

COMMUNITY RESOURCE MAPPING

Conservation, Livelihoods and Governance Programme
Tools for participatory approaches

February 2013

Community (or village) resource mapping is a method of showing information regarding the occurrence, distribution, access to and use of resources; topography; human settlements; and activities.

What is it useful for?

- To explore together how different people understand their local environment, resources and land use. Cartographic precision is not important as this tool is **not** designed for demarcating boundaries or calculating areas under a particular land use.
- It can also help in examining the relationships between different factors (resources, topography, settlement etc) and in identifying problems and opportunities.
- In the context of climate change, this tool can be used to map and discuss hazard-prone features of the landscape (e.g. floodplains, infrastructure vulnerable to floods, drought-prone areas), including the comparative probability and impact of climate related hazards. (Note that the Risk Mapping tool is more appropriate if the focus of the exercise is on climate change risks and vulnerabilities).
- Identifying the location, access and use of key resources, including biodiversity and ecosystem services, in relation to different social groups in order to inform ecosystem services valuation and equitable benefit sharing mechanisms.
- Monitoring changes in resources and land use over a period of time.

Suggested steps

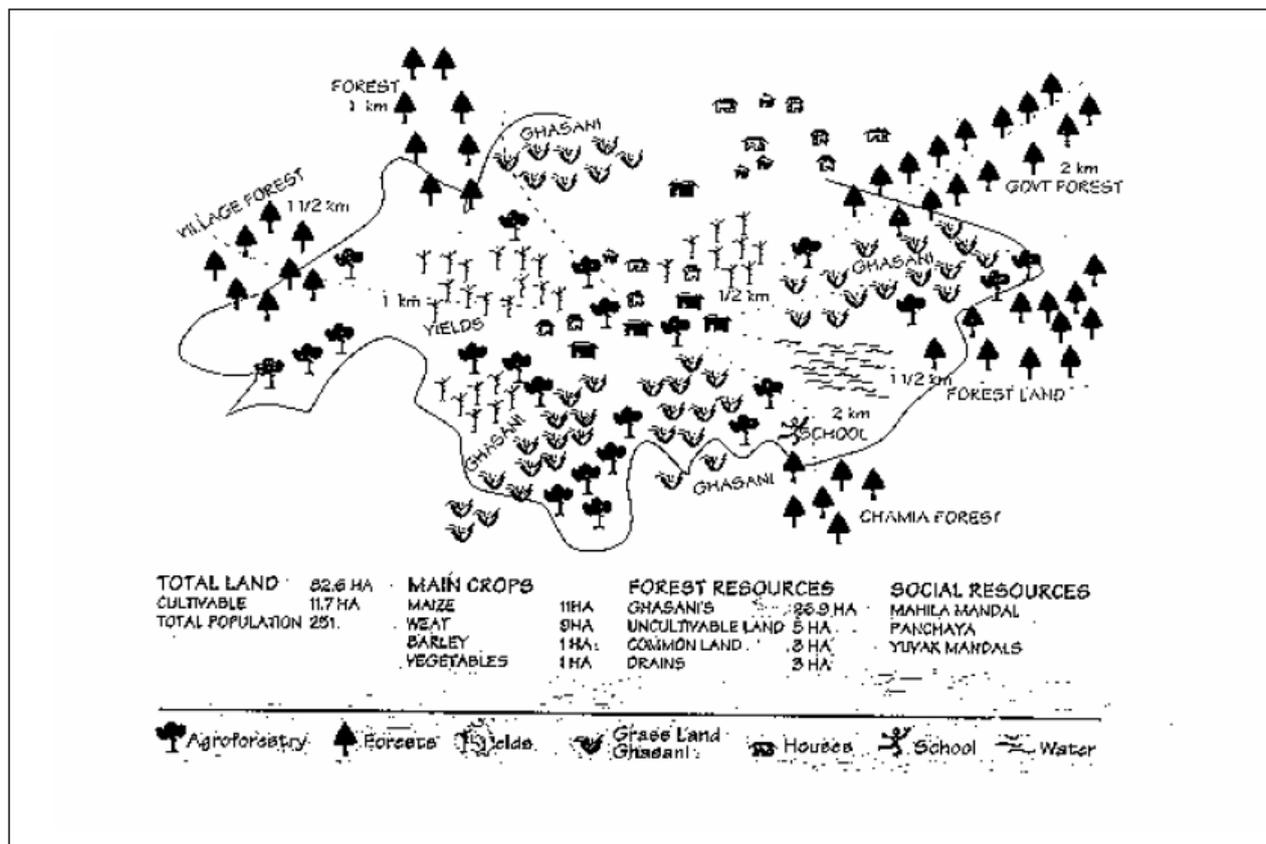
Allow approximately **3 hours** for this exercise.

- 1) Ask participants to select a suitable place and medium on which to draw the map, which could be on the ground using stones, seeds, sticks and coloured powder; on the floor using chalk; or directly onto a large sheet of paper, using pencils and pens.
- 2) Agree with participants exactly what area the map will cover, such as a village, a watershed, and so on.
- 3) Explain that the quality of the drawing is **not** important and it does not matter if the map is not entirely accurate or to scale. If any of the participants are illiterate it is important to use symbols and drawings, with a key to interpret the symbols used into the local language (and where necessary, the relevant language for other intended users of the information).
- 4) Ask participants to start by preparing the outline or boundary of the map and then identify the central point or an important landmark within the area (such as a mosque, school or market place)

- 5) Other important landmarks can now be drawn. Participants should develop the content of the map according to what they think is most important. The map does not need to show every individual house, shop, or field etc, but rather the area where they are located. Local landmarks and features might include:
 - infrastructure and services (e.g. roads, houses, bridges, schools, health clinics, bus stops, shops and markets)
 - special places (e.g. location of medicinal plants, places of worship, sacred sites, cemeteries).
 - water sites and sources
 - agricultural land (e.g. crop varieties and locations, grazing areas), soils, slopes, elevations
 - natural resources (e.g. areas of forest, rivers, or location of species of specific interest) and wildlife (including areas of predation or crop raiding)
 - areas of hazard / prone to risk (e.g. floodplains, infrastructure vulnerable to floods, drought-prone areas)

- 6) Although it might take some time to get going, the process should not be rushed. Once the map is underway, sit back and observe and only interrupt if absolutely necessary in order to clarify something or help participants if they get stuck.

Figure 1: Example of a community resource map from Pradesh, India (FAO, 2001)



- 7) If the map is being drawn on the ground, once the broad outline has been established local participants can start making a copy on to paper (indicating which direction is north). This process is important because extra information and corrections can often arise as a result. Also it is important that a copy or permanent record of the map is available if they want it.

- 8) If participants have sufficient time, it might be useful to draw a series of maps to illustrate changes over time, or to use map drawing as a 'visioning' exercise to explore different groups' desired futures.

- 9) Discuss and analyse the map(s). Ask participants to describe it and ask questions about anything that is unclear. If there are several different groups, each group should present and describe its map to the others for their reactions and comments. Are there major differences? If so, note these and whether a consensus is reached. Note that a consensus is not necessarily a desired outcome – differences in perceptions of land use can be very useful basis for further discussions

Questions to guide discussion and analysis

The following questions can be used to guide the discussion but should be adopted and adapted according to the focus of the exercise.

- What resources are abundant or scarce?
- What resources are used? Which unused?
- Which resources are degrading? Which improving?
- What (other) changes have there been in the last x (number of) years?
- Which resources are there most problems with? Why?
- Who makes decisions about land (water, or another specified resource) allocation?
- Does the village have land (or another resource) held in common? How are decisions made about how common resources are used?
- Where do people obtain water and firewood? Who collects water and firewood?
- Where do people take livestock to graze? Who is responsible for this?
- How does access to land (or another specified resource) vary between households or social groups? Has access changed and if so, when, why and how?
- Which areas are most vulnerable to risk (including climate change impacts)?

Once the map has been completed, it can be used as a basis for conducting semi-structured interviews on specific topics of interest (such as how land use patterns have changed and why) or for collecting more statistical data (such as how crop yields vary from one area to another) or more in-depth participatory mapping of resource use boundaries using GPS.

Points to remember:

- ❖ This tool is most suitable for a geographically limited area. For larger areas it may be appropriate to produce more than one map.
- ❖ Local participants should be encouraged to build as much of the diagram as possible without interruption and to suggest anything else that should be recorded.
- ❖ Before using this tool read the accompanying document, *A guide to using tools for participatory approaches*.

For further information

FAO (2001) *Field Level Handbook (Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme)*
http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/1_en.htm

World Bank (2005) *Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Sourcebook*
<http://go.worldbank.org/ZGZHJEDBZ0>

This tool is based on *Community resource mapping* in the World Bank (2005) *Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Sourcebook*



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