

Tell your story



Photo courtesy of Market Rasen Development Trust

Community Impact Mapping

by Karen Byrne



The Sunlight Development Trust

Community Impact Mapping

What is it?

Community Impact Mapping can help you start to think about your story, why and how your organisation does what it does. It is a simple way to visualise your journey and the difference you are making to your community.

Development trusts focus on positive social, environmental and economic change. It is therefore important to be able to understand what changes are achieved and how.

Community Impact Mapping is **not** a fully comprehensive approach to measuring impact. But it is a start, and it provides the basis to do more if you choose.

At its most basic level, *Community Impact Mapping* is similar to a story telling circle - you find the time to talk about what your organisation is doing and ask some leading questions. The answers to the questions help to make sense of what you have been doing and why it is important.

The information gathered during the conversation is transferred to a storyboard to illustrate what actions have been taken on the journey and what impact these actions have made.

Your storyboard could look something like this:

Starting out	Resources	Action	Nearly there?	Result!
Vision - what did you want to achieve for your community?	What did you use - Staff? Volunteers? Money?	Activities - what did you do with the resources?	What happened because of what you did?	What difference did your actions make to your community?

Three examples

1. *Hailsham Trust - Community Safety Centre*

Hailsham Trust in East Sussex is a community enterprise and development trust. Its mission is to secure and oversee the use of resources in the regeneration of Hailsham and district; responding to local needs with local solutions.

Starting out	Resources	Action	Nearly there?	Result!
<p>We want to achieve a better use of a community asset and to position the trust as a catalyst for positive change</p>	<p>Finance to refurbish building - £5,000 allocated to prime project</p> <p>Additional capital to refurbish and rebuild</p> <p>Steering group of six leading the project in early stage</p> <p>Time to work with partners</p>	<p>Transferred lease of building to trust, refurbished the building for operational use by fire service as a location for 24hr care call centre and as community space for the trust with shared use of some facilities</p>	<p>Increased joint working due to premises sharing</p> <p>Development of community safety courses by fire authority, care contractors and trust</p> <p>Larger Lifeline client base</p>	<p>High profile shared premises ensure trust now perceived as major community / statutory stakeholder delivery mechanism</p> <p>The dynamics of community enterprise beginning to be recognised within the town</p> <p>Pro-active joint working initiated and managed by the trust</p>
<div> <p>Hailsham Fire Station</p> </div>				

"Impact mapping should be a useful tool to measure the successful delivery of projects and to build community support"

Carolyn Lambert, Hailsham Trust

2. Account3 - Welfare Link Project

Account3 are a women's co-operative and development trust based in Bethnal Green in Tower Hamlets, East London. They offer a range of training, enterprise and development services for women in a friendly and supportive environment.

Starting out	Resources	Action	Nearly there?	Result!
<p>Need to support women who start training but are unable to continue</p> <p>Challenged by language barriers, child-care issues and lack of familiarity with welfare system</p>	<p>Home Office Race Equality unit finance for first three years</p> <p>Office / IT costs absorbed by main project</p> <p>One full time employee, two / three volunteers each day</p>	<p>Set up welfare advice drop in for trainees</p> <p>Also email and phone support</p>	<p>Providing immediate support for current trainees</p> <p>Greater percentage fully complete courses</p>	<p>Work opportunities for those completing courses has improved</p> <p>Greater understanding of benefit system / entitlements and who to speak to / what the process entails</p> <p>More women start training courses</p> <p>Info and understanding of benefit system throughout the wider community enhanced</p>
				

"This process is useful to re-affirm our vision - staff will find it valuable and informative"

Toni Meredith, Account3

3. *Market Rasen* - Developing 'Rasen Hub', our first asset

Market Rasen Development Trust in Lincolnshire works to improve the quality of life in Market Rasen and the surrounding area for all age groups, grow business opportunity, celebrate heritage, build community and promote local distinctiveness.

Starting out	Resources	Action	Nearly there?	Result!
<p>Better training facilities</p> <p>Reduce anti-social behaviour and violence amongst young people by enhanced local employment opportunities</p>	<p>Premises - purchase of building</p> <p>One paid member of staff, approx 20 unpaid active volunteers</p> <p>Time to network - quarterly partnership meetings</p> <p>Finance approx £237,000</p>	<p>Refurbish building</p> <p>Set up training facility</p> <p>Create two jobs</p> <p>Provide affordable incubator space</p>	<p>Tenants recruited for available work space</p> <p>Increased training opportunities</p> <p>Enhanced local skills base</p>	<p>The use of the building to create an income stream means the trust is becoming sustainable</p> <p>More local jobs</p> <p>Positive environmental impact because smaller travel / work zones reduces fuel consumption</p> <p>Improved social mix and demographics, people work locally</p> <p>Improved local economy because money is spent locally</p> <p>Enhanced aspirations amongst young people</p>
 <p>Rasen Hub</p>				

'Our Directors enjoyed this challenge as it helped them to say that MRDT 'does what it says on the tin'. In other words they can now much more readily tell the story of the trust and why it has had an impact'

Sylvia Jones, Company Secretary, Market Rasen Development Trust and volunteer Director

Why do it?

Why invest precious time and energy in *Community Impact Mapping*? There are five good reasons to involve your organisation with this process:

1. To *promote* your organisation - recognising, knowing and being able to '*tell your story*' is a powerful PR tool. Our oral traditions are the key here, making your story come to life, and the human angle makes it compelling. Your organisation's story is unique - everyone can learn from your journey!
2. As a *participative tool* to keep a project in focus - very useful as a workshop exercise for anyone involved with your organisation; such as board members, volunteers, employees as well as the wider community. It can help your team understand where they are heading - and why! It can ground people in the reality of their community and returns them time and time again to what is important and necessary to generate change and cultivate community prosperity. Bringing people together helps gain new insights, and contributes to their sense of ownership.
3. To persuade people to *invest* in your organisation - to consider the potential of a proposed project. Using a community impact map could assist you to get finance and also to demonstrate added value, why it is good to trade with your organisation and the spin offs that will benefit local people and their quality of life. It will help you to promote your abilities to those that make the decisions, to enable purchasers, funders or investors to make an informed choice - in your favour.
4. As an *evaluation* exercise - by telling your story steps are identified during the journey, automatically providing a framework within which your story can be monitored and eventually evaluated.
5. As a *planning exercise* - to challenge the assumptions underpinning a project, making clear to participants as well as to potential purchasers, funders or investors exactly what their contribution is likely to lead to - the added value that benefits the community and quality of life rather than just thinking about the immediate activity.

This visual way of telling your story really gets a group thinking about 'how and why' activities are important.



Hastings Trust

How to do it?

What you need - resources

Tell your story! worksheets (included and also available on line from www.dta.org.uk)

Pens
Flipchart
Sticky notes
Time
Creative thinking
Imagination

How to do it - the process

REMEMBER! *Stories have a beginning, a middle and an end, but not necessarily in that order. You don't have to start at the beginning, it's sometimes easier to start at the end - with what you achieved. Or the middle - with what activities took place.*

1. Clear enough time to have a conversation - this is very important. The basics can be done with a group of three or four in around two hours. More people will require more time.
2. Someone needs to be familiar with the process, to be prepared to facilitate, to ask the right questions and also to develop and expand the answers provided. The Development Trusts Association may be able to support you with facilitation - contact your regional development manager or the national team.
3. Have the conversation, ask the questions provided on *Tell your Story!* Worksheet 1.
4. Write down your answers on *Tell your Story!* Worksheet 2.
5. Think what you have learnt and write your answers on *Tell your Story!* Worksheet 3.
6. Add a note about any barriers or challenges you encountered along the way.

When this has been done - STOP! You are ready to *Tell your Story!*

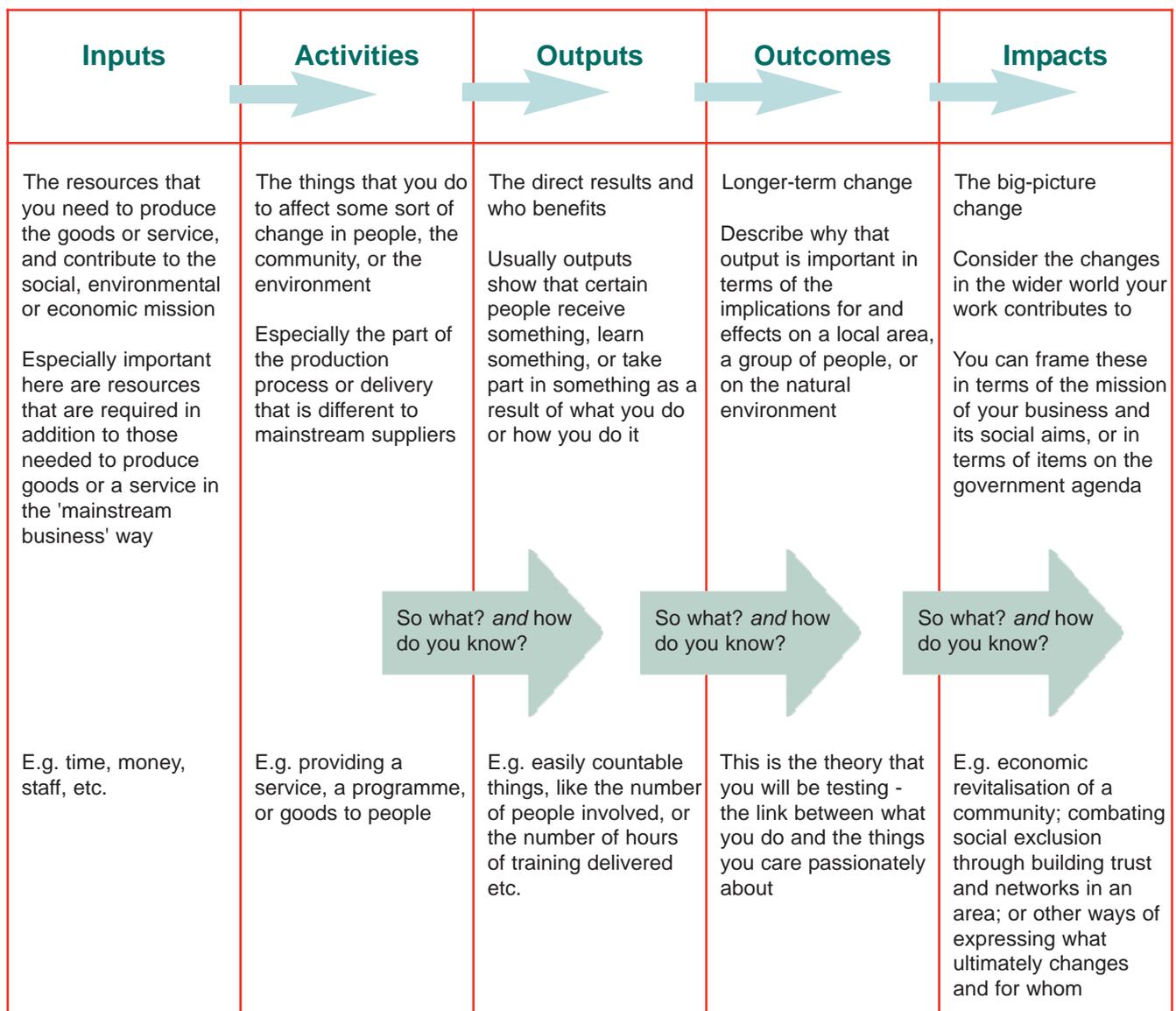


Broxtowe Partnership Trust

The next stage

You may want to go to the next stage and consider how this work can lead to defining inputs, activities and outcomes and how it can lead to more in depth research and analysis of the impact you are making.

Impact mapping is a concept that has been around for a long time. Most notably it draws upon the thinking behind the 'Theory of Change' model developed by the Aspen Institute. It can be drawn very simply:



At each point the arrow in between each column can prompt us to ask 'So what?' or 'How do you know?' This helps you to identify, understand and analyse why it is important that the resource, activity or result happened.

Once you have done this you might want to progress to more detailed ways of measuring impact - but that's another story! The New Economics Foundation (NEF) website is a good place to start - www.nef.org.uk

What can be learnt?

The process of asking the questions in the storyboard leads to thinking about effects of your project. This framework can be used to create the storyboard as already explained, but recognising and being able to *'tell the story'* can also help to uncover both the expected and unexpected consequences of your journey - the positive and negative. This exploration then helps with decision-making by raising questions like:

- Was this activity effective? Did it create the impact we wanted to have?
- Did the activity have any negative effects?
- Are there other things we could be doing that would have the same positive effects, and fewer negative effects?
- Are the things we do necessary to create change? Are they the only things that are needed to create change?
- Do we need to do other things alongside our current activities to have the intended impact?

Community Impact Mapping can be used with any group involved with your organisation to see how you are creating positive change and how your activities may also have unintended outcomes. These additional 'outside the box' outcomes may contain real value for your community, demonstrate that value and really promote the community benefit provided.

Good enough?

The simple *Community Impact Mapping* storyboard might be perfectly 'good enough' for what you need. On the other hand, you may find you need to understand your impact in more depth.

When the community impact map is used as an evaluative process, the arrows in between each column can help you question what has happened. The answers to that question can then help to develop indicators of impact - ways of asking questions, getting answers, and knowing that the change or outcome has actually happened, in other words a way of measuring that impact.

These are the ways in which an organisation can express its progress towards social, environmental, or economic impact - which can assist purchasers, funders and procurement agents to see how your added value can also help meet their goals and targets. For example, these may include the regeneration of a certain area, a reduction in social exclusion, or environmental sustainability.

This further *Community Impact Mapping* can be a more complex and time consuming process - Development Trusts Association staff and others are trained to provide additional support - contact your regional development manager or the national team for further information.

Thank you

In developing the DTA storyboard approach to *Community Impact Mapping* we are grateful for the assistance of the New Economics Foundation (NEF) who have led the quality and impact programme for the Social Enterprise Partnership (SEP) - a three year collaboration between some of the leading support agencies for social enterprise in the UK: the Development Trusts Association, Social Firms UK, Co-operatives UK, Social Enterprise London, the Social Enterprise Coalition and NEF.



We would also like to thank the development trusts that have contributed towards the production of this publication and 'road tested' the community impact map.



CAST Trust

Worksheet One

Questions for your conversation

1. Describe your community, what are you planning to do, what do you want to achieve, what is your vision?



2. What resources were needed to achieve this vision?



3. What did you do with the resources, the activities that took place?

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4. What happened immediately because of your activities, were there any additional activities added to the original project?

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5. What difference did your activities make to your community?

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Worksheet Two

Your Storyboard

Starting out	Resources	Action	Nearly there?	Result!

Worksheet Three

What have you learnt?

1. Was this activity effective? Did it create the impact we wanted to have?

2. Did the activity have any negative effects?

3. Are there other things we could be doing that would have the same positive effects, and fewer negative effects?

4. Are the things we do necessary to create change? Are they the only things that are needed to create change?

5. Do we need to do other things alongside our current activities to have the intended impact?

Development trusts are:

- community owned and led
- cultivating enterprise
- building assets
- securing community prosperity

The DTA:

- shares skills and experience
- attracts investment

Price: £5.00, free to DTA members

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