

Community Mapping Toolkit for Church Leaders

Introduction:

As a church leader, understanding and connecting with your local community is essential for effective ministry and mission. Community mapping is a valuable tool that enables you to gain insights into the demographics, needs, resources, and dynamics of the area you serve. This toolkit is designed to guide you through the process of community mapping, helping you to identify opportunities for gospel work within your neighbourhood.

Watch this video on Community Mapping: <https://vimeo.com/295264864>

What you need:

- Large piece of photographic paper (heavy duty so easier for people to step on/kneel on as they write on it etc)
- Different colour markers
- Laptop and projector
- Blu tack
- People (minimum of 4 no larger than 20)
- 2-3 hours
- Large space with tea, coffee, snacks

1. Getting Started:

- Determine the geographical boundaries of your community. Consider factors such as neighbourhoods, arterial roads, train lines, schools, businesses, and other relevant landmarks.
- Clarify your goals for community mapping. Are you seeking to identify areas of need, locate potential partners, better understand the demographics of your community... etc etc?

2. Gathering Data:

- Encourage people to prayerfully consider the local community prior to the mapping activity. What do they notice about where people gather, how they commute, when they are at home or out in public? Be curious. Spend some time prayer walking.
- Utilise census data, local government records, or online databases to gather information on population demographics, including age, ethnicity, income levels, household types, new housing etc.
- Identify existing resources within the community such as schools, community centres, healthcare facilities, businesses, social services, and other organizations.
- Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups to understand the strengths, needs and challenges faced by community members. This can include issues related to housing, education, employment, healthcare, and social services. Meet with local community leaders or Council.

3. Mapping Activity:

- Geography
- Existing Churches
- Third Places/Nodes
- Spiritual Strongholds
- Subcultures or Groupings
- Historically significant places or events

- Create an inventory of community assets and resources, categorising them based on their relevance to your ministry objectives. This could include both tangible assets (e.g., buildings, facilities) and intangible assets (e.g., community organisations, networks).

4. Engaging the Community:

- Reach out to local organisations, businesses, schools, and community leaders to explore opportunities for collaboration. Building partnerships can amplify your impact and leverage existing resources.
- Share your findings with the community and solicit feedback to validate your observations and priorities. Engaging community members in the planning process fosters ownership and connection.

5. Taking Action:

- Develop a strategic plan based on your community mapping findings, outlining specific objectives, actions, and timelines. Consider how your church can contribute to addressing identified needs and leveraging existing resources.
- Continuously monitor progress towards your objectives and evaluate the impact of your interventions. Adjust your strategies as needed based on feedback and changing community dynamics.

Community mapping is a dynamic process that empowers church leaders to better understand and engage with their local communities. By systematically gathering data, identifying assets and needs, and fostering collaboration, you can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of your ministry, ultimately making a positive difference in the lives of those you serve.