



Transition Kerry

Biodiversity & Climate

Community Leadership Programme

Biodiversity is the foundation of all life on earth and its interconnections

***Community
Mapping &
Skills for
Activists***



Community Mapping & Skills for Activists

“Community mapping focuses on the positives in an area, not the problems or deficiencies in a community. It tries to seek solutions to problems arising. The process involves getting people talking about what already exists in terms of social assets (individuals, community groups and organisations) and physical assets (eg. community centres, open spaces, businesses) and what really matters to the community. This will help identify the community’s capacities and assets and plan for future provision” <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>

When developing your Community Map explore what connections do you need to consider:

- ✓ How can you connect with people already working toward your goal?
- ✓ Who can contribute the skills you do not have?
- ✓ What organizations have perspectives you could learn from on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Community Leadership, Transition farming, Whole systems, Food Sovereignty, Local resilience, Climate Justice?
- ✓ Make a list of the people and organizations (or kinds of people/orgs) you want to include in your plan.
- ✓ Write out the steps you will include in your plan to make these connections.
- ✓ Look at your Community Map in light of your responses and add people who could help you succeed with your work.
- ✓ If you don’t know people who could help you, think about the kinds of people who could help you – local and national politicians, statutory agencies, local environmental leaders and community organizations. Add them to your Community Map. Make a plan to find those people and connect with them. Remember: if you are at the activist level, you need to prioritize finding established organizations and leaders to work with and learn from.

“The Spirit of Meitheal”

Finding people who can offer guidance and support is the Number 1 way people succeed. Being isolated is the Number 1 reason people lose motivation and fail to reach their goals

Finding the right people to work with you is the best support system you can create for yourself.

Questions to reflect on:

- What is the right timeline and pace for your work?
- How much time can you dedicate to activism each week?
- Do you work in sprints or at a steady pace?
- What support and motivation do you need?
- What are the likely barriers to you succeeding?
- What strategies and tools can you use when barriers arise with your action plan?

As you reflect on those questions, consider how the answers may affect your goal and the steps in your Action plan and consider:

- Do you need to adjust your goals and timeline?
- Where can you find a support network through your Community Map?
- Are there organizations you plan to work with that fit your style better?



Skills Inventory For Activists

Everybody has skills to offer when working with environmental and social change. Sometimes it's a natural skill. Other times, people have developed skills through their lives and work. The key is understanding what your skills are and how to translate them into your context.

- I'm good at organising people, money and time:** The foundation of a successful project is keeping these things organized. That's why it is called community organising.
- I'm a good writer:** Writing social media posts, mass emails to the community, letters to local officials, - all essential tasks that need to be done well.
- I like to research and figure things out:** Knowing how to find things out makes all the other work more effective. For example: finding out the opinions of County Council members on a green initiative so your team knows who to approach for support or lobbying, researching grants and supports.
- I'm a good storyteller:** Communicating the importance of your initiatives to your local council or groups. Writing an engaging story in your local paper about how you decided to get involved.
- I'm good with social media:** Creating a buzz around a fundraiser or upcoming event. Posting videos about your initiatives
- I'm good with accountability, details, follow up, and follow through. A reliable support person.
- I'm good at teaching people how to do things.
- I'm good at speaking in front of people
- I'm good with money: raising it and/or managing it
- I know how to make things fun:** This is not frivolous -- many of the great movements in history were both powerful and fun. The two support each other
- I help people work through arguments and disputes:** Maybe you step into the middle of an argument to help keep it fair.
- I'm willing to have uncomfortable conversations:** I am good at holding boundaries, with love and respect. For example being direct with a community member when they are not living up to promises on the environment. Talking to a person who made a derisive comment to a team member.
- I can read a room, sensing what's not being said:** During a tense meeting, noticing the mood and raising your hand to name it so the group can have an open discussion about it. It is so valuable to the leaders of an organization to have someone who can read what is happening and help them figure it out. It is the foundation of learning to be a facilitator.
- I nurture people:** Climate solutions and social justice work can be intense and demanding. People can burn out. Seeing when people need support, knowing what they need, and offering it or helping them get it - these are vital to creating healthy, vibrant organizations that stay centered in their heart.
- I can make people feel welcome** and feel like they have a place in the world. The greeter makes all the difference and helps build the organization helping people find their place is the basis of grassroots organizing
- I'm good at hosting and creating great events and gatherings:** Events can and need to be fun, welcoming and exciting.
- I am comfortable engaging with multiple cultures:** Helping organizations from different communities in your area to communicate is a vital skill.
- I am connected to the sacred and the big picture** and can be counted on to bring that to the group. Being able to offer a grounding, opening sacred space, naming how a topic shows the interconnectedness of life -- are small ways that any member of an organization can bring this dimension into gatherings.

Adapted from <https://pachamama.org/>

