

## What is mapping the field?

The exercise of mapping the field asks participants to think about other organizations, institutions and actors in their field and the resources that these groups can potentially provide. When mapping the field, we are thinking about all sorts of resources the organization has.

### Materials List

- A stack of index cards
- Pens or pencils
- 2 pieces of flipchart paper
- Markers
- A big table

## The Significance of Mapping the Field

Why should you spend time mapping the field? There are three reasons:

1. Find out your added value.

It is pointless to duplicate work that is already being done by others. If you only repeat research or work that other groups are doing already, you will have to compete with them for both funding and attention.

### Discussion Points

- What service do we provide that other organizations are already doing (as well or better)?
- What do we do that no one else does as well?
- What is unique or special about our approach?
- Is there a service that no-one is providing, but that we are well-equipped to provide?
- Is there a “space” that we should move into?

2. Assess the resources at your disposal. Through mapping the field, you will be able to see how many other organizations already work on the issue, and what your added value can be. This information can also help you decide whether or not you need to or want to partner with another group for specific projects. Mapping the field can help your organization see which donors, international NGOs and academic institutes focus on the same issue, which is helpful for discovering potential donors and partners.
3. Stake your claim. The first question donors and other people to whom you take your report will ask is, "Have you spoken with [X group]? I hear they are working on the same issue." If you have to tell them that you have not spoken with X group, you will look inexperienced and uninformed. By speaking to other groups, you are also letting them know that your organization plans to join the field.

## Process

1. The group should come up with a list of organizations working in your region that provide related services or other organizations that can potentially provide support to you (for example, other NGOs, government and UN agencies, charities, academic institutes and experts).
2. Then, think about all resources needed (for example, funding, technical support, office space, information, permission from the target community, research, media support and legal support).
3. Now, members of the group should take a stack of index cards and write the names of each organization on a card. These can be local organizations or international ones. For instance, if you are working on HIV/AIDS prevention among men who have sex with men (MSM), you may have one section of the table for other MSM groups in your region, one section for academics researching MSM, one section for

HIV/AIDS groups working with sex workers (some of whom are MSM), etc.

4. Put your organization's card in the middle of the wall. Put the cards with the names of other organizations around your organization's card in any order you like as long as they are all on the wall.
5. Now put the similar organizations together, sorted by topic or field (for example, all government departments together and all academic institutes together).
6. You can add notes on the cards about what resources or programs each organization offers.
7. When you are done, rearrange the cards and put organizations that provide similar resources together (for example, with all training organizations together, all foundations together, and so on).