Roots & Shoots, a program of the Jane Goodall Institute, is a global movement of youth who are empowered to use their voice and actions to make compassionate decisions, influencing, and leading change in their communities. Learn more at rootsandshoots.org

roots&shoots

ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY MAPPING 101

Use this Community Mapping tool along with your critical thinking skills to explore your community

In this activity, you will practice many types of research including observation, Internet, and print media searches, as well as interviews with family, friends, and community leaders who become collaborators with you on your efforts. Through this activity, you will:

✳ Learn about the geography and layout of your local area

✳ Determine areas of need for people, other animals, and the environment

✳ Identify resources that may support efforts to meet community needs

✳ Form a deeper commitment and resulting empathy towards the people, other animals, and environment that makes up your communtiy.

Time Requirement:
2 hours minimum, suggested multi-day/ week project

Materials:

✳ Colored Pencils, markers, or Crayons

✳ Regular pencil or pen

✳ Large sheets of white paper

✳ Glue or Tape

✳ Stickers

✳ Optional: Map (printed, purchased, or hand-drawn)

✳ Optional: Internet

✳ Optional: Google My Maps or Esri ArcGIS Online (see digital mapping tutorials)

✳ Optional: Building materials (blocks, Legos, boxes, etc.)

TIP: Looking to align community mapping with your classroom curriculum? Visit rootsandshoots.org/lessonplans to learn how

HOW TO START:
Listen to Dr. Jane explain the importance of Community Mapping
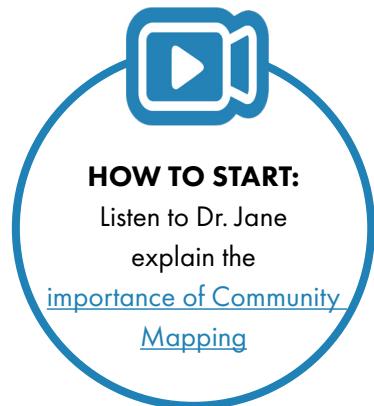
"**Community mapping helped us decide which areas that we could improve on in our community such as utilizing large yards in multiple neighborhoods to create bee sanctuaries.**"

-Seraphina W., Roots & Shoots Member

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1. Observing Your Community

Take note of what is on the way to school or work. Imagine you are looking at the community from a bird's eye view.

Why is it important to learn more about your community?

What are the roads around your location? Are there any major intersections? Sources of public transportation? Walking/bike paths?

Is your community inclusive and accessible? Are there sidewalks, curb ramps, and audible crossing signals? Are there signs in multiple languages if your community speaks many languages? Are there places or features in your community that are exclusionary or offensive?

Do you see wild or domestic animals? Where do they go during the day? get food? play? or when they are sick?

Where do you see plants or trees? How do they survive and how did they get there? What makes them important to your community?

Be introspective! What role do you play in your community? How do the daily actions you take impact the people, other animals, and environment around you?

TIP: There are many ways to record your observations –photography, artwork, journaling, video, presentations, the opportunities are endless!

Learn More:
RESOURCE
Read the virtual book
My Community & Me
Ages 3-6

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Explore your community virtually! If you can't get outside to explore, Google Street View can be a great way to bring the outside in.

1. Go to Google.com/maps and type in a starting address or location.

2. Click on the picture that appears beneath the address to enter Street View. You can also click on the yellow pegman in the lower right corner and drag and drop him onto the map. You will see a blue line appear wherever there is Street View imagery available.

3. Look at the area with your Observer's hat on:
   * What do you see?
   * Is it what you expected? If not, how does it look different through this lens?
   * Can you tell what season it is in the Street View image?
   * Are there people or animals in your Street View?
   * What nature do you see in your Street View?

4. Now take a look out a window or front door. How does this compare to what you saw in the Street View imagery? Look out a second window or door to continue the comparison.

2. Reflecting On Your Observations
Reflect on what you have observed in your community with these suggested questions.

How do you feel about your community? Do you feel your community has the resources to meet the needs of both humans and animals? Do you feel that local officials consider the environmental and social impact of major changes such as new roads, parks, and other developments?

What issue have you recently read or heard about that impacts your community? Does this issue primarily impact humans, animals, or the environment? Do you believe the issue will have a positive or negative impact on your community?

What are some defining characteristics of your community, is it rural, urban, or suburban? Is it mostly apartment homes, row houses, single-family homes, or other types of residences?

3. Creating Your Community Map

Decide how you want to make your map and gather your materials. All materials are suggestions, but not required.

DO YOU WANT TO DRAW YOUR OWN MAP?

Suggested Materials

* ✱ Markers, Crayons, Chalk, or Paint
* ✱ Stickers
* ✱ Print, purchase, or request a map of your location
* ✱ Alternatively, you can use paper and draw your map from memory
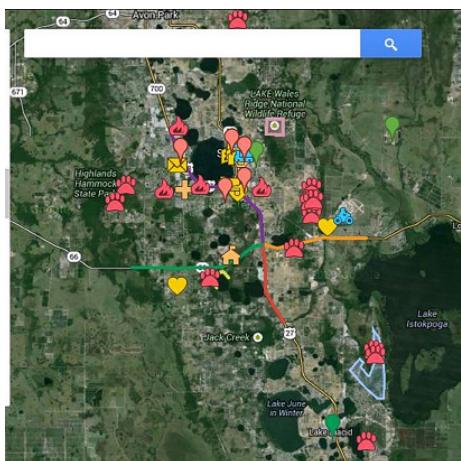
DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIGITAL MAP?

Suggested Materials

* ✱ WiFi
* ✱ Google My Maps
* ✱ Esri ArcGIS Online
* ✱ Roots & Shoots Digital Mapping Guide

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A 3D MODEL?

Suggested Materials

* ✱ Blocks
* ✱ Legos
* ✱ Putty or clay
* ✱ Plenty of space to build your community!

DO YOU WANT TO GO MATERIAL FREE?

Suggested Materials

* ✱ The outdoors
* ✱ Dirt or sand to draw in
* ✱ A stick to draw with
* ✱ Natural objects like leaves, rocks, and sticks to represent the features on your map

Next, look at the examples below to identify your community's unique features. The lists below are just examples, you don't have to map all of them, and you could map others depending on your community. For example, if you live in an urban area, the features you map will be very different from someone living in a rural area.

TIP: Distinguish the three categories on your map by assigning each a unique identifier (I.e. color, shape, stickers). For example, mark human features in blue, animal features in orange, and environmental features in green.

People

* Places for school/work
* Highlight major streets, bus routes, bike paths, or sidewalks
* Libraries/community centers
* Place of worship
* Grocery stores/corner stores
* Favorite Restaurants
* Hospitals or health clinics
* Shelters and food banks
* Abandoned Buildings
* Play Spaces

Animals

* Animal sightings/species
* Domestic animal use (dog parks, dog-friendly trails, etc.)
* Animal shelters
* Animal control facility
* Animal hospitals
* Animal sanctuaries
* Zoos and aquariums

Environment

* Wild and/or protected spaces
* Bodies of water
* Mountains, beaches, etc.
* Recycling centers, landfill/waste management
* Water facilities
* Local parks
* Green spaces (yards, tree boxes, etc.)
* Vacant Lots
* Power sources (coal, nuclear, wind, solar, and geothermal plants)
* Environmental services (watershed, reservoirs, wetlands, etc.)

4. Reflect On Your Community Map

Refer to your map as you reflect on the following suggested questions. You can use some of these questions or different reflection questions to think about your community and help you decide where there is an opportunity to take action.

Do any of the marked features above serve more than just one category? (For example, a recycling center benefits the environment but also provides a service to humans.)

What are some of the features above that support the people, other animals, and environmental habitat in your community?

What things do you like about your community? (Look for one quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for people, one quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for animals, and one quality about your community that makes it a great environmental habitat.)

What makes you most proud (happy) to live in your community?

Is your community meeting the basic needs of people and animals?

Is your community environmentally sustainable? (Can your community's environment meet the needs of the current population without negatively impacting the needs of future generations?)

What things could be improved for your community? (Look for one quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for people, one quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for animals, one quality your community could improve to make it a better environmental habitat.)

What other parts of your community should be included on the map? How are they important to the human, animal, or environmental habitats in your community?

Reflect on the observations made in Part 1. How did your initial observations influence your map? Are there things that surprised you about your community as you were mapping?

> **TIP:** Organize your reflections with the Community Mind Map activity.

5. Share Your Map

If you haven't already, sign up as a member on rootsandshoots.org**. Then, show us your map and tell us about the project you're planning by navigating to your member profile, clicking *Projects*, then *Add New Project*.**

> **TIP:** Upload photos of your community map and the process of making it to your member or group profile on rootsandshoots.org

Learn More:
RESOURCE
Community Mapping 101 is part of the Roots & Shoots 4-step Formula.
Next Up, use Step 3: Take Action to design a serice project