

# Ripple Effects Mapping: A Participatory Evaluation



Debra Hansen, M.Ed. & Rebecca Sero, Ph.D.



# Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)

Participatory  
evaluation  
technique



To understand the  
*intended* and  
*unintended* results of  
a program on  
individuals, groups,  
communities, or  
regions.

# Overview

1. Benefits
2. Core Elements
3. Brief Demonstration
4. REM Process
5. Data Management & Coding

# Evaluator Benefits of REM

Effective way to collect *stories* & *impacts*.

Captures impacts of complex or evolving work

Useful when the total impact of program is difficult to **conceptualize & measure** with other evaluation methods

Opportunity for participant reflection

Group validation of results

Can be completed:

- **Mid-program** (formative)
- **Post-program** (summative)

# Participant Benefits of REM

Uses a participatory & appreciative approach that engages stakeholders

More positive & hopeful when group has seen what they have done

Able to see how their activities are connected to larger purpose

Provides opportunity for reflection & growth

Displays emerging patterns & trends

Fun, engaging, & visual!

# Program Examples

- Leadership Programs (WA, ID, MT, ND)
- Bridges out of Poverty Training (ID)
- Business Retention & Expansion (MN)
- Master Gardener Program (MN, WA)
- Turning the Tide on Poverty (SRDC)
- Sustainable Harvest International (Panama)
- Community Arts Collaborative (WA)
- Hunger Coalition (WA)
- Early Learning Coalitions (WA)
- 4-H (Multi-state grant)

# Demonstration



# Why does it work?

*Blending effective theory and practice*

1. Appreciative Inquiry
2. A Participatory Approach
3. Interactive Group Interviewing and Reflection
4. Radiant Thinking



# Appreciative Inquiry

## Positive questions

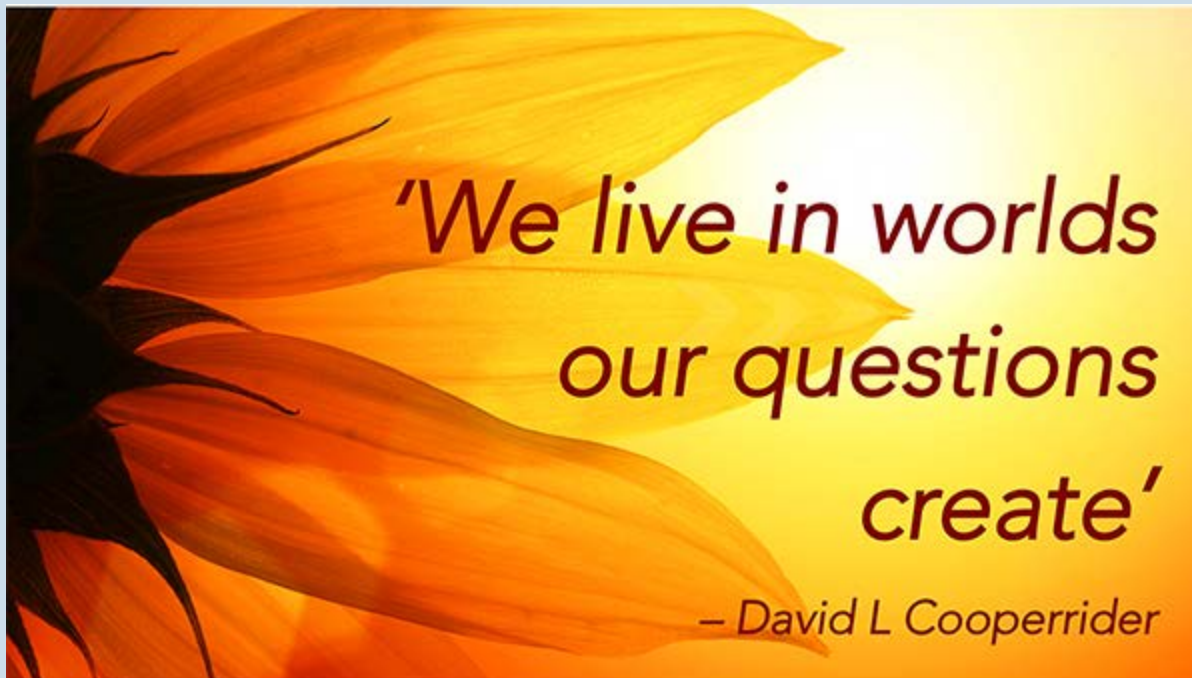


Image: [appreciatediscernment.blogspot.com](http://appreciatediscernment.blogspot.com)

# Using Appreciative Inquiry Questions

What has been the most helpful part of the program?

What changes are you most proud of?

Have you seen unexpected results?

Tell me a story about how you have used the information from the program?

Is there anything resulting from the program that you are proud to share?

List an achievement or a success you had based on what you learned.

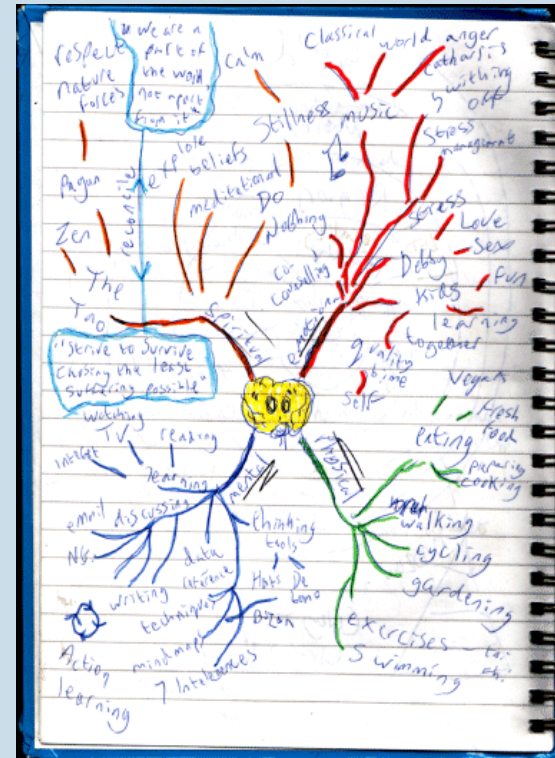
# Radiant Thinking: Mind Mapping

# Pictorial method

- Note taking
- Brainstorming
- Organizing
- Problem solving

# And now...

- **Evaluation**



# Process Steps

- Identify the program to be evaluated
- Schedule the event & invite participants
- Hold group REM session
- Conduct follow-up interviews
- Complete cleaning, coding, & analysis

# Identify the Program

What will be in the center of the map?



# Having a Successful REM Event

- Frame it as a celebration
  - Highlight the benefits to the participants
  - Serve food
- Participant options
  - Invite members of the core group, the peripherally involved, and outsiders (non-program participants)
- Approximately two hours to complete

# REM Event Steps

- Provide a brief overview to start
- Appreciative Inquiry Interviews
  - Each person should find a partner
  - Interview each other to gather stories
    - *Use questions relevant to your program*



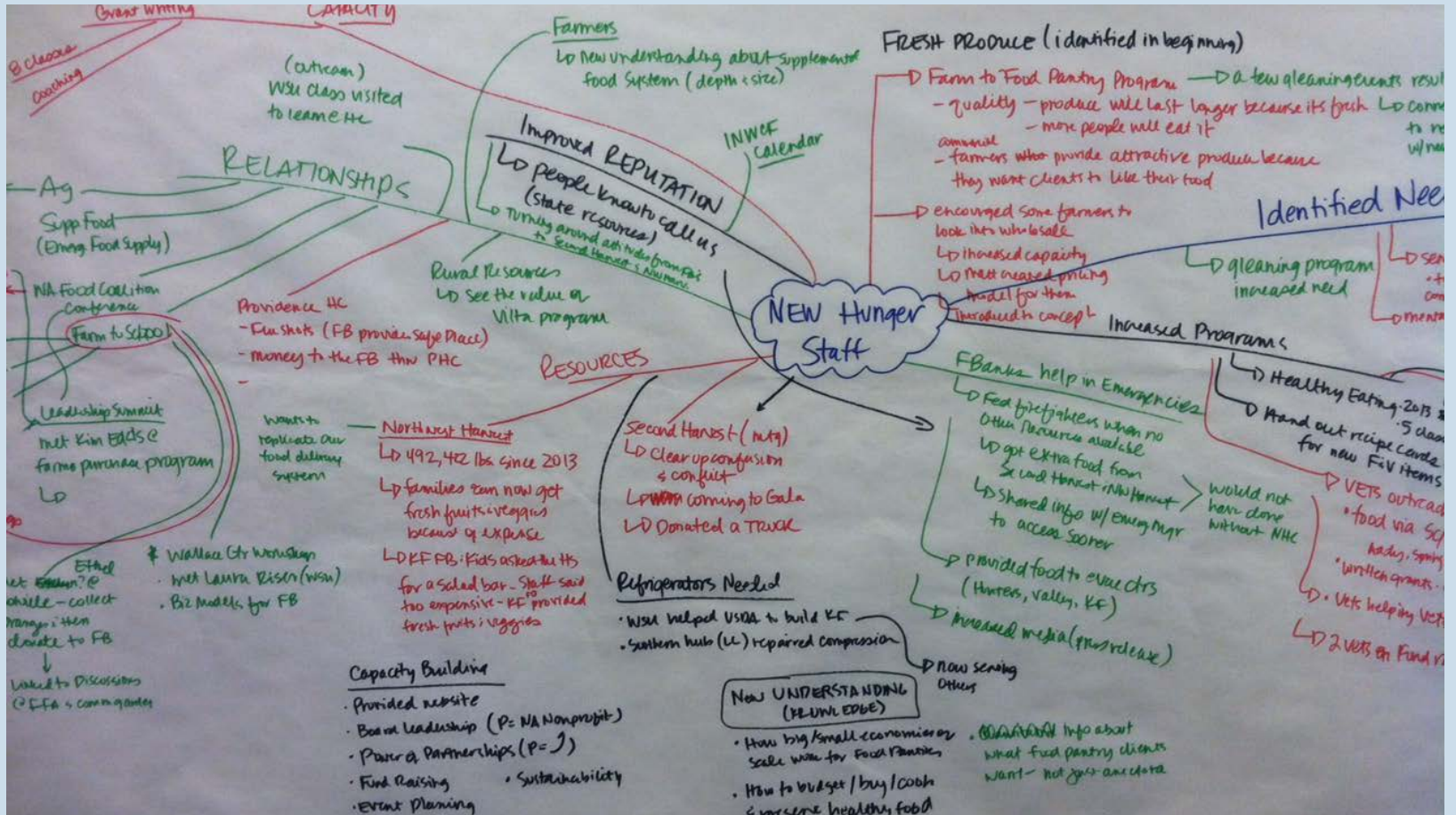
# REM Event Set Up



- Around one table or circle
- Round robin
  - Share one story per pair
- Watch the time
  - Every person/pair has opportunity to speak



# Wall Mapping Example



# Finding Useful Prompts

- Then what happened?
- Who was involved?
- How did it help you... your business... your family... etc.?

# Reflection and Closing

- Most significant change?
- Was anyone missing?
- What information is missing?

# Completing Follow-Up Interviews

- Contact the absent key stakeholders
- Gather details:
  - Grant amounts
  - Participation numbers
  - Any other data that was mentioned, but not at hand
- Do this ASAP!

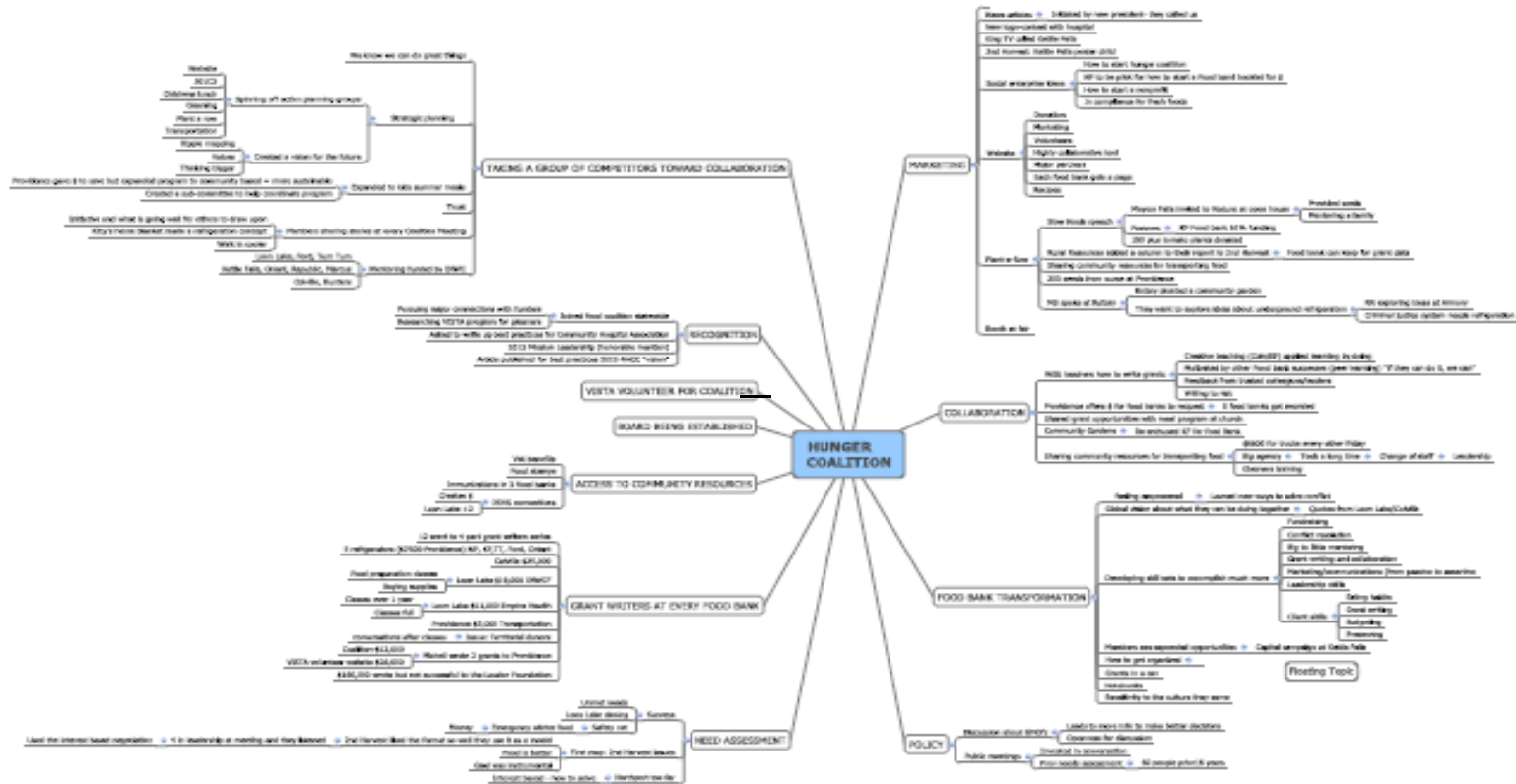


# Cleaning, Coding, & Analysis

## Data Management after the REM

- Use mind mapping software (Xmind)
  - Allows for re-organization to better identify pathways
- Download data to Excel for coding
- Code using relevant framework
- Follow-up interviews if more clarity is needed

# Xmind Map Example





# Export Map Data to Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	
1	<b>NCPR, Northport Building Relationships Changing perceptions of 'help'</b>					
2	Capitals	Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	P
3						
4	1. Community Center					
5	1.1 Several business people use community center for free advertising					
6	1.1.1 Generated business for computer technician because					
7	it provides a place to advertise - at least 3 or 4 referrals					
8	1.2 Ran completely by volunteers			M		
9	1.2.1 15 volunteers work steady, 3 on call				M	
10	1.3 Gives kids something positive to do				M	
11	1.3.1 Especially for kids who don't have anything else to do				M	
12	1.4 12 computer stations: Individual computer usages/provides wireless internet					
13	1.4.1 Dramatic increases between April to June					
14	1.4.2 223 total registered computer users					
15	1.4.3 Who uses?					
16	1.4.3.1 Resume writing					
17	1.4.3.2 Beginning computer classes					
18	1.4.3.3 Ebay business					

# Coding

- Primary Method:
  - Evaluator codes REM data
- Primary Intent
  - To organize and better understand results through the development of themes



A word cloud of terms related to community development and social impact. The words are arranged in a circular, overlapping pattern. The terms include: human, social, financial, ripple, skills, political, cultural, shared values, infrastructure, capital, relationships, trust, empowerment, natural, built, spiral, and community. The words are in various colors (red, blue, green, yellow) and fonts (serif, sans-serif).

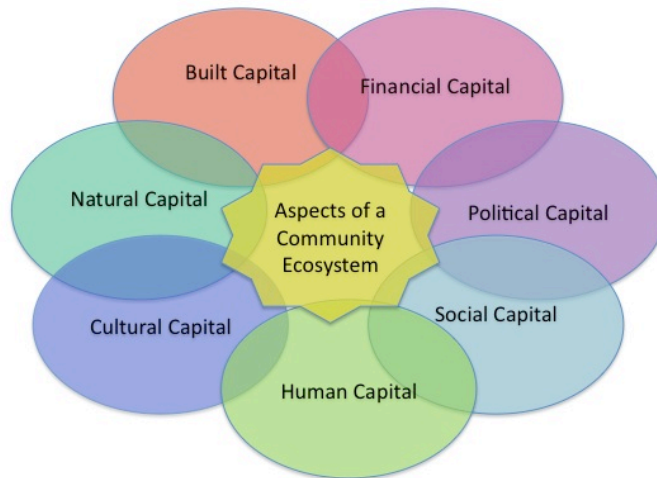


# Successful Coding Frameworks

## Community Capitals:

- Identifies the assets within a community

### Community Capitals Framework



Source: Community Capitals Framework & Sustainable Communities,  
Cornelia Butler Flora, Rural Studies Research Seminar, July 4, 2006, University of Guelph

## Triple Bottom Line

- Used by businesses, nonprofits, government entities, and regional initiatives
- People, Profit, and Planet

*And*

- Short-term, Mid-term, Long-term Outcomes

# Reporting Ripples



# Suggestions

- Three person teams work best
- Use same facilitator, recorder, and “mapper”
  - Facilitator should not be program staff
- Complete follow-up activities quickly

# Final Reflection

*The power of Ripple Effects Mapping rests within its flexibility; it can be used across multiple settings and with various types of participants to document the intended and unintended effects of program, project, community, coalition, and systems work.*

# Ripple Effects Mapping

## Team Contacts



**Debra Hansen**

[debra.hansen@wsu.edu](mailto:debra.hansen@wsu.edu)

(509) 684-2588

**Rebecca Sero**

[r.sero@wsu.edu](mailto:r.sero@wsu.edu)

(509) 358-7879

