts of ripple mapping because I know it has a positive, catalytic effect on people. As an academic and practitioner of community development, I love when something is a tool for research and community development at the same time, and REM is just such a tool.

**CHAZDON** Learning about REM and conducting REM sessions has transformed my evaluation career. Before learning about REM, I already thought of myself as a participatory evaluator. With my background in qualitative sociology and anthropology, I was drawn to the use of highly engaged evaluation tools such as depth interviewing and participant observation. For several years, I had employed the Community Capitals Framework to design interview protocols in which I would interview program participants and community stakeholders about the impacts of Extension community development programs. Then I learned about Ripple Effects Mapping and saw the power of conducting the evaluation work as a group activity with mind mapping. Every time I conduct a REM session, I am blown away by the generative power of the process of engaging people to reflect on their successes (as well as their challenges). As an evaluator who wants my work to make a difference, I cannot think of a better way to support the generative energy of a group, and to yield information that is useful for the traditional stakeholder audiences such as funders, as well as deeply meaningful and useful for the participants themselves.

**SERO** As a qualitative researcher and evaluator, I have always found the most meaning in context. My work has focused on understanding the "why" underneath the surface, the story behind the numbers, the answer to the posed question. So imagine my excitement when I started as the Evaluation Specialist for Washington State University Extension and one of the first faculty I met was Debra, who was excited to tell me about "this remarkable new way we're talking with organizations to get information about their impact." To be introduced to a new qualitatively-focused evaluation technique was the quintessential professional gold mine. From my perspective, the power of Ripple Effects Mapping rests within its flexibility; it can be used across multiple settings and with various types of participants to document those intended and unintended effects of a program, project, community, coalition, and/or system. I have been lucky enough to witness the power of a REM session, where the Extension professional walks away from a mapping having effectively evaluated their community work, while the participating community is left with a better sense of its accomplishments and a renewed vision for the future. When looking for meaning, when wanting to hear stories, when needing to understand, REM provides all that...and much more.

## Transformation of the Field

**CHAZDON** REM has its origins in community development work, and it continues to grow as a resource in that field. After several years of trainings and presentations, we have witnessed enormous growth in interest in the community development field, and now even internationally (see the SHI case study, 125). Increasingly, REM is seen (as it should be) as an integral part of community development interventions, not just an afterthought. I was so encouraged when our own Tourism Center in Minnesota made a commitment to incorporate Ripple Effects Mapping as a strategic element in the design of its Tourism Assessment Program (see case study, 140), and I have also supported the integration of REM into the design of leadership, civic engagement, and BR&E programming in my state.

**HANSEN** Community and economic development projects and programs generally take a long time to realize community change—and it often saps the energy of the people engaged in the work. I've seen many faculty add REM into a set of tools that they use for evaluating their projects, and I think it has energized them as well. I see them being inspired from the clients and constituents they work with—in their words.

**HIGGINS** REM proves that evaluation does not have to be painful or complicated! It also demonstrates the value of participatory approaches to reflection and evaluation. Participants leave a REM session feeling empowered and vital, rather

than feeling like they just had something done to, or extracted from, them. As community development practitioners, fostering empowerment and vitality should be a goal of all that we do professionally. Contacts in the non-profit sector have been reaching out to explore use of REM in their program work and I think we will see a parallel growth in adoption in agencies, non-governmental organizations, service learning/experiential college courses, and Extension. Professionals who serve communities know their work makes a difference, but until now, demonstrating some of those impacts has been challenging. A leadership training graduate who runs for office two years afterward will probably not remember to call the trainer to let them know he/she is utilizing what was learned. Nor should they; it is their hard work that has led to a momentous decision and should they pause to reflect on the path that led to the decision, it does not mean they will contact every influential person involved in their journey. Now we have a way to capture the seeds as they bloom as well as identify the other factors that led to positive change. I also believe participants are even better equipped to be change agents, because REM demonstrates the systemic connections between arenas of activity.

**SERO** Measuring condition change is challenging for community and economic development programming efforts, especially those programs that are complex, evolving, and have broad public participation. Oftentimes, community development work is foundational and focuses on building relationships and various local capacities. Later quantifiable impacts, such as job creation, cannot always be traced back to the original capacity-building effort. As noted by Workman and Scheer (2012), very few (6%) of published evaluations of Extension-based programs obtain the highest "condition change" level of evidence from Bennett's hierarchy (Bennett, 1975). However, impact measurement is possible, especially if qualitative methods are considered. Despite all of these challenges, institutions, organizations, and individuals are continually asked to report outcomes and impacts for our work and programmatic efforts. In the end, we will not be able to sustain our community development work if we are not able to document the value we are creating among our communities and their members. REM offers community development professionals an evaluation technique that can be used as part of a broader evaluation process to help address and answer these complex questions.

**EMERY** In Community Development, we often talk about how the practice has moved beyond the theory, and that we need better theoretical models to understand what the practitioners are learning about what works and why. REM has the potential to help us create a more robust link between theory and what happens in the field as we look to theory to help us explain the process by which a set of actions create impacts beyond the immediacy of those actions. Secondly, REM encourages practitioners to think about how actions in a specific program area can have impacts in multiple capitals.

The practice of REM and reflections about the REM process have also taught us how important reflexive praxis is in the community—that transformative change can only happen when it is recognized as such. REM provides communities and organizations with a strategy for creating the opportunity for socially constructing local meaning around transformative change elements. Practitioners of REM are more attuned to the nuances of community change as they engage in community development work. We have seen the value of tracing linkages; we can visualize what linkages are possible and work with people to make that happen.

Thirdly, I think REM is vastly under-utilized as a research tool. Reed (2010) raises the issue of how researchers are connected to the world they research. "In the production of knowledge about social life, two social contexts come together: the context of investigation, consisting of the social world of the investigator, and the context of explanation, consisting of the social world of the actors who are the subject of study." One strategy for overcoming this gap lies in placing both contexts in the larger social structure (Reed 2010); REM offers an alternative in that the researcher/facilitator can be part of a dynamic process of meaning making in regard to community or organizational change. Using REM as a qualitative tool can help a researcher identify key elements that need to be part of research design, as opposed to thinking s/he knows what indicators need to be included based on other research. REM provides a great example of why qualitative data collection methods are important for increasing our understanding of communities and community change processes.

Finally, REM adds exceptional value to evaluation processes. An engaged community process uncovers key indicators often lost in traditional approaches and unanticipated outcomes worth noting. It is also great example of giving back instead of taking from in regards to evaluation.

## Organizational Transformation

**HIGGINS** Organizations are typically slow to change, but community development practitioners tend to be entrepreneurial as well as early adopters of innovative practices. I recently (four months ago) conducted a REM training in a western state. In the West, Extension systems are almost always profoundly under-resourced in community development, but in the state where the training took place, REM has already been used twice, to map impacts of a Horizons community and a rural community foundation, and will soon be used again to map the activities of a different kind of organization. I like to think this is the rule in Extension organizations, not the exception. My own organization has yet to see the light, but I'm working on it!

**EMERY** I see three ways REM has transformed organizations. First, in organizations using REM, more people are interested in developmental approaches to evaluation and see the value of creating a learning community among evalu-

ators, program developers, and recipients. Second, REM provides a forum for helping people think about contribution versus attribution and in the process recognize the importance of collaborative efforts, as it is the interaction among people and networks and the trust built in that process that provides the foundation for collective impact; no one organization does that alone. Third, the value of the data and insights emerging from REM provides a concrete example of why respectful and well-designed qualitative data collection is essential to addressing "wicked problems."

**CHAZDON** In recent years, I have seen increased interest in REM in other areas of Extension and community-engaged programs at the University. I have worked with several other departments at my University to integrate REM evaluation sessions into highly engaged programs, and have provided training on REM to scholars from across the university. In university settings where research is typically emphasized over community engagement, it is exciting to see more scholarly interest in the use of participatory action research, as well as participatory evaluation strategies, such as REM. There is a strong undercurrent of community engaged scholarship with which REM fits like a glove.

**HANSEN** I agree with Scott's assessment that there's growth of awareness; faculty from across our Extension program areas have shown increasing interest in learning and using REM, and I especially see a significant growth in Youth and Family programs deploying the tool in their work. I'm also seeing many including it in their grant proposals. One of my colleagues was turned down on an AFRI grant, but sent along this comment from one of the reviewers "And I am especially impressed with the evaluation method built into the proposal (Ripple Effects Mapping by Hansen-Kollock). This is a more rigorous and well-designed approach to evaluation which directly involves extension partners than I typically see in AFRI proposals." Now that made me smile!

We have trained several faculty and staff and have requests both inside our institution and in others for additional training and coaching. I'm encouraged by their grasp of understanding of the steps, and the power of how it will inform their constituents and audiences about the outcomes of their work. It's an evaluation tool that sells itself.

**SERO** As the Evaluation Specialist within my organization, I have had the satisfaction of conducting Ripple Effects Mappings for colleagues in not only Community and Economic Development, but also Youth and Family programs, as Debra mentioned. And plans are currently underway to expand the use of REM to evaluate programs within Agriculture and Natural Resources. Most recently, our Extension Administrative Team agreed to a proposal set forth by Debra and me to use REM to collect county-level economic data. The intent of this new project is to better understand the positive outcomes and economic impact of Extension work within individual counties. It is being used to demonstrate the relevance and public value of Extension to funders, stakeholders, and our own institution. And

eventually, if the process occurs in a significant number of counties, we'll be able to use the data we've collected with REM to report statewide impact.

## Community Transformation

**HANSEN** For several years our county office has been engaged in building capacity in local nonprofit organizations. Ripple Effects Mapping has been very helpful for them to use as a tool to simply celebrate their current activities or to evaluate their past work. Because REM is so interactive and has no cost, it's easy for them to access and consider for their small and large organizations. I have been presenting it at regional and statewide nonprofit conferences and have seen an avid interest and multiple requests for more instruction in that sector as well. Groups that have used REM refer to the information gathered when discussing grant applications and in their strategic planning efforts. Their stories are the complete focus of the process, so they often refer back to those "aha" moments. I've also heard some of their REM stories make it into their pitch presentations and marketing materials. After participating in the Hunger Coalition Ripple Effects Mapping and subsequent Case Study, the pastoral care manager has requested training so she can bring the tool into the hospital for assessing the impact of their health care work. I'm excited to see how it will be viewed in their culture.

**SERO** REM, at its core, is a community-focused participatory evaluation method. This means that community, coalition, and/or group members are at the heart of the evaluation—truly engaged in learning about and understanding the issues within their communities and the impact of group efforts on those issues. Uniquely inclusive, without the normal barriers to evaluation or group participation, REM enables wide participation. For example, whereas age, literacy level, and/or language barriers may have prevented participation in and success of other community development evaluations, this is not the case with REM. Ripple Effects Mappings have been held with youth as young as seven, no writing or reading is required during the session, and mappings can (and have) occurred in a community group's native language of choice. This allows many diverse interests and cultures to have a voice in the process, and, subsequently, in their community. Additionally, the entire intent of REM is to better understand the positive impact of work happening within the community, using the participants' own voices. Oftentimes, a secondary goal is to help the participants determine their strategic plans and goals for the future, allowing the group to decide its own path. This enables those gathered at the REM session to have an influential voice within their own community and, therefore, to be able to work toward improving their community using a path of their own choosing.

**HIGGINS** In a majority of cases, REM participants leave the process feeling more hopeful about their communities and with a greater sense of self-efficacy. As practitioners familiar with the literature, we know that these are some of the building blocks of community development. Again, I think someone should map the impact of ripple mapping, because I believe that REM participants, armed with

a palpable sense of their strengths and recent accomplishments, often proceed to make more positive changes in their communities and organizations.

**CHAZDON** University folks need to demonstrate to community members that their voices matter. I have witnessed many encounters between university people and community people that followed the "expert" model. It was assumed that the university person had the knowledge that needed to be imparted to the lay audience. REM provides the "lay audience" a real opportunity to be heard, to guide, and to teach. The REM session can provide a strong corrective to the expert model of community engagement. As a result of these more empowering engagements, community members can more effectively take advantage of the resources that higher education institutions have to offer.

**EMERY** Often community leaders talk about being stuck in a rut or bordering on burning out because they are so busy and it seems like nothing is happening. REM provides the means by which they can rise above the rut and see a different, more generative, and proactive reality for themselves and their work in the community. After a REM session, people are energized to do more and to do it more intentionally and effectively. REM gives them a way to think more deeply about how their work in the community makes a difference on the larger scale, and in doing so provides an impetus for monitoring change, continuing to increase the circle of involvement, and proactively linking opportunities to build assets across the community. REM also creates collective efficacy—"see what we have done!"—as people see that the cultural capital of the community, particularly in relation to everyday ways of thinking and doing, is something they can change. In changing that, they expand the opportunity structures for everyone across the community.

## Toward REM's Future

As described in the introductory chapter, REM's complex origins emerge from the application of the Community Capitals Framework to engage participants in a systemic approach to practical and participatory evaluation in measuring impacts of community leadership programs. As seen throughout this book, REM has continued to be useful as a tool for measuring community development impacts, yet it is increasingly being used in a range of other evaluation contexts—health care collaboratives, youth development, child care systems change, sustainable agricultural development, arts coalitions. The possibilities for REM are endless. As more and more people use REM, we are hopeful that the transformative aspects of the method will be preserved—its use of appreciative inquiry, strong participatory process, interactive group reflection, and mind mapping. We assembled this book because we want to preserve these core elements while encouraging innovation. We see REM as an emergent evaluation method appropriate for emergent evaluation contexts. We hope you agree and will join us in strengthening and sustaining REM through sharing at conferences and in journal articles and through continued training and coaching activities.

# APPENDICES
## REM tools

### An Overview of the Tools

Many relevant tools for Ripple Effects Mapping are embedded in the case examples in this book. Below are some additional resources that may be helpful as you embark on a Ripple Effects Mapping project. For additional information, you may also wish to contact one of the editors of this book:

Mary Emery (Web Mapping): mary.emery@sdstate.edu

Debra Hansen (In-depth Rippling): debra.hansen@wsu.edu

Lorie Higgins (In-depth Rippling): higgins@uidaho.edu

Rebecca Sero (In-depth Rippling): r.sero@wsu.edu

Scott Chazdon (Theming and Rippling): schazdon@umn.edu

**APPENDIX A: FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH RIPPLING** A guide created by Debra Hansen of Washington State University in 2011 to walk you through the process of conducting a REM exercise using the In-Depth Rippling approach.

**APPENDIX B: CODING GUIDE** A tool created by Rebecca Sero of Washington State University in 2016 to describe how to organize the data collected during a REM session. It briefly explains how to use mapping software, and to code and report the data.

**APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK (CCF) GUIDE** Created by Debra Hansen in 2011, based on earlier work of Mary Emery on the CCF. Helps REM facilitators think about how to use the CCF to code the effects on a ripple map. Also useful with community members when presenting findings from a ripple map.

**APPENDIX D: WEB MAPPING INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE** Created by Mary Emery.

**APPENDIX E: THEMING AND RIPPLING FACILITATOR SCRIPT** Created by Lisa Hinz, Unversity of Minnesota Extension

**APPENDIX F: SAMPLE RECRUITMENT FLYERS—COMMUNITY GARDENING** Two sample flyers describing the ripple mapping process and encouraging people to participate.

**APPENDIX G: SAMPLE AGENDA FOR THEMING AND RIPPLING APPROACH** Example of an agenda used for the Tourism Assessment Program in Minnesota using the Theming and Rippling approach.

**APPENDIX H: FOURTEEN WAYS TO MAKE USE OF THE DATA FROM RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING** Created by Mary Emery.

# APPENDIX A
# Facilitator Guide for In-Depth Rippling

**To better understand the ripple effects and relationships of the program on individuals, groups, communities, and regions. It's an engaging way to capture your impacts and compelling stories.**

**TIME REQUIRED** 60–120 minutes, depending on the depth of the mapping process

**ITEMS NEEDED** Large white paper posted on the wall, tape, markers, questions printed on paper for participants to write on.

### FOCUS GROUP STEPS

1. **Brief overview of the session and objectives** (5 minutes)

   This impact mapping evaluation project will help us better understand the ripple effects of the program on individual participants, groups, communities, or regions involved. This mapping evaluation provides a method of visually illustrating to stakeholders the impact of this program, validating the effects of the program, and creating stronger support and public value. The purpose of this study is to explore overall (individual, group, community, or regional) changes that have taken place as a result of participating in the program.

2. **Appreciative Inquiry interview** (10 minutes)

   A. Find a partner (not a good friend)

   B. Share a story briefly about the program being evaluated using one of these Appreciative Inquiry questions for this group:

      - Tell me a story about how you have used the information received in the program
      - Is there anything you are proud to share? Cost savings? New ways to work? Telling others about what you learned?
      - List any achievements or successes you had based on your learning through the program—what made it possible?

   **NOTE** Introductions, which should include the individual's role within the program or community, can happen either before the interviews or when it is the participant's turn to share.

3. **Mapping** (45–75 minutes)

   Ask each pair to offer one story (only one at a time so everyone has an opportunity to share), and ripple it out (draw out some of the details), welcoming input from all. Use a different marker color for each ripple.

   A. Probing questions can include:

      - Then what happened?
      - Who was involved?
      - How many people were there?
      - What was the dollar amount of the grant?
      - What are people doing differently?
      - How have relationships changed as a result?

   B. Continue until all stories have been captured and rippled

4. **Reflection and Closing** (5–15 minutes)

   A. Ask focus group members to reflect on the mapping process.

   B. Ask the group to identify the most significant change(s) on the map.

   C. What is most interesting about the map?

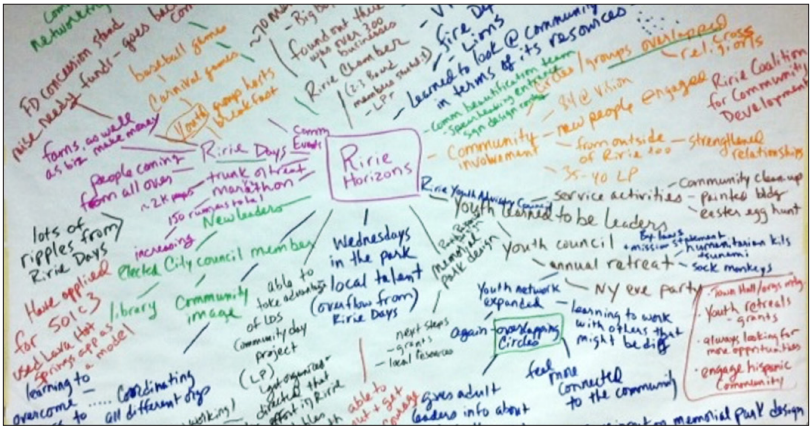
   D. How might we use the map to help us tell our story about how we are making a difference?

   E. What should we do next? (can refer to use of mapped information or, with more time, use of the map to identify impact concentration and gaps)

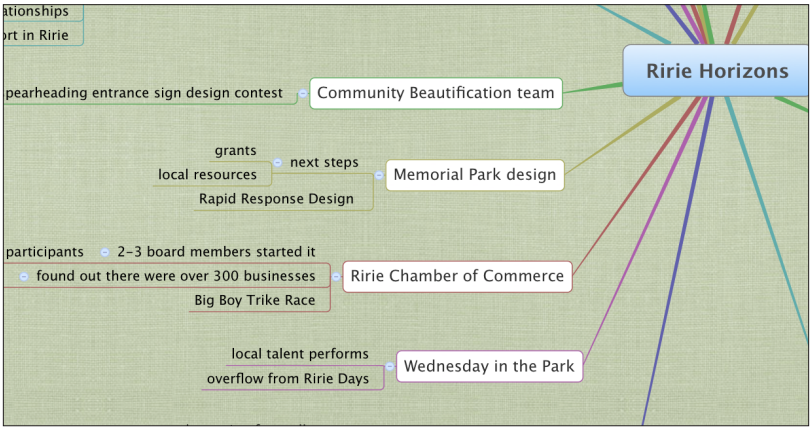
   F. If appropriate, briefly describe the Community Capitals Framework and present it as one way to organize impacts. Can ask participants to give examples of where their work has dipped into the different capitals.

5. **Closing** (10–15 minutes)

   Thank the participants for engaging in the Ripple Effects Mapping exercise and discuss the next steps. Will the map be digitized and coded like the example below? Will it be photographed and shared? In what ways will the data be shared with others?




**Ririe, Idaho Horizons Map**




**A portion of the community map digitized to the software**

### TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MAPPING

Individual learning and action items may be the easiest to start with.

When mapping, get as detailed as possible. After collecting information for the "map" there will be opportunities for participants to add and embellish. This provides ideas about how to dig deeper.

People may be shy about sharing their own successes, but may be more willing to talk about how others have used the information.

# APPENDIX B
# Coding Guide

**Taking the mapping data generated in a focus group exercise and getting it into a format that can be coded to the categories you desire.**

**ITEMS NEEDED** Mind-mapping software such as XMind, copies (or photographs) of the handwritten Ripple Effects Map.

### MAPPING IT TO THE SOFTWARE

Each mapping software has unique attributes, but we use XMind for its ease of use and ability to export into Word or Excel for coding purposes. Regardless of the software chosen, it should also allow for the map to be saved in a PDF format and printed at the size you want, for sharing with funders, partners, or other stakeholders.

Data can be typed into the mapping software during the actual mapping session or following it. All information shared during the mapping should be entered into the software. When the intent of the mapping is to collect detailed data for analysis, it is critical to have a scribe typing stories, quotes, and details from the participants during the mapping exercise. This detail should be populated into the mapping software as soon as possible following the mapping.

### CODING PROCESS

The process of coding will be directed by the outcomes you wish to track. Methods could include coding short-, medium-, and long-term impacts using deductive codes such as the Community Capitals Framework, the triple bottom line (economy, environment, and social; or people, planet, and profit), or any other metric you want to track. Additionally, you could use an inductive coding process, where codes are developed as you process and read the data from the mapping exercise. Coding the data provides you with the opportunity to conduct both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Once you export the data from the mind mapping software into a spreadsheet, you can code the data to the framework you want to track.

Here is an example of a community development Mind Map that is coded with short- (S), medium- (M) and long-term (L) impacts using the Community Capitals Framework. It is easy to imagine inserting other metrics.

| Capitals | Social | Cultural | Human | Financial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Provides a wide variety of opportunities | S | S | S | |
| Helps youth develop in an environment of unconditional acceptance | S | S | | |
| This is inclusive and accessible to all in the community | S | | | |
| There is a cultural value of enrichment | | M | | |
| Confidence builder | 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 | | | |
| A girlfriend of one of the boys in a play (dropped out of college) | | | M | |
| Was convinced to become one of the leads. | S | | | |
| "The change in her was just phenomenal." | | | M | |
| She went to Spokane and was talking about heading to college. | | | | S |
| Park Avenue Players has gained legitimacy | M | M | | |

### REPORTING

There are multiple ways to use and report this information that you've gathered:

- Print the entire map wall size, and display at meetings
- Share the stories and/or quantitative findings in grant proposals
- Pull out specific pieces for presentations and printed materials

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 the group. 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. As Patton (2002) noted about qualitative data, "The experiences of the sample participants, explained using their own words, strengthen both the validity and credibility of the research."

Patton, M. (2002). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

# APPENDIX C
# Community Capitals Framework (CCF) Guide

## Community Capitals Framework

The Community Capitals Framework offers us a new viewpoint to analyze holistic community changes. The Framework encourages us to think systemically about strategies and projects, thus offering insights into additional indicators of success as well as potential areas of support.

Ripple Effect Mapping can be used to find where capitals are being addressed, improved, and having an impact on your community like the examples below.


### NATURAL

*What does the land give us?* Assets in a particular location, including geography, natural resources, amenities, and natural beauty.

- Leaders enhance green space
- Community garden
- Community cleanup
- Park improvement

### CULTURAL

*How do we think and act in our community?* The way people "know the world" and how they act within it, as well as traditions and language.

- A broader perspective issues
- Festivals/parades/celebrations
- A pro-youth community
- People believe they can shape their future
- "Giving back" both in dollars and time becomes a dominant value

### BUILT

*What is built on the land?*
Infrastructure supporting these:

- Broadband
- Recreational facilities
- Small business incubator

### HUMAN

*What can I do?* The skills and abilities of people to develop and enhance their resources.

- Increased knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, leadership, grant writing, insect identification, how to run effective meetings
- Increase in volunteer hours

### SOCIAL

*What can we do together?*
The connections among people and organizations or the social "glue" to make things happen. Bonding social capital = close redundant ties that build community cohesion. Bridging social capital = loose ties that bridge among organizations and communities.

- Develop small business-owner networks
- Youth-to-youth mentoring
- More organizations and groups are linked together through team participation
- Local businesses linked to agencies for technical support
- Farmer and producer mentors

### POLITICAL

*What about our political activities?* Access to power, organizations, connection to resources and power brokers. The ability of people to find their own voice and to engage in actions that contribute to the well being of their community.

- Business owners participate in state and local government
- Local elections have at least two candidates running
- Leadership is diversified – more women and young people run for office and start businesses

### FINANCIAL

*How do we pay for development now and in the future?* Financial resources to invest in community capacity-building, underwrite business development, civic and social entrepreneurship, and accumulate wealth for future community development

- Create local investment clubs
- Create community foundations
- Savings and investment capital
- Increased grant writing capacity

Ripple Effects Mapping

A new way to explore overall (individual, group, community, or regional) changes that have taken place since participating in your program.


Washington State University Extension

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WSU Extension, 2011

Community Capitals material adapted from: "Spiraling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with Community Capitals Framework." Emery and Flora (2006).

## APPENDIX D
# Web Mapping Instructions and Template

1. **Welcome** and **agenda review**
2. The **purpose of the activity** is to look at how the work has made a **difference in the community** and to use that information to think about **what we can learn** from our work together, how we can **use that information** going forward, and how we can **evaluate that work**.
3. Begin by asking people to **share in pairs** for about 5 minutes how they feel **their work has made a difference** in the community.
    A. Consider your work in the community and focus in on the specific aspect of that work that you feel has made a real difference in the community.
    B. Find a partner you have not talked with in a while and share your stories for about 5 minutes.
    C. In the large group, ask people to list the impacts.
    D. **Use the information shared** to help the group **come up with the topic** for the center of the map.
4. **Write the capitals** around the edges of the map with a **brief explanation**. I usually use black to write the capitals and the idea in the center of the map.
    A. **Start with natural capital** because it **frames what is possible in a place**. Natural capital includes natural resources assets as well as those in our environment. For communities interested in tourism or those focused on farming, natural capital is very important.
    B. We often think of **cultural capital** in terms of language, dress, traditions, music, etc., but cultural capital also includes our **everyday ways of thinking and doing**. Some communities might say, for example, "a great asset here is our work ethic." That is an example of cultural capital.
    C. **Human capital** refers to our **health, knowledge, skills and understanding**. It also includes **self-efficacy or our belief that we can make things happen**.

   D. When we talk about **social capital**, we are focusing in on **connections and relationships**. We want to look at the networks people are involved in—those where people know each other well and bond together, and those based on weak ties but which link us to resources and information. Social capital exists where there are **norms of reciprocity and trust**.

   E. **Political capital** is often thought of in terms of **policy, laws, and running for office**. Political capital includes the carrots and sticks that encourage certain types of behavior, but it also is about **whose voices are heard and respected**.

   F. **Financial capital** is most often a focus of community development efforts. It includes not only **loans and investments** but also **gifts and philanthropy**. Investments in financial capital lead to increases in profits, jobs, and businesses.

   G. **Built capital** is our **infrastructure,** from the roads we drive on to the towers that support our cell phone service and access to the internet.

5. **Confirm the topic** for the center of the map.

6. **Explain the three levels of ripple process** and that the purpose of this tool is to better understand the impact of our work by thinking about it as a **pebble or boulder in the community pond**. Using the capitals to frame this discussion helps us think about the whole community and avoid overlooking some aspects. Some find it helpful to **draw three rings** around the center topic, with Ring 1 representing the first ripple right around the topic, Ring 2 around that ring, and Ring 3 the outside ring.

7. Begin mapping **the first ripple** with the question "**what are people doing differently?"** Put the items generated during the first ripple discussion near the center in the section of map in the region of the map framed by the capital they represent. When the map is done, you should be able to see all the social capital impacts, for example, in one section of the map. Probe for more ideas by asking about changes in the capitals not yet mentioned.

8. Begin mapping **the second ripple** by focusing on items in the first ripple and using questions like: "Who is benefitting and how?" "How is the fact that people are doing things differently affecting others?"

   A. Use a **different color**, so the ripples are evident.

   B. **Draw an arrow** from the item in the first ripple to the item in the second. Sometimes there are multiple arrows. The arrows will **show the process by which change was accomplished**, which can inform new efforts.

9. Begin mapping **the third ripple** by asking "What changes are you seeing in the community's systems and institutions and organizations? Are everyday ways of thinking and doing changing? How? "

   A. Use a **new color**

   B. **Use arrows** to link items in the second ripple to those in the third ripple.

10. Ask "What do you think the most **significant change** is on the map? Why?" Use **red** to star those items.

11. Initiate a brief discussion on **how the map can help with evaluation**. Looking at the map and thinking about the impact of your work, what questions about your work would you like to have answered? Are there items on the map for which data is already available?

12. Initiate a brief discussion on **how this reflection process can provide insights into next steps**. "What are the **implications** of what we learned about our impact from the mapping that will be helpful in our next round of our work?" "What additional **stakeholders** should we add to our advisory committees or project committees based on how we are impacting the community?"

Ripple mapping can also be used to help plan an initiative. Here the questions would be, "if we are successful, what will people be doing differently, how will that make a difference, and what changes do we hope to see in organizations, everyday ways of thinking and doing, and community/neighborhood characteristics."

The results of a ripple mapping activity can be used to **populate a logic model**.

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## Mapping Report Template

**NAME OF GROUP** _____

**LOCATION** (town/city and state) _____

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS** youth: _____ adults: _____

**NOTES ABOUT GROUP MEMBERS** _____

**FACILITATOR** _____

**CONTEXT NOTES** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**INSTRUCTIONS** Enter items from the map, adding additional information where needed for context. For each item, indicate Forms of Capital: B = Built, H = Human, F = Financial, S = Social, C = Cultural, N = Natural, P = Political.

Indicate items starred as most significant, circled as bonding activities, and marked with triangles as items that built new relationships.

Insert as many additional rows as are necessary to capture the relationships in your map. If an item on the outer circle is connected to more than one inner circle item, it should be repeated to show that it is related to both.

| CONTEXT OF THE ACTIVITY<br>**Who was involved—time, funds, intensity?** | ACTIVITY'S SHORT-TERM CHANGE<br>**How have you changed the community?** |
|---|---|
| **SAMPLE**<br>One 4-H club with ten youth (ages 12–18) and two adult partners procured $500 Park & Rec funds to improve park for young families to use<br><br>Meetings:<br>• 1 training<br>• 2 planning<br>• 1 public forum<br>• 6 wks, 3-hr work sessions<br>• Additional 15 people (ages 5–60) worked at sessions | **SAMPLE**<br>**B** Parks improvement—purchased swing set, built pavilion, pit toilets |
| ACTIVITY'S MID-TERM CHANGE<br>**Who benefits and how? How are changed behaviors affecting others?** | SYSTEMS AND LONG-TERM CHANGE<br>**Are there changes in the way community groups and institutions do things?** |
| **SAMPLE**<br>**B** Local and visitors' kids have places to play<br><br>**H** Kids start earlier physical activity<br><br>**P** Youth learned to participate in public meetings | **SAMPLE**<br>**C** Community calls on youth for resources (e.g. Glacial Gardeners asked for help with tech.)<br><br>2 stars for most significant change<br><br>**S** Community trusts that youth will not get out of control, will be productive. |

After mapping—comments/insights by participants about the mapping activity:

**FEEDBACK** "After you left the 4-H volunteers were sharing with parents about the types of community connections and contributions the group discussed. This was very eye opening in that the volunteers showed pride."

**FEEDBACK** "The session was very interesting and helped me to see how very much we do as a club. Sometimes I get the narrow view and you sure widened the horizons for me."

Ways in which the group will use this information:

Grant Completion Report to Park and Recreation, Garden Club, and Cooperative Extension; pull quotes for newsletter article.

# APPENDIX E
# Theming and Rippling Facilitator Script

**DATE** _____ **TIME** _____

**LOCATION**

**TO BRING**

- ☐ Sign-in sheet
- ☐ Agendas for participants
- ☐ Cardstock for name table tents
- ☐ Facilitator script
- ☐ Laptop with XMind mapping program loaded & working
- ☐ LCD projector
- ☐ ½ sheets of paper ("anything else" question and back-up if computer doesn't work)
- ☐ Black sharpie markers/person
- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Sticky wall (for back-up)

1. **INTRODUCTIONS AND BRIEF OVERVIEW** (10 minutes)

   The University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality and _____ are hosting this session to better **understand the impacts of the Art of Hosting training in your community**.

   Each of you was **invited here because** you have connections to the Art of Hosting training—you may have been a **participant** or **are aware of things** that have **happened in your community as a result of Art of Hosting activities** since the training.

   We are sure that **all of you have something to share about what kinds of things have happened as a result of the Art of Hosting**. We **thank you for taking the time and making the effort** to be with us.

   Let's take a moment to get to know each other a bit. Please **share your name, where your home is, and how you're connected to the Art of Hosting**. We'll go around the whole room.

   The **Bush Foundation** is also interested in this Ripple Effects Mapping work and is funding this, as they **want to know how the Art of Hosting training makes a difference** to individuals and communities.

   Today's session will use a visual **"mind mapping" method to help you to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes** produced

[1] Developed by Lisa Hinz, Extension Educator, Leadership and Civic Engagement, University of Minnesota, hinzx001@umn.edu

by the Art of Hosting. We will explore **individual, organizational, and community changes** that have taken place **as a result of the Art of Hosting**. We start at the **individual** level and **then group** and categorize to the **organizational and community** levels.

2. **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW** (10 minutes)

   A. Find someone you don't already know well to interview—pairing with someone you don't know well increases the curiosity about the thoughts and insights you each have.

   B. Share a **brief story about your experience with the Art of Hosting** using one of these questions (these questions are also on your agenda):

      - What is a **highlight, achievement, or success you've had based on your involvement** in **the Art of Hosting**?
      - What is **something about your involvement** in **the Art of Hosting** that you are **proud to share**?
      - What **connections with others—new and/or deepened—have you made as a result of the Art of Hosting**?

   (**NOTE** Gathering information from these interviews happens in the next section)

3. **MAPPING** (90 minutes)

   In **this phase** of conversation, we **focus on how** the **Art of Hosting has affected you, your work, and your community**. You can **think of this as a "so what" conversation**—as in, **you participated in the Art of Hosting, so, what difference did it make for you? For your work? For your community?**

   **For those of you who participated** in the program, **I'll ask questions about things you learned, have used, and done for yourself and your communities as a result** of the **Art of Hosting training**. As we do, **we'll map your answers** to see what connections emerge.

   **For those of you who didn't participate in the training but still know how the program and participants' experience led to things happening in communities** around the area, we **want you to share your observations too**. We'll map those as well.

**Probes** during the mapping exercise are **intended to help draw out and categorize different types of "ripples,"** such as

- new knowledge or skills,
- new relationships or connections,
- new financial/economic opportunities,
- strengthened or new cultural activities,
- new or improved uses of facilities or technology,
- maybe even strengthened or new efforts to conserve the natural environment.

**POTENTIAL PROBES**

Tell me more about that...

Can you say more about...?

So what did this lead to?

Please go on...

Please tell me more about what you mean when you say...

What are examples of that?

#### GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD MAP

- **Review the way your comments show up** on the map. We invite you **speak up if it doesn't reflect what you've said**, either in the **wording or the connections**.
- **At first, comments on the map** may seem **"all over the place." Over time, it gets clearer** as we hear how things are connected.
- We'll take time to **review the map later, so if you see words or connections that could be tweaked or improved, we'll give you a chance** to do that.

We'll **start by mapping things you've just shared in your interviews**—things that touched on highlights and successes, things you're proud to share, and connections with others that you've made as a result of your contact with the Art of Hosting. **Interview partners may add or elaborate** if you heard something and want to add on.

So, **let's go around the room to hear brief reports from your interviews** and we'll **start to map them as the first "so what's"or ripples** of the program.

**If what you share seems related to something someone else has already shared**, please **let us know so it can be clustered near that comment** on our map.

*(Go around to each participant to get short reports on what they shared. Record each on the map, likely unconnected to anything else since these are the first comments.)*

*After the interview reports are done, take a little time to do some initial clustering with the group—it gives time to clarify information shared, probe for additional information as needed, and create initial organization in the map.)*

Now that everyone has shared stories of what happened as a result of the Art of Hosting training, let's take a few minutes to sort what we've got on the map—to **cluster things that are similar or alike**.

Are there any items you think should go **near each other**?

- **For what reasons**?

  *(Once the interview reports and initial clustering are done, use the potential questions below to probe potential impacts of the program. Ask additional questions that you think of as the conversation unfolds as needed)*

Ok, now I'd like to **follow up with some additional questions to explore possible other impacts or ripples** of the Art of Hosting training.

#### SOCIAL IMPACTS

One of the interview questions asked about connections that you gained or strengthened as a result of the Art of Hosting training. Each of you has likely met people you didn't know before, or didn't know as well as you do now. That said,

- **How did your experience** in the program help to **expand or deepen your personal, community, or professional connections?**
  - **What has happened as a result** of any of those relationships?
- **Think back to things you learned through your experience** with the Art of Hosting training.
  - **Have you shared the knowledge and learning gained from your experience with others?** This could be formal sharing such as convening and hosting meetings, or informal sharing such as discussions or conversations with family, friends, and co-workers. Have you shared things you learned?
  - If so, what kinds of things have you shared? with whom?

#### CIVIC IMPACTS

- **How** has the Art of Hosting **influenced how you engage in your community?**
  - Have you **increased your participation in organizational or community decision-making?** How so?
- How has the Art of Hosting **impacted the way you engage others** in the community?
- Have **new collaborations and networks have formed** as a result of your Art of Hosting experience? **What ones?**

#### ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL IMPACTS

- **What, if any, funding** have you, your organization, or community received that you **feel is related to the Art of Hosting?**

#### BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS

- **Sometimes**, people get involved in **building and infrastructure projects that benefit the public**, such as **historic preservation, community beautification projects, park and recreation projects,** or infrastructure development.
  - **What, if any, building and infrastructure projects have happened** in your organization or community that you feel are **related to the Art of Hosting?**

#### NATURAL RESOURCE IMPACTS

- Since the program, **can you think of any conservation efforts aimed at protecting natural resources that you feel are related** to the Art of Hosting? If yes, **what**?

#### CULTURAL IMPACTS

- Since the program, have there been **any community cultural events such as celebrations, museum exhibits, festivals, or county fairs** that have been **affected by the Art of Hosting experiences**? If so, **what**?
- **What impact**, if any, has the Art of Hosting **had on efforts to promote diversity in your community or organizations** (e.g., people of different ages, different cultural backgrounds, or different economic backgrounds)?

**STAKEHOLDER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

- **What have you observed** in the Art of Hosting **participants that you feel is directly related to their involvement** in the program?

**NEGATIVES/DOWNSIDES**

- Are there **negatives or downsides** of the program that you can speak to?
- Are there **things that happened as a ripple of the program that you wish hadn't** happened?

**ANYTHING ELSE?**
(If short on time, have people write on a half sheet of paper with their name in case we need to follow up)

- Are there **any other impacts** of the Art of Hosting **that haven't been mentioned**, that you would like to add?

4. **REFLECTION** (10 minutes)

Let's take a few moments to review our map so far.

- Have we **missed anything really important**? If so, let's add it. (If time is short, have them write it down on a half sheet)
- At this point, what is **most impressive to you about what is on the map**?
- What seems **most significant**?
- At the end of this time, **if there is still something we did not have time to get to, please write it down on one of the half sheets of paper in as much detail as you are able, along with your name, and we will incorporate** it into the map.

5. **CLOSING** (5 minutes)

- We'll likely do **follow-up interviews to flesh out some parts of this map to get more details on the impact** of the Art of Hosting training on your community.
- **You will get a final copy** of this map.
- **THANK YOU** for your help here today and for your efforts in your communities!

## APPENDIX F
# Sample Recruitment Flyers

## Please join us on the First Day of Spring for a special, Community *Ripple Effect* Gathering!

**Wednesday, March 20th, 2013, 5:30 – 7:30 PM**
**At Lao Family Community of MN, Inc.**
**320 University Ave W. 55103**

We want to include your thoughts among the sharing of wisdom and stories about how backyard gardening, community gardening, and urban farming, like the following examples, have impacted the Frogtown and Rondo Communities:

- Arts-Us Young People Garden
- Ober Community Center
- Community Garden Boxes
- Oxford Dayton Urban Farm
- Ramsey County Master Gardeners (Inclusion Committee)
- Victoria/Rondo Community Garden
- Aurora & Fuller Ave Backyard Gardeners
- U of M Extension Nutrition Program
- Aurora/St. Anthony Peace Sanctuary
- Frogtown Greenhouse Garden
- Gordon Parks High School
- Maxfield School PPL Garden
- Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Community Garden

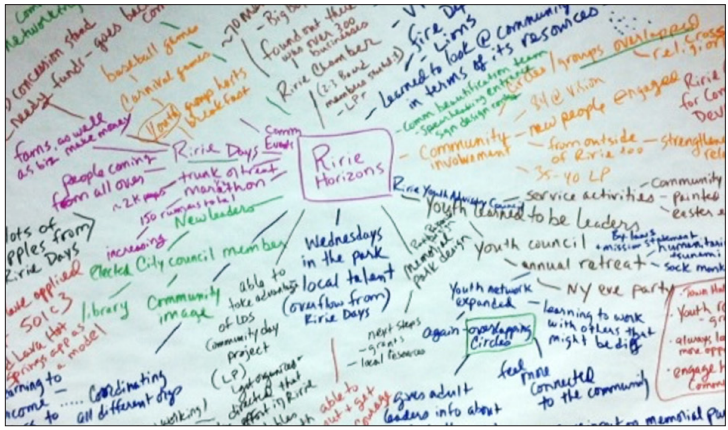
This special activity, known as ***Ripple Effects Mapping***, will be a structured group discussion among Community Members and volunteer Master Gardeners from the University of MN Extension. The exercise will map the positive effects of gardening programs in our Community. The results are a powerful way to document impacts, as well as a way to hear and listen to neighbors discuss their broader goals and how they would like to be supported by the U of M Extension in reaching their vision for our community. The event will be co-led by Scott Chazdon, a program evaluator from the University, and Melvin Giles, community liaison.

We'll be serving a tasty meal, too, so join us for dinner!

Please RSVP by emailing _____ at _____ or call _____ to let us know you will be able to attend. Thank you!

For additional information please email _____, _____.

# Ripple Effects Mapping to Capture Impacts of the Anaconda Horizons Program




University of Idaho Extension

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY | EXTENSION

**RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING TO CAPTURE IMPACTS OF THE ANACONDA HORIZONS PROGRAM**

***Purpose of Ripple Effects Mapping*** The impact of community development work is notoriously difficult to measure. Community development programs often plant seeds that take time to grow into community projects and desired outcomes. By the time something "happens" (a grant is received or a community center is built) the path between the program and the outcome isn't obvious, even though the grant or community center started with the program. Though clearly the community members writing the grants and building the center deserve all the credit for their hard work, community, state, and national non-profits and organizations making those initial investments need to show funders the impact of those investments. Ripple Effects Mapping is a way to do that and to ensure that important community development work continues to get funded.

***Procedure*** Participants first pair off and describe things that happened as a result of a program. After these discussions, events and results (personal, group, and community levels) are "mapped" on butcher paper on the wall. Mapping continues until the group is satisfied that the map captures everything known to have happened as a result of the program (from improved relationships to million-dollar grants and everything in between!).

Sometimes follow-up interviews are conducted in order to fact check and gather additional information, such as grant amounts, numbers of program participants, and other data, especially quantifiable data that participants may not have at hand during the mapping process.

The messy hand-drawn map will be transferred to a software program and results will be organized in various ways for community and Extension use. Resulting products can be distributed electronically and in print.

***Summary*** Traditional survey evaluations are often necessary for statistical purposes, but they rarely capture a program's valuable but unintended impacts. Surveys also do not lend themselves to compelling stories, which are increasingly recognized as the most important product from a program evaluation.

This form of the process was developed by Debra Hansen at Washington State University Extension (and she coined the term "Ripple Effects Mapping"), and then adopted in North Dakota and Idaho, where Extension organizations delivering the Horizons program mapped impacts with communities.

Communities find the process itself to be rewarding. It is a way to visually show all that has been accomplished, making people feel more positive about their work, and to analyze accomplishments and recognize work that still needs to be done. The resulting products and materials can be used in grant proposals and presentations, facilitating communication to the community and decision makers. It is a relatively easy tool to use and, with free mapping software programs out there, can be used to both evaluate and plan many community programs and projects.

# APPENDIX G
# Sample Agenda for Theming and Rippling Approach

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AKELEY, MINNESOTA**

## Ripple Effect Mapping Session Agenda

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2015, 5:30 -- 7:30 P.M., AKELEY SENIOR CENTER**

### I. INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF OVERVIEW (5:30 – 5:45)

The University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality is hosting this session to better understand the impacts of the Sustainable Tourism Assessment for Small Communities project. Today's session will use a visual mind mapping method to help you to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes produced by the project.

### II. APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW (5:45 – 6:00)

- What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement in tourism development in the past 18 months?
- What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement in this tourism development work in the past 18 months?
- What connections with others – new and/or deepened – have you made as a result of the work happening in tourism development in this community in the past 18 months?

### III. REPORTING AND MAPPING (6:00 – 7:15)

Now we'll report out and build from the interviews to generate themes about the ways the Tourism Assessment project is having an impact. Our questions during this mapping exercise are intended to help draw out and categorize different types of "ripples," such as new knowledge or skills, new relationships or connections, strengthened or new cultural activities, strengthened or new efforts to conserve the natural environment, new financial or economic opportunities, or new or improved facilities. We also will be asking about negative consequences of the program and responses to these.

**Guidelines for a good map**

- Review the way your comments show up on the map. We invite you speak up if it doesn't reflect what you've said, either in the wording or connections.
- At first, comments on the map are "all over the place." Over time, it will get clearer as we hear how things are connected.
- Today's map is only a rough draft. After the session, we will review and organize the map, in consultation with core program staff.

### IV. REFLECTION AND CLOSING (7:15 – 7:30)

- What is most interesting about the map to you?
- We'll likely do follow up interviews to flesh out some parts of this map to get more details on the impacts of the Sustainable Tourism Assessment project.
- The community will receive a final copy of this map.
- THANK YOU for your help here today and for your efforts in your community!

**Notes from Appreciative Inquiry exercise**

Interviewee's Name _____ Interviewee's e-mail address_____

***What is a highlight, achievement, or success you had based on your involvement in tourism development in the past 18 months?***

***What unexpected things have happened as a result of your involvement in this tourism development work in the past 18 months?***

***What connections with others – new and/or deepened – have you made as a result of the work happening in tourism development in this community in the past 18 months?***

APPENDIX H

# Fourteen ways to make use of the data from Ripple Effects Mapping

1. Identify new prospects for advisory committees, mentors, or other community partnering.
2. Construct a great story to share with funders and stakeholders.
3. Refresh/revise marketing materials.
4. Revisit strategic planning—if this is what we have done together, what can we do next?
5. Identify indicators on the map that someone is already collecting data on—sales tax, utility hook-ups, etc.—to add metrics to the stories.
6. Develop survey, interview, and focus group questions based on the outcomes and impacts identified in the map to determine if others see/experience the same outcomes/impacts.
7. Identify beneficiaries of the stories, so you can tell them the story and encourage increased participation, resources, and referrals.
8. Use the stories to develop a case for the public value of the work.
9. Identify new best practices and strategies that can be applied to new and stalled projects.
10. Engage in reflection to build individual and collective efficacy.
11. Honor what the community values in the evaluation and reporting.
12. Use data and stories to demonstrate capacity to prospective funders, investors, and partners.
13. Use the map as a visual for outside groups to build a sense of how community connections and social capital can make a difference.
14. Use items from the map as specific speaking points with elected officials for programming and budget decisions.

# Contributor biographies

**KIT ALVIZ** is a program planning and evaluation analyst with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. Over the last five years, she has been involved with REM protocol development, implementation, and dissemination for Cooperative Extension in Minnesota and California, as well as for a multi-state child care initiative. Alviz earned her MA in organizational leadership, policy, and development from the University of Minnesota. Email: kit.alviz@ucop.edu

**EMILY BECHER** is a research associate on the Applied Research and Evaluation team in the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development. She specializes in research and evaluation of parent and family-based programming and often uses REM as an effective technique, particularly for community and systems-based initiatives. Becher received her PhD in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota, and her MS in Couple and Family Therapy from the University of Rochester Medical School. Email: bech0079@umn.edu

**RANI BHATTACHARYYA** is a Community Economics Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota. Over the last five years, she has been serving Northwest Minnesota in the areas of applied economic research and implementation of community tourism and entrepreneurship capacity building efforts. Bhattacharyya earned her MA in rural Tourism, Parks, and Recreation Management from Western Illinois University. Email: rani-b@umn.edu

**CATE BOSSERMAN** is an evaluator with five years of experience promoting community health through participatory evaluation. She is currently a Community Evaluation Coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Health's Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives. Prior to working at the Department of Health, Cate was a Research Associate at Rainbow Research, Inc., a mission-driven research and evaluation firm serving community-based organizations, state and local government, and foundations. Cate received her BA in sociology from Smith College in Northampton, MA, and is in the process of completing her MPH in community health promotion from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. Email: cate.bosserman@state.mn.us

**JODI BRUNS** is a Community Vitality Area Extension Specialist with the NDSU Extension Service, and has worked for Extension for 15 years in various capacities. She currently works with rural communities and their various boards and committees, assisting them with strategic planning and implementation as well as marketing. She serves as Co-PI on the USDA Rural Development Stronger Economies Together (SET) grant program. Jodi earned her

Master's degree in educational leadership from North Dakota State University. Email: Jodi.Bruns@ndsu.edu

**CHERYL BURKHART-KRIESEL** is a community vitality specialist with Nebraska Extension. She first used the REM evaluation technique with a newly created rural new resident recruitment program, Marketing Hometown America, and appreciated the way it lifted up both the intended and unintended outcomes for the community. Burkhart-Kriesel received her PhD from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in community and human resources with a focus on qualitative research methods. Email: cburkhartkriesel1@unl.edu

**MATT CALVERT** is a state 4-H Youth Development specialist, member of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Evaluation and Leadership Support team, and chair of the North Central Extension and Research Activity Contribution of 4-H Participation to the Development of Social Capital, which refined the Ripple Effects Mapping process for use with youth audiences in community service and development settings. He received his PhD in Educational Policy Studies from UW-Madison. Email: matthew.calvert@ces.uwex.edu

**SCOTT CHAZDON** is an evaluation and research specialist with University of Minnesota Extension. He has been conducting REM evaluations for over five years, and has been instrumental in creating the "theming and rippling" variation of REM, as well as in conducting trainings and presentations on the method across the country. Chazdon received his PhD in sociology at the University of Denver, and his MA in sociocultural anthropology from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Email: schazdon@umn.edu

**SARA CROYMANS,** M.Ed., AFC, is an Extension Educator at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Sara was a Co-I on the overall Childcare and Youth Training & Technical Assistance Program (CYTTAP) evaluation project. She works within communities to help youth and families develop critical life skills in decision making and financial capability. Croymans received her Master's of Education from the University of Minnesota and Bachelor's of Science in Home Economic Education and Extension from South Dakota State University. She is an Accredited Financial Counselor. Email: croym001@umn.edu

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# REM Glossary

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY** A group facilitation and organizational development technique that encourages people to reflect on life-giving factors, in contrast to deficiency-based approaches that focus on what went wrong. Appreciative Inquiry is a core ingredient of the Ripple Effects Mapping method and is used at the beginning of the process as participants are paired to interview each other using Appreciative Inquiry questions.

**AUDIENCE** The individuals or groups who receive evaluation reports.

**CODING** A data analysis process in which the investigator applies thematic labels to the observed data. In the case of Ripple Effects Mapping, coding typically involves labeling each report effect with a thematic category pertaining to the theory of change of the program. In cases of community development programs, this is often the Community Capitals Framework, and reported effects would be labeled as human, social, cultural civic, natural, built, or financial effects.

**COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK (CCF)** A framework developed by rural sociologists Cornelia and Jan Flora (Flora & Flora, 2008) based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial and sustainable communities. They found that the communities most successful in supporting healthy, sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals as well as how investments in one capital can build assets in others.

**DATA** Information collected using different methods; can be numbers or words.

**DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION** "An approach to evaluation in innovative settings where goals are emergent and changing rather than predetermined and fixed" (Patton, 2008, p. 277); "developmental evaluation supports program and organizational development to guide adaption to emergent and dynamic realities from a complex systems perspective" (Patton, 2008, p. 278).

**EVALUATION** (see Program evaluation)

**FOCUS GROUP (INTERVIEW)** A form of data collection that consists of interviews in which small groups of people discuss their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes toward a program, product, or service.

**IN-DEPTH RIPPLING** One of the three approaches to REM, In-depth Rippling emerged as an evaluation strategy for a community leadership program in several states. After the initial Appreciative Inquiry exercise, the group focuses on the deepest and most impactful chains of events, using a large sheet of butcher paper to record the conversation.

**MIND MAPPING** A diagramming process that represents connections among ideas hierarchically (Eppler, 2006, p. 203). A fundamental concept behind mind mapping is radiant thinking (Buzan, 2003), which refers to the brain's associative thought processes that derive from a central point and forms links between integrated concepts (Bernstein et al., 2000). As argued by Tony Buzan (2006), the British psychologist who popularized mind mapping, "thoughts radiate outward like the branches of a tree, the veins of a leaf or the blood vessels of the body that emanate from the heart" (p. 22).

**MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE** A story-based evaluation method (Dart & Davies, 2003) that involves generating and analyzing personal stories of change and deciding which of these stories is the most significant—and why. Stories are collected from people most directly involved in a program, including participants as well as staff.

**OUTCOME HARVESTING** A retrospective method for identifying, formulating, verifying, and making sense of a broad range of outcomes that may be associated with a program (Wilson Grau & Britt, 2012). In Outcome Harvesting, the evaluator reviews documents such as reports or other secondary sources and conducts interviews in order to assemble a retrospective chain of effects leading from the intervention to the outcome.

**OUTCOME MAPPING** A methodology used for the full range of planning, monitoring, and evaluation of complex international development initiatives (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001). The core focus of Outcome Mapping is the insight that a single program is unlikely to be able to claim responsibility for the achievement of broader development impacts or changes in condition.

**PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION** Evaluation strategies that move beyond thinking of program stakeholders as recipients of evaluative information and integrate program stakeholders actively in the evaluation process. A participatory approach dramatically increases the potential for evaluation results to be useful for program stakeholders such as people in community-based organizations (Johnson et al., 2009; Patton 2012a).

**PRIMARY DATA** A set of numbers or words collected directly through first-hand experience or observation, including information collected from experiments, surveys, interviews, and other data collection methods.

**PRIMARY INTENDED USERS** "Those **specific** stakeholders selected to work with the evaluator throughout the evaluation" (Patton, 2008, p. 72; emphasis in original).

**PROGRAM EVALUATION** "A process of systematic inquiry to provide sound information about the characteristics, activities, or outcomes of a program or policy for a valued purpose" (King & Stevahn, 2013, p. 13); "systematic investigation of the value, importance, or significance of something or someone along defined dimensions (e.g., a program, project, or specific program or project component)" (Joint Committee, 2011, p. 287).

**QUALITATIVE DATA** Information collected primarily in narrative rather than numerical form (words rather than numbers).

**QUANTITATIVE DATA** Information collected primarily in numerical rather than narrative form (numbers rather than words).

**RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING** A participatory evaluation method that engages program and community stakeholders to retrospectively and visually map the chain of effects resulting from a program or complex collaboration. REM employs elements of Appreciative Inquiry, group reflection, mind mapping, and qualitative data analysis.

**STAKEHOLDER** An individual who has a vested interest in a program or its evaluation.

**THEMING AND RIPPLING** One of the three approaches to REM, Theming and Rippling captures the breadth of reporting impacts from all participants, generates impact themes, and examines ripples once themes are identified. Theming and Rippling typically uses mind mapping software to capture and organize data during the group session.

**TRANSACTIONAL CHANGE** As part of the Web Mapping approach to REM, participants are asked to think about change at three levels. Transactional change is the most basic, short-term level of change involving changes in specific behaviors of individuals—isolated transactions that may not lead to additional changes.

**TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE** As part of the Web Mapping approach to REM, participants are asked to think about change at three levels. Transformational change is the highest level, long-term change involving changes in policy, institutional practice, or everyday thinking and acting.

**TRANSITIONAL CHANGE** As part of the Web Mapping approach to REM, participants are asked to think about change at three levels. Transitional change is the intermediate level, medium-term change involving changes that affect other elements in the same process or program.

**WEB MAPPING** One of the three approaches to REM, Web Mapping examines short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts, and then maps them directly onto butcher paper with the seven community capitals listed radially around the edges of the mind map.

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**Top Ten Answers to the question**

# How is program evaluation like gardening?

10. You may find it takes a lot of tending to see fruits emerge.

9. As you sow, so shall you reap. . .

8. It's dirty, it's "MESI," and it's possible nothing will come of it.

7. Just when you find yourself knee deep in the mud, something beautiful can bloom.

6. Everyone is looking for the perfect tool, but you really just have to get in there and get your hands dirty.

5. Neither gardeners nor evaluators can make it rain.

4. It's surprising, sometimes dirty, and the most important things sometimes happen below ground.

3. Even with careful tending, sometimes you need to go through s**t to get fruitful results.

2. Both help ensure that evaluators are able to feed themselves.

1. Both can bring beauty, order, and nourishment to the world.

# A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping

The second volume in the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute Program Evaluation Series focuses on the emerging evaluation technique of Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). This participatory data collection method is designed to capture the impact of complex programs and collaborative processes. Well-suited for evaluating group-focused efforts, Ripple Effects Mapping involves aspects of Appreciative Inquiry, mind mapping, facilitated discussion, and qualitative data analysis. As the REM process unfolds, the intended and unintended impacts of participant efforts are visually displayed in a way that encourages discussion and engagement. Using these visuals, plus other graphics, pictures, and real-life examples of how Ripple Effects Mapping has been successfully used in multiple settings, this book provides a comprehensive overview of REM. Providing an in-depth examination of the origins, elements, and how-to of the REM process, the Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping is a step-by-step guide to successfully implementing this process with a group, collaboration, or community of choice.

**Scott Chazdon** is an evaluation and research specialist with University of Minnesota Extension. He has been conducting REM evaluations for over five years, and has been instrumental in creating the "theming and rippling" variation of REM. • **Mary Emery** is Department Head of Sociology and Rural Studies at South Dakota State University. She has been involved with evolution of Ripple Mapping over the past decade and in the application of Ripple Mapping. • **Debra Hansen** is an associate professor and county Extension Director with Washington State University, focusing on Community and Economic Development in rural Stevens County. Debra was one of the original architects of Ripple Effects Mapping. • **Lorie Higgins** is a Community Development Specialist and Rural Sociologist at University of Idaho. Lorie has worked with coaches and communities during all three phases and conducted Ripple Effects Mapping in Phase II and III. • **Rebecca Sero** is the Evaluation Specialist for Washington State University Extension, responsible for increasing the organization's capacity to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs and services. Rebecca helps conduct and train on "in-depth" Ripple Effects Mapping.

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