

Social Map



This is a bird's eye view of a village that shows the demographic details and the social infrastructure available for the people including houses, roads, schools, drinking water sources, etc. and their relation to the people. Discussion following the drawing of the social map helps people to understand who is accessing and who is controlling the available infrastructure, and if or why it is not accessible to poor and/or marginalized people of different ethnic, religious, class groups etc., or those excluded on the basis of gender, age, and disability.

Steps

1. Gather people in a common place where everyone in the village, irrespective of status, can come and participate.
2. Explain the purpose of the exercise and how it is useful for the village social analysis.
3. Ask participants to locate the magnetic pole directions (north, south, east, west) on the ground or on flip chart paper, depending on the situation. It is usually better to draw the social map on the ground using locally available materials (and then copy this onto paper).
4. Draw the boundaries of the village.
5. Draw the roads and any streams/rivers running through the village.
6. Ask participants to identify other prominent and communal infrastructure in the village such as schools, drinking water sources, hospitals, religious places, bridges, cyclone shelters, etc.
7. Indicate the location of all the houses, including relevant information such as the type of construction.

Questions for Analysis

Community members:

At first, discussion should be around the houses and number of adults (women and men), children (girls and boys) in each household. This will enable everyone to understand the demographic details by sex and age segregation.

- Total number of families (make sure that all families are included i.e. poor families on the periphery of the village, families of married children living with their parents etc.)
- Number of male, female, children
- Who are the vulnerable community members
- Who are the most vulnerable people in the community? (Probe: Does this include female headed households, older people living alone, people with disability etc.) Why are they vulnerable? Where do they live? (Highlight their houses on the social map.)

Social Infrastructure:

Discuss the social infrastructure like drinking water sources, schools, primary health centers, roads etc. in the village. Discussions should cover who is benefiting, who is not benefiting, if or why poor people are not benefiting, etc. The discussions should bring out issues of power in accessing the social/communal infrastructure and the power dynamics need to be understood from the perspective of women and poor people. That is, discussions need to bring out the group and gender dynamics in the village.

Drinking Water:

- Where do people get drinking water?
- How many ponds or wells? Are these clean enough to drink?
- Is there enough drinking water throughout the year? Are there any periods in the year when there is a shortage of drinking water? In these periods, where do people get drinking water?
- Does everyone have access to drinking water? If not, who and how many people don't have access to drinking water? Why?
- Are there other problems related to drinking water?

Education:

- Are there any schools in the village? (Primary/middle/secondary)
- What is the condition of the school buildings? Classrooms, equipment/teaching aids, toilets.
- Is the school suitable for all seasons?
- Are there enough classrooms (primary/middle/secondary)?

- If there isn't any school in the village, where can children go to school? How far is it?
- Can all the school age children go to school? How many children of primary education age (approximately 6-11 years old) are not going to school? How many are girls/boys? Why are they not enrolled/dropped out?
- Are there enough teachers? How many teachers are there? Are they government appointed or community teachers?
- Is there a nursery school in the village?
- How many high school graduates are there in the village?
- Are there any other issues/problems regarding education?

Primary Health Care:

- Is there a primary health center/clinic in the village?
- If not, how far is the nearest primary health center located from the village? Is it easily accessible to all people?
- Is there a community health worker in the village? A midwife? Other health providers?
- What do people usually do when they/their children get sick? Where and to whom do they go?
- Who are the households unable to access primary/health care services? Why?
- What are the common diseases people suffer? When? Why?
- Do people in the village use toilets?
- What are other problems related to health?

Transport:

- Can the road(s) and footpaths in the village – and the roads connecting to other villages – be used throughout the year?
- If not, when can they not be used and why not?
- What are the main means of transportation?
- Who faces the most problems in terms of transportation? Why?
- In terms of an emergency situation (urgent cases) can all people access transportation easily?
- What are other transportation issues in the village?

Disaster Preparedness

- Where are the most vulnerable places in the community?
- Who are the groups most vulnerable to disasters? (Older people, pregnant women, people with disability, children etc).
 - How are the members of these vulnerable groups affected by disasters?
- If there is a disaster is there a shelter or safe place for people to go?
 - Is it easily accessible for vulnerable people?
 - If there is no shelter or safe place, where do you plan to go? How will you go there?
- From whom, and where can people in the community get information about disaster alerts?
 - Can all people get access to the information? For example, people in the village, in the paddy field etc.
 - If they cannot get information directly, how can they be informed?

Community Members and Relationships between Them and with Neighboring Villages

Discuss the different ethnic, religious and/or other groups present in the village, the level of social cohesion within the village and if there are any conflicts among the groups - and how these are affecting the most vulnerable people.

- Who are the different ethnic and religious groups present in the village? Are there any other groups?
- Number of families in each ethnic and religious group?
- Are there any conflicts between these groups? If so, what are they?
- Who and how are people affected by the conflict in the village?
- Do all the villagers work together for social welfare/community development?
- Does the village have good/friendly relationships with their neighboring villages?
- What is other issue related to social cohesion in the village?

Suggestions for use

- The maps can be used as evidence of where power and resources lie in a community. If maps are collected over time, they can help communities understand how power and resource allocation has shifted. This requires the facilitator to rigorously document the process of generating the map, recording who helped to develop it, and ensuring that their informed consent has been given.
- The maps can be used to inform analysis of who has power, who can help influence these powerful actors to change [see other tools in the toolbox] and strategies for doing so, and thus form the basis of an advocacy strategy.