MAPPING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

FOREWORD

This short guide seeks to provide a succinct and user-friendly explanation of what 'mapping' is and how it can be used in the development of strategies to combat human rights violations and abuses. It also includes a training session for those who may wish to share this skill with others.

The authors recognise that much information about mapping exists on the Internet, ranging from the very technical to the simplistic. This document does not pretend to offer anything new but should be treated as a brief introduction to the subject that contains useful examples of how mapping can be used in the human rights context.

The guide has been prepared by **Muthee Thuku**, a human rights and environmental activist working in rural Kenya who was inspired by the many uses of mapping to share his knowledge with other fellow human rights activists. Cristina Sganga, an experienced human rights trainer, and Peter van der Horst, coordinator of the Special Programme on Africa, provided comments during the preparation of the document.

INTRODUCTION: MAPPING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mapping - the process of making maps - is a technique used in many disciplines as a way of helping to identify key elements involved in a situation and the connections between these elements. The field of mapping is a broad one and its uses are continuously developing: there are a number of categories, including cartographical and 'concept' mapping. Its use in human rights work is relatively recent. This guide focuses mainly on the mapping of violations[1] and abuses[2] of human rights, but it also

touches on how mapping can be used for positive social change. It suggests a number of different forms of mapping that can be used by human rights activists in their work.

Factors that can be mapped in relation to a human rights situation may include:

- Violence (e.g. all types of violence in a community including violence by state agents, criminal violence, domestic violence). Please note: not all violence amounts to a human rights violation or abuse and not all violations of human rights are defined as 'violence'.
- Human rights violations or abuses (e.g. excessive use of force by the police or militia, forced evictions, a ban on union meetings, pollution of drinking water by an oil company).
- Trends and patterns of human rights violations or abuses (e.g. an increase in the number of arrests of human rights defenders and journalists or an increase in the use of rape by an armed opposition group, as well as positive trends such as an increasing number of women reporting rape to the police in a situation in which police refused to accept such reports previously).
- The development and realisation of economic, social and cultural rights (e.g. a decrease in maternal mortality of women under 20, or an increase in the number of children completing their primary education).
- Power structures and the control of information and resources (e.g. the role of the army or local chiefs or elders).
- Opportunities for positive change (e.g. singling out men who oppose FGM, identifying women who dare to challenge denial of land rights to widows).

The aim of this guide is to equip human rights trainers, monitors, investigators and others defending human rights with basic mapping skills.

1. WHAT IS MAPPING?

As mentioned above, mapping is the process of making maps; this includes making cartographical maps but also concept mapping such as social or cultural mapping.

CARTOGRAPHICAL MAPPING

Cartographical maps are produced as a result of surveys of a region or part of the earth and are represented on a surface. They are guided by internationally or regionally agreed systems for surveying land. Maps generated from different types of surveys could include national atlases, base maps for regional and urban planning, topographical and engineering maps or hydrographical maps for sea and lakebeds. Owing to the specialised nature of the process used in producing these maps it remains a skill largely unknown to outsiders. Due to national security considerations, the process of cartographical mapping is tightly controlled by governments through laws and institutions.

CONCEPT MAPPING

Concept maps are schematic/graphic representations of concepts or ideas produced in such a way that the connections between different aspects of the central concept or idea are drawn out to facilitate analysis.

Importantly in the human rights context, concept mapping allows for active participation of communities or specific groups in the critical analysis of a situation. The fact that concept mapping is a participatory process it facilitates learning and understanding, encourages critical thinking and seeks to move communities towards collective action. When concept mapping is carried out in relation to social issues, the process is sometimes also referred to as 'social mapping' or 'social cartography'. In relation to cultural issues it is referred to as 'cultural mapping'. Human rights mapping, being a social issue, is classified as a form of social mapping.[3]

> **DEFINITION**
> **In the context of social mapping processes, mapping may be defined as a *participatory or collaborative technique through which a problem or topical issue is translated and depicted in a visual illustration to facilitate an in-depth and systematic analysis*.**

Unlike in cartographical mapping processes there are no internationally established standards or symbols in concept mapping. Elements of the mapping process are guided by the nature of the concept and the understandings of the local community or individuals involved. Concept maps can be produced with very few resources, for instance by drawing in the sand and using seeds, leaves and/or small fruits as symbols (see below).

However, it is important to note that with help from experienced mapmakers, concept maps can be translated into cartographical/topographical maps for the purpose of high level lobbying, especially in the case of issues of land tenure and ownership claims. For examples of these type of maps, please visit:

www.iapad.org/publications/ppgis/cultural_mapping.pdf /2f04f4d4-fcba283b39b5da634087fa53cultural_mapping_1.pdf or:

www.portal.unesco.org/culture/en/file/_download.php

As with other types of mapping, mapping in relation to social issues involves two major factors.

- **Local Community** – this refers to a group of people living together, sharing certain beliefs or culture and values, experiencing certain similar conditions and resources and sharing aspirations. (Obviously it is important to acknowledge that within a local community, different groups can have different interests, e.g. men and women, workers, paraplegics, ethnic minority groups etc).

- **Territory** – this refers to a community's sphere of interest and includes their land and all resources therein and the cultural attachments that exist.

A clear and concise overview of cultural/concept/social mapping[4] can be found on the website of UNESCO Bangkok: http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=2630. Under the heading of Cultural Mapping they give short descriptions and graphic examples of Social mapping, Cognitive mapping, Mind mapping and Concept mapping.

An example of Social Mapping can be found on the website of the FAO: www.fao.org/Participation/tools/socialmap.html. It shows a map of a village including the nutritional situation, and importantly, a list of key questions and how to facilitate the process.

Note: When carrying out the actual mapping in villages/neighbourhoods care should be taken not to map out any sensitive government installations especially military bases and other high security facilities related to national security. Governments are normally very sensitive about them.

2. FUNCTIONS OF MAPPING

Mapping as a technique can be an important tool for communities, human rights trainers, monitors and activists since it can unravel the dynamics of human rights violations and abuses and the web of factors that lead to and sustain those violations and abuses. For example mapping can enable communities to better understand prevalent local prejudices that make human beings subject others to violations and abuses of their human rights.

Once an overall picture of human rights violations and abuses has been produced through a mapping process, it may be advisable to focus further mapping on specific types of violations and abuses, for instance on violence against women, or on violations and abuses related to state authorities. This can make it easier to unravel the dynamics and root causes of violations and abuses and can form the basis on which to develop actions aimed at change.

By mapping violations and abuses of human rights, both the facilitator and the participating community can be made fully aware of what they are up against. Their strategies will thereby be based on a firm and realistic understanding of the situation.

The main objectives of a mapping exercise could include:

- To identify the various dynamics of a human rights situation and the key players involved;
- To develop a deeper understanding of the prevailing situation;
- To carry out a critical analysis of the human rights situation in order to enable communities, human rights trainers, monitors and activists to prioritise intervention measures;
- To involve the local community in addressing a human rights situation;
- To stimulate collective action against a human rights violation or abuse or to start working collectively for positive change;
- To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of changes that take place over time.

Advantages of mapping

- It allows for active participation of affected communities;
- It is flexible and can be used to analyse both an overall situation as well as specific types of human rights violations or abuses;
- The relationships between the various factors that have been mapped are easy to identify, and are hence easy to comprehend;
- Mapping can be customised to adapt to local realities and understandings. For instance, in the case of cultural mapping, participants are free to draw maps on the ground and use local items as symbols;
- Schematic mapping can be done in a classroom setting, which makes it a simple tool appropriate for teaching.

3. MAPPING HUMAN RIGHTS

The two key characteristics of social mapping are that it is **participatory** and **analytical**. The mapping of human rights violations and abuses aims to identify relevant factors, key players and their interrelations in order to identify steps that can be taken to improve a situation.

The analytical nature of mapping allows a community to be made aware of factors such as:

- What are the types of human rights violations or abuses prevalent in the community e.g. rape, torture, ethnic cleansing, domestic violence, etc.
- Who are the perpetrators of different types of human rights violations or abuses e.g. armed militia, police officers, civilian adult men, etc.
- Who or what is sustaining situations in which human rights violations or abuses are occurring e.g. parents, inept administrators, religious leaders, etc.
- Where are such violations or abuses occurring e.g. at home, detention centres, police cells, schools, religious establishments, etc.
- Who are the victims of different types of violations or abuses e.g. women, children, workers, etc.
- What are the causes of violations or abuses e.g. impunity, cultural beliefs, poor distribution of resource, political interests, gender inequality, etc.
- What are the possibilities for intervention e.g. men's education and women's empowerment, strengthening the justice system, advocacy and lobbying, awareness building, etc.
- What are the constraints to intervention and change e.g. financial problems, religious or cultural prejudices, lack of political will, etc.
- What are the opportunities available for intervention and change e.g. local resources, legal avenues, networking with other organisations, international lobbying, etc.
- What are the trends and patterns that emerge in relation to the human rights violations or abuses, either in a positive or negative way?

Such analytical thinking by a community helps in unmasking the nature of human rights violations and abuses and directs the community towards systematic action to remedy the situation. It allows them to hold those responsible for violations and abuses to account but it also helps them to identify opportunities for positive change.

4. MAPPING METHODS

There are several mapping methods that can be used in human rights work. This guide discusses four such methods. The first two are the most appropriate for mapping human rights violations and abuses while the latter two are suitable for promoting human rights in and for communities. See also the UNESCO and FAO websites mentioned at the end of Section 1 above.

4.1 DIAGRAMMATIC (SCHEMATIC) MAPS

These involve a diagrammatic (illustrated or pictorial) representation of a human rights situation in which the various aspects of a violation or abuse radiate around it. The key factors are then visually connected to the type of violation or abuse in the middle of the schematic diagram (Illustration I). Schematic mapping could be broad - dealing with several forms of violations (Illustration II) or specific - dealing with a specific form of violation or abuse (Illustration III).

This form of mapping is ideal for mapping human rights violations and abuses since it allows participants/a local community to view all the different aspects of the situation in a simplified form. It can also be done in a classroom/workshop setting without the necessity of field visits.

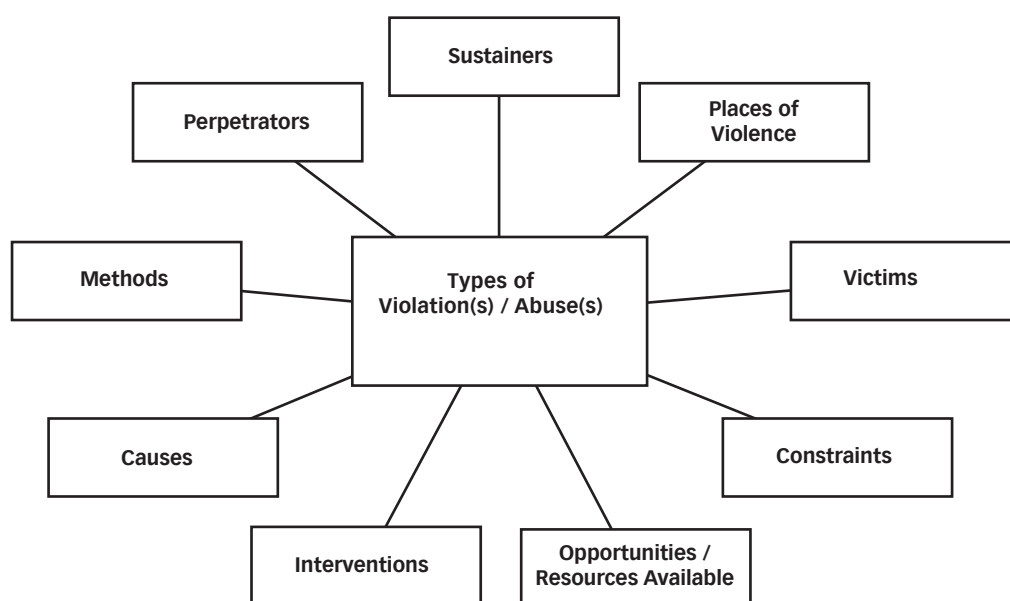ILLUSTRATION I: A MODEL OF DIAGRAMMATIC MAPPING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

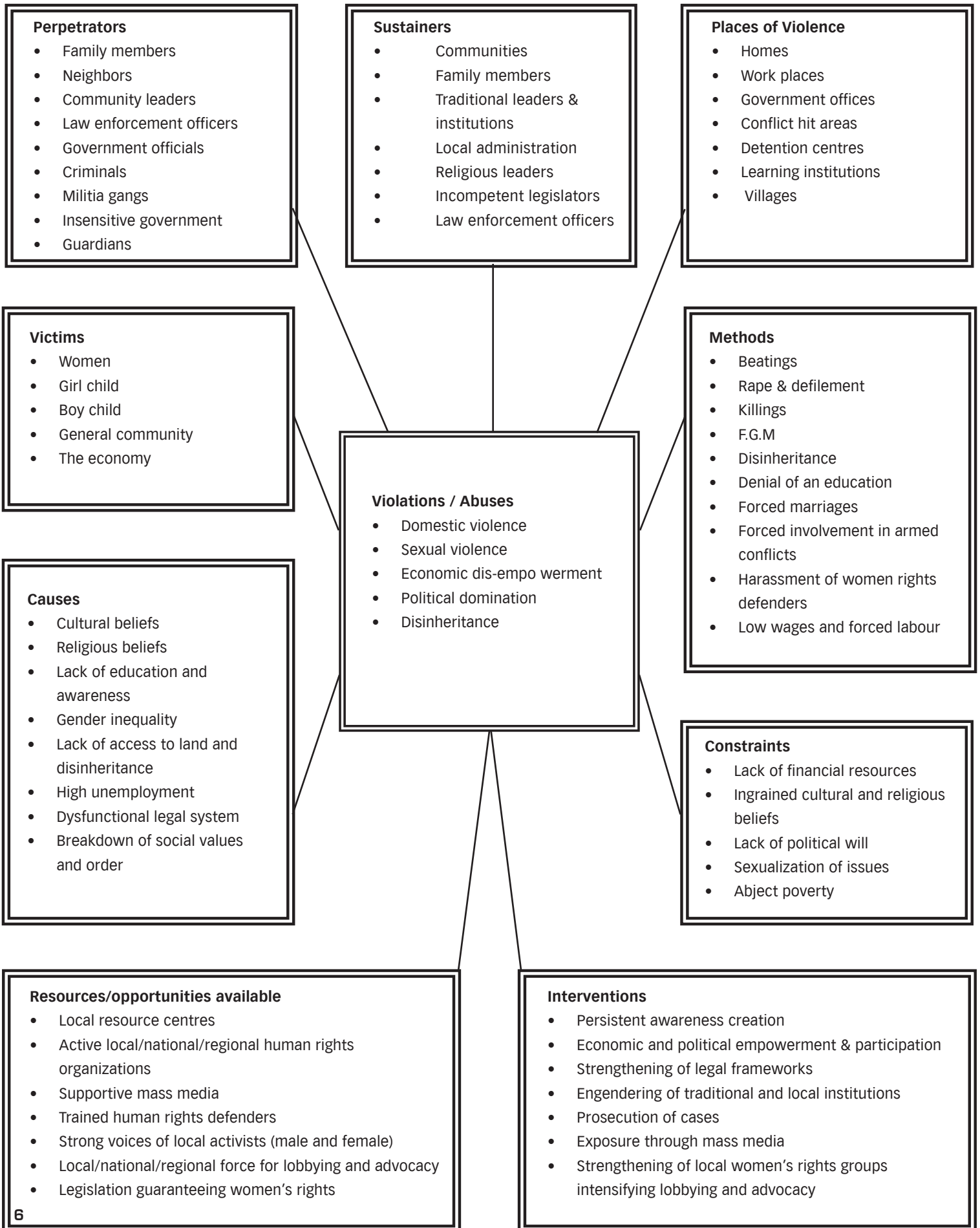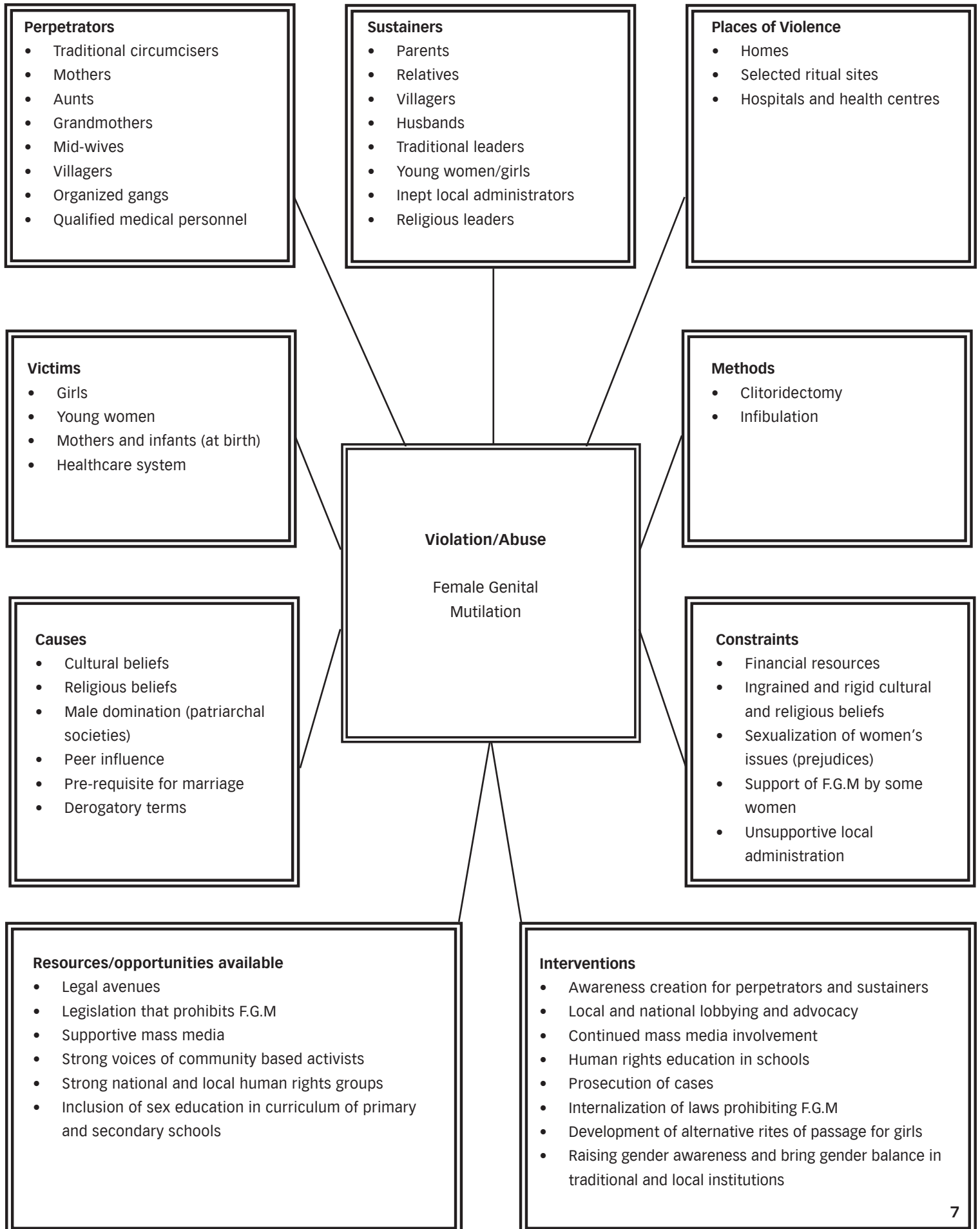# ILLUSTRATION II: A BROAD MAPPING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AFRICA

Perpetrators
- Family members
- Neighbors
- Community leaders
- Law enforcement officers
- Government officials
- Criminals
- Militia gangs
- Insensitive government
- Guardians

Sustainers
- Communities
- Family members
- Traditional leaders & institutions
- Local administration
- Religious leaders
- Incompetent legislators
- Law enforcement officers

Places of Violence
- Homes
- Work places
- Government offices
- Conflict hit areas
- Detention centres
- Learning institutions
- Villages

Victims
- Women
- Girl child
- Boy child
- General community
- The economy

Violations / Abuses
- Domestic violence
- Sexual violence
- Economic dis-empo werment
- Political domination
- Disinheritance

Methods
- Beatings
- Rape & defilement
- Killings
- F.G.M
- Disinheritance
- Denial of an education
- Forced marriages
- Forced involvement in armed conflicts
- Harassment of women rights defenders
- Low wages and forced labour

Causes
- Cultural beliefs
- Religious beliefs
- Lack of education and awareness
- Gender inequality
- Lack of access to land and disinheritance
- High unemployment
- Dysfunctional legal system
- Breakdown of social values and order

Constraints
- Lack of financial resources
- Ingrained cultural and religious beliefs
- Lack of political will
- Sexualization of issues
- Abject poverty

Resources/opportunities available
- Local resource centres
- Active local/national/regional human rights organizations
- Supportive mass media
- Trained human rights defenders
- Strong voices of local activists (male and female)
- Local/national/regional force for lobbying and advocacy
- Legislation guaranteeing women's rights

Interventions
- Persistent awareness creation
- Economic and political empowerment & participation
- Strengthening of legal frameworks
- Engendering of traditional and local institutions
- Prosecution of cases
- Exposure through mass media
- Strengthening of local women's rights groups intensifying lobbying and advocacy

ILLUSTRATION III: A DIAGRAMMATIC MAPPING OF F.G.M. IN KENYA

Perpetrators
- Traditional circumcisers
- Mothers
- Aunts
- Grandmothers
- Mid-wives
- Villagers
- Organized gangs
- Qualified medical personnel

Sustainers
- Parents
- Relatives
- Villagers
- Husbands
- Traditional leaders
- Young women/girls
- Inept local administrators
- Religious leaders

Places of Violence
- Homes
- Selected ritual sites
- Hospitals and health centres

Victims
- Girls
- Young women
- Mothers and infants (at birth)
- Healthcare system

Violation/Abuse

Female Genital Mutilation

Methods
- Clitoridectomy
- Infibulation

Causes
- Cultural beliefs
- Religious beliefs
- Male domination (patriarchal societies)
- Peer influence
- Pre-requisite for marriage
- Derogatory terms

Constraints
- Financial resources
- Ingrained and rigid cultural and religious beliefs
- Sexualization of women's issues (prejudices)
- Support of F.G.M by some women
- Unsupportive local administration

Resources/opportunities available
- Legal avenues
- Legislation that prohibits F.G.M
- Supportive mass media
- Strong voices of community based activists
- Strong national and local human rights groups
- Inclusion of sex education in curriculum of primary and secondary schools

Interventions
- Awareness creation for perpetrators and sustainers
- Local and national lobbying and advocacy
- Continued mass media involvement
- Human rights education in schools
- Prosecution of cases
- Internalization of laws prohibiting F.G.M
- Development of alternative rites of passage for girls
- Raising gender awareness and bring gender balance in traditional and local institutions

4.2 TACTICAL MAPPING

Tactical mapping is a form of schematic diagramming that visually depicts institutions and relationships that sustain human rights abuses or violations, and involves developing tactics to combat these.

This technique involves the development of a visual image of institutional and personal relationships in which a human rights abuse or violation exists. That image is then used as a tool to help analyse problems and opportunities for action and to develop effective strategies to combat the violation or abuse. In tactical mapping, a wide range of relationships and connections are tracked. They may include: victims, perpetrator, family, community, professions, associations, political or ethnic organizations, non-government agencies etc. The diagram helps to develop and unpack strategies for intervention. Each relationship in the diagram is seen as an opportunity to initiate an intervention. This method has been applied mostly in West Africa, for instance to understand the relationship between a torturer and a victim and in which context it is embedded. Tactical mapping is appropriate to both a classroom and a workshop situation.

EXAMPLE:
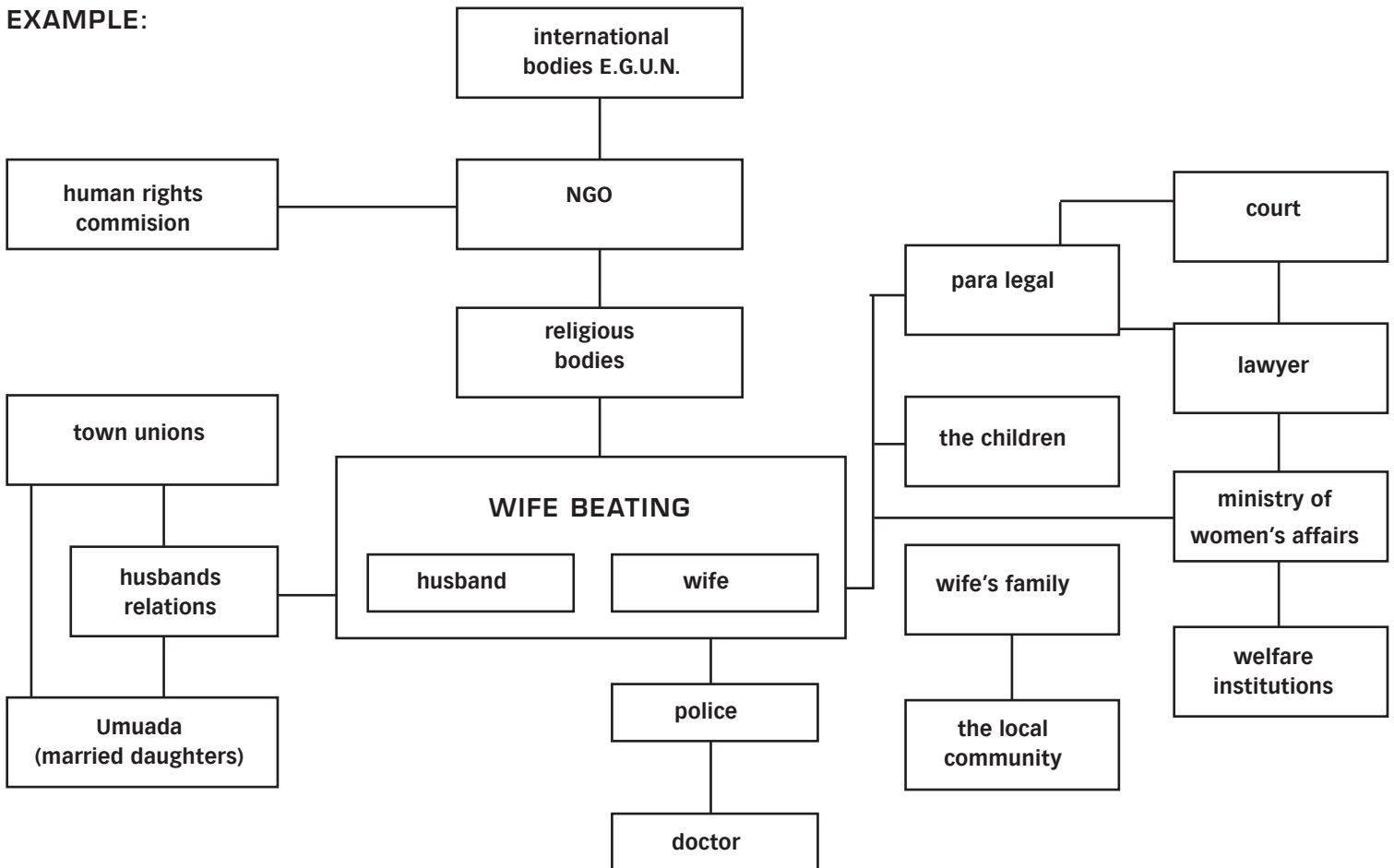
Acknowledgement

4.3 DEVELOPMENT MAPPING

This technique maps social developments in a locality. It works best for small geographical areas and requires resource persons from within the local community. Developments mapped could include education facilities, health facilities, recreation amenities, infrastructure, administration structures and resource processing factories.

Although development mapping can be carried out in a classroom setting, the results are good in field visits. Different groups (please refer to 4.5 Composition of groups for mapping below) could walk in transects[5] across the area noting every aspect of development before coming together to draw a map which shows the agreed locations of development.

Participants first draw maps on the ground (ephemeral maps) using agreed symbols to map out the developments. Symbols used are sourced from local materials and could include leaves, sticks, seeds, small stones and beads (development sketch maps drawn as a result of this process therefore need a key to explain the various symbols).
Participants agree on the shape of the map and the location of developments before drawing a sketch map on paper. The different groups then present their sketch maps. They can then agree on one all-inclusive sketch map, which is the final outcome of the process.

For more information, please visit
www.udg.or.ug/home.php?act=rural&p=Development%20mapping
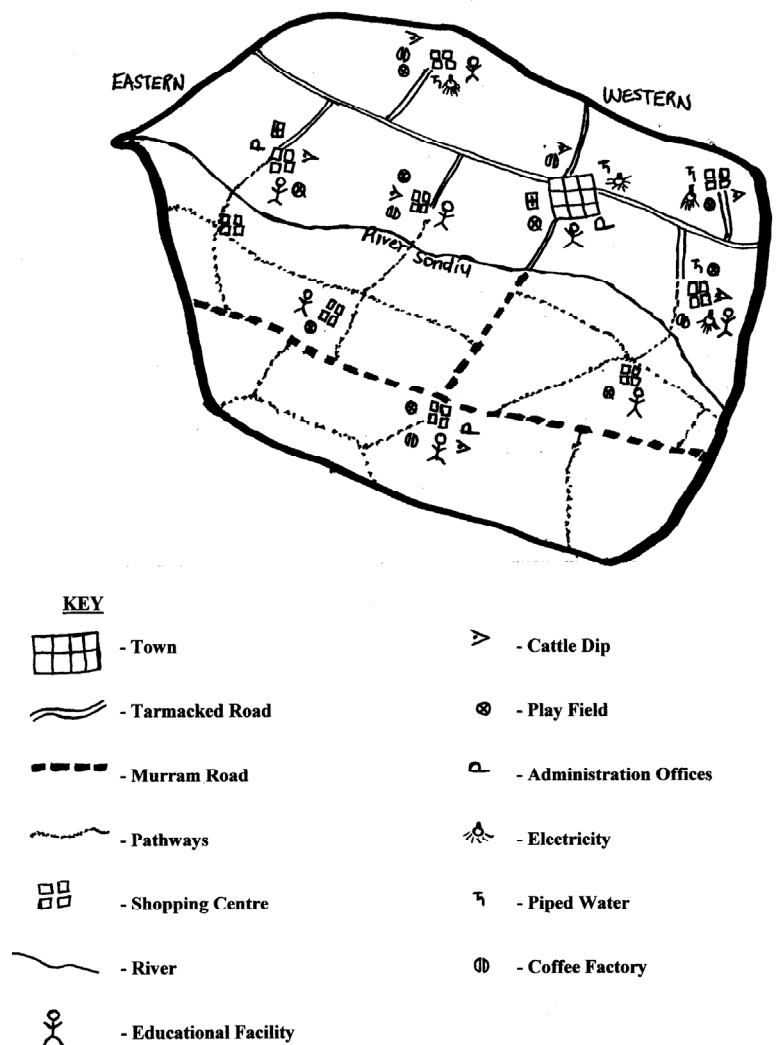&menuname=Development%20mapping
For those who wish to see samples of the types of development indicators that can be mapped out in an area, this site provides a good example of Adjumani District of Uganda.
Acknowledgement: Uganda Development Gateway)

Although development maps are most commonly used in the identification and prioritisation of development issues, human rights defenders are increasingly finding them useful in the struggle for the social and economic empowerment of marginalized groups. For example, in Illustration IV the people on the lower side of Sondui location have clearly been marginalized from development processes, leading to demands for affirmative action and decentralisation of development. It is important to determine factors that allow for such marginalization. They could be political, religious, ethnic, racial, ecological or based on class structures. Mapping could be a way to visualise the different factors.

ILLUSTRATION IV:
DEVELOPMENT MAPPING OF SONDUI LOCATION

KEY

⊞ - Town	⋗ - Cattle Dip
∿ - Tarmacked Road	⊗ - Play Field
▬ ▬ ▬ - Murram Road	⌒ - Administration Offices
∼ - Pathways	⚡ - Electricity
⊞⊞ - Shopping Centre	ⴕ - Piped Water
⌒ - River	⏚ - Coffee Factory
⚲ - Educational Facility	

4.4 CULTURAL MAPPING

This broad field of mapping (also known as 'cultural cartography') is continuing to develop and is gaining a central place in the struggle for community rights. Cultural mapping is largely used in relation to land and land-based resources. It is increasingly used in relation to land tenure systems and ownership of territories by traditional communities since it underscores the deep attachments felt between people and their natural environment. As such, cultural mapping is sometimes referred to as eco-cultural or bio-cultural mapping.

The proper definition of cultural mapping (cartography) remains the subject of debate. Many experts believe that as an audit of a people's heritage - including cultural, historical, anthropological, linguistic, topographical and botanical aspects - the process goes beyond mere mapping. Simply defined it is a participatory process through which a community maps out the relationships between themselves and their territory and ecosystems. Such maps illustrate proof of tenure and utilization of resources.

Cultural mapping is a practical activity that necessitates field visits (sometimes lasting days or weeks) and the presence of well-informed resource persons who can generate important traditional knowledge.

A simple cultural mapping exercise would involve two or three groups from the community taking transect walks across their territory (please refer to 4.5 for composing groups).

Each group would come up with a sketch map that highlights places such as:

- All local villages
- Ritual and sacred sites
- Rivers and other water sources
- Meeting / recreation sites
- Forests
- Burial grounds
- Sites of important flora and fauna
- Historical sites
- Grazing fields
- Hunting areas
- Archeological sites

It would be important to ask for indigenous knowledge relating to land and natural resources e.g.

- Traditional names for sites, trees, animals and their meanings
- Oral heritage such as stories, music, proverbs and riddles based on certain sites or on biological/ecological heritage
- Local concepts of tenure and ownership of land
- Traditional seasonal calendar and its impact on local lifestyles
- Traditional religious beliefs related to land, environment and ecosystems
- Indigenous botanical knowledge

Such indigenous knowledge is of huge importance especially in situations in which communities are struggling for land rights or over intellectual property rights.

The different groups involved in the process then meet and come up with agreed symbols for the different sites and put them on a map.

The information can be put into geographically accurate maps by using Geographical Information System (GIS) technology. Factors related to land ownership can be very complex and GIS technology can help to unravel those. However, using GIS is only an option if financial resources are available, as experts are required to do this.

Human rights defenders can use cultural maps for purposes such as:

- Campaigning for the return of community territories that have been grabbed;
- Campaigning on intellectual property rights issues;
- Campaigning to end the denudation and over-exploitation of land;
- Campaigning to end the annexation of land belonging to minorities by larger communities;
- Addressing issues of security of tenure (against governments, mining & logging companies, wildlife conservancies and parks for example);
- Campaigning for the development of marginalized indigenous communities such as forest peoples;
- Campaigning for community participation in research and decision-making on issues relating to traditional territories.

Traditional communities in South America, Asia, Africa and North America have successfully used cultural mapping as a lobbying tool. The San people of South Africa recently successfully mapped and recovered parts of their traditional territory after a process of eco-mapping. For more information please visit: www.unescobkk.org/culture/cltmapping

4.5 COMPOSITION OF GROUPS FOR MAPPING

The text below reflects the experience of Samuel Thuku working in North Kenya.

The choice of who should make up each group undertaking a transect walk will largely depend on the objective of the exercise. In Development Mapping as well as in Cultural Mapping, the participants should be people who know the area well and are knowledgeable about their community. *The community itself should choose these resource persons.*

In **Development mapping** the groups should preferably be a mixed representation of various social groups within the community such as women and men, different age groups and religious groupings. Geographical representation should also be taken into account. A typical group should have local elders (men and women), young people (men and women), boys and girls, religious leaders (Muslim, Christian, traditional), and they should come from all corners of the area concerned. Experience of working with mixed groups shows that different social groups see various aspects of development differently and hence trigger more thought and deeper insights within the group. However, if it is important to highlight the different perspectives or levels of awareness of development of particular social groups, one could also divide the groups "mono-socially".

In **Cultural mapping** it could be helpful to work with both mixed groups and "mono-social" groups. This is for several reasons:

1   Certain important cultural areas, sites and features may be out of bounds (taboo) for different people such as women, young people, men, from a specific religion or a certain clan.

2   Persons of different age groups or gender may not talk freely in the presence of others on certain aspects associated with their bio-cultural heritage. In such cases it may be useful for researchers or activists accompanying the group to belong to that gender, age group etc.

3   In the African scenario, it is most often male elders who have been custodians of traditional knowledge in many areas. This sometimes leads to the greater participation of men than of women in cultural mapping. In some specific areas, such as where sources of firewood and water are sited and in matters such as midwifery, it is women who hold the bulk of information and who take the lead.

In mixed groups elders will generally take the lead. While this may have some disadvantages, they do become "teachers" of their culture and mapping can become a learning experience for other members of the community. In North Kenya this type of transecting is being used in order to ensure that elders pass on vital cultural information to young people in the face of the attack on their culture from modernisation and globalisation. However transects with specific thematic groups is still continuing where the situation demands.

5. A TRAINING SESSION
TO INTRODUCE MAPPING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

AIM OF SESSION:

To equip participants with the skills necessary to map a human rights situation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session participants will have

Understood what is meant by 'mapping'

Be able to successfully undertake a mapping exercise

TIME:

2 hours and 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

Copy of the guide on mapping for each participant; pre-prepared diagrammatic maps on flipchart paper for each group[6]; markers and flipchart paper

METHOD

- **20 minutes**

The facilitator should first introduce the aims of the session and then briefly explain the definition of mapping and the different types of maps. The objectives and process of mapping should be clearly explained.

- **35 minutes**

Distribute the guide on mapping and ask participants to go through it. Allow the participants to read it and to pose questions.

- **40 minutes**

Divide participants into groups and assign each group a human rights concern. Ask each group to choose the mapping method best applicable to their topic and to fill in the appropriate pre-prepared diagram on flipchart paper with those factors relevant to their topic.

- **30 minutes**

Invite the groups to present their maps, allowing for brief discussion of each group's results.

- **5 minutes**

Consolidate the session by emphasising the importance of mapping as a participatory skill for human rights monitors and activists. Propose further reading.

FACILITATORS NOTES

If participants are inexperienced in mapping, you can start the session by asking each of them to draw a sketch map of his/her village or neighbourhood.

You need to draw models of diagrammatic mapping on flip charts before the session so that participants can fill in the information. This saves a lot of time. You should know how many groups there will be beforehand.

When carrying out the actual mapping in villages/neighbourhoods care should be taken not to map out any sensitive government installations especially military bases and other high security facilities related to national security. Governments are normally very sensitive about them.

REFERENCES

1. *The Facilitator's Guide; A Handbook for Human Rights Trainers*, Amnesty International Netherlands
2. *Pambazuka – Participatory learning for Human Rights,* Kenya Human Rights Commission
3. Peter Poole, 'Cultural Mapping and Indigenous Peoples, A report for UNESCO', Forest Peoples Programme, March 2003
4. *Ukweli Handbook: Monitoring and documenting human rights violations in Africa,* Amnesty International Netherlands and CODESIRA, 2000

NOTES

1   According to Amnesty International, a violation is a breach of international human rights law by states or their agents e.g. a police officer.

2   An abuse is a breach of international human rights law or humanitarian law by non-state actors such as armed opposition groups, multinational companies or civilians.

3   Different organisations employ different terms for types and methods of mapping. For instance UNESCO uses Cultural Mapping as an overall term, while the term social mapping, cognitive mapping, mind mapping and concept mapping are used to describe methods. Others use concept mapping as an overall term.

4   This is a paper prepared for UNESCO, '*Cultural Mapping for Indigenous People'* by Peter Poole. It has examples of different types of cultural maps, which can be helpful to anyone who wants to train on or undertake cultural mapping. If you have a problem accessing it try a web search on Peter Poole – Cultural Mapping. He also has other useful papers on cultural mapping in various sites.

5   UNESCO uses Cultural Mapping and the overall category, while social, cognitive, mind and concept mapping are presented as methods. Others use concept mapping as the overall category.

6   A transect is a path along which one records occurences of a phenomenon, e.g. development issues in a local community.

7   Ensure that the different types of mapping methods are represented.