

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR HEALTH PROMOTION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THROUGH PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

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FIOCRUZ

THE
GLOBAL
HEALTH
NETWORK
LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN





Understand how community engagement contributes to health promotion in vulnerable territories



Understand how participatory methodologies foster community engagement;



Share the direct and indirect results of participatory methodologies conducted with people experiencing homelessness in Rio de Janeiro/Brazil.

GOALS

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION



Community Engagement

Refers to the active involvement of a community in activities, decisions, or initiatives that impact the well-being of its members. It seeks to ensure that the voices and needs of the community are heard and considered by organisations, governments, or projects.



Social Participation

A term used by Paulo Freire in his education theory as a means of emancipation. It is the act by which people, especially the marginalised, become aware of their realities and engage in transformative practices aimed at changing these realities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Emphasis

Practical solutions and community well-being; collaboration between various actors (government, NGOs, community)

Emancipation, critical awareness, and social transformation

Participation Level

Can vary from consultation to full community control over decisions; focus on collaboration

Active, political, and dialogical participation; focus on autonomy and empowerment of the oppressed

Final Objective

Improvement of living conditions, resolution of local issues, strengthening of social capital

Political and social transformation; creation of a fairer and less oppressive society

Political Nature

Not always explicit, can be more pragmatic and oriented towards well-being

Highly political and critical; participation is an act of liberation

Method

Partnerships between institutions and the community, consultation, trust-building

Liberating education, critical dialogue, awareness, and transformative action

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS

HOW CAN PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Participatory methodologies like "circles of talk", "talking maps" and "river of life" are widely used to promote community engagement and social participation.

They facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and ideas among participants, fostering dialogue, creating bonds, and strengthening cohesion within a community.

This approach promotes collective solutions to common problems.



HOW DOES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTH PROMOTION?

Community Engagement can favor collective decision-making by playing a crucial role in increasing people's buy-in, participation and involvement in a common goal.

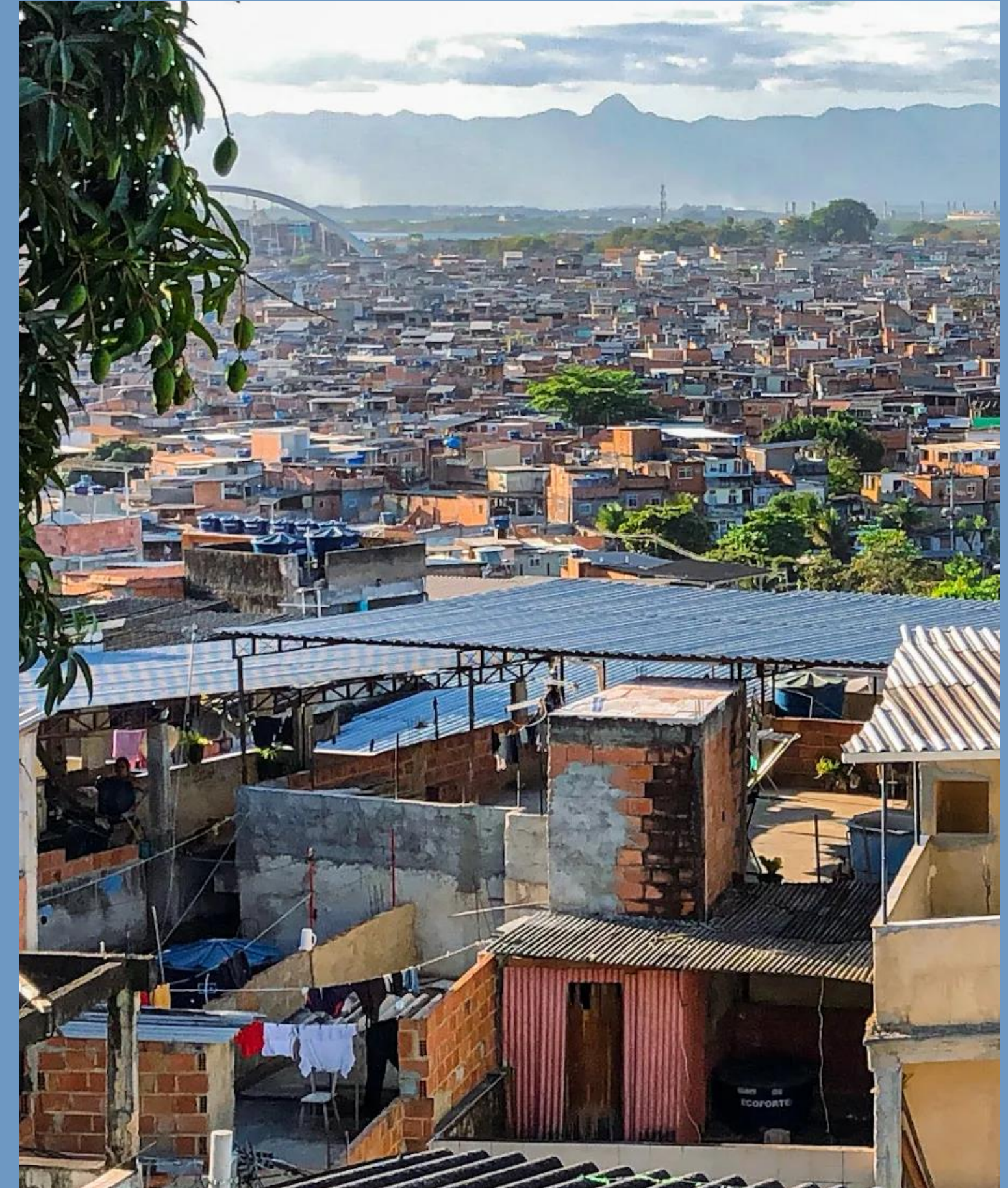
In health actions, these **methodologies** are especially powerful, as they encourage active collaboration between health professionals and the community, ensuring activities are more relevant, accessible, and meaningful to the populations involved.

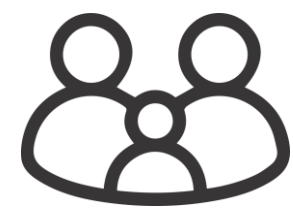


EXPERIENCE REPORT

The project is run by a community-based organisation (NGO) that has been active in the area for over 20 years, working to expand and guarantee rights through political advocacy via community engagement

Maré, located in the North Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is a complex of 16 interconnected favelas with a dense population of almost 140,000. Strategically situated near major city access routes, the region faces challenges, including infrastructure shortages and the presence of armed civil groups.





ACTIONS

The idea of hosting a participatory methodologies - circle of talk - was suggested by the project's regular attendees.

The project's social worker, initiated the action proposed by the people experiencing homelessness who frequented the project

Initially, participants were invited to introduce themselves, briefly share their stories, and explain how they arrived at the project.

The weekly meetings were open, with some participants regularly attending while others joined occasionally.

They suggested musical, culinary, artistic activities, outings, games, and movies to spark conversations. Shared experiences often made team mediation unnecessary, as participants led their own care journey.

RESULTS

In 2022, 15 circles of talk were held, engaging 73 people experiencing homelessness in activities like music, art, cooking, and film, which are recognised as important psychosocial tools.

All topics and activities were suggested by the participants.

Through these actions, it was possible to observe how group work allows participants to learn about and understand social benefits as rights. Additionally, it enables homeless individuals to see themselves as rights-bearing individuals.

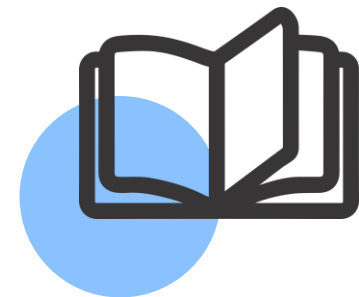
Participatory methodologies also allow for the creation of affective memories, a fundamental element in identity-building, both individual and collective. Honoring these memories fosters belonging and citizenship.



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS



The impacts of this action extend beyond mental health, transforming data and actions into concrete measures to improve the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness and promote health equity.



Participatory methodologies are presented by many researchers as a psychosocial tool used in health care promotion, as they aid in the physical, mental, and social recovery of individuals. Through these actions, we have demonstrated the effectiveness of participatory approaches.



Lastly, it is important to emphasise that actions carried out with community involvement tend to yield more relevant results and be more effective, highlighting the importance of acting with the population, not merely for them.

WHEN THE TERRITORY SPEAKS

Participatory methodologies for working with vulnerable populations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Apply engagement tools and methodologies to explore practical skills that help foster



Communication with diverse community groups



Analysis of the use of engagement tools and methodologies to work with diversity



The assessment of community groups and their potential impact on service delivery



Discussion about the challenges faced with working with diverse community



Groups and suggestion of problem-solving strategies to overcome them.



ABOUT PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

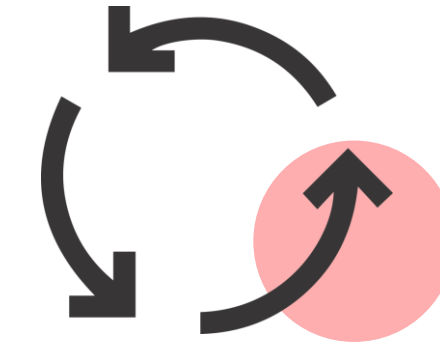
Participatory methods (PMs) encompass a variety of activities that empower ordinary individuals to actively participate in and influence decisions impacting their lives. This goes beyond mere consultation, ensuring that people's voices are not only heard but actively shape the final outcomes.

Researchers, community members, activists all use PMs. Because it respects local knowledge and experiences, the result of the interventions that reflect local realities, which often leads to better supported and longer lasting social change.

WHEN TO USE EACH ONE OF THESE METHODOLOGIES?



When you want people to be involved in decision-making, whether individual or collective.



PMs can be used at all stages of the project cycle associated with development aid.

MAP OF MEMORIES AND IDENTITY

PURPOSE

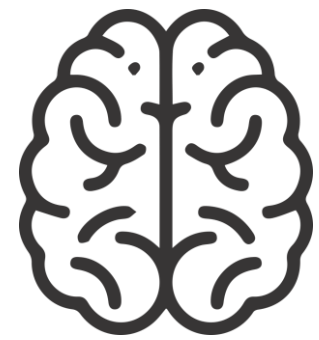
The Map of Memories and Identity, also called "Map of origin or identity" is a participatory methodology that creates a visual representation of the identity of the participants.

From a local map, participants locate where they come from, telling a little of their history and their memories about their place of origin.



MAP OF MEMORIES AND IDENTITY

WHAT IS IT FOR?



It allows participants to relive their memories and choose something that marked their life story that they want to share



Mobilizes affections and memories



Strengthens affective bonds with the participating group as they share their stories

MAP OF MEMORIES AND IDENTITY

WHAT CAN BE PRESENTED?



Aspects of his personality; cooking; Hobbies; life situations; childhood memories, etc.

This exercise can be carried out as an introductory dynamic, in which participants will be able to introduce themselves from the place(s) where they identify themselves on the map.

RIVER OF LIFE

PURPOSE

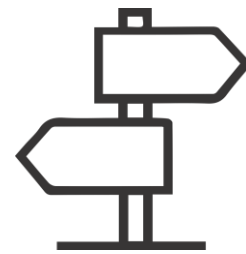
“The River of Life” built on the work of Paulo Freire, is an exercise based on the process of dialogue and reflection whereby participants reflect on and document the critical and significant moments of their collaboration.

Through guided questions and by using the metaphor of a river, the exercise is designed to facilitate community and academic partners to actively acknowledge, celebrate, critique, change, and sustain the goals, processes, and results of their health equity work.



RIVER OF LIFE

WHAT IS IT FOR?



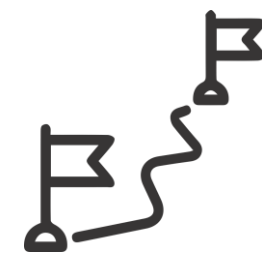
It makes possible to understand the paths in the individual and collective context.



It helps personal reflection and stimulates in a creative way, the sharing of experiences.



It is based on the metaphor of the river, which rises, bifurcates, meets other rivers, streams, lakes;



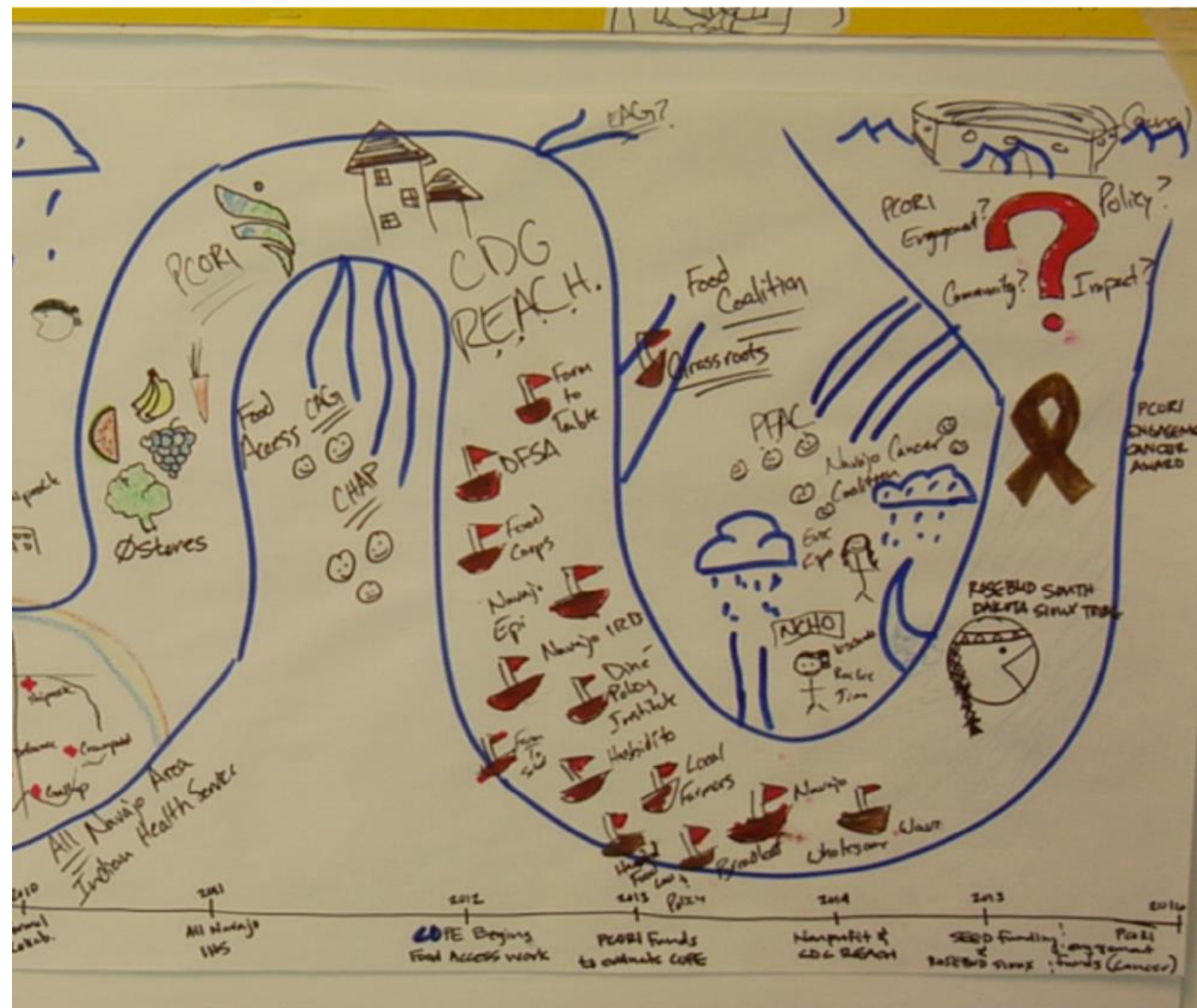
It is in this same procedural design that the experience of life occurrences.



Understanding the place you are and where you are going is essential to understand and create paths that are compatible with what you are looking for.

RIVER OF LIFE

WHAT CAN BE PRESENTED?



Rio Da Vida: Parceria com Nação Indígena | New Mexico University, CBPR Instituto, 2017

SOCIAL CARTOGRAPHY OR TALKING MAP

PURPOSE

It is a participatory technique that enables the knowledge of place and its relations, based on a collectively elaborated graphic representation

The maps present a "portrait" that is the result of the vision and perception that the participants have of their territory, of their place as an everyday space

It is based on the experiences, perceptions and practical knowledge of those involved as a local diagnostic methodology that will allow us to better understand the problem that will originate the project, but also the existing resources in the localities.

It must promote a detailed survey of data and information that can characterize the living conditions of those potentially involved also their resources and potentialities.



SOCIAL CARTOGRAPHY OR TALKING MAP

WHAT IS IT FOR?

To read a reality from its multiple dimensions, problems and resources, making it possible to build a collective look at the territory

For easy plugs of decisions and/or organization of actions and interventions on the territory

To open up possibilities of articulations, proximities, and complementarities

This dual perspective, problems and existing diagnostic resources makes a difference in the potential of local intervention. At the same time that problems are mapped, resources and partnerships are also mapped.

SOCIAL CARTOGRAPHY OR TALKING MAP

WHAT CAN BE PRESENTED?



DIGITAL MAP

The talking map can also be presented in digital platforms.
[Mapa Comunidade Santa Maria - AM - Google My Maps](#)

