

## Community asset mapping

In this methods snapshot, community asset mapping is briefly defined, and our approach to using it within our communities is outlined. Also, key learnings from our experiences using community asset mapping are discussed.

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### What is it?

Community asset mapping is a strength-based activity that focuses on identifying, locating, and cataloguing the existing assets within a particular area.

In this activity, assets are defined as anything that can be drawn on to improve the quality of community life, including infrastructure, organisations, services, programs, activities, community leaders and networks.

Community asset mapping can provide a snapshot into the current state of resource accessibility and distribution in a particular place, at a particular time.

As part of the *Pathways in Place* program, we mapped the community assets relevant to the specific needs of:

- children aged 0-15 years in Logan, Queensland, and
- young people aged 15-24 years in Brimbank, Victoria.

Community asset mapping provided us with an abundance of information about the nature and distribution of resources that cater to our target groups in these areas.

## How was it used?

Our approach to asset mapping followed the three-stage approach outlined in Figure 1.<sup>[1]</sup>

The activities in each stage were planned out in detail before commencing the data collection.

Data collection was focused on assets that were considered to contribute to the flourishing of children and young people across different life stages.

Specifically, this included assets that:

- actively supported the positive development of children and their families in Logan, and
- fostered educational engagement, employability, and wellbeing of youth in Brimbank.

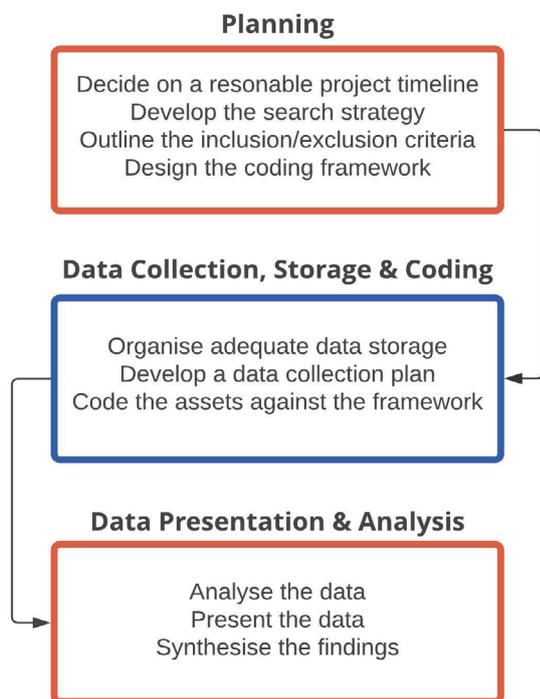


Figure 1 - Three-stage approach to asset mapping

## What did we learn?

Community asset mapping can be a resource and time-intensive activity.

We found that addressing several key questions about the context of the project prior to commencing can help to provide focus and clarity to the mapping activity:

- **Why?** Why perform community asset mapping? What is the purpose of the project? Will it be beneficial? Who will benefit from it?
- **What?** What are the boundaries of the project? What do you want to learn from the process? What kind of insights are you team hoping to find?
- **How?** How will the mapping be conducted? How will the data be stored? What resources will be required?

Starting out with clear inclusion and exclusion criteria will improve the efficiency of the mapping process. Knowing and clearly defining exactly what you are (and are not) looking for will make the data collection process much more straightforward, particularly when several people are working together to map a community's assets.

Community asset mapping can be an excellent tool for understanding the distribution of resources within a particular area. Yet, we found that the information gleaned about our communities was enriched when it was combined with the findings from other activities, such as an analysis of population characteristics.

We realised that our findings were unlikely to be exhaustive. Given the ever-changing landscape of service provision within our communities, it is impossible to capture up-to-date information on when programs or services begin, change or end.



## References

[1] Aicken C, Roberts H, Arai L. Mapping service activity: The example of childhood obesity schemes in England. *BMC Public Health*. 2010 Jun; 10(310):1-6.

## Suggested Citation

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## About Pathways in Place

**Pathways in Place: Co-Creating Community Capabilities** is an innovative program of research and action that supports flourishing of children and young people. This Program is jointly delivered by Victoria University (Victoria, Australia) and Griffith University (Queensland, Australia) with funding generously provided by the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

The Program teams are each leading one of two complementary streams:

1. Early learning and development pathways (children and youth 0-15 y.o.), led by Griffith University in Logan (Queensland, Australia).
2. Pathways through education to employment (youth 15-24 y.o.), led by Victoria University in Brimbank (Victoria, Australia).



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