Learning Community Map — Location

⏰ **Time required:** 60 — 120 min
(more sessions ideally)

✂️ **Material required:** printed or hand-draw local, regional, global maps, tracing paper, stickers, markers, clippers or paper tape

🧩 **Facilitators:** 1 facilitator

👥 **Group size:** max. 8 ideally divided into 2 subgroups

<u>Learning Community Map — Location</u> will enable you to identify various stakeholders on the local, regional and global level, analyse their connections, unveil and identify potential or missing networks. It supports discussion and visualisation of the complex information through the layering of transparent maps. The layering of maps creates a space for continuous and long term work with one group or cumulative data gathering utilising "layers" from different stakeholders and groups. This haptic and playful activity helps participants to open and stimulate lateral thinking.

In combination with Scenario Cards, it helps to imagine and understand the vulnerability and dynamics of networks. It allows groups to discuss, prepare and plan for different potential scenarios.

There are many alterations to this activity. The activity can be done separately on each level (local, regional, global) without transparent layering. If you use maps more often, you can print them on cardboard and roll out new tracing paper with each group. You can then layer different groups maps (tracing papers).

Preparation

Print your maps or draw them. Be sure you have assigned space for the map legend. You can pre-draw and assign 1 — 2 colours or shapes to inspire the group.
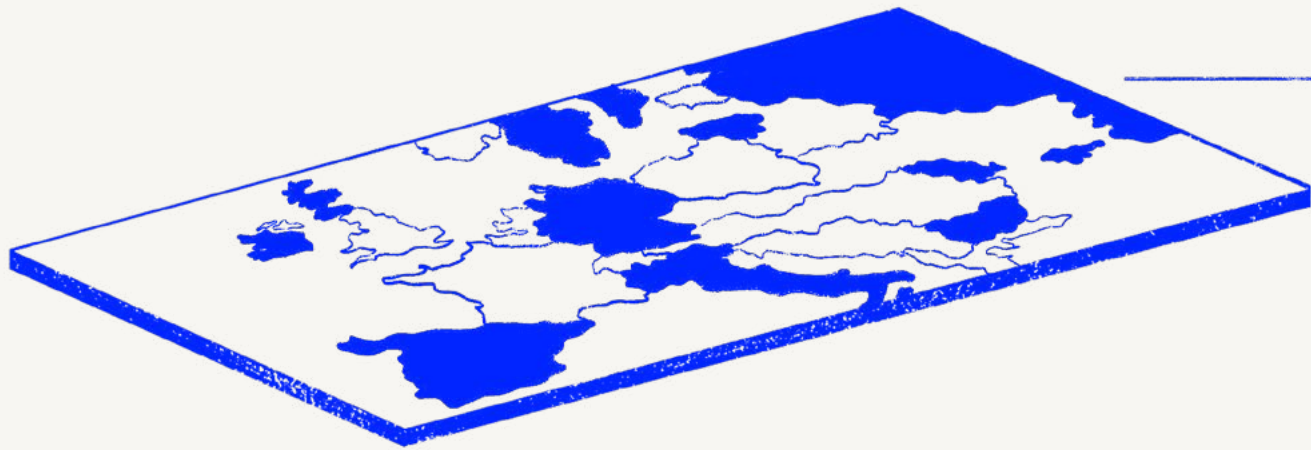
Preparation — Maps

- **LOCAL MAP**
highlights the space/area that is your main interest. You can underline nearest streets, points of interest, e.g. water, public transportation, main roads, hotels, schools, social services etc. Choose according to your specific context and the goal of the research and mapping. Do not put too many points of interest; let participants fill in the map. You can highlight the borders of the neighbourhood or the city.
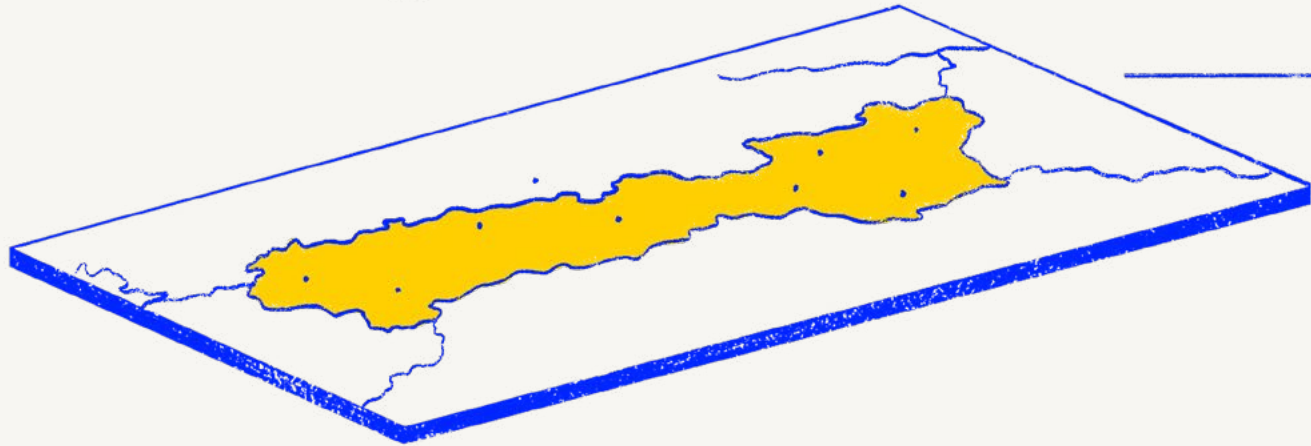
- **REGIONAL MAP**
should include major cities and smaller villages or even unexpected points of interest in the region like UNESCO sites, rivers and bridges, railways, specific cultural centres, etc.
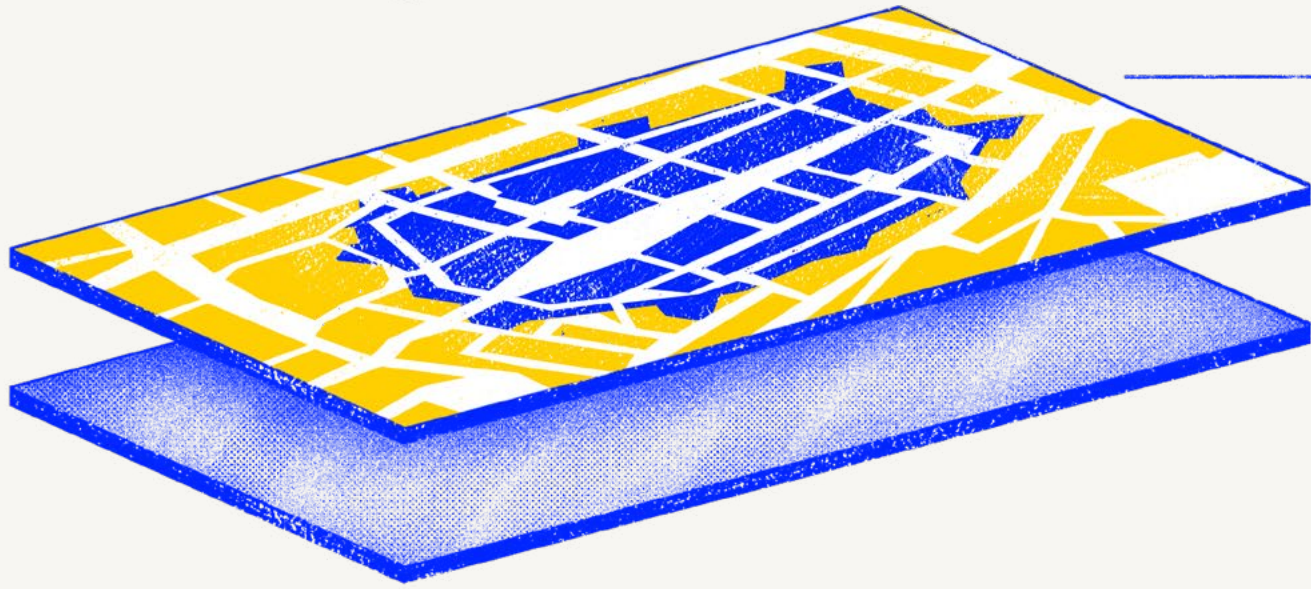
- **GLOBAL MAP**
and its concreteness depends on the scope of your project; you can include only neighbouring countries/districts, main cities, airports, or you can be more abstract and add only names of partnering organisations, major festivals, or even a space station (:)

GLOBAL MAP

REGIONAL MAP

LOCAL MAP

Preparation — Material

- Table (a wall is sufficient as well)

- Maps prepared by hand (either printed or drawn)

- Cut tracing paper as needed

- Choose max. 4 colours you will be working with. Be sure you have at least two markers from each colour (8 people max. working with one map)

- Prepare fitting colour stickers.

Execution

1. MEANING: Start with the opening question and let people discuss without mapping:

"What is the meaning of the space/service in the location? What significance it has within the location?"

Execution

2. STAKEHOLDERS: Listen to the conversation. According to the discussion outcomes, create an example of the point of interest on the map.

"From what you said, it seems like ….. is an important stakeholder. I will mark them on the map with the colour… Let's use this colour from now on to designate a similar category of stakeholders on the map. What are the other stakeholders you would mark on the map? Why?"

Ask participants to record their thoughts on the map and create a map legend as well.

From now on, leave the agency to participants. Distribute markers and stickers, and just coordinate their efforts, and help the group explain their decisions.

"With whom does the space/service cooperate?"

"Why are these stakeholders important? Who is not important for space/service?"

"Who is missing on the map? Why?"

"What do they have in common, and what is different?"

Execution

3. COMMUNITY: Help participants to see connections and levels of relationship with various stakeholders on the map. Ask them to indicate these connections on the map.

"What relations do space/service have with institutions, individuals, groups in the area, now?"

"What is the potential for cooperation? Why?"

"What can we learn from each other?"

Execution

4. PROCEDURES & MATERIALITY: Ask people to look at the map quietly for one minute and ask them to add anything missing.

Sum up what we can see on the map and close the mapping exercise. Open a discussion about implications on the space and the service, its procedures, spaces and objects, needs, financ-es, communications, personal capacities, etc.

"What meaning or value does our service/space bring to the stakeholder, and vice versa?"

"How are relationships anchored or reflected in the space/service organisation and processes?"

Execution

5. BONUS SCENARIOS: For deeper brainstorming and ideation, use Scenario Cards of your choice. You can create new cards according to your context.

"How does a relationship, cooperation change when (scenario)?"

"Who is missing on the map when (scenario)?"

Execution

6. CLOSING: Let participants briefly discuss in small groups or individually to select, most important implications, novelties, lessons learned from the activity.

Quickly share in the group or collect written notes from groups.

"What are the three things you find most important as an implication for our project?"

"What are the three things you find new to you? What have you learned about the service/ space?"

LAYER 2 and 3 - REGIONAL MAP and GLOBAL MAP
Execution

1. Add a new layer Regional Map over the local map. Be sure you fix it with clippers or paper tape.

Repeat all the steps described in the LOCAL MAP instructions.

Evaluation

After the activity.
Look at the result and identify weak points:

- Stakeholders mentioned, but you haven't covered discussion on their needs and relations.

- Identify stakeholders and relations you would like to highlight and discuss more on the other occasion.

- Reflect directly on potentially biased views and highlight them.

- Follow up individually if needed with certain user groups.

Tips and tricks

- From the beginning, it can be messy, or participants may be shy. Give it time and patience.

- This workshop can be divided into two or even three sessions if you want to go deeper. Or when you find out that you don't have enough data or knowledge about partners and possibilities in the area of your choice. You can continue the activity later and ask participants to prepare, research or ask different stakeholders to come for the meeting.

- There are many options on how to literally "play" with this tool. You can use cheaper materials or put your maps on the walls. You can avoid layering and printing as well. Be just sure that data are visible, and participants can see connections and overlapping relations and can work on the maps in the group.

- If you expect "shy" participants, print first maps on smaller papers (A4) and let them work alone or in pairs first. Then let them share and discuss in the big group on the master map.

Tips and tricks

• Use max. 4 colours and basic shapes for stickers. Otherwise, it can become too messy and complicated to coordinate within the group. Also, be focused and check if participants explain their intentions, drawings and signs. Be sure everyone is included and aligned.

• Facilitators should use the tool during the focus groups, but with lower expectations on data quality, it can be used during Open Space workshops or as unfacilitated activity/workshop for the broader public or team meetings.

References
Inspiration:

🔗 **GIS Layering**

🔗 **SPOLKA - Mapping the In-between**

🔗 **MIT - City Form Lab**