

SECTION 2/A



MAPPING OUR WORLD

This section provides resources to assist in information gathering, community research and group analysis with young people.

The techniques include many suggestions for cultural and art-based work, an approach we have found very useful.

Mapping Our World: An Overview



In CAP we have developed techniques for action-based research with young people in conflict areas. Many of these activities are based on cultural and visual expression, an approach that we have found very useful. Unlike adults, young people thrive on the opportunity to use many ways to describe their ideas, not just through speaking. A cultural approach affirms the value of a young person's world, something that is very important in conflict situations

To define this process we prefer the term 'mapping' rather than 'needs assessment'. This is because the intention is to consider all aspects of young people's lives, not just their weaknesses and needs. A dictionary meaning of mapping is to "define a given area according to its most important components". Our given area is the conflict situation in which children live. Using a mapping process we hope to identify ways to uphold their rights through programming that supports them but also draws on their skills, interests and abilities. It is thus a collaborative process amongst partners.

THE PROCESS:

The mapping process has three main steps. It begins with individual experiences, thoughts and impressions. This is followed by community level research. The combination of these two types of information form the basis for the group analysis and identification of needs.

In practise, the distinction between individual and community is quite artificial. In real life the two are intertwined. We also have seen that a better understanding of community dynamics increases a young person's self awareness and vice versa. For this reason, we often try to include an art activity for individual reflection just before the analysis session.

A final outcome is tied to two main objectives. The first is to identify ways to support young people's needs as they have identified them. But is also to define openings whereby they can contribute their strengths and talents to the promoting of peace in their communities.

THE TECHNIQUES:

The following pages outline the approach and techniques we have developed. Instead of providing a tight sequence of activities we have described a range of activities from which programmers can choose. All these methods have been used in CAP workshops at either the local or regional level. The methods are coded into three main groups: individual, group/community and games/exercises.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MAPPING PROCESS

This unit provides an orientation and overview to the “Mapping Our World” process. It includes:

- 1) Using art as a research
- 2) Workshop organization and community research
- 3) Analysis of information

THE TECHNIQUES



Individual Level

The activities for research at the individual level are coded by the antelope drawing. Each description is accompanied by notes on the type of information that can be acquired using that method.

Every activity should be combined with individual interviews. This ensures that there are no confusions or misinterpretations of the messages. It also helps young people to clarify their thoughts and feelings, both for others and for themselves. In our experience, young people really enjoy these one-to-one sessions. Occasionally we have done peer interviews but have found that this is more useful at the community analysis stage.



Group Analysis & Community Research

The activities for group analysis and community research are coded by the bird drawing. As with the individual research, it is important to select the method according to the type of information that is required. In some cases we have adapted some of the individual activities for group work and found this very effective.

Community research should be complemented by group presentations and discussions. These are built into the method descriptions. Again, we have found that young people are eager to report and discuss their findings. This is particularly important in the interpretation of cultural symbols and modes of expression. For example, at a workshop in Rwanda the youth had a heated discussion on whether the church was a symbol of peace or war.



Games & Exercises

We have included several games and ‘warm-up’ activities. For us, these are not just “monkeying around” – though that is part of it. As every workshop facilitator knows, games help to promote group cohesion, relieve tensions and keep the group focussed and energetic.

We are quite proud of our games collection as they have been contributed by all the CAP partners and so reflect a truly international approach to having fun. Many of these games serve different purposes. They have been categorized accordingly.