

Building Dynamic Groups

All Over the Map



Having multiple sectors of the community involved is essential to the legitimacy of your collaboration and its overall success. This exercise is designed to be a self-assessment tool for collaborations regarding their membership. Membership in a collaboration can be directly participating in the collaboration's meeting and events or it can mean contributing to the collaboration through donations. For example, a local radio station might donate airtime to advertise your event. An ecomap is a way to visually represent components of the community in relation to a collaboration and its members. Creating an ecomap allows collaboration members to identify gaps in the membership of the collaboration.

Purpose: To identify current members of a collaboration.
To identify current members and organization roles in the collaboration.

Materials: "All Over the Map" handout, one per participant
Overhead of Figure 1 (ecomap example)
Newsprint for all the individuals and one for the overall collaboration
Ecomap
Pen or pencil
Markers or colored pencils

Time: 20-40 minutes

Procedure:

Explain to the participants that they are going draw an ecomap. (2 minutes)

- A. You may want to say to the participants, "Today we are going to draw an ecomap. An ecomap is picture that provides graphic information about the direct and indirect involvement of various community organizations and citizen groups involved in your collaboration. Simply, it is a picture of who is involved in your collaboration."
- B. You may want to show them an example of an ecomap ([see Figure 1](#))

Adapted by National Network for Collaboration Members, Daniel F. Perkins and Lynne M. Borden (7/26/97) from: Lauffer, A. (1982). Assessment tools: For practitioners, managers, and trainers. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

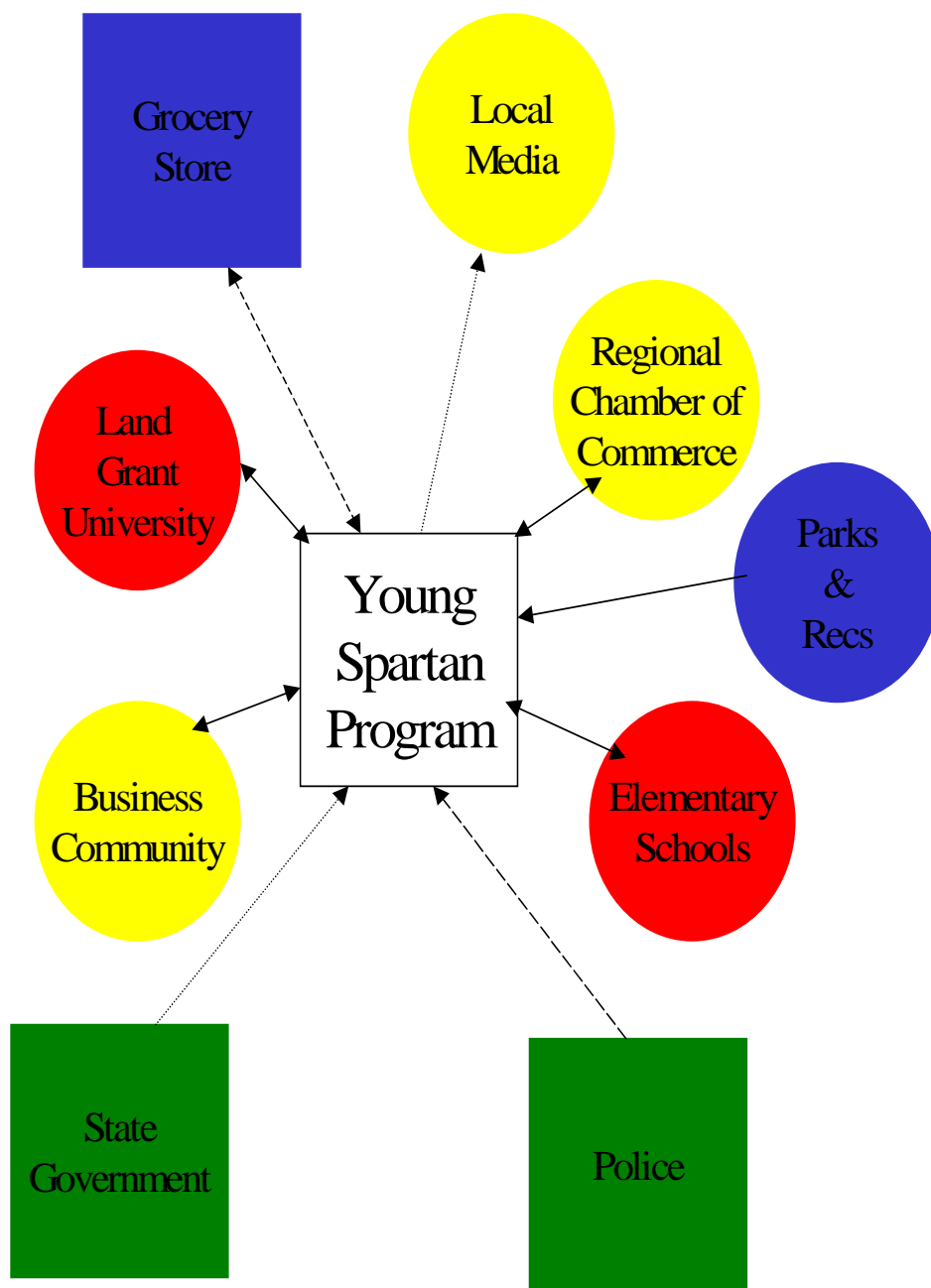


Figure 1.
Example of an Ecomap

Distribute the handout with "All Over the Map" instructions. Go through each of the steps to be sure participants understand the directions, as follows:

1. Draw your group in the center of the page.
2. In the next layer, put those agencies, organizations, and people who are in direct contact with the group. In addition include the role that they play in the group. This layer can include the organizations that members are representing.
3. In the outermost layer, put those organizations and businesses who are indirectly involved in your group (e.g., donors, corporations, local business, media)
4. An ecomap can be used to show how groups are related to each other. Use different colors, shapes, and lines to show these relationships for your community.
 - A. Use shapes to indicate member's reason for being involved
 - Circles used for members who are mandated to be involved in the group.
 - Squares used for members who are voluntarily involved in the group.
 - B. Use lines to indicate the level of the connection
 - Use a solid line to indicate a strong relationship
 - Use a dotted line to indicate a relationship that is unsure.
 - Use arrows to show the direction of relationship - is it one-way or two-way.
 - C. Use colors to indicate the level of involvement in your group.
 - RED: Greatest degree of involvement
 - YELLOW: Moderate degree of involvement
 - BLUE: Sporadic degree of involvement
 - GREEN: Low degree of involvement
5. Have individuals complete this exercise by themselves. (8-10 minutes)
6. Then have them get into groups of five members and complete an overall collaboration ecomap. (10 minutes)
7. Bring the smaller groups together and facilitate the creation of the overall collaboration ecomap by reviewing the small groups' ecomaps. (10 minutes)

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