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What is the importance of cultural mapping

The word culture has as many meanings as there are different cultures. Culture is used here in connection with identity, which can be either personal or corporate. Cultural mapping is an action journey that is carried out specifically to identify, investigate or reclaim your strengths, whether they are corporate or personal. Once you have identified these strengths they can be used to create a variety of results, as evidenced by the stories in the case studies. In the past, Cultural Mapping has been used as a technology by certain professionals in the Community development sector as a means of mapping Community assets. How it was implemented was largely dependent on who did it and why, most often, it was used as a tool to identify resources in communities and was called community mapping. If one were to ask what is Cultural Mapping we would first have to say that it is about mapping the culture of who or what you are, whether it is a tribe, organization, community, group, school, association, business or an individual – to find your unique assets or strengths. Culture in this case can be defined as your intellectual property, your special way of being or doing, the purpose of your existence, the activity you are in (or want to be) or the special story that you must tell, such as your reason for doing what you are doing. It is a process that has a purpose, and through the use of a proven system Cultural mapping results can be utilized and targeted to create sustainable futures. Cultural mapping has been recognised by UNESCO as a crucial tool and technology for preserving the world's intangible and material cultural assets. It covers a wide range of technologies and activities from community-based collection and management of participating data to sophisticated mapping using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Culture and experience shape belief systems, education orientation, media, tourism, community development, planning, and creative industries, which in turn influence people's perceptions of places. It is important to understand the factors that influence perceptions of places, with particular attention to personal and community interpretations of culture. Cultural mapping is therefore used in both a literal and metaphorical sense, where it goes beyond strict cartography to include not only land, but also other cultural resources and information recorded by alternative technologies. Cultural mapping themes are broad and varied, varying resources include... Anthropological Sociological Genealogical Linguistic Linguistic Topographic Musicological Botanical What is Cultural Mapping? Mapping has been humanity's indispensable tool in illuminating natural and cultural landscapes and used for a myriad of purposes. the mobilisation of cultural mapping tools and instruments is a fundamental step in its objective of safeguarding cultural diversity. Cultural mapping means that a community identifies and documents local cultural resources. Through this research cultural elements are recorded - the material such as galleries, craft industries, distinctive landmarks, local events and industries, as well as the intangible ones such as memories, personal histories, attitudes and values. Having researched the elements that make a community unique, cultural mapping involves initiating a range of community activities or projects, to record, preserve and use these elements. ... the most fundamental goal of cultural mapping is to help communities recognise, celebrate and support cultural diversity for economic, social and regional development (Keynote speech, Clark, Sutherland & Young 1995. Cultural Mapping Symposium and Workshop, Australia). The collected data can be represented by a variety of formats such as geographic maps, graphs, diagrams, aerial photographs, satellite-produced images, statistical databases and others. Based on this, a comprehensive view of cultural resources can be stored and the documented data will serve as invaluable information for the development of national strategies that engage in accurate and sensitive analysis of people, places and environments. One of pachamama alliance's goals is to bring all the scale of modern and domestic worldviews in a way that generates empowerment rather than destruction. As a new intern here, I look forward to learning more about how indigenous peoples and outside individuals and organizations go hand in hand in these efforts. At the same time, it can be difficult to imagine what such an alliance might look like. I, for one, have been guilty of thinking modern forces always destroy old ways and wisdom. In 2011, my perspective changed when I had the opportunity to observe the indigenous Batwa in Uganda completing the second of two cultural maps of its former ancestral territories. Today, these territories are Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks. They also have a third unmapped ancestral territory in Uganda which is now the Echuya Forest Reserve. Using Modern Technology to preserve ancient cultures like so many indigenous peoples around the world, batwa ancestral territories were taken from them. The forests batwa inhabited for centuries as hunter-gatherers were turned into national parks by the British colonial government in the 1930s when immigrant communities living by the margins of forests began logging them to cultivate land. Although Batwa continued to have access to the forests, albeit with increasing difficulty, they were formally evicted from these territories in 1994. Now Batwa can be arrested for illegally crossing into the forests they once Not having lived in, or been able to access, the territories of their ancestors for nearly two decades, they lose their cultural traditions, memories and languages. Today, only older members of society have memories of living in the forests. Cultural mapping provided a way for Batwa to create a tangible history of knowledge and memories of his elders that would otherwise be lost in the space of a generation. And their mapping project opened my eyes to how modern technology can help support the survival of indigenous wisdom and traditions. Honoring the traditions of democracy to map the forests, Batwa used a process called P3DM (Participatory 3-Dimensional Mapping). While creating the maps, Batwa relied on its traditional egalitarian ways. They used democratic and participatory processes to collectively decide what and where things should be marked on the maps. The finished maps identified resources batwa used to hunt and collect, where resources and former hunting grounds were located, where important landmarks and sacred sites were located, and the various ecological zones within the territories. Because P3DM is a relatively simple process, and is designed to be participatory, communities could play a primary role in constructing the maps. In addition, not only the elders, but members of society of all ages could play a role in the construction of the maps. When they were done, because the maps are 3-dimensional, all participants could understand the maps, whether they had ever seen or used a map before. Potential results of cultural mapping While Batwa used cultural mapping as a way to record knowledge of the forests they no longer inhabit, other indigenous groups still living within their traditional territories can use cultural mapping as a tool to protect and/or assert their land rights, and protect their cultural autonomy. Cultural mapping has the potential to: Increase intercultural understanding. Help indigenous peoples claim land rights, and/or protect their territory from illegal resource extraction. Preserve domestic knowledge. Provide clarity, especially for non-indigenous peoples, regarding the under-recognized forces indigenous peoples possess. Catalyze the ability of indigenous peoples to identify appropriate strategies for addressing the challenges they face. Help external organisations get a more comprehensive picture of biodiversity found in current and former indigenous territories. Making Ancestral Wisdom Palpable Although Batwa can never return to his ancestral territories, the cultural mapping project was an important one and provide steps on their path toward recreating their lives. The mapping project enabled them to remember, and convey to others, their deep connection with the forests they once lived in, forging forging relations with the dominant society and its agencies. When Batwa completed the survey, they now have a tangible record of their memories that serve as a symbol of their past lives, as an educational tool for all, and as evidence of the efforts they are making to advocate their rights as equal citizens. More on cultural mapping To learn more about how indigenous peoples benefit from cultural mapping, check out these additional resources: On October 22-23, 2015, Malta's capital Valletta hosted the International Conference cultural mapping: Debating Spaces & Places. The valletta 2018 conference brought together a number of professionals, researchers and cultural practitioners from all over the world to present and discuss studies and projects related to the subject of cultural mapping. What is cultural mapping? What kind of practice, research, approach, methods, beliefs or fields of study do we refer to when talking about this subject? Commonly defined as an emerging and interdisciplinary field between research and practice, cultural mapping is becoming one of the most interesting areas to explore and analyze. Linked to cultural and urban planning, strongly linked to the notions of space, location and identity, cultural mapping appears as a collaborative and participatory tool with a core focus on community engagement and collective knowledge. As described by Nancy Duxbury, co-editor of the latest publication Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry: Cultural Mapping, broadly designed, promises new ways of describing, accounting for and addressing cultural resources communities and sites (...) cultural mapping is seen as a systematic tool to involve communities in the identification and registration of local cultural assets, meaning that this knowledge will then be used to inform collective strategies , planning processes, or other initiatives. These assets are both tangible, quantitative and intangible, or qualitative. Together, these assets help define communities (and help communities define themselves) in terms of cultural identity, vitality, sense of place, and quality of life. (Nancy Duxbury, W.F. Garrett-Petts, David MacLennan, Cultural Map as Cultural Inquiry. Routledge, 2015). Other essential elements – such as its intercultural nature, the role of new media, the fundamental alliances between research and practice, between university and society and the current changes in authorship and agency have been identified and highlighted in the publication of Duxbury, Garrett-Petts and MacLennan, in order to better understand and describe the different characteristics of the field. The interdisciplinary and interoperable nature of this practice closely linked to changing perceptions of authorship and agency, an increased in intercultural interaction, the advent of new media technologies, the trend towards community-university research alliances, the spatial turn in social and critical theory, (...) and renewed interest in rhetoric and practice of civic engagement. Cultural mapping triggers a sense of active participation, a renewed and central role for local actors, a diversified set of goals and interests that emphasise the value of the place – with its diverse meanings, its cultural character, its roots, stories and stories – rather than its mere economic potential. All these mechanisms and strategies represent a major change in urban planning practices and in the understanding of a territory, focusing on the different layers that delineate a place and involve their community. The two-day Valletta conference opened up the scope for further development of these topics and for sharing information on various projects developed in this area. As indicated by its organisers, the conference objectives included: bringing together the contributions of academics and cultural mapping practitioners worldwide, with a particular focus on European countries and Mediterranean regions; Comparing and contrasting existing typologies and the understanding of cultural map; To support the development of a better understanding of how cultural mapping exercises can be used as a tool for policy makers and cultural practitioners; promotion of cooperation between researchers and actors in cultural mapping; Promote the debate on the heritage of cultural mapping methods. Several presentations – divided into plenary sessions and parallel sessions – highlight current projects and reflections dealing with the main topic of the conference. The two keynote speakers, Pier Luigi Sacco and Adel Essaadani, presented their latest projects in the field and highlighted their context with the issue of local development. Pier Luigi Sacco, professor of cultural economics at the IULM University in Milan, referred to culture not as an isolated sector, but as an essential factor linked to all other aspects of society. In its presentation, Sacco introduced cultural mapping methods developed in concrete policy design experiences in the Veneto region, Italy, and the regions of Halland and Skaraborg, Sweden. Among the main points highlighted in his presentation, it is worth mentioning the central role of the participation process in the mapping phase; the importance of combining education and culture, the meaning of mapping for decision makers; and the necessary interaction between the different sectors of society through a holistic approach. Dr. Adel Essaadani, co-founder of the Racines association and an expert on cultural policy, mediated cultural mapping from the perspective of civil society, highlighting the role of culture as a tool for human, social and economic development. Essaadani presented the project artmap.ma, an online database that provides information about Moroccan centres for creativity, dissemination and education, as well as about artists and cultural practitioners working in several artistic disciplines. Among the other presentations, I would like to mention it as Lia Ghilardi, founder of Noema, UK, who spoke of cultural mapping as a tool to make cities resilient and sustainable. In her own words: Cultural mapping is about designing participatory mechanisms that can combine expertise with 'wisdom of crowd input'. Dr. Maria Attard, professor at the University of Malta, focused her presentation on the cultural mapping project Valletta 2018. The Malta Cultural Map – the interactive online database – aims to catalogue all spaces across the Maltese islands used for cultural purposes, ranging from established cultural sites (such as museums, theatres and cultural heritage sites) to public and open spaces. Dr. Attard explained in detail the methodology for research and fieldwork developed to create this tool: from data collection to processing and digitization, using open source GIS software. For greater availability, the data are made available in both English and Maltese. Furthermore, Dr Oleg Koefoed, Action-Philosopher and co-founder of Cultura21 Nordic and International, spoke about the concept of siteness (working from the site, on the spot) and missing in relation to sustainability. Koefoed raised several interesting questions, such as: How do we increase our sense of siteness through mapping and offending? Neil Peterson, consultant and founding member of the informal European Capital of Culture Network (ECoC), examined the cultural mapping method in relation to the ECoC model and the experiment, concentrating on the case of Liverpool in 2008. The subject of cultural mapping was also discussed and analysed through an artistic, experience and personal perspective. The RADICI project by Paola Ponti, exploration – through dance and the movement of her body – the life, traditions and geography of Gozo Island. The personal mapping of the relationship between the author and his father, given form in David Jackson's video This is not my house; or the experimental project Spatium Clausum, developed by artist Trevor Borg with collaboration by researcher and curator Katya Micallef – who engaged in a process of collaboration to create a visual and poetic map around the perimeter of the Mediterranean Center in Valletta– are some of the most evocative examples of this more creative and emotional side of cultural mapping. The various projects and ideas discussed during the two-day conference have shown how mapping methods are constantly growing as a research and much more practices, consensual broader civic engagement and dissection of the hidden identities of a territory. As cultural mapping expert, Professor Janet Pillai, said: Cultural mapping that engages society is becoming popularized by civil society groups, marginalised indigenous peoples, and residents of cultural heritage. In such cases, the mapping process is as important as production. Cultural mapping is seen as a procedural tool that can strengthen a Community identity and deepen their awareness of their cultural assets and resources. (Janet Pillai, Cultural Mapping. A guide to understanding Location, community and continuity, strategic information and research development centres. Petaling Jaya, 2013). Cultural mapping aims to promote a process that respects the cultural ecosystem, which promotes natural interrelations between people, places and the environment. Useful links: Herman Bashiron Mendolichio holds a European PhD in Art History, Theory and Criticism from the University of Barcelona. His current lines of inquiry involve the subjects of intercultural processes, globalisation and mobility in contemporary art and cultural policy, the interaction between artistic, educational, media and cultural practices in the Mediterranean and cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe. He has participated in several international conferences and developed projects and research residences in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. As an art critic and independent curator, he writes extensively for several international magazines. He is special correspondent for ASEF culture360. culture360.

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