



Understand Your Community

Community Mapping Guide

Includes Classroom & Group Activities



the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada

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Introduction to This Guide

Understand Your Community is a guide for educators participating in the **Roots & Shoots Program** through the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada. This program is active in over 130 countries worldwide. The four step curriculum-connected program encourages teachers to support their students in developing a community action project. This guide provides activities for the second step of this process.

www.janegoodall.ca/rootsandshoots



Roots & Shoots Educational Program

Learning Objectives

- Create maps of community
- Explore interconnections between people, animals and the environment
- Examine cause and effect relationships in the community
Interview community members
- Access Indigenous and historical knowledge of the community
- Identify issues of importance for an action project

JGI's Approach to Conservation: Community Mapping

The approach used by The Jane Goodall Institute to protect chimpanzees in Africa is called Community-Centred Conservation (CCC). The success of this type of conservation is based on valuing and understanding the needs of the people in the community and their relationships to the local environment - the habitat of chimpanzees. The first step to develop this understanding is to create a community map that values and incorporates Local and Indigenous Knowledge of the area. This type of knowledge is central to the success of JGI's conservation programming around the world.

What Is Community Mapping?

Community mapping is a vibrant way to tell the story of a neighbourhood, village or city. Mapping involves identifying relationships, needs, and resources and recording them in the form of a map. It highlights the rich complexity between how people, animals and the environment interact and what issues might arise as a result of those interactions. And it takes into account many different ways of 'knowing' about a place - the stories and perspectives from different people.



Indigenous Knowledge

Integral to acquiring useful and accurate information about a community is the incorporation of **Indigenous Knowledge**.

“Indigenous Knowledge refers to the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings.”¹

-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The Jane Goodall Institute of Canada believes that Indigenous Knowledge is essential to the understanding of issues facing a community. It provides for a holistic and historical perspective unique to the community and is always an integral part of any community mapping endeavour that JGI undertakes around the world.

Online Resources

Use these resources when looking to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into the activities in this guide:

Aboriginal Affairs – First Nations Interactive Map

<http://fnpim-cippn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>

Department of Canadian Heritage – Four Directions Teachings

<http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com>

Protecting Our Sacred Water – Supporting Educators and Youth Program Facilitators in Bringing Aboriginal Ways of Knowing into Community Action Planning

<http://janegoodall.ca/get-involved/protecting-our-sacred-water/#guide>

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). *Local and Indigenous Knowledge* available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/> Accessed 21 April 2014.



Creating a Community Map

Follow these steps with young people to create a community map.

Step 1: Introduce the Activity

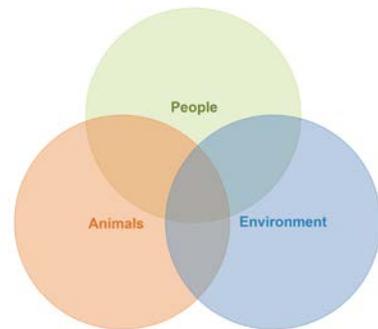
Explain to the students that they will be creating a community map to better understand the relationships between people, animals and the environment. The goal of the map will be to help determine an issue of local importance around which they can develop an action plan.

Opening Sharing Circle

Start by exploring what 'community' means to each member of the group using a **Sharing Circle**, which are used in some Aboriginal communities. Participants sit in a circle to show equal respect for all members of the group. Use the instructions on page 9 to facilitate your circle.

Discuss Interconnectivity

Introduce the concept of interconnectivity and interdependence. In every community people and animals interact with the local environment and have an impact on one another. In many Aboriginal communities we are understood to live in harmony, unity and equality with 'All of Our Relations', which means one is alive because of its connection to everything that makes up the whole.



People, Animals and the Environment Interact With and Impact One Another

Try This to Introduce the Concept of Interconnectedness

- Choose an issue of local importance, for example the removal of a wetland for residential development. Create cards with organisms (e.g. fish, birds, humans) and aspects of the natural environment (e.g. groundwater, air) that can be found in the local environment.
- Gather students in a circle. Give each student a card. Hand a ball of yarn to one student and ask him/her to say aloud their identity from the card.
- Then ask for others in the circle to raise their hand if they are in some way connected to the first student (e.g. they require them for food or shelter). The first student then tosses the ball of yarn to one of them, while being careful to hold the end of the yarn.
- The receiving student says aloud their identity and what their relationship is to the first student. Then the process repeats until a complex web of yarn is created.
- Finally introduce the issue of local importance. Ask the students to consider who in the web would be impacted (e.g. by wetland removal). All those impacted can either sit or let go of the yarn.

Discuss

- What does a 'web' teach us about relationships between members of a community?
- What did we learn about communities when our web was impacted by the local issue?
- Why is it important to understand interconnectedness and interdependence?



Step 2: Select your Community

Primary	Walk to school/playground
Junior	Neighbourhood
Intermediate/Senior	City/County

Decide upon a geographic area that will allow you to examine issues of relevance to current classroom studies. Depending on the age group of your students, your map can cover different geographic areas.

Step 3: Map your Community

Decide who will contribute to the map. Perhaps you want to work together as a group, in pairs or individually. Then determine which type of map you will start with and add to.

Will your map be...?

- Hand-drawn from observation
- Computer generated using mapping software or a game like Minecraft™
- Created over a printed street map
- A 3-dimensional diorama
- Imposed over a map from Google Maps™ or Google Earth™

Add Information to the Map

As you decide which items to add to your map, consider the big ideas in the following chart. Choose the concepts and ideas that are appropriate for the learning level of your students.

People	Animals	Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential areas and where you live • Where you go to school/play • Transportation routes (cars, buses, bikes, pedestrians) • Recreation areas/buildings (parks, playing fields, basketball courts, movie theaters, gyms, malls, restaurants, stores, museums, etc.) • Farming and agricultural lands • Community places/ buildings (parks, libraries, town halls, youth centres, police stations, hospitals, treatment plants, markets) • Cultural heritage sites • Other land use (e.g. gravel pits) • Aboriginal lands and territories, sacred sites, cultural monuments • Planned future construction (new residential and commercial sites) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there endangered/at risk species? Identify habitat and names on the map • Areas of domestic animal use (dog parks, etc.) • Mark wild animals seen in the area and name • Common animal crossings over roads or diversions under highways (e.g. deer and turtle crossings) • Areas of animal husbandry and farming • Areas servicing animals (vet clinics, shelters, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation areas such as forests, groves, woods, grassland, marshlands, etc. • Water bodies such as oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, etc. • Landforms such as mountain ranges, beaches, hills, etc. • Conservation areas and protected land • Carbon sinks (e.g. forested areas) • Land degradation (e.g. erosion, desertification) • Growing areas of traditional medicinal plants



Step 3: Map your Community (continued)

Where to Find Information for Your Map

- Ask an Elder
- Take a walkabout in the schoolyard, in the neighborhood
- Interview a city planner
- Examine municipal maps
- Look through directories of businesses, farms and municipal services
- Check municipal, parks, and conservation association websites
- Ask your local librarian
- Examine online satellite images
- Talk to neighbours and community members.

Step 4: Learn About Your Community

Understanding your community involves working within it to better comprehend the interactions between people, animals and the environment. These interactions will help identify areas where needs are not being met. Recognizing resources and areas of strength in the community will identify potential solutions or sources of support.

Students explore their community to identify:

1. Who are the members of the community? (people, animals and the environment)
2. What are the needs of members in the community?
3. Are the needs of all community members met?
4. What resources in the community can be better utilized to address needs?

Needs versus Wants

Needs: are things *required* to survive.

Wants: are things that are nice to have, but are not necessary.

Try This - With Younger Students

Use the **Community Scorecard** (page 10) to have them examine their neighborhoods for cause and effect relationships between people, animals and their environment.

Try This - With Older Students

Explore deeper clarifying questions about the members of the community. Use questions like those below to dig deeper into who the members of the community are. This helps them identify which members may be more vulnerable (have greater needs) or be more privileged or better positioned to provide support to others (have many resources/assets). Read more about good questions on **Interviewing Tips** (page 11).

For example:

What are the human demographics of this community?

(ages, socio-economic levels, ethnicity, languages, etc.)

Who uses the community other than residents and how do they use it?

(migration into community for work, transit through on highways, tourism)



Step 4: Learn About Your Community (continued)

Record Your Ideas

Create the chart below with students. Fill in what information you already know from the investigations you did to create your initial community maps (in Step 2). See the examples below for ways to fill in the chart.

Community	Who?	Needs?	Are Needs Met?	Resources?
People	<i>Local residents</i>	<i>Growing population – more housing</i>	<i>No – require more housing</i>	<i>Town Hall Discussions</i>
Animals	<i>Wetland species (frogs, insects)</i>	<i>Healthy habitat</i>	<i>Current habitat is healthy, but will lose to developers</i>	<i>Local wildlife advocacy group</i>
Environment	<i>Local wetland</i>	<i>Protection from pollution and disturbances</i>	<i>No – plans to develop wetland into homes</i>	<i>Local wetland conservation group</i>

The gaps in your chart will help you understand what information you still need to seek out. Plan to gather that information using this next tool.

What We Already Know	What We Need to Know	How to Get More Info

Students can explore their community using a variety of methods:

- A walk about with an Elder
- Interviews with community service groups
- Surveys with household members
- Storytelling with Elders
- Reading First Nation, Metis or Inuit stories
- Interviews with experts (e.g. conservationists, historians)
- Examining local newspapers

Access Indigenous Knowledge and Stories

Use the *Online Resources* on page 3 to access Indigenous stories and ways of knowing as you learn about your community.

Once the information from the community is collected, students revisit their map to make changes and additions to reflect the new information.



Step 5: Debrief the Activity

Once the mapping process is complete, issues of concern will have emerged presenting potential ideas for action. As well, students will have identified resources in the community where further support or solutions might be sought during the action planning process in Step 3 of the **Roots & Shoots Program**. Use a **Sharing Circle** in closing to debrief learning and determine next steps.



Closing Sharing Circle

Use the instructions on page 9 to conduct a closing sharing circle. Incorporate these debriefing questions:

- What did you learn about the relationships between people, animals and the environment in this community?
- Do you think there are members whose needs are not being met? If so, which ones?
- Do you think some members' needs are being met at the risk of the needs of others? What are these needs? Are they actually needs or are they wants?
- Which issues or concerns in our community did you find particularly interesting?
- What issue or concern do you feel is most important to address? Why?

Sharing Circle

Student Handout

The Sharing Circle is an important practice in some Aboriginal cultures. It provides a structure through which Elders, families, friends and community members can share with and learn from one another.

A Talking Stick is used in a Sharing Circle to help ensure everyone has the opportunity to contribute and be heard. Talking Sticks symbolize respect for the thoughts, stories and individual histories of each member of the circle. Create a Talking Stick for use in the circle by incorporating materials that are special and meaningful to you. To learn more about Talking Sticks see the link below.

For the purposes of this guide, you can use a Sharing Circle to open the topic of 'community' with young people. Ask each member of the circle to contribute their ideas, stories, comments and questions in response to the question: What does 'community' mean to you?

Then use the Sharing Circle again at the end of your community mapping activities to understand what was learned during the process and where the young people want to go from there. Use the questions on page 8 during your closing circle.

Instructions

- Organize the participants into a circle – whether that is standing, sitting on chairs or on the floor. Make sure everyone can see easily into the eyes of everyone else and have them adjust themselves until they can.
- Explain the importance of Sharing Circles to Aboriginal cultures (learn more about this at the link below). Explain that everyone in the circle is equal and interconnected.
- Reinforce the safety of the circle by explaining that what is said in the circle stays in the circle meaning members shouldn't discuss the sharing with people outside of the group.
- Show the Talking Stick and explain how it will be passed from person to person around the circle allowing everyone a chance to speak. If someone does not wish to share, they have the right to pass the Talking Stick to the next person.
- While someone is speaking everyone else in the circle is listening attentively by looking at the speaker, by being silent, by thinking about what is being said, and by caring about the person who is doing the talking.
- Close the circle by thanking the participants and explaining that the sharing has connected all those who participated. Mind, body, heart and spirit have been activated by the sharing and a sense of community reinforced.

The **Sharing Circle** handout was adapted with permission from: Raven Speaks (2012). *Classroom Support: How To Conduct a Sharing Circle (Elementary)* available at: <http://www.ravenspeaks.ca>. Accessed April 21 2014.

Learn More

To learn more about Sharing Circles and how to make a Talking Stick please visit:
<http://www.ravenspeaks.ca/education/resources/classroom-support/>



Community Scorecard

Student Handout

Let's take a look at your neighbourhood community!

Over the next couple of days, observe the interactions in your neighbourhood between people, animals and the environment. Take note of the cause-effect interactions that occur and whether or not they are helpful or hurtful. Record your findings in the chart below.

Then return your scorecard by the date indicated below so we can discuss your findings.

Please return by: _____

Name _____

Community Scorecard - People/Animals/Environment Interactions				
Cause	Effect	Hurts	Helps	Neither
E.g. Person plants tree in yard	Can create food and shelter for birds		X	

The **Community Scorecard** was adapted from: Council for Environmental Education (2002). *Community Wildlife Scorecard* in Project WILD Activity Guide.



Interviewing Tips

Student Handout

Interviewing community members, historians, Aboriginal Elders, reporters, and local experts is an invaluable way to learn about a community.

Use these tips when preparing for an interview:²

1. **Do your homework.** Have a basic knowledge of the subject before you interview them.
2. **Have a list of questions.** Be prepared with questions to ask, but also be able to ask unplanned questions based on the respondent's answers.
3. **Use open-ended questions.** Open-ended questions are useful for encouraging full, meaningful answers that get at the subject's knowledge, experiences and feelings. These types of questions often start with words like "How" or "Why" or phrases like "Tell me about..." Closed-ended questions that often encourage short or one-word responses should be avoided.

Example of an Open-Ended Question: Tell me about the history of this park? *Example of a Closed-Ended Question: Are you aware of the history of this park?*

4. **Listen.** A common mistake of interviewers is to be planning the next question while the respondent is still answering the previous question. You will miss important information if you are not listening fully.

Try This

Invite an Elder from a local First Nation, Métis or Inuit community to speak with your class. Elders are treated with immense respect in Aboriginal communities. They are repositories of cultural teachings and history, and they are looked to for guidance and wisdom.

Connect with your FNMI liaison in your school board or your local Friendship Centre for guidance.

Show Respect By:

- Making an offering, such as tobacco, as an invitation to visit with your class.
- Building in lots of time for their visit. When speaking in public gatherings, Elders are often given as much time as they need to speak.
- Listening attentively and respectfully. It is considered rude to interrupt an Elder.
- Being prepared with a gift or recognition that shows respect for the time and effort the Elder put in to visit with you.

Learn more about how to meet with and host Aboriginal Elders in the guide: ***Protecting Our Sacred Water*** at www.janegoodall.ca/get-involved/protecting-our-sacred-water/

² *Interviewing Tips* was adapted from www.mediacollege.com.



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