

**Create Gloucestershire
GUIDE**



How to learn from your creative project with Ripple Effects Mapping

Intro: what is Ripple Effects Mapping?

REM is a versatile and friendly way to bring communities and people together to talk about a creative project or activity. At CG we think it fits really well as an evaluation tool in the arts and cultural sector. There is no set way of doing it. Making a map allows a more visual and non linear process to reflect together as a group.

It helps tell the story of a project, capturing intended and unintended consequences and by literally connecting actions and events within a project, you can start to see how themes interlink and influence each other.



The Breathing Space participants work on their Ripple Effects Map.

Feedback from Ripple Effects Mapping participants



Why use REM?

INTERACTIVE & COLLABORATIVE



FLEXIBLE



INTERACTIVE & COLLABORATIVE	VISUAL	FLEXIBLE
Encourages whole group conversation and sharing of different perspectives	Visual means of mapping activity and capturing data	Can be used in a range of settings
Includes everyone	Effective way of showing impact and celebrating achievements over the duration of a project or programme	Cost effective and simple to use individually or with a larger group
Builds new connections	Captures the wider impacts, both intended and unintended changes over time	
Helps the group to collectively plan for the future	Runs alongside a project and leads to ongoing reflection and learning	

What you need to get started:

1. Long roll of paper (the wider the better)
2. Masking tape
3. Thick pens
4. Different shape and coloured post it notes
5. A long table



You will also need:

- Time – at least 1.5 hours
- Individuals directly involved in a specific project/programme
- A skilled facilitator






Step by step guide – for working in groups

1. Getting started

Spend time thinking about how to set the tone for the session to ensure everyone's voices can be heard. In small groups or a whole group, agree the purpose of the project or work that you would like to explore and evaluate through ripple mapping together.

- Roll out the paper along the table and weigh or tape it down
- Get your marker pens and post it note shapes ready
- The facilitator draws a timeline from the beginning of the project/programme through to the present day and writes in 6 key milestones, dates, or events along the way
- Explain what each of your post-it shapes represent

You can use these headings or you can choose as a group what the most relevant terms are for you.

	Enablers - things or people that helped the project
	Barriers - things or people that got in the way of the project
	Conversations - key conversations that changed the course of the project
	Impact - something that happened
	Stories - are stories beginning to emerge?

Each person can now start mapping what they have done within the project.

- Think about actions, beneficiaries, what were the highlights, successes?
- Use your different shaped/coloured post it notes to indicate when these things occurred e.g. a conversation that led to a meeting

2. Building on the map (focus on your evaluation needs)

For each event or activity ask yourself what occurred before to enable this to happen, or what happened afterwards as a result. Add this activity to the map and draw arrows between them to show the connectivity.

Start to add more detail by going forwards and backwards along the timeline so all events have a connection to something else.



- Think about who has been involved, who are the beneficiaries?
- Did this lead to any new funding, opportunities, or resources?
- Of impacts which were intended (i) or unintended (u) and put I or u next to it.
- What else is going on? the wider contextual factors
- What new connections were made?
- What conversations were there?
- What impacts or ripples are starting to emerge?

3. Spotting the most and least significant impacts

- What stories stick out to you?
- What enabled the work to continue, or what held it back?
- What could have been done differently?
- What learnings can we take for the things that didn't work as planned?



4. Understanding your map as a whole group

- Look for any connections, overlaps or pathways you can see.
- What gaps can you see? What does this tell you?
- What patterns or ripples are starting to emerge? What does it tell us?
- Cluster different themes or patterns together – how can you code them?
- What stories or learnings can you pull out of the map?
- What worked, what didn't work?
- What might work elsewhere, or is unique to the environment or project?
- Has the purpose been achieved, or has it developed?
- How can you use the map to tell a story and present back?



5. Feeding back and learning as a group

Focus on main learning on mapping project and impacts.

- Is there a means of enhancing the process in the future?
- Is there anything you would do differently in your work following the session?
- Who else would be useful to involve in a future session?



6. Mapping future intentions

- What do you anticipate will happen in the next 3 months of the project
- What do you expect is going to happen?
- How do these link to the previous events on the map?
- What steps do we need to take to move forward on these actions?

7. Returning to your map

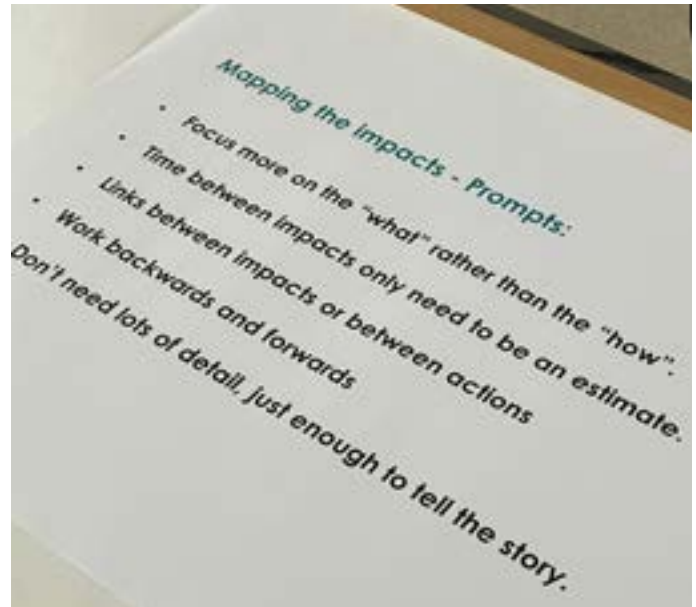
- Plan a follow up session 3 – 6 months later
- Reflect back on the expected actions and consequences.
- Did it happen as expected?
- What was different?
- What learnings are there?
- Build on the map to identify what has happened since the first session and how this links back.
- Repeat the exercise to anticipate what will happen in the next 3 months.



Supplementary information for facilitators

Questions to get your group started

- What happened because of that?
- What didn't go well?
- Who was involved in that?
- Why did that happen?
- What surprised you?
- What happened next?
- So what?
- How are things different as a result?
- What has this led to?
- How did they feel about that?
- What was the return on investment?



Top tips

- Ensure you have the right people in the room.
- Be open and flexible in the workshop set up – it might be the purpose, or what brought people to be involved in the project.
- Building the map together gets people to start sharing stories and take ownership of the map. Conversation creates new ripples.
- Share your impact or story with funders – using photographs or digital maps.
- Spend time at the beginning of the session to set the right tone for the session and ensure it feels equitable.
- Focus on what has changed, rather than how.
- Estimate dates and provide just enough detail to tell the story.
- Work forwards and backwards along the timeline.

Further reading:

[A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping](#)

[Ripple effects mapping: capturing the wider impacts of systems change efforts in public health](#)

How to videos: [An Introduction to Ripple Effects Mapping](#)