LISTENING
TO THE CITY

Community Research and Action
through Sound and Story

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS BOOK

OVERVIEW

This book is the result of a year long collaboration that arose from a shared desire to explore how sound - including the human voice - can enrich our understanding of place. Although no single truth exists, we often narrate and come to our own understanding about a community, its history, and its present challenges from a single point of view. Through listening, we embark on a transformative journey through the memories and sensations of a place, and develop a deeper appreciation for all it represents. The editors of this book encourage readers to embrace unconventional and aesthetic approaches to inquiry and engagement, and seek to make the case for the potential these methods hold to unleash more nuanced, complex, and even contradictory understandings of space. In this sense, this book was also brought into being with the intent of counterbalancing traditional social science practice--which historically recognizes only certain forms of knowledge as legitimate--with other ways of knowing cities, including the critical perspectives of those (often unheard voices) who live within them. Beyond cultivating empathy and developing a multi-layered understanding of place, this book also urges academics and practitioners alike to explore emergent methods for making meaningful change within communities.

ORIGINS

In 2014, MIT CoLab's Empathetic Aesthetics Program embarked on research initiatives at the intersection of aesthetic inquiry, urban planning and community change. It was around this same time that LA Listens was investigating the inter-relationship between sound practice and the sensory experiences of residents. The two organizations joined forces to generate a community-engaged blog series and global soundwalking call, which drew attention from contributors around the world and sparked interest in continued collaboration around emergent methods for sensing cities through sound. Hoping to expand the partnership and learn how others were using sound practice both to shape their sense of place and as a means for social change, CoLab recruited the Design Studio for Social Intervention to engage local artists and activists interested in this nexus. The trio applied for and was awarded funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to embark on a shared exploration, Listening to the City, which sought to capture and embed a selection of sound and story-based approaches to community research and action into a handbook that could be more widely utilized and shared.

PROCESS

The Listening to the City partnership engaged hundreds of researchers, artists, activists, urban planners, and educators in 2017 to collaboratively develop this handbook. The development process undertaken is further outlined below.

Network Building

In May of 2017, as an initial way to convene the intended partner network, MIT CoLab co-organized and hosted a free 2-day conference, Listening to the City: Engagement, Exploration and Intervention through Sound, in collaboration with DS4SI, LA Listens and other local partners. The event drew an international audience of over 100 academics and practitioners. It also welcomed 22 speakers from 3 continents who shared their expertise and experimental sound practice in an array of session formats, from traditional panel discussions to interactive workshops and sound art installations.

Photo credit: Ashley Cantrell, Opening Panel at Listening to the City Conference

Knowledge Co-Production

As a way to begin compiling content for and engaging multiple perspectives in the development of the handbook, over the Summer of 2017, MIT CoLab interviewed conference presenters about their research and/or sound practice. During the interviews and follow up working sessions with presenters, specific sound-based and storytelling methods for community research, engagement and change-making were documented. Additional research contacts within the interviewees' own networks were solicited, contacted, and interviewed through a process of triangulation. Over a period of several months, MIT CoLab engaged in an iterative and dialogic process of drafting and editing content with over 40 project contributors, collaborating to co-produce new knowledge and record their emergent methods.

User Testing

Once a draft of the handbook was completed, several user-testing sessions were conducted on both coasts (in Boston and Los Angeles) to solicit feedback, make necessary adjustments, and begin to circulate the content across a range of disciplines.

Knowledge Dissemination

Information about the Listening to the City partnership has been shared with interdisciplinary audiences through conferences, courses, and community workshops since the Fall, 2017. Nearly 50 printed copies have been distributed to academics and community practitioners around the world, and the handbook will remain available for free download from MIT CoLab's website here: http://colab.mit.edu/ resources.

THE POWER OF LISTENING

As urban planning, design and cultural practitioners and scholars collaborating with marginalized communities to understand complex urban challenges and co-create change, the creators of this handbook have long considered deep listening to be critical to their work. The unique benefit of listening to and with communities is often over-looked in participatory research and planning, however, particularly in design fields where community engagement processes are dominated by visually oriented methods. Through Listening to the City, the project partners have come to fully appreciate how tremendously potent and immersive a sense listening is, and hope to further expound on its transformative power through the presentation of this handbook.

"We cannot close our ears...we cannot help but hearing all sounds"

- Hildegard Westerkamp

Sound is our first sense

Before we enter the world, we can hear sounds from outside the womb. After birth, human infants can recognize the sounds they heard before embarking on their journey to the outside world. On a fundamental level, sound can help us to recognize things we don't yet know that we know.

We can listen in every direction at once

The shape and positioning of our ears enable us to listen to sounds all around us simultaneously. Since we can detect and respond to auditory cues from all sides, we have a heightened awareness and are provided with a richer, more nuanced immersion into our environment than we would have if we could hear in only one direction.

Sounds enable us to feel and to empathize with others

The auditory system plays a significant role in helping us to perceive the emotions in others, and to elicit emotional and physiological reactions within ourselves. Sounds are perceived in the form of vibrations that trigger the parts of the brain that elicit physiological and emotional responses, like changes in heart rate or feelings of happiness/sadness.

We make meaning of the world through sound

Listening tunes our brain to the patterns and variations in our environment, helps us to form memories, and interacts with the biological systems that make meaning of our experiences.

Sources:
- Horowitz, Seth S. "Grey Matter: The Science and Art of Listening." New York Times, November 9, 2012.
- Horowitz, Seth S. The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes the Mind. Bloomsbury, 2012.

ACTION RESEARCH

The Listening to the City partners have seen this project not only as a vehicle for uniting disparate networks to explore the powers of listening, but also as a means for advancing the use of emergent and creative approaches to community research, engagement and change-making within and outside of academia. The partners believe that the most effective participatory research and planning processes honor and draw upon the lived experience and wisdom of the local community to define and help address the challenging social problems they face (see more on participatory action research on pg. 131). Through these types of research partnerships, unequal power dynamics between marginalized communities and those traditionally considered 'expert' researchers are transformed in such a way that data is co-owned and strategically utilized to create positive change within a particular place. Despite the diverse array of benefits creative approaches to action research have been known to yield, many of the sound and storytelling methods highlighted in this handbook are not yet recognized as legitimate or utilized as part of mainstream research. By compiling and sharing these methods more widely, the creators of this handbook hope others will come to see the unique power they hold to uplift and amplify critical community voices and their struggles through community research and action.

GUIIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS BOOK

In spite of the partners' disparate backgrounds and areas of expertise, from the outset, the Listening to the City collaboration was built upon a shared set of values and ways of approaching the work. Given the collective goals of using the project as a way build a broader network and expand the use of sound and story-based approaches to action research more widely, the partners were intentional about showcasing a rich variety of values-aligned projects which met the following criteria.

Accessible

The methods compiled in this handbook are intended to have a low barrier to entry, meaning that they do not require a lot in the way of technical know-how or financial resources in order to be carried out. As such, they are intended to be accessible to those from a variety of disciplines with differing types of expertise, as well as those from socially excluded communities without a significant amount of material wealth.

Transferable

The partners sought to include methods and approaches within the handbook that could be scaled up and applied in a variety of different contexts without much need for adaptation. Believing in the value of knowledge co-production and the right for all involved in research (particularly those most impacted by it) to access and utilize it to bring about positive change, the partners' intention was to break down the methods to their most basic form and share them widely through visual and step by step processes.

Participatory

All of the methods in this handbook are participatory and collaborative in nature, and many lay out a process that is intentionally driven by the needs and aspirations of a particular community. The partners believe that those most directly impacted by a particular issue possess deep insights about how best to address that issue and ought to be leading the change they hope to see, if they so choose.

Transformative

The projects and approaches highlighted in this handbook all grapple with specific instances of or approaches to community change. Given the organizational orientations of the three project partners, there has been an intentional emphasis on the inclusion of projects that raise awareness about or directly address social, economic or environmental justice through community research and/or collective action.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The partners hope that this handbook will be used by academics and community practitioners in a variety of fields that seek to employ sound and story-based methods to amplify critical voices through community research and action. The methods included in this handbook are intended for use across cultural contexts and disciplines, and the partners believe they hold great promise to transform our understanding of cities, and the complex social, economic, environmental and political dynamics within them.

GENERAL TIPS FOR USERS

1. **Start anywhere.** With color-coded tabs indicating methods on the side of the handbook, and multiple ways of redirecting readers between related content in different sections, the editors have sought to create a structure that is easy to navigate, and they hope readers will find something inspirational on each page!

2. **Consider the level of community engagement needed.** Since some methods require deeper levels of community trust than others in order to be carried out, icons are included to indicate the extent of participation or collaboration that will likely be needed for a given method to be successful. The handbook is also loosely organized in a way that places methods requiring lower levels of community engagement in earlier chapters and those requiring deeper levels of engagement in latter chapters.

3. **Go deeper with additional resources, tips and tutorials.** For those who are new to using sound, story-based and other creative methods in community research, engagement and/or social change, there are a variety of tips, tutorials, and additional resources to support readers beyond the basic methods themselves. Project highlights in each chapter also provide a window into how one might incorporate a particular method into their research or community-engaged effort.

4. **Share this resource with others.** Through making this handbook free and downloadable from MIT CoLab's website, the editors hope that the sound and story-based methods can be more widely disseminated and embraced!

TIPS FOR SPECIFIC USER GROUPS

Although the editors realize the user groups identified below are not mutually exclusive, suggesting specific ways intended audiences might utilize this handbook seemed of potential benefit.

Academics

Those based in educational settings with an interest in community-based research may find the resources on participatory action research to be particularly useful. Those already engaged in community research may want to explore creative methods, such as photovoice and story mapping. Meditative Listening activities, as well as inquiry-based methods like audio mapping and soundwalking, can help to hone critical listening, which will be useful across all disciplines. For social scientists and historians, the chapter on personal storytelling might spark creative ideas for learning across place.

Activists

Those leading social or political change efforts within communities may come to realize the benefit of sound, story-based and other creative approaches to this work. When attempting to address issues of inequity, assessing a community's needs and resources through asset mapping can be a useful first step. Story mapping, photovoice, and participatory theatre also have a powerful role to play in organizing and advocacy efforts.

Artists

The handbook presents a number of opportunities for exploration beyond one's own area of creative expertise, from photography to participatory theatre. Sound artists, or those with an interest in social practice might find the pop-up listening chapter (as well as subsequent chapters) particularly inspirational, in addition to specific project highlights showcasing work initiated by socially-engaged artists. Artists without a background in sound practice, on the other hand, may want to experiment with emergent methods for listening to their surrounding environment.

BUILDING AWARENESS

AND EMPATHY THROUGH

MEDITATIVE LISTENING

OVERVIEW

Through meditative listening, and the development of a deep personal listening practice - an approach developed by the late Pauline Oliveros - we can expand our awareness of ourselves and cultivate greater empathy and connection with our surroundings. Often taken for granted, a well developed sense of sound enables us to become more astute in our observation, and to more fully appreciate the multiple ways one can make meaning of a given experience. Meditative listening is an essential first step in successfully carrying out the other methods in this book. The diverse array of activities to follow are intended to help in further honing this critical practice.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- To further hone deep and critical listening skills
- To discover our inherent relationship to sound in our everyday lives
- To develop an appreciation for the unique ways individuals experience and make meaning of their surroundings
- To cultivate empathy and understanding across difference

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- When one is interested in and beginning to experiment with the use of sound-based methods for research, teaching and/or community engagement

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REFLECTION

MENTAL RESPONSE
(in head)

PHYSICAL RESPONSE
(in whole body)

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
(in heart)

ACTIVITY #1: Developing a Deep Personal Listening Practice

In the introduction, we summarized the many powerful ways that sound affects our minds, hearts, and bodies. The goal of this meditative listening activity is to begin to practice deep listening (the approach coined by the late Pauline Oliveros) as part of our daily life, and to more deeply understand the various ways sounds impact us.

INSTRUCTIONS A

1. First, go to a place that you find peaceful and calming (with the realization that this will be different for every person).

2. Find a comfortable seat and close your eyes.

3. Take a few deep breaths and settle into your own breathing rhythm.

4. Identify 3 to 5 distinct sounds that you can hear simultaneously.

5. Choose one of these sounds to focus on.

6. Proceed to answer the questions on pgs. 27-33.

INSTRUCTIONS B

1. Now go to a place you find chaotic, overwhelming, or stressful.

2. Find a place to sit and close your eyes.

3. Take a few deep breaths and settle into your own breathing rhythm.

4. Identify 3 to 5 distinct sounds that you can hear simultaneously.

5. Choose one of these sounds to focus on.

6. Proceed to answer the questions on pgs. 27-33.
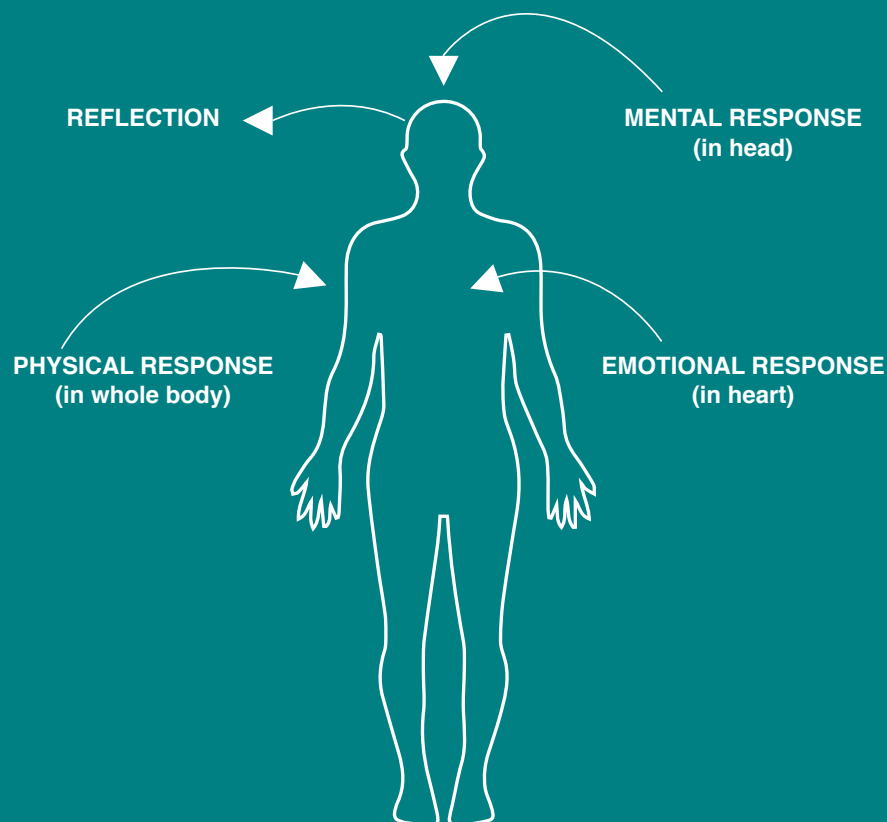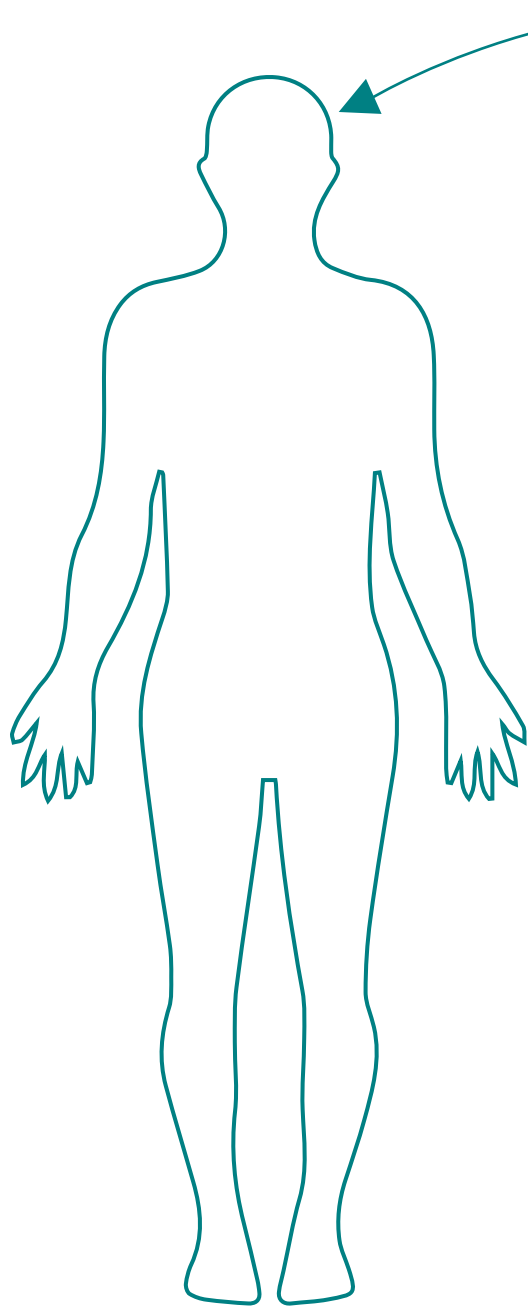
MENTAL RESPONSE (in head)

Why did you choose this sound? Is the sound new or one you have heard many times before?

Describe the volume as compared with the other sounds you identified.

Describe any pattern or repetition to the sound.

What else do you notice, and what other thoughts arise as you listen?
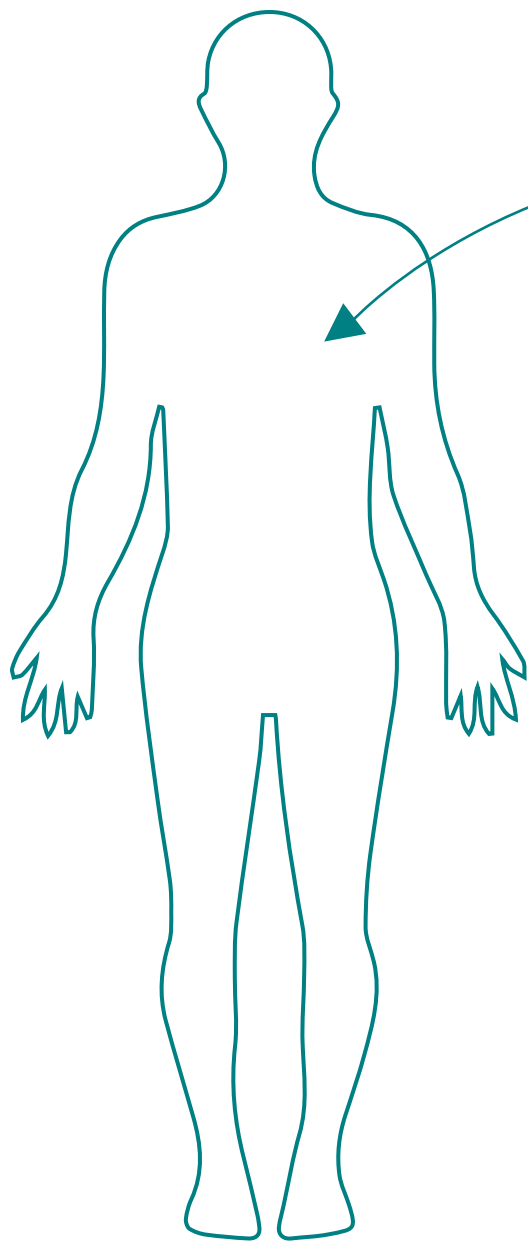
EMOTIONAL RESPONSE (in heart)

What do you feel as you hear this sound?

Notice and describe the impact of the volume, pitch, and other variations of the sound on your emotions.

What memories, positive or negative, does the sound evoke, and what other emotions arise in response to those memories?
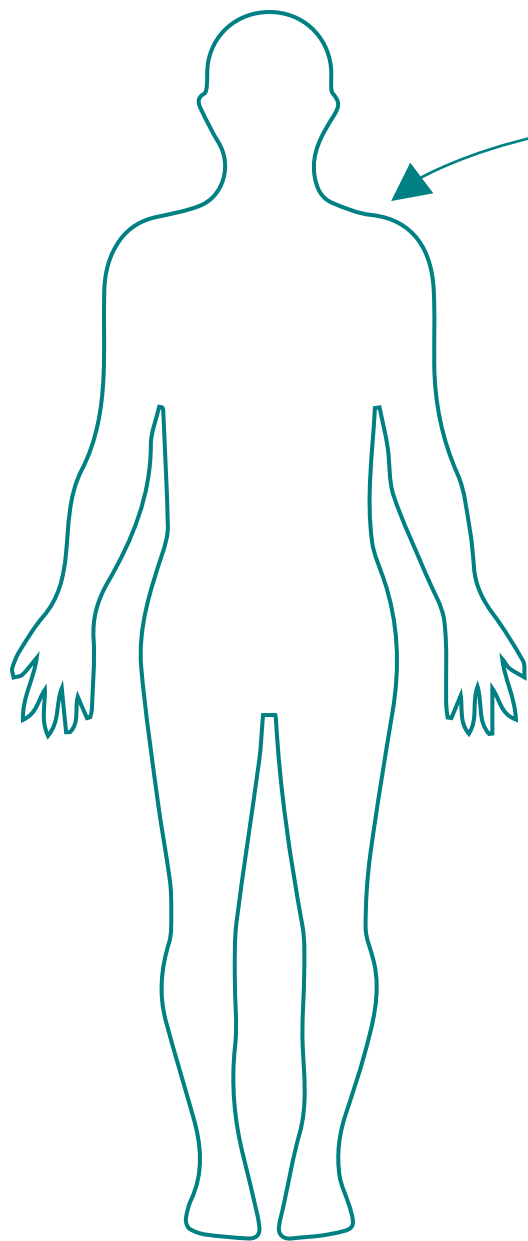
PHYSICAL RESPONSE (in whole body)

How do you notice your body reacting as you listen to the sound? On the human diagram to the left, make note of the places on your body that you notice a reaction to the sound.

Is your breathing slower and deeper, or shorter and faster? Has the rate of your pulse changed?

Is your body feeling warmer or colder in response to the sound? Are you getting chills or sweats?
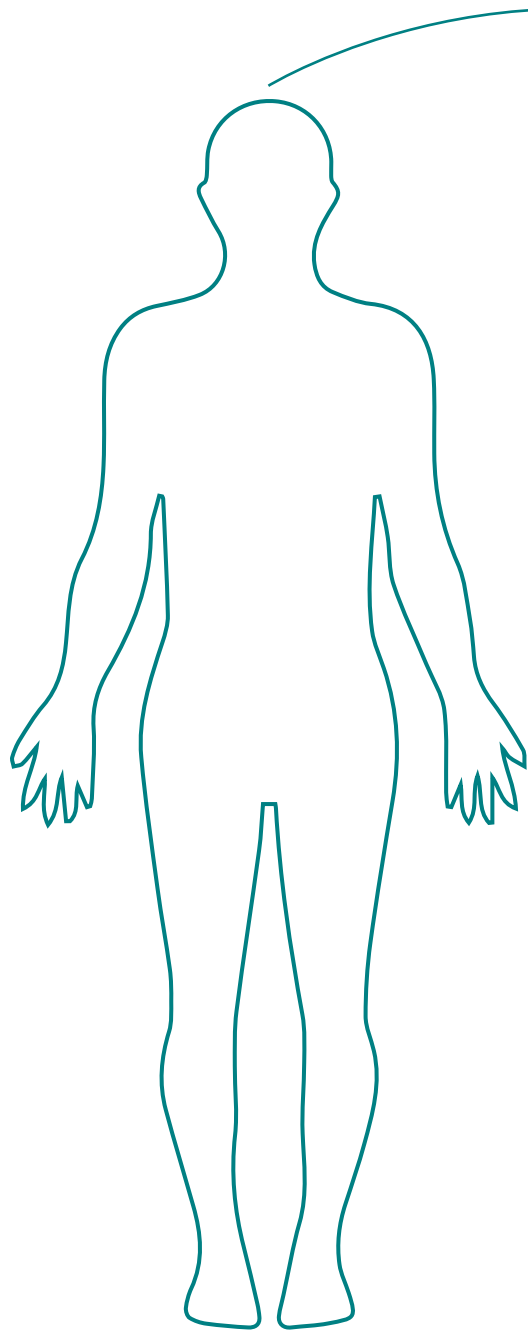
REFLECTION

What was it like focus in on just one sound and the ways it impacted you?

What did you learn about yourself and how your body works?

What did you learn about the way you make meaning of the world around you? How do you think someone else would have reacted to hearing the sound you identified, and why?

If everyone practiced listening this closely to their environment, what impact might it have on the world, if any?

ACTIVITY #2: Recording the Sounds of Our Own Lives

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Think about the sounds you experience in your every-day life. How do the sounds you hear impact your day? While at work or at home, close your eyes and listen. What sounds do you hear? Which are familiar and which are you hearing for the first time?

2. Use your cell phone or other recording device to capture two or more sounds that connect to the places and experiences you have in your everyday life. Each recording may be up to 3 minutes in length.

3. Reflect on the process of collecting and listening to the sounds of your day.

4. Share your recordings and reflections with others (ideally those who have also participated in the activity themselves).

5. Using markers, pencils, and other art materials, decorate a record cover on pg. 36 that tells a visual story about the sounds of your life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How did it feel to assess the sounds around you?

• How did you select the sounds you recorded?

• Did you hear new things in places that are familiar to you?

• Did you find yourself more aware of your surroundings through sound?

• What new insights did you gain about yourself? About your life?

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Art in the Round

Socially-engaged artist, Elisa H. Hamilton, created "Sound Lab", a hands-on community listening space for Boston area residents as part of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's contemporary exhibit, "Listen: Hear, The Art of Sound". As part of a series of neighborhood workshops, participants were asked to collect short sound clips from their own lives. Recorded audio tracks were transposed onto vinyl records which were played on turntables. Participants then had the opportunity to create their own record art with images representative of the sounds from their own lives, and to reflect on what they learned through the process of recording these everyday sounds. For more information, visit: https://www.elisahhamilton.com/projects.html

Photo Credit: Leo March

Decorate the record with images
that represent the sounds from
your own life.

RECORD ART
WORKSHEET
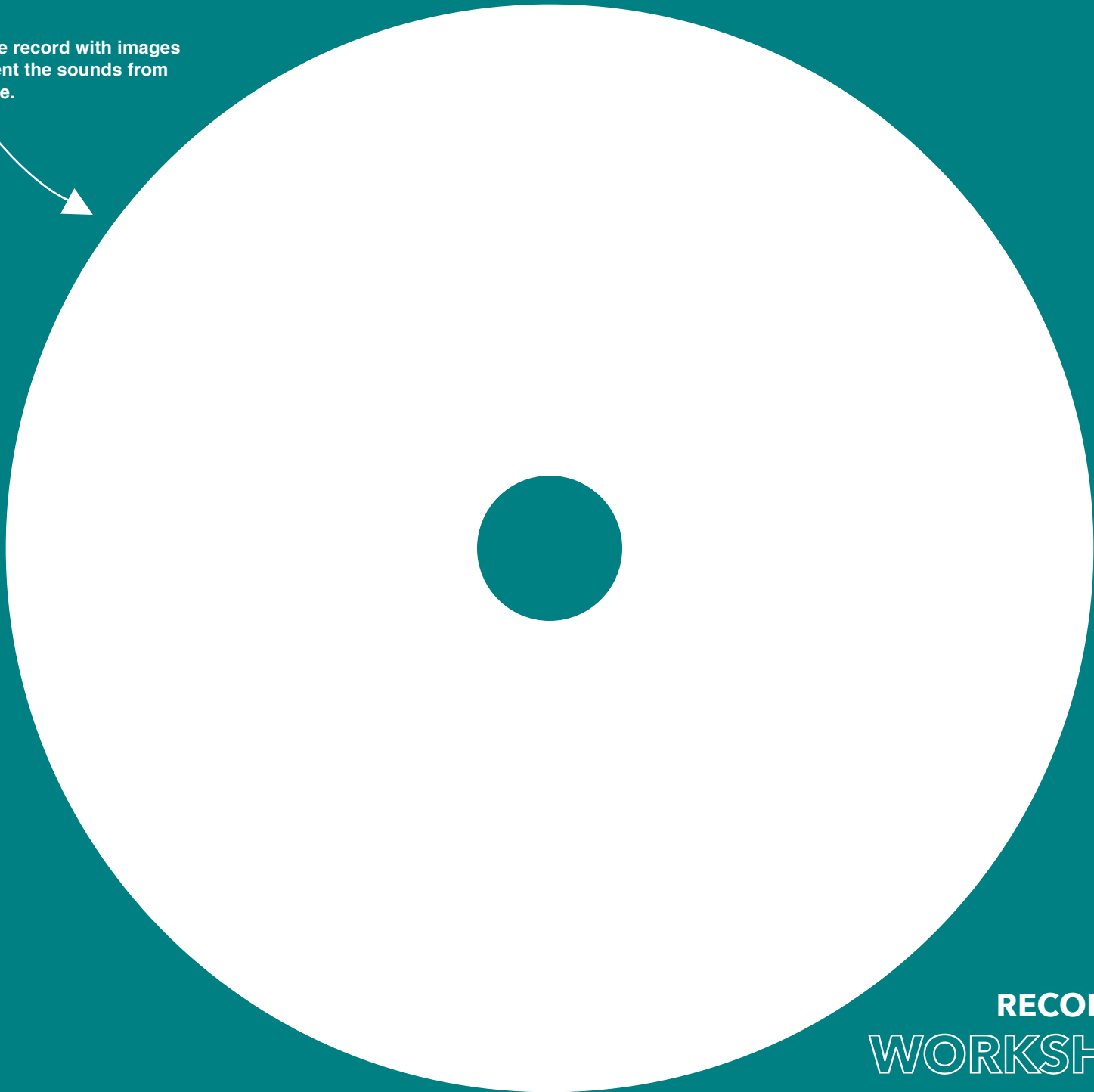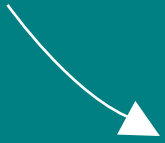
ACTIVITY #3: Becoming Aware of Sounds in Public Space

The following activity involves creating an interactive sound sculpture from paper cone megaphones in a public space and observing and "overhearing" how others engage with it. The megaphone cone symbolizes both amplified listening and sound amplification, which invites people to engage with the sonic environment and heightens the awareness of the sound qualities within a given space. It also empowers people to contribute to their own sonic environment and to take action towards modifying it.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Construct 6-10 paper megaphones using the materials below. To encourage interaction, you can write "listen" or "shout" on the cones.

2. Identify a public place with a rich sonic environment (ie a well used public park).

3. Find a tree or other similarly appropriate place to hang the cones. Alternate the heights so they are reachable by both adults and children.

4. Observe how people engage with the sound sculpture and try to 'overhear' the conversations.

5. Join in and take note of how you engage with the sculpture as well.

MATERIALS
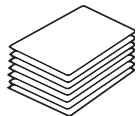
A3 Heavy
Construction Paper

String
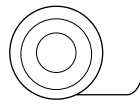
Tape
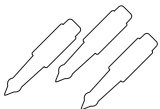
Markers
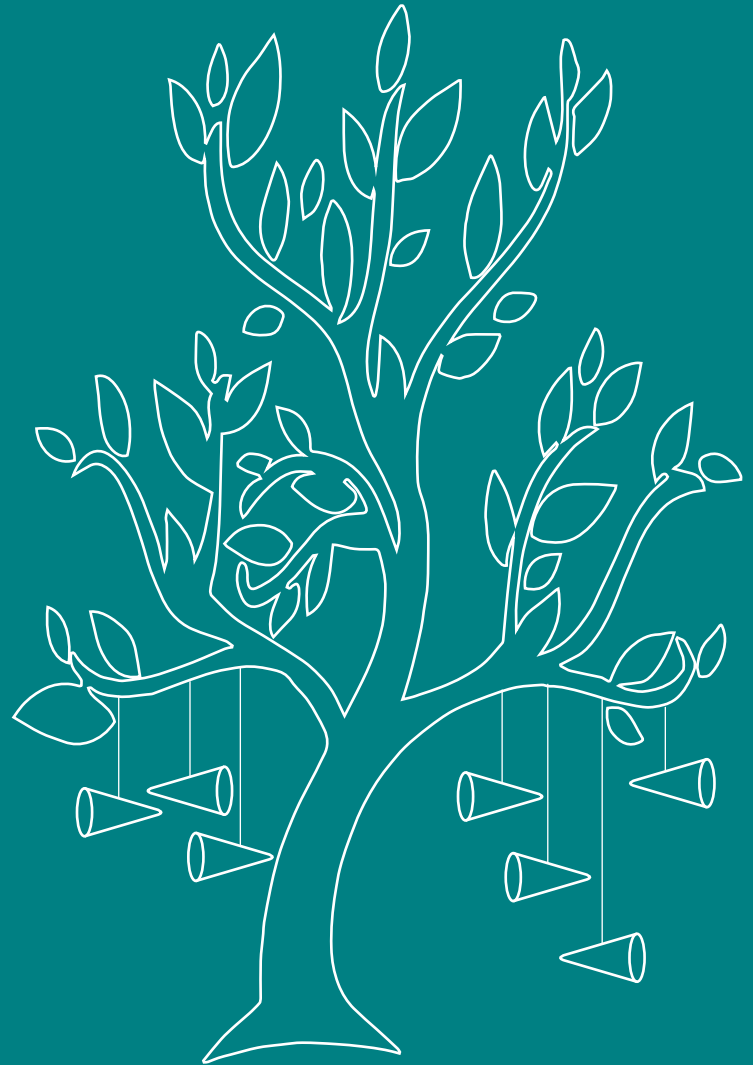
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does the sculpture impact your own experience of the public space and its sonic environment?

- How do people engage with in? Do they listen? Do they make noise?

- How do they react to each other's noises and to yours?

- What sounds do they try to recreate or imitate?

- What are the topics of conversation that you overhear?

- What do you notice about the way you interact with the sound sculpture? Are you more aware of the volume of your voice or the things you are saying in the public space?

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
The Overheard

The Overheard was a Denmark-based sound art project (as well as official selection of the European Capital of Culture, Aarhus 2017) that involved the placement of large wooden 'Forest Megaphones' in an urban park to amplify the sounding surroundings and emphasize the importance of sonic environments. The title "The Overheard" has two opposing meanings in Danish: namely to not hear, to disregard, AND to hear what one is not meant to hear. The goal of the project was to encourage engagement with and deeper exploration of the meaning and value of sound in public space. This project was created by Marie Höjlund, Morten Riis & Jonas R. Kirkegaard. For more information, visit: https://www.overheard.dk/the-overheard/.

Photo credit: Malthe Riis
The original installation, "Forest Megaphones" was created by Birgit Õigus.

ACTIVITY #4: Cultivating Empathy through Embodiment (Mask-Making)

One of the most effective ways to empathize with another's lived experience is through physical embodiment. Although it is impossible to fully comprehend what it means to be without one's vision or without use of a limb, for instance, there are temporary ways to get a sense of what life might be like under very different circumstances. With a focus on sound and listening, the following activity enables us to further build our listening practice to explore what life is like as another, with differing abilities and limitations from our own.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Go for a walk in a place where there is an abundance of wildlife (nature preserve, dog park, etc).

2. Identify an animal of interest and observe it for 10-15 minutes.

3. Spend 5-10 minutes recording the sounds the animal makes as well as sounds that seem of interest to the animal.

4. Once back indoors, play back the recordings and note down anything surprising that you learn.

5. Cut out the parts of the mask on pgs. 44-49 and put them together, or create a mask of your own to represent the animal you observed.

6. Wear the mask around while outside, imagining what it would be like to embody the animal.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do the shape and size of one's ears determine the way they perceive their environment?

2. If one's ears were much larger or smaller than yours, what impact would that have on their daily life and the decisions they made?

3. What else have you come to understand through this exercise about what it's like to be another?
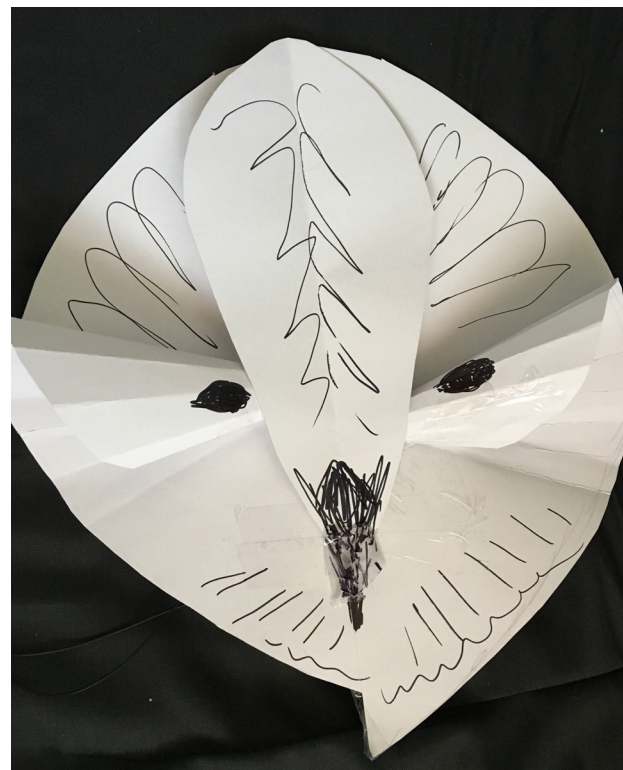
PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
The Ears of Others:
Activities in Listening Like Animals

This activity is inspired by a workshop developed by Matt Green, a sound artist and researcher in Leeds, UK. During the workshop, participants build masks inspired by specific animals to mimic the physical listening characteristics of the animal and amplify the emotional and physical experience of hearing like another. Through this activity, participants build new listening skills through creative engagement as well as cultivate greater empathy towards all creatures.

Photo Credit: Sarah Browne

Use mask as inspiration or cut out mask and features to listen through. How does the mask change how you hear the sounds around you?

MASK
CUT 1

BEAK
CUT 1

SNOUT
CUT 1

MASK MAKING

WORKSHEET

EAR
CUT 2

EAR
CUT 2

HORN
CUT 2

EAR
CUT 2

OUTER EAR
CUT 2

INNER EAR
CUT 2

ANTLER
CUT 2

FEATHER
CUT 12

BIRD HEAD
TOP
CUT 1

CHEEK
CUT 2

ANTENNAE
CUT 2

NOSE
BRIDGE
CUT 1

NOSE
CUT 2

NOSE
CUT 1
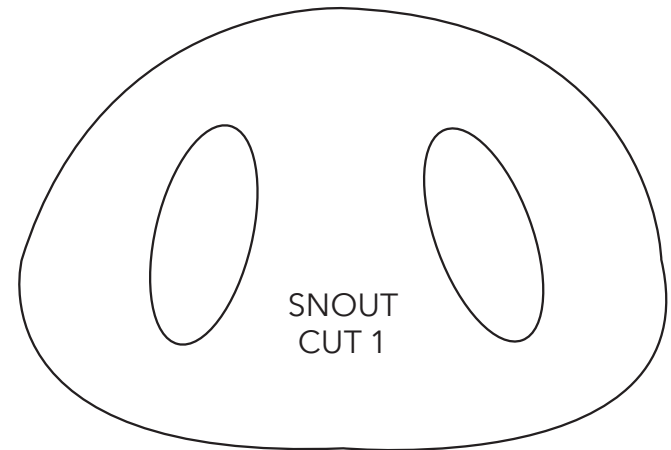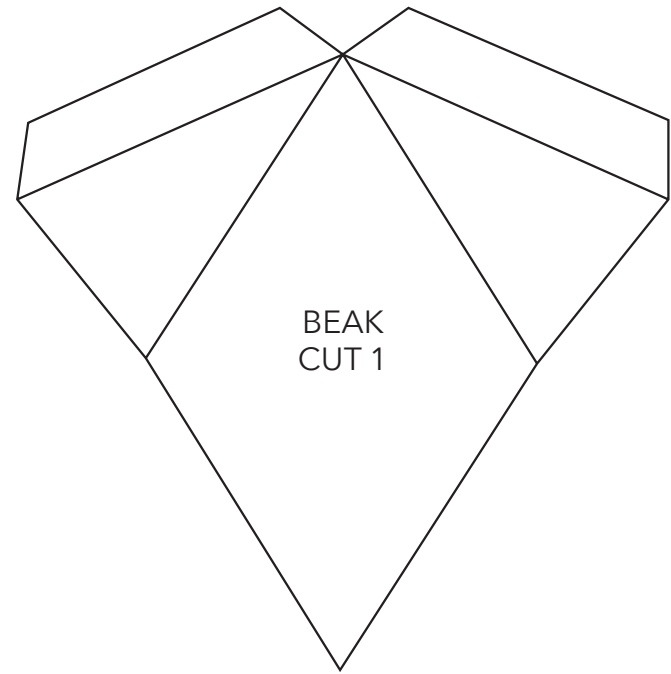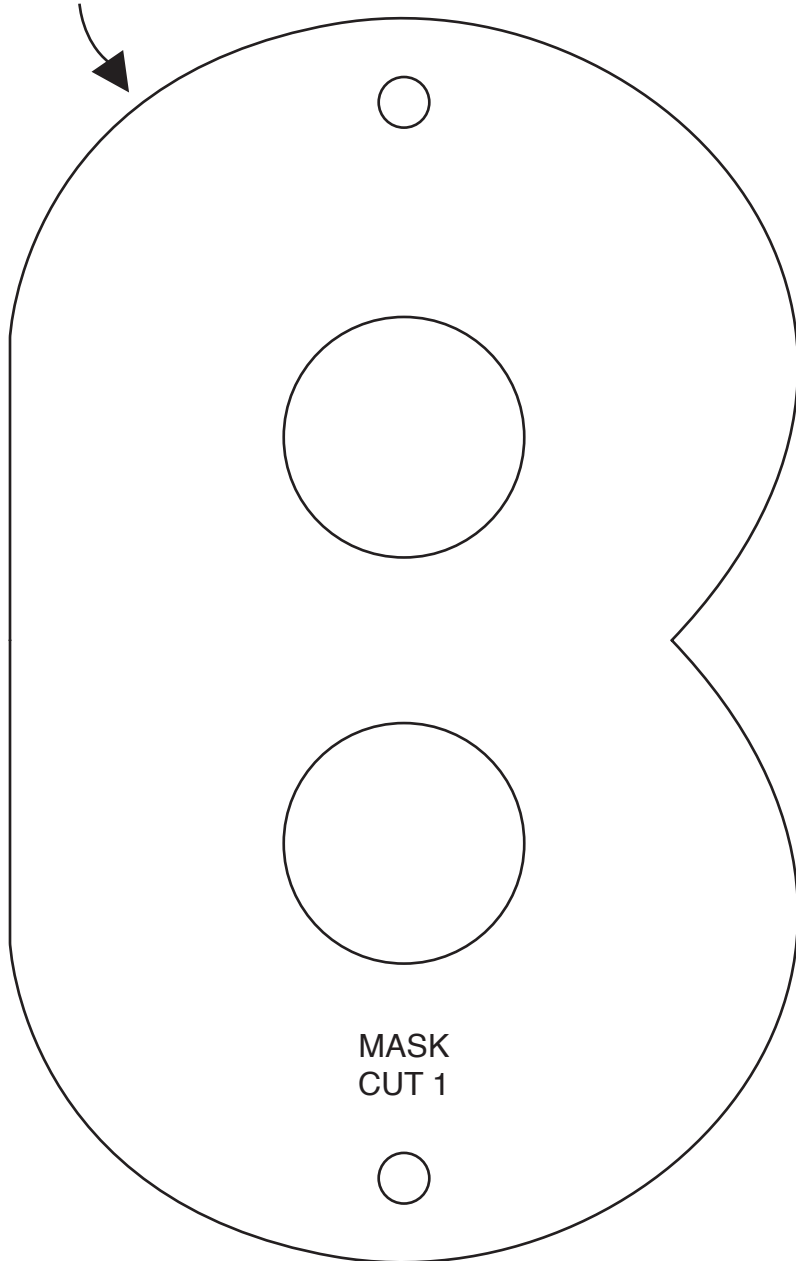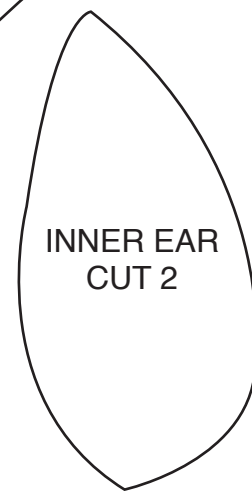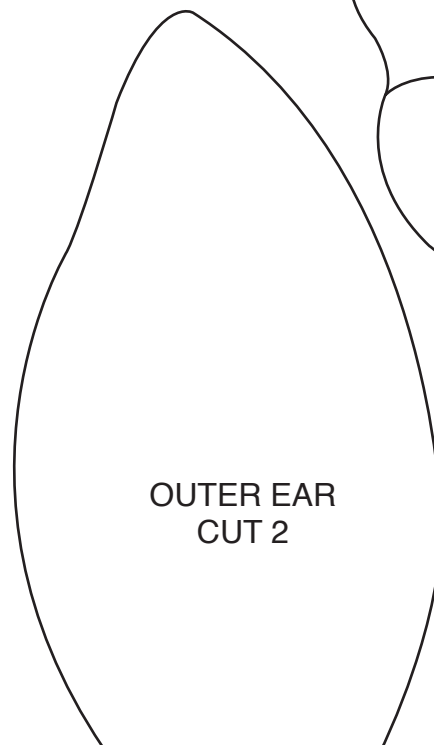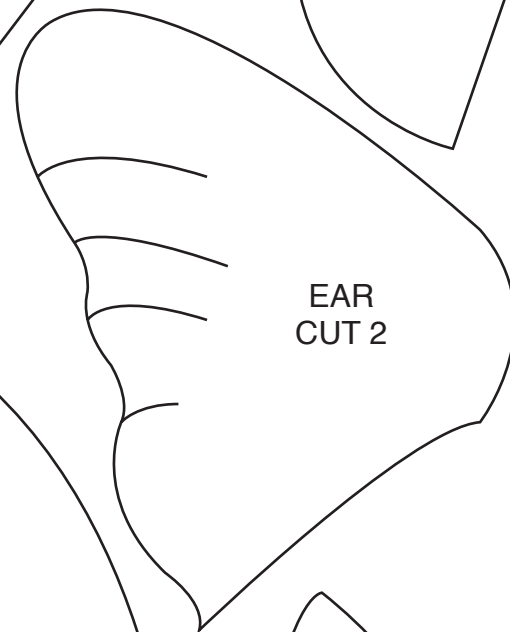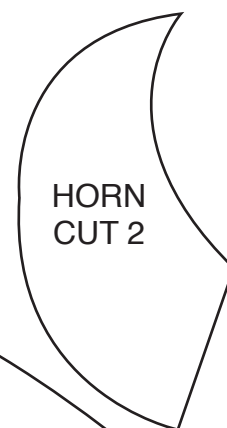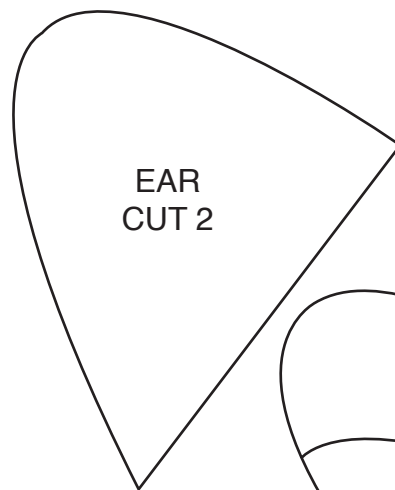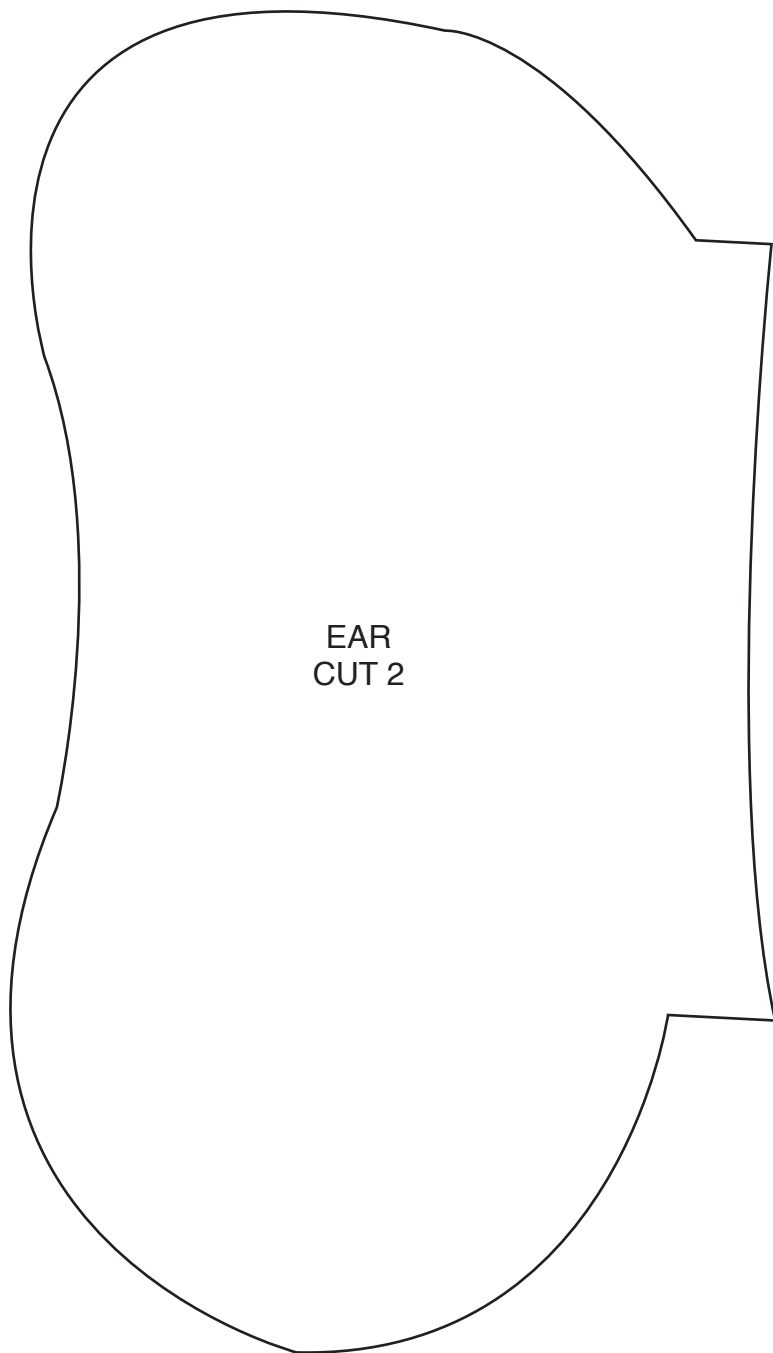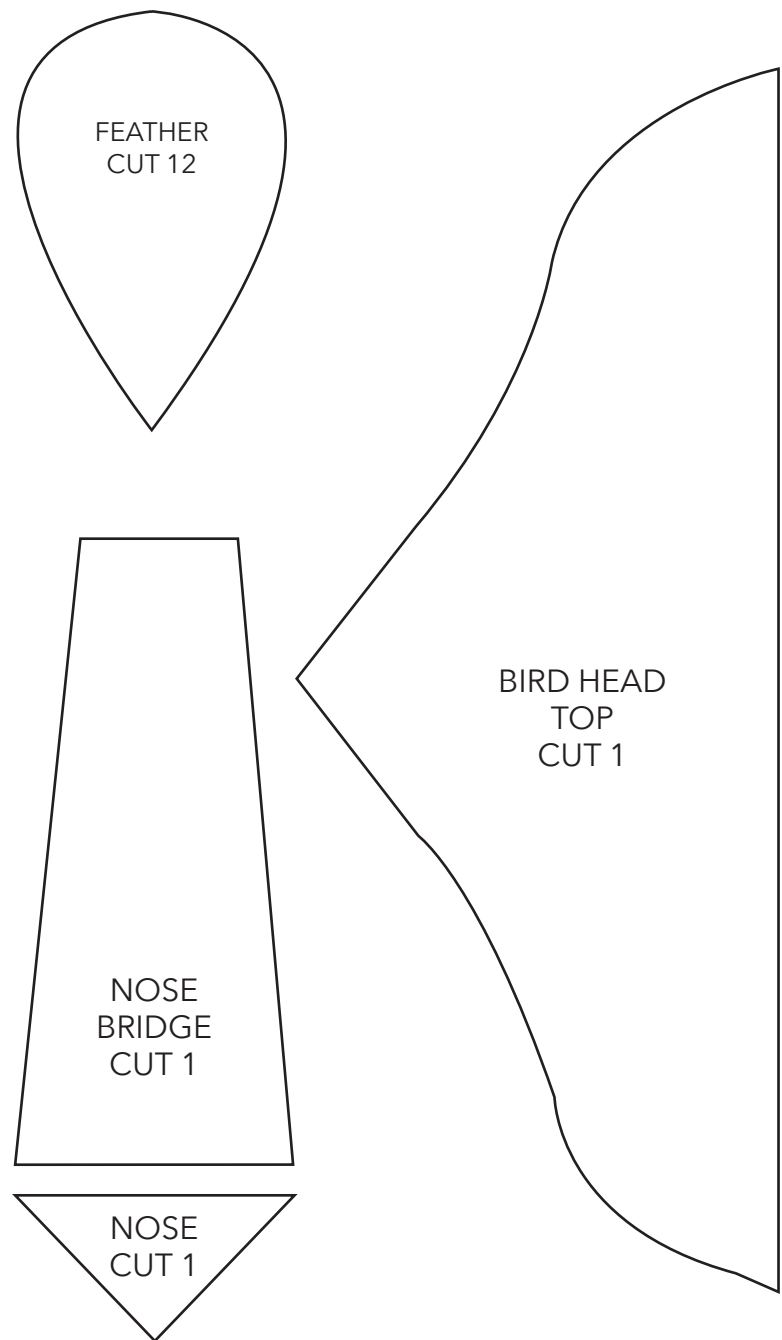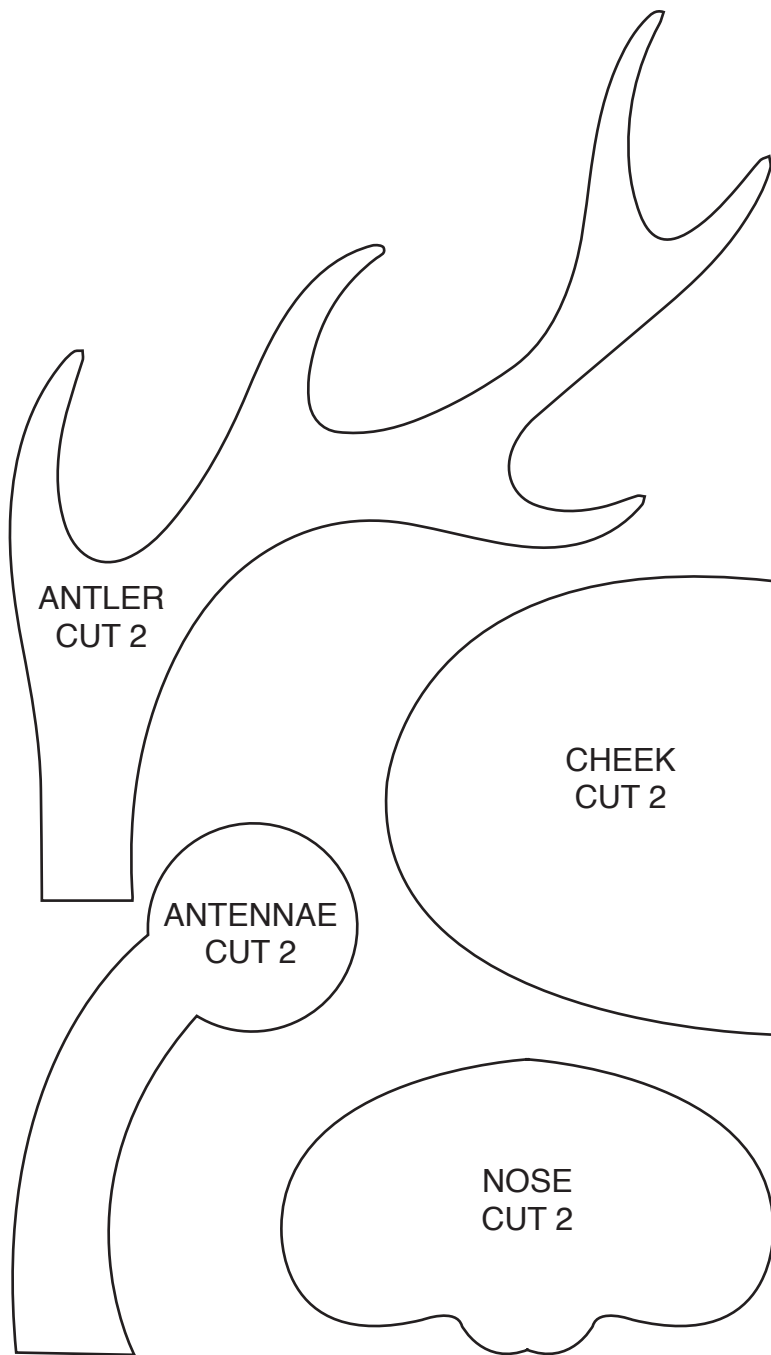
IDENTIFYING
COMMUNITY NEEDS
AND ASSETS THROUGH
AUDIO MAPPING

OVERVIEW

Maps have traditionally been visually-oriented, two-dimensional representations of data about a place, but imagine what new insights we could gain about a community's needs and assets through maps that engage our other senses. Maps that incorporate sounds present an alternative and participatory method for collecting, sharing and analyzing information about a community's resources. Audio maps are enriched by the assignment of sounds to symbolize data points. They have the potential to facilitate the delivery of data by activating new neural pathways that solidify memory, and like a new language, illuminate nuances that might be otherwise overlooked. In this section, we offer two kinds of audio mapping methods: a handmade audio map and a digital audio map.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Identify and make community needs and assets more widely understood

- Understand and reveal spatial and sensory patterns and their interrelationships

- Create an enhanced and layered sensory experience of a community

- Make non-visual data perceivable and measurable

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- To tell a compelling story

- To support community change-making

- To assess whether the distribution of community resources is equitable

- To understand more about the context of a place you cannot access physically

- To document social interactions without violating the privacy of community members (i.e. taking photos of people)

- To understand how different phenomenon in a place interact with one another

- To complement other forms of data collection

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ASSET MAPPING

Community asset mapping is a fundamental method used in participatory action research and community planning which draws on local expertise to identify strengths and resources within a given place. Asset maps are then used by the community for the purposes of education, engagement, capacity-building, and/or social change.

Core Principles and Assumptions

- Strengths-based approach
- Driven by members of the community

Some Reasons for Asset Mapping

- To engage community members in improving existing resources
- To address inequalities in a given community
- To help strengthen networks amongst community organizations and other stakeholders
- To identify which services are utilized in a community and why or why not

Methods and Approaches to Asset Mapping

- **Lists + Inventories -** Physical lists of assets and resources within a community
- **Table-Top Mapping -** Hand-drawn visual maps of resources and assets
- **Online Mapping -** Maps indicating assets and resources using technological tools

Types of Assets and Resources

- Environmental
- Historic/Cultural
- Human
- Economic
- Educational
- Physical
- Institutional
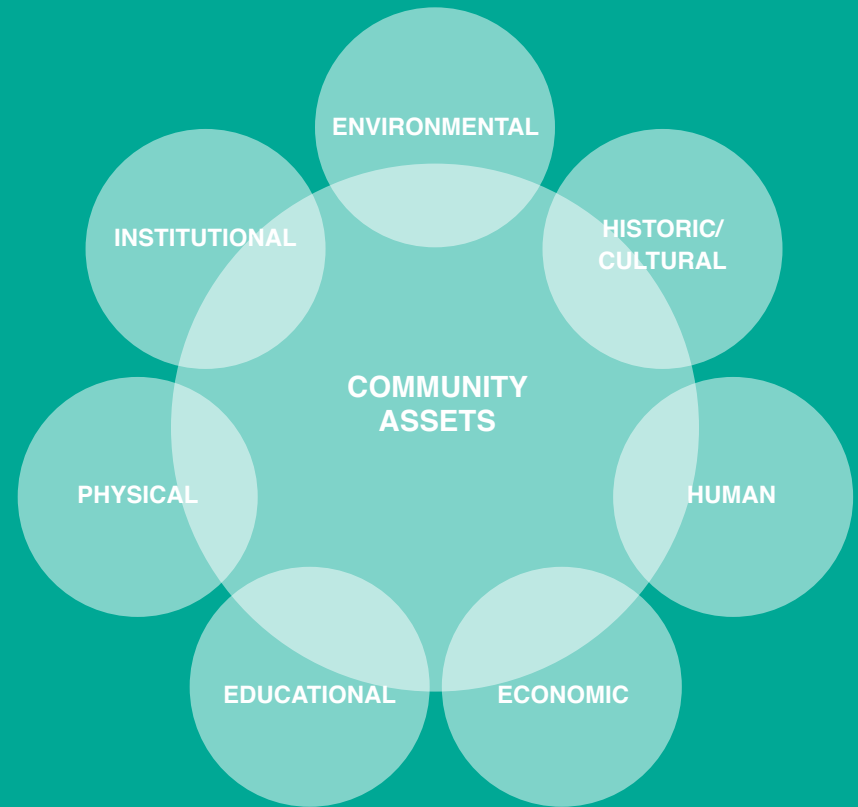
Additional Asset Mapping Resources

- **Community Asset Mapping Toolkit -** http://www.communityscience.com/knowledge4equity/AssetMappingToolkit.pdf
- **Community Tool Box Guide for Identifying Community Assets and Resources -** https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/identify-community-assets/main
- **Mapped: A Youth Community Mapping Toolkit -** https://practicalradical.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/mapped-a-youth-community-mapping-toolkit-for-vancouver.pdf

ASSET TYPE:
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ASSET TYPE:
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Draw a map and identify the community's assets.

HAND-MADE AUDIO MAP

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify a specific neighborhood or community of interest.** Determine what you are trying to understand or reveal about that community.

2. **Inventory the community's needs and assets through research and/or direct observation.** Conduct research about the place, ideally with participation from members of the community, and gain a deeper understanding of its needs and resources. The information about asset mapping on pg. 54 may be useful in this step. If you do not have access to the place physically, you can still create an audio map by following the steps below. Alternatively, you can listen to the sounded environment of the neighborhood and use your sound observations to inventory the community's needs and assets.

3. **Create a hand-drawn map of the neighborhood.** Map Making Tips on pg. 64 may be helpful for this step. Maps are a place to note the relevant data about community needs and resources identified through your research and exploration of the place.

4. **Identify sites on the map you will activate with sound.** Develop a visual symbology for either observed and recorded or found sounds (see Sound Libraries on pg. 61 or create sounds using your own body by stomping, clapping or humming) that are representative of the assets and needs you identified. Use the symbology that you have developed to visually notate the sounds that you have observed or want to use to highlight particular data on your map. Think about how you can effectively represent the needs and assets identified through sound.

5. **Perform your map.** Slowly trace your finger along the map as you perform/activate/invoke the associated sounds, potentially also describing the impact that the sounds may have on the community.

6. **Discuss how sounds can contextualize the data and stories about a place.** How did this audio exercise impact your impression of the place you were exploring, particularly if from afar? What new insights or questions can be exposed when new tools or languages are engaged to communicate that story (ie sonic cues and audio tools)?

This audio mapping method was contributed by Jocelyn Frank, Emily Cohen, and Umi Hsu.
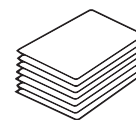
LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

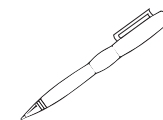## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

In pairs or with groups of 4-5

TIME

1 - 7 days

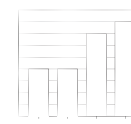## MATERIALS

Paper for creating maps

Pens (different colors, if possible)

List of identified resources or assets in a place

Human voices, instruments, computer, or other type of 'soundmaker'

(Optional) Additional data about the place to provide additional insight

DIGITAL AUDIO MAPPING

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify a question you want to answer about a place and research that question.** Through interviews, field recordings, site visits with community members, and/or with data collected from external sources (state/local GIS databases, US Census, etc), identify the key characteristics of the place.

2. **Organize the data into categories.** Create spreadsheets for different data layers for easy insertion into the mapping tool or platform you select.

3. **Host your sound recordings in a cloud-based database like SoundCloud.**

4. **Identify an appropriate mapping platform to display your data.** Some questions to consider beforehand may be: a) Does the information need to be delivered linearly? b) How would you like your users to experience the sounds? c) Will there be visual cues on the map to communicate the various layers of data in addition to the sounds? The list of Free and Subscription-based Map Making tools/platforms on pg. 66 may also be helpful for this step.

5. **Assign sonic recordings or cues to the community data.** Embed sound recording using Soundcloud iframe code in the asset pop-up window in web map. You may use field recordings captured from the community or representative sounds downloaded from public domain (See the Sound Libraries on pg. 61.)

6. **Create a key or legend to help orient users.** See the Handmade Audio Map method on pg. 58 for instructions on how to develop a sonic symbology.

7. **Make time for user training.** Since map reading is a learned skill, it will be important to make time for teaching and learning.

8. **Review the information your map reveals.** What new insights can you draw about the place through the incorporation of sonic cues? What new patterns can be revealed? What do you understand differently about the community's needs and assets?

This audio mapping method was contributed by Jocelyn Frank, Emily Cohen, and Umi Hsu

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

This type of map can be created by an individual or by a group

TIME

1 - 7 days

MATERIALS
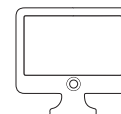
Computer with Internet

Software to create web maps with multimedia capabilities and to edit audio

Field recordings of community, preferably. If unavailable, use recordings in the digital commons (Free and subscription-based sound libraries below)
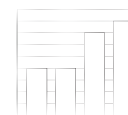
Data about the community

FREE AND SUBSRIPTION-BASED SOUND LIBRARIES

- **Free Sounds** - www.Freesound.org
- **Sound Dogs** - www.sounddogs.com
- **Rabbit Ears Audio** - www.Rabbitearsaudio.com
- **Audio Blocks** - www.Audioblocks.com

TIPS FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Start by listening.

Label recordings right away and use specific file names that you will remember later. A sound you can't find is a sound you can't use. Also, ID your location clearly as you move.

Listen to your recordings at home over speakers to learn how you can improve.

Make recording a habit, not a hobby.

Use closed headphones.

Choose a quiet location to record.

Record more than you think you need.

Record in uncompressed audio format (WAV). You can reduce file size later but cannot increase it.

Back up your recordings frequently.

Be prepared! Have pens and paper ready for taking field notes. Have back up batteries and memory cards for your equipment. And don't forget to press Record!

Practice recording in as many different places as possible to learn about how to manage different types of situations. Don't be afraid to experiment or make mistakes. Pay attention to what matters most to make the most of your recordings.

Use a microphone and carefully choose its location. Try to avoid unintended movement or sound that the microphone may pick up (wind, rustling clothes, breathing, and your own handling of equipment).

MAP MAKING
TIPS

AUDIENCE
Before you begin, take time to consider what exactly you are trying to communicate with your map, and to whom. Considering what their level of understanding already is can help make determinations about what information may need to be included in order for the map to have use to your intended audiences.

Good maps tell interesting and meaningful stories about a place. The following are some considerations to make before beginning your map that will hopefully help to ensure that you are telling the most powerful story possible.

SCALE
When considering the place you want to represent, be thoughtful about how much of the territory needs to be included in the map, and the implications for including more versus less, depending on what you hope to communicate.

HIERARCHY
Important things must look important. This may mean that less important information needs to be eliminated, so as not to crowd out the essential data, or that the design lends itself to ensuring that the key points you want to make are visually clear.

USER FEEDBACK
Sharing and getting feedback on a preliminary draft of your map from a few people in advance of a public release can help identify aspects of its presentation that may need adjustment or further clarification.

SYMBOLOGY
Just as in a purely visual map, where water should be blue and green space should be green, when incorporating audio, visual elements representing sounds should also clearly represent the data they are depicting.

FREE AND SUBSCRIPTION-BASED MAP MAKING TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

- **QGIS -** https://qgis.org/en/site/

- **UMapper -** www.umapper.com

- **Zeemaps -** https://www.zeemaps.com/

- **GeoCommons -** http://geoawesomeness.com/geocommons-2-0-web-based-mapping-platform/

- **Storymaps -** https://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/

- **Cue Base -** https://www.steinberg.net/en/products/cubase/start.html

- **Radio Aporee Sound Mapping Platform -** https://aporee.org/maps/

- **Carto:** https://carto.com/

ADDITIONAL MAP MAKING RESOURCES

- **Guide to Map Making -** http://gisgeography.com/map-elements-how-to-guide-map-making/

- **Map Making for Research and Advocacy -** https://www.slideshare.net/healthycity/map-making-101

- **Map Making to Engage Stakeholders -** http://www.healthworkforceta.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/HWTAC_Webinar_Cartography_101.pdf

ADDITIONAL AUDIO MAPPING EXAMPLES

- **Chatty Maps -** http://goodcitylife.org/chattymaps/

- **Everything Sings -** http://sigliopress.com/book/everything-sings/

SENSING SHIFTS IN
COMMUNITIES THROUGH
SOUNDWALKING

OVERVIEW

Soundwalks invite us to explore and more deeply understand the complex, and frequently changing dynamics of a community through focused listening, recording and analysis of a soundscape that has been experienced while walking. This form of deep, embodied listening practice can often reveal hidden social and cultural shifts happening within a place which are less easily understood through other means of field research, but which have the potential to lift up the struggles of those most directly impacted by the changes taking place. Soundwalks, which were pioneered by R. Murray Schafer and Hildegard Westerkamp of the World Soundscape Project in the 1970s, can take place individually or as part of a group and can also include the creation of a map or route capturing visuals that accompany the identified sounds.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Understanding place and context, including the implications of socioeconomic, environmental and cultural shifts within a community

- Honing of critical listening skills

- Cultivating empathy and profound embodied experience across social divides, generations, and amongst strangers

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- To educate others about a community challenge or shift that is taking place

- To demonstrate there are many different ways of understanding social, environmental, economic and political dynamics within a community

- To augment or complement other research methods

EMBARKING ON A SOUNDWALK

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Choose a main street or place with a high level of activity** that feels comfortable for you to walk along or move through.

2. **Listen closely to all of the sounds on site.** What feelings do the sounds evoke? How do the sounds interact with one another? If opportunities arise, ask passersby about the sounds and what they think of them. Do they consider them welcome or unwanted noise?

3. **Capture a 2-minute recording of sounds where you are.** Choose a site where you stand to take the recording using the voice memo function or a simple recording app on your phone, your laptop, or a fancier audio recorder. Note the street address, intersection, or latitude and longitude values of your recording site. For more information on audio recording, please visit pg. 62.

4. **Take at least 3-4 pictures of the sounds you hear.** If possible, try to capture a wide shot that shows the various sound layers at the point on the street where you made your recording.

5. **Listen to the recording a few times.** Do you hear anything on the recording that you didn't hear in person? Do you hear a volume disparity between sound sources? What do the sounds tell you about place's history, cultural heritage, and economy? What can you learn about a place through listening that you didn't realize you could?

6. **Write a 250-500 word analysis and reflection on what you heard.** Your description should include:

    - The location of your recording site
    - Your and others' reactions to the sounds you heard there
    - Anything you learned about the place through listening

This soundwalking method was developed by LA Listens.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
This method can be conducted by an individual, in pairs, or in small groups, ideally with some members of the local community.

TIME
3-5 hours

MATERIALS
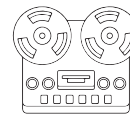
Audio Recorders/Cell Phone/Laptop

Field-recording Journal
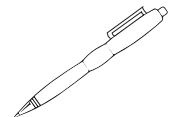
Pens
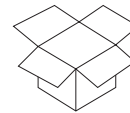
Space for archiving/ storing sounds (dropbox, etc)
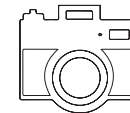
Camera

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Experiencing gentrification through Soundwalking

LA Listens is a Los Angeles-based civic sound collective comprised of researchers, musicians and community practitioners with a commitment to understanding the interrelationships between the sensory, social and ecological aspects of urban life. This is an image captured during one of their group soundwalks in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, which is experiencing profound cultural and demographic shifts due to gentrification. Project link: http://www.lalistens.org/

"Listening will help us reconnect to the environment. If we can understand what listening can do to reconnect us to our environment, we can understand what's happening to our environment... we would be enriched, hugely."

- Hildegard Westerkamp

CREATING AND SHARING YOUR
OWN SOUNDWALK

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify the key elements of a place that symbolize its identity as you perceive it.** Think about what you would want to communicate about the place to someone who has never been there before. What would you include on a walking tour of the place? This step can also be conducted alongside other local community members who may have particular perspectives to share.

2. **Select 8-10 specific locations (buildings, historical landmarks, natural resources, etc) that represent those elements and write a brief paragraph about each.** What do these sites represent or symbolize? What is the history, or set of parallel histories, behind each? What meaning or purpose have these places held and what meaning do they hold today?

3. **Record audio (10 seconds or less per site) from each of the 8-10 locations.** Try to capture the sound that best represents the place as you or the other community members experience it. For tips on audio recording, please visit pg. 62.

4. **Save the sounds to a digital archive,** such as Soundcloud, Dropbox, skydrive, or a similar storage space.

5. **Map out a walking route that incorporates all 8-10 sites.** Think carefully about the order in which the sites should be experienced.

6. **Compose an audio score that includes each of your 8-10 sounds** in the order in which they will be experienced as they walk. For more on audio editing, see pg. 108.

7. **Write a 3-5 page narrative description of your walk.** This should include a rationale for why you have designed your walk the way that you have, an explanation of what you were trying to communicate about the place, your reasoning behind which sites and sounds to include/omit, and descriptions of the sites and sounds selected.

8. **Walk the route you have created while listening to the score.** This walk provides an opportunity for identifying and addressing any technical issues that you discover before sharing your soundwalk with others.

9. **Reflect on your own soundwalk.** Either through a group discussion or personal writing reflection, consider what it was like to create a soundwalk of a place that was familiar to you? What new insights did you gain by undertaking this activity? What new insights did you gain by walking and listening to your own route? Are the unconscious biases you identified in yourself? Is there anything you would have done differently, or that you would want to communicate differently about the place?

(Optional/Additional Steps)

10. **Exchange soundwalks with someone else and complete the other person's walk.** Approach the sound walk with an open mind and an intent to develop an understanding for why they would design it the way they did. This exchange can happen between individuals who have lived within the same community for a long time, or those who are newly familiar to a particular place.

11. **Write a reflection about your experience of the other person's soundwalk.** What conclusions could you draw about the place based on the sonic experience? What did you learn about the relationship between sound and place based on this experience?

12. **Discuss your experience with your partner.**

This soundwalk method is used as part of the Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

This method can be conducted by an individual, in pairs, or in larger groups.

TIME

3-5 hours

MATERIALS

Audio recorder or phone

Laptop/computer

Printer

Notebook or journal
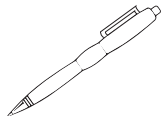
Pen

Audacity (free to download) or other audio editing software
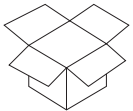
Space for archiving/ storing sounds (dropbox, etc)

TIPS

- **Make Accessible for Limited Mobility -** Ensure that the route of the soundwalk is safe and easily accessible for those with limited physical mobility.

- **Synchronize Sounds -** If multiple people will be taking the soundwalk simultaneously using different devices, plan accordingly to ensure that everyone is listening to the same thing at the same time.

- **Walk the Walk -** Experiencing the soundwalk at different times of day and in various kinds of weather can illuminate new understandings about the place, and may lead to adjustments in the route or content delivered.
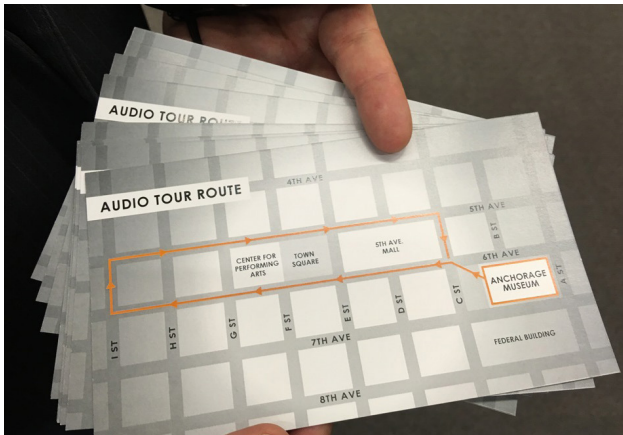
PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Frontier of Change:
Learning about life on the edge of climate change

Seeking to share stories and sounds from life on the edge of climate change, and to understand the impact of shifts taking place within a coastal Alaskan community, radio producers from the multimedia project Frontier of Change created a self-guided soundwalk that virtually transported listeners to the remote village of Shaktoolik, a community at risk of disappearing over the coming decades. Funded by the Association of Independents in Radio's "Localore" initiative, the project brought New York-based independent producers Isaac Kestenbaum and Josephine Holtzman to Alaska to work with Joaqlin Estus, Frank Chythlook, and others in the newsroom of KNBA, Anchorage's Alaska Native owned station. The team also organized other associated events about change in Alaska, including an audio scavenger hunt. During this experience, participants received an 'audio passport' with a phone number they could text to hear stories and get clues leading them to visit local artists around downtown Anchorage. The stops gave participants the opportunity to explore creative depictions of recent changes that have occurred in the community's history - from being entirely forested 100 years ago, to becoming an oil boom town - and also took listeners to an imagined future. To listen to the soundwalk and learn more: http://www.frontierofchange. org/soundwalks/

Photo credit: (Left) Audio Tour Route for Frontier of Change soundwalk, (Right) Shaktoolik, Alaska from above, Frontier of Change

DATE:

LOCATION:

SOUND:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

DATE:

LOCATION:

SOUND:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

DATE:

LOCATION:

SOUND:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

DATE:

LOCATION:

SOUND:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

SOUNDLOG
WORKSHEET

Draw a map of the place you want to create a soundwalk.

SOUNDMAPPING TOUR
WORKSHEET

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project

The Binghamton, New York Historical Soundwalk Project (BHSP) is a research initiative led by English and Sound Studies Professor Jennifer Stoever at Binghamton University that explores the potential for sound practice to augment collective understanding of the city's complex history and layered built environment through a series of activities at the intersection of sound practice and civic engagement. Developed in partnership with TechWorks Binghamton and in consultation with students and year-round residents, the BHSP culminated in a live guided soundwalk through a one-mile stretch of Downtown Binghamton that blended the area's ambient sound with five site-specific audio art installations. By reanimating the past to create new understandings of the city's present conflicts, the BHSP challenges all residents to consider how differential listening practices create fractured, unequal, and/or parallel experiences of allegedly shared urban spaces. For more information, visit: https://binghamtonsoundwalkproject.wordpress.com/

Photo credit: Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• Hall, Tom, Brett Lashua, and Amanda Coffey. "Sound and the Everyday in Qualitative Research." Qualitative Inquiry. Volume 14. 2008. pp: 1019-1040.

• McCartney, Andra. "Soundwalking: creating moving environmental sound narratives". The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies, Volume 2. 2014. Edited by Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek. pp. 212-237. https://soundwalkinginteractions.wordpress.com/2010/09/27/soundwalking-creating-moving-environmental-sound-narratives/

• O'Keefe, Linda. "Memories of Sound: Socioeconomic, Community and Cultural Soundscapes of Smithfield, Dublin from the 1950s." Auditory Culture Reader. Edited by Michael Bull and Les Back. Bloomsbury, 2015.

• Petty, Karis. "Walking through the Woodlands: Learning to Listen with Companions who have impaired vision." Auditory Culture Reader. Edited by Michael Bull and Les Back. Bloomsbury, 2015. pp: 173-184.

• Radicchi, Antonella. "A Pocket Guide to Soundwalking: Some Introductory Notes on its Origin, Established Methods, and Four Experimental Variations." Atmosphere and Perception. 2017. Pp: 70-73.

• Stoever, Jennifer. The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening. NYU Press, 2016.

• Stoever, Jennifer. Editor in Chief. Sounding Out: The Sound Studies Blog. https://soundstudiesblog.com/

• Soundtrackcity - http://www.soundtrackcity.nl/amsterdam/en/

• Westerkamp, Hildegard. "Soundwalking." Sound Heritage, Volume 3 no. 4, 1974, pp: 18-27.

• Wilson, Helen. "Sound Geographies, Soundwalks, and More-Than-Representational Methods." Edited by Michael Bull and Les Back. Auditory Culture Reader. Bloomsbury, 2016. pp: 163-173.

UNCOVERING AND HONORING HIDDEN HISTORIES THROUGH PERSONAL STORYTELLING

Photo Credit: Memory Boxes: Mr. and Mrs. Matsushita K Shozawa, Artist.
Nikkei National Museum.

OVERVIEW

Before stories were written down, they were shared and passed down from generation to generation through the oral tradition. Personal and inter-generational storytelling enables us to learn from, preserve and share the often forgotten or unacknowledged memories from the past in ways that can help inform our understanding of the present. Sharing and archiving these personal memories in the form of oral histories can not only help heal past traumas, but can bring people together over shared experiences and struggles overcome. The act of archiving historical sounds and personal narratives can take many different forms, and can also incorporate other creative media, such as photography and found objects.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Cultivating empathy and educating publics

- Acknowledging, healing and learning from past traumas or social divides

- Developing a deeper understanding of a place and its historical contexts through personal storytelling

- Digitizing and preserving community stories/sounds, images, and objects that have not yet been captured and passing them on for the benefit of future generations

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- To ensure that particular memories, images, and objects are preserved when a place is on the verge of major change

- To shed light on historical narratives that have been misunderstood or absent from public discourse and education

- To bring a community together over shared or fragmented histories

CONDUCTING AND ARCHIVING ORAL HISTORIES

Selecting a Location

- **Choose a neutral/comfortable space.** Selecting a location where the interviewee will feel at home and at ease to share his or her experiences freely is key. It is often helpful to have the interviewee select the meeting location for this reason.

- **Avoid spaces with other people or background noise.** It is also important to conduct the oral history interview in a quiet space where there won't be any disruptions or noise while the interviewee is speaking.

Preparing for the interview

- **Do your research.** The more background research you have conducted on the interviewee, the more prepared you will be to make the most of the time you have together, and know which topics need to be approached with sensitivity, and avoid unanticipated issues that may arise, such as a negative or overly emotional reaction to a particular question that halts the conversation.

- **Bring back-up recording equipment.** Be prepared for the unexpected (ie equipment that isn't working properly, or an interview that runs longer than anticipated, etc) by bringing back-up audio recorders and batteries with you, and testing them once in the space.

- **Create a tentative list of questions beforehand, but don't send them in advance.** Letting the interviewee know the general topics and themes you'd be interested in exploring beforehand (and also having a strong sense of this yourself) will help everyone feel more comfortable and prepared, and will help ensure that responses to questions remain genuine and natural during the interview. If questions are sent beforehand, the interviewee may prepare 'staged' answers based on what he or she assumes you want to hear as the researcher. Although it will be helpful for you to have a tentative set of questions prepared, don't be afraid to stray from those during the interview.

- **Be prepared to practice deep listening.** An hour or so before the interview begins, find a quiet place to sit and prepare yourself for an exchange that will enable you to open your heart and mind through deep listening.

- **Frame questions in creative ways.** Ask questions in such a way that encourage your interviewee to 'show' as opposed to 'tell' their story. During the interview itself, try to avoid questions that are leading or that will result in a single word response. To the greatest extent possible, try to follow your own instincts about where the emotion lies and steer the conversation towards it.

Archival Opportunities

There are a number of ways to archive oral histories in whatever format they may be - from paper records to digital preservation - to ensure their use and longevity over time. Trained professionals, such as archivists or preservationists, will know the appropriate ways of storing and maintaining the oral histories over time.

Sample Interview Questions

- What is your earliest memory?

- Do you remember any of the stories your parents or guardians, or other relatives use to tell about your childhood or theirs?

- Which parent do you most resemble and why?

- What was your relationship like with your siblings, cousins or other family members?

- How long have you lived here, how has it changed over time, and what do you miss about the way it used to be?

- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

- What are some of the major challenges you have faced?

- Who do you look up to? Who are your mentors?

- What is your proudest accomplishment?

- What, if anything, do you regret?

- How would you like to be remembered?

- What do you hope to pass on to future generations?

- What do you think the future holds?

- What else would you like to share?

BUILDING TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

- **Be clear about your intentions.** At the outset of the collaboration, communicate clearly what you hope will come from the work together, and establish a set of shared agreements around expectations of one another. These ought to be revisited throughout the partnership.

- **Identify mutually beneficial opportunities to strengthen the partnership.** Early on, and along the way, make an effort to strengthen the partnership by identifying emerging opportunities (ie grant funding or creative ways to share the research) to further each other's goals, and the goals of the collaboration as a whole.

- **Spend time where people already are.** Invest your time building personal relationships as well as professional ones in places that your partners are already spending time. In addition to scheduling time to work, make time to have fun together and get to know one another on a deeper level.

- **Be conscious of cultural norms and customs.** Adhering to customs and social norms in a context that is unfamiliar to you will help to ensure that those with whom you are working feel you are respectful and aware of your surroundings. Understanding the political and cultural landscape, and the dynamics between different entities within your partner's community, will also help ensure that sensitive or complicated issues are broached with care and discretion.

- **Be consistent and follow through.** Trust is built upon a series of small interactions over time. By routinely keeping your promises and following through on your commitments, you are more likely to build a strong foundation of trust with your research partner(s).

ACTIVITY: Warm-up Personal Storytelling

OVERVIEW

Through this personal storytelling activity, participants can explore identity in a safe and supportive environment through hands-on writing and sound editing exercises while honing skills in sound production, verbal/writen expression, and community-building. This activity can be a helpful exercise for building trust at an early stage in the oral history collection process.

INTENDED OUTCOMES/ WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- Build empathy
- Break down stereotypes
- Honor personal histories and experiences
- Develop writing and storytelling skills
- Highlight the multidimensionality of what is happening internally (e.g. thoughts overlay speech, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Intro and Brainstorm.** Introduce the concept and benefit of free-writing. Preview writing prompt: Tell me about your family and where you're from [conduct group brainstorm of the various directions the prompt could go if necessary]

2. **Free Write.** Free-write with the prompt: Tell me about your family and where you're from [2 minutes]

3. **Trade with a partner.** Trade writing samples with partner who circles 3 things they find interesting and want to know more about [> 2 minutes] and returns writing to the author.

4. **Free Write (second round).** Author selects and writes more about one of the circled items [2 minute free-write].

5. **Trade with partner and free write (third round).** This exercise is continued 2+ times.

6. **Story Record.** Individuals/Pairs/Small Groups voice-record their stories using computers and audio editing software [individuals may read writing word-for-word or simply use it as a jumping off point to tell their story]. For more tips on audio editing, check out pg. 108. Send recordings to facilitator.

7. **Listen and Reflect.** Listen to samples of everyone's work and group brainstorms and responds to editing techniques (e.g. subconscious inflection, emphasis, repetition, dynamics, speed, etc.)

This method was developed by Beau Kenyon for one of his project's as Boston Public Library's Composer in Residence.
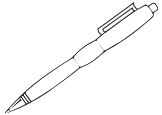
LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

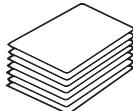2-20 people (all working in pairs)

TIME

60-90 minutes

MATERIALS

Pencil

Paper

Computer (with built-in mic)

Sound editing software (GarageBand, Logic, Audacity, etc.)

Additional optional materials: external mic

"If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten."

- Rudyard Kippling

AURAL POSTCARDS

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify a historic site or monument of interest.** Use the concept of a postcard as a way to understand a place. Consider both the front (public-facing history) and back (personal/private connections) via sound and what both evoke about the site's sense of place and history.

2. **Generate a list of everything that your site has been over time.** Conduct archival and real estate research. Has ownership changed? Have the physical structures on the site been altered? What purpose has the site served at various points throughout history?

3. **Walking the site, identify and record 5-10 unique sounds** that you find representative of its essence. Store the sounds in a secure file (in dropbox, soundcloud, etc).

4. **Find 5-10 other images related to your site** (both present day photographs, and past images identified through historical archives, local antique shops, etc) that represent its past and present context within the community as you understand it.

5. **Conduct an oral history of someone who has a connection to the site.** It could be a neighbor, local business owner, elected official, or someone else identified through your archival research. Invite them to share their own history and relationship to the chosen place, drawing from sample questions on pg. 105 and other tips made available on pgs. 94-97 on Conducting and Archiving Oral Histories.

6. **Create an aural postcard of your site** comprised of the audio and visual elements you have compiled. Using Audacity, or a similar audio editing program, edit the various sound files you have captured into a score that can be played alongside a slideshow of the images (past and present) you have collected. See pg. 108 for more tips on Audio Editing.

7. **Write a 500-800 word narrative describing what new insights you have gained** from this exploration. Have you encountered multiple and/or contradictory truths about the history of your site, and if so, where? What discrepancies have you come across in the public-facing vs. personal/private histories connected with your site? What have the soundscapes and narratives in your exploration revealed about individual interpretation of meaning in relation to historical places and events? Do these insights change the way you understand the broader community in which the site resides?

8. **Share your postcard** with others and discuss what new insights emerge. Make it available to the public by archiving it in an accessible place or creating a shared exhibit if multiple postcards have been developed as part of a class, workshop, etc.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

There is no limit to the amount of participants who can contribute their stories and personal histories to a given project. It is ideal if the recording and archiving of personal narratives happens between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee).
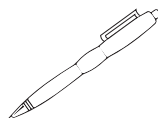
TIME

1 - 4 weeks

MATERIALS

Audio recorder or phone
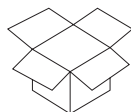

Notebook or journal

Pen

Historical/Real Estate Archives

Antique postcards or historical images from a local library or antique shop

Secure space for archiving/storing sounds (dropbox, soundcloud, etc)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR AURAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

- What is your earliest memory of this place?
- Do you remember any of the stories your parents, grandparents, or guardians use to tell about it?
- How long have you lived here?
- How has the place changed over time, and what do you remember and/or miss about the way it used to be?
- What, if anything, have you learned from this place?
- How would you like it to be remembered?
- What do you think the future holds for this place?
- What else would you like to share?

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- **Let the Participants Lead -** The most authentic and cathartic personal narratives emerge when the storyteller can steer the direction of the story.
- **Double Consent is Key -** Provide those who are sharing their personal narratives with the opportunity to listen to their recording and omit or make changes as necessary so they feel comfortable with the result
- **Celebrate the Stories -** Hold an event and share the collected stories, sounds and images with those who have participated in the project, as well as others that might be interested to know the recordings are available as a public resource, not just sitting in a file or on a shelf.

This aural postcard method had been developed by Jennifer Stoever as part of the Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Aural Postcards

Aural Postcards have been created and featured by the Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project in NY. Inspired by the work of sound theorist Fran Tonkiss, the aural postcards, like sonic time capsules, serve to educate both students and long-time residents about the multi-layered history of their shared city, and to create spaces of public discourse around current community challenges. Online models developed by Binghamton University students for TechWorks Binghamton can be accessed at:
http://www.ctandi.org/aural-postcards-1/

Photo credit: Aural Postcard, Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project

"Sound gives us the city as matter and as memory. In this register, the double life of cities - the way they slide between the material and the perceptual, the hard and the soft-is made audible."

- Fran Tonkiss

TIPS FOR
AUDIO EDITING

1. Good editing comes from good recording. Review Audio Recording Tips on pg. 62 for details.

2. Back up your recordings before you begin to edit to ensure you don't lose any critical material.

3. User-friendly software, such as Audacity and GarageBand are best for audio editing.

4. Listen as if it is for the first time. Even after hearing your recording over and over, try to continue to listen as though you've never heard it before so that you can identify areas that still need more attention.

5. Fade in and fade out background noises and room tone gradually, and keep them at lower levels so that they sound natural and complementary to the human voice recordings.

6. Never edit alone. Share your recording both with those who are familiar and unfamiliar with the content to get their feedback.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
House of Memory Museum

Like many other such museums around the world, the Casa de la Memoria (House of Memory Museum) in Medellín, Colombia is a historical museum dedicated to sharing the memories and personal stories of those that have been impacted by the country's violent past as well as offering a safe and reflective space for pluralistic dialogue, remembrance and community transformation. The exhibits build empathy by enabling visitors to listen to intimate firsthand accounts of personal struggle, generosity, and courage. The museum itself acts as both a kind of 'home' that invokes feelings of belonging and hospitality, as well as an archive that grapples with divergent truths and parallel realities, ultimately raising questions about how best to reconstruct a sense of hope for the nation's future.
For more information, visit:
http://museocasadelamemoria.gov.co/en/

Photo credit: Museo Casa de la Memoria, Medellín, Colombia

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Memory Boxes

Memory Boxes: Stories from New Denver is a community-based art and oral history project initiated by socially-engaged artist Katherine Shozawa. The project involved Japanese Canadian elders from New Denver, B.C. including her own relatives, who endured incarceration during WWII and today, continue to live in a former internment camp site. Over 7 months, participants shared their personal memories about their lives before and after the forced relocation, often from the living rooms in their own homes. Elders co-created keepsake boxes of personal items they entrusted to the artist together with objects and photos made by the artist to tell their stories. The project has been presented to schools and community groups across Canada and the US. The boxes and oral histories are in permanent collections at the Nikkei National Museum and Simon Fraser University Digital Archive. [Link to this for photos: http://katherineshozawa.com/community/m]

Photo credit: Memory Boxes, artist Katherine Shozawa.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ORAL HISTORIES

- **Oralhistory.org: Guides to conducting oral histories -** http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/
- **Storycorps: A Toolkit for Success -** http://www.programminglibrarian.org/storycorps/files/SCL_DIY_Guide_2014.pdf
- **Storycorps Education and Training Resources -** https://storycorps.org/discover/education/

AUDIO EDITING RESOURCES

- **Audacity Audio Editing Software (Free) -** https://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/
- **Audio Tool -** https://www.audiotool.com/product
- **Radio Handbook -** http://radiohandbook.org/editing-tips/

AURAL POSTCARDS

- **Aural Postcard Project (Binghamton Historical Soundwalk Project) -** http://www.ctandi.org/aural-postcards-1/
- Tonkiss, Fran. "Aural Postcards: Sound, Memory and the City." Auditory Culture Reader. Edited by Michael Bull and Les Back. Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 243-248.

PROMOTING PUBLIC DISCOURSE THROUGH POP-UP LISTENING

OVERVIEW

Whether sharing critical research findings, or inviting community ideas on a local issue of concern, meeting people in places where they already are is a valuable way to broaden and diversify participation. Pop-up listening can take many forms -- from makeshift community storytelling booths to public displays of data broadcast through a megaphone while being projected onto a high-rise building. In whatever form pop-up listening activities are conceived, these transient forms of engagement can help initiate community dialogue around controversial topics and instigate community-led efforts to transform neighborhoods. This section covers an array of approaches to pop-up listening that have the potential for replication in other community contexts.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Activate and lift up local knowledge to promote public discourse and drive community change

- Broaden and diversify community participation

- Increase public access to and expand ownership of critical information

- Build agency and community decision-making power in planning, policy and design processes

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- To understand a community's needs and aspirations

- To engage in a process of collectively imagining an alternative future

- To share or collect critical information with/from large numbers of people in an efficient and memorable way

- To involve those that may not be able or inclined to participate in traditional public engagement processes by meeting where they already are (ie the elderly, children, non-native speakers)

POP-UP COMMUNITY VISIONING THROUGH BUILDING: FROM STORIES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify a project or issue that you'd like to engage the local community to share their ideas on to build capacity and self-activation.** This could be a controversial site that is about to be redeveloped, or a concept that may be on community members' minds, such as sustainable transportation planning or access to affordable, healthy food.

2. **Collect making and modeling materials.** Gather an assortment of small, colorful household objects and construction paper on large tables in an accessible public place (sidewalk, park, etc), or convene participants in a neutral meeting space.

3. **Ask a poignant question.** Prompt participants with a statement or question to spark their imaginations, such as, 'Build your favorite childhood memory' or 'When was the first time you confronted difference' or 'What would you like to pass onto your grandchildren.'

4. **Build.** Give participants 5 minutes to collect the objects they need and build their model, providing a 1 minute warning before wrapping up the activity.

5. **Share the work.** Once everyone is finished, give each individual 1 minute to describe what they built and share back to the group. Have everyone give a round of applause to each participant after they share.

6. **Debrief the process.** Synthesize and discuss the information shared. There are many ways to do this (ie, through identifying themes across models, listing and then voting on best ideas, etc). This activity builds empathy and trust. Now participants are ready to collaborate, prototype ideas and define community values.

7. **Engage in partner/team building.** Have participants collaborate on a second model around a theme of relevance to a particular location or community (ie, Create your ideal transportation system for your city).

8. **Share back.** Each team presents their model and then each team member is asked to pick a day, time, and activity using the model as a reflection of their own life.

9. **Debrief the group process.** Synthesize and discuss the information shared. There are many ways to do this (ie through identifying themes across models, listening and then voting on best ideas, etc). This activity builds planning capacity, community values and encourages self-determination.

10. **Share the ideas with decision makers/policymakers.** Encourage participants to continue to engage in local community planning processes and to share their perspectives with elected leaders.

This method was contributed by James Rojas/Place-It.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
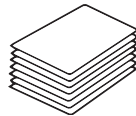
6-25 at a time is ideal
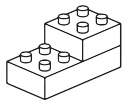
TIME

60-90 minutes
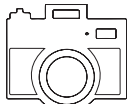
MATERIALS

Public Meeting space
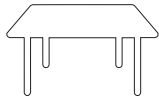
Tables

Construction Paper

Assorted household objects (legos, buttons, cotton balls, paper clips, toy cars, pipe cleaners, etc)

Camera

Translation equipment (optional)

TIPS

- Pick a public location that is neutral and accessible to diverse audiences

- Plan in coordination with existing large-scale community events to maximize impact

- Start with a prompt that encourages each participant to explore his/her own personal experience

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Envisioning our Community's Future through Pop-up Making and Modeling

Founded by architect and urban planner, James Rojas, Place-It uses pop-up storytelling and model-building workshops, often in highly visible and accessible public spaces, to broaden participation in planning and design processes, to educate communities about the role these processes play in shaping the way we live, and to translate the community's dreams and ideas for the future into physical form. Through this type of pop-up engagement, community members can translate their own experiences and aspirations into physical form to help address urban planning issues, and can generate plans and policy proposals to be shared with policymakers. For more information, please visit: http://www.placeit.org/index.html

Photo Credit: University of Washington http://swarmdev4.be.washington.edu//wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Natural-History-Museum.jpg

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Pop-up Interventions Spur Community Conversations on Policing Practices

How can data be shared in accessible ways that enable community members to use them to advocate for change? What does it mean for a community most directly impacted by research to share ownership of the data?

The Public Science Project (PSP), situated within the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, believes social science can play an important role in interrupting injustice. Through engaging in participatory action research, and disseminating findings in publicly accessible ways, their work aims to position those most intimately impacted by research as leaders in framing the questions and interpretations, and in designing meaningful research products and actions within their communities.

The Morris Justice Project, a collaborative research team of neighborhood residents in the South Bronx and members of the Public Science Project, documents and disseminates experiences of policing in the 40-block community near Yankee Stadium. In this video, the Morris Justice Project partners with the Illuminator Van of the Occupy Wall Street Movement to project the results of their Stop and Frisk survey onto a high-rise apartment building in the South Bronx to make the findings accessible to the community and to respectfully request a more just approach to local policing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mliuISC2hJk

As part of their 'Sidewalk Science' initiative, the Morris Justice Project also set up stations on a NY sidewalk with chalk drawings of research findings to provide an open invitation for local passersby to discuss issues of local policing and learn more about the research that had been conducted.

For more information about Participatory Action Research, see pg. 131.

For more information, visit:
www.publicscienceproject.org and
www.morrisjustice.org

Photo credits: Morris Justice Project

Translation into both Spanish and English make the station accessible to those most directly impacted by displacement

Headphones are set up for participants to hear the stories of others who have been displaced throughout the city

The **Colorful Mural** Design draws curious residents to learn more about the project and come inside

Audience Engagement with participants and passersby can easily occur at street festivals and other events around the city

Audio recorders provide participants with a place to share and record their own experiences with gentrification

Mobility to different locations and in various types of weather is enabled by the wheels below and roof above the listening station

Accessibility up and down the ramp makes it easy for families with strollers and those in wheelchairs to participate

NO MÁS DESPLAZAMIENTO FÍSICO O CULTURAL

NO MORE PHYSICAL OR CULTURAL DISPLACEMENT

GENTRIFICATION IS URBAN COLONIALISM

LA GENTRIFICACIÓN ES EL COLONIALISMO URBANO

NO ONE DISCOVERED EGLESTON

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Mobile Listening Promotes Community Dialogue on Displacement
The Urbano Project, a non-profit organization that creates participatory art as a vehicle for social change, in partnership with artist Salvador Jiménez-Flores, created a mobile mural and interactive anti-displacement listening station, Nomadic Civic Sculpture 4.0, to spark community dialogue about the impacts of gentrification in Boston.

photo credit: Allegra Williams

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PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Pop-up Listening Booth Facilitates Engagement in Community Redevelopment

Taking an unorthodox approach to a redevelopment effort in Hunters Point, San Francisco, consultants Envelope A + D and Studio O, engaged and built rapport with residents in the predominantly working-class African-American neighborhood through providing a unique venue for recording, listening to, and archiving local stories about growing up there, including life in the shadow of the site's former power plant. Referencing the industrial heritage of the area, the team worked with local youth to refurbish a shipping container with armchairs, lamps and wallpaper to make it feel like your grandmother's living room, and partnered with StoryCorps, the nationwide oral history project, to collect over 20 stories from residents. This approach helped encourage community dialogue and participation in efforts to transform the site, and ultimately paved the way towards activating the site temporarily and in the longer term. Instead of drawing up a plan without any resident input, the team employed pop-up listening to gain valuable insights from the neighborhood's past and foster meaningful conversations that could help shape its future. For more information about StoryCorps and collecting oral histories, please see pg. 113.

Listening NOW video: http://nowhunterspoint.org/listeningnow/

Storycorps audio: http://nowhunterspoint.org/media/#

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
DIY Community Radio

In many parts of the world, community radio is used to activate critical dialogue about issues that are absent or actively banned from mainstream media. In 2017, artist Erik DeLuca led a workshop on radio sound for the LungA Art School in the small east Iceland town of Seyðisfjörður. The workshop was anchored on establishing a free, pirate radio station as a site for reflection, agitation, provocation, and composition in sound art. Seyðisfjörður Community Radio 107.1 FM served as a bridge for the creative communications between the school and the Seyðisfjörður residents, sparring dialogs that strengthen community identity and cohesion. Seyðisfjörður Community Radio continues to make broadcasts today. For more, visit: https://soundcloud.com/user-56177927.

(Above) In Houston's Third Ward, OJBKFM Third Coast, another version of pop-up radio- as well as a temporary public art project commissioned by Project Row Houses -- emerged in 2016 out of the back of a 1959 Cadillac to activate and reinvigorate the cultural heritage of the Dowling Street commercial corridor.

Photo credit: (Left) Anne Hamersky (Right) Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas

POP-UP DO-IT-YOURSELF COMMUNITY RADIO STATION

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Choose a location to install a free "pop-up" community radio station.** Possible locations include busy street corners, vehicles, local businesses, but are by no means limited to these types of locations.

2. **Acquire an FM broadcast transmitter and antenna** and replace the original transmitter antenna with the new one by soldering it on. If the new antenna is longer than 35 inches, the signal will fall out of normal FM frequency range and listeners will not be able to tune in.

3. **Pick a transmission frequency.** Test out how well your radio broadcast works and how far your radio waves can reach. The copper wire may be helpful in dealing with resistors and in trouble shooting issues that arise.

4. **Make a visual emblem and give the station a name.** Branding and identity are key to spreading the word.

5. **Hang the visual emblem around town.** Whether in the form of a paper flyer, or a bumper sticker, make sure to get the word out about your new radio station.

6. **Broadcast radio sound.** Your audience will begin to build, particularly if you create the station in collaboration with other local community members.

7. **Use the radio station as a means for building critical awareness and empathy.** You might consider discussing issues of representation, heritage, erasure and memory over the airwaves, as well as other issues specific to the neighborhood.

8. **Leave the pop-up radio station up and empower others to co-own it.** If there is a need for the space to discuss particular community challenges, radio is often the idea place for this and they will continue broadcasting themselves.

This method was adapted from an approach used by Erik DeLuca.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The more the better

TIME

1 – 2 weeks

MATERIALS

FM Broadcast Transmitter
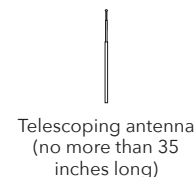
Telescoping antenna (no more than 35 inches long)

Putty knife

Soldering iron

Copper wire

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **DIY Community Radio Station –** https://www.wired.com/2015/11/create-your-own-pirate-radio/

- **Children's Radio Foundation Handbook on Starting Your Own Youth Radio -** http://www.childrensradiofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Youth-Toolkit_FINAL.pdf

- Juris, Jeffrey S. "Frequencies of Transgression: Notes on the Politics of Excess and Constraint among Mexican Free Radios." in Radio Fields: Anthropology and Wireless Sound in the 21st Century. NYU Press, 2012.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Pop-up 'Tea' Stop Transportation Planning

In 2014, the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) partnered on a series of pop-up transportation planning efforts in Boston that took on the form of imaginary 'Tea Stops'. At these booths, community members were able to openly share site-specific desires for the future of the City's transportation network. This is one of many pop-up listening activities spearheaded by DS4SI in collaboration with other local leaders. DS4SI convenes activists, artists and academics to imagine new approaches to social change and to design social interventions-- actions that reconfigure social habits, unspoken agreements and arrangements-- that result in new solutions to social problems. For more information, visit: http://www.ds4si.org/

Photo credit: Design Studio for Social Intervention

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Creative and Pop-up Community Engagement and Planning

- Community Engagement Toolkit: Guidance and Resources for Engaging Community in Planning and Policy Development. Futurewise, 2014. http://www.futurewise.org/assets/reports/CET.pdf

- Sarkissian, Wendy and Hurford, Dianna. Creative Community Planning: Transformative Engagement Methods for Working at the Edge. Earthscan, 2010.

- Sarkissian, Wendy and Bunjamin-Mau, Wiwik. SpeakOut: The Step by Step Guide to SpeakOuts and Community Workshops. Earthscan, 2009.

- Rojas, James. "Let me tell you a Story! Storytelling to Enhance Urban Planning Engagement." Planetzin. February 14, 2018. https://www.planetizen.com/features/97224-let-me-tell-you-story-storytelling-enhance-urban-planning-engagement

Participatory Action Research

- Assil, Reem, Kim, Miho & Saba Waheed. Introduction to Research Justice. Data Center, 2013. http://www.datacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Intro_Research_Justice_Toolkit_FINAL1.pdf

- Coffey, Alison. Research from the Periphery: Resources for Community-led Action Research at Instituto Banco Palmas. MIT CoLab, 2015. https://colab.mit.edu/sites/default/files/Research%20from%20the%20Periphery%20Toolkit%20%281%29.pdf

- De Sousa Santos, Boaventura, Eds. Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies. Verso, 2007.

- Frière, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. Bloomsbury, 1970.

- Greenwood, Davydd. & Levin, Morten, Eds. Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change, 2nd Ed. Sage Publications, 2007.

- Reason, Peter & Hilary Bradbury Eds. The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice. Sage Publications, 2008.

DEMOCRATIZING
DECISION-MAKING
THROUGH DRAMA

Puppets in Protest
As part of the University of Puerto Rico student strike in 2010, AgitArte/
Papel Machete Collective created a giant student puppet in collaboration
with the striking students as a symbol of struggle and resistance.
Photo Credit: Papel Machete - http://agitarte.info/

OVERVIEW

Theatre provides a unique venue for imagining alternative futures, and for activating democratic discourse in pursuit of social change, particularly when it is designed to engage with the public in an interactive or participatory way. Theatre of the Oppressed, a form of theatre influenced by Brazilian educator and theorist Paulo Freire, was developed by theatrical visionary, Augusto Boal, in the 1960s to involve the audience not only as passive spectators, but as engaged actors (spect-actors) capable of both observing and co-creating meaningful solutions to the problems they face as a community.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Imagine alternative realities and propose ways of addressing community issues

- Make more widely understood urgent community issues that have received little attention or gone unaddressed

- Encourage democratic discourse and personal agency, particularly among those most directly impacted by a particular problem

- Educate decision makers and create policy change

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- When past attempts to address a particular issue have failed and a more creative and participatory approach is required

- To capitalize on the opportunity to address and make visible an issue publicly during an event where many people will be gathered together (ie for a public festival, protest, etc)

- To protect personal identities for the safety and well-being of individuals and families who may be targeted if they publicly support a particular issue

"We are all actors. Being a citizen is not living in society, it is changing it"

- Augusto Boal

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Transgender Youth Legislative Theatre

Legislative Theatre, developed by Theatre of the Oppressed founder Augusto Boal, is an interactive dramatic form which seeks to activate democratic discourse and create political change. In this version of participatory theatre, actors perform public street plays in the presence of policymakers depicting common societal struggles, and then 'spect-actors' from the audience are invited to join in and act out solutions that can then be voted on with the intent of changing legislation.

The Mandala Centre for Change, a multi-disciplinary arts and education organization dedicated to societal healing, transformation and social justice, convened a youth-led Legislative Theatre program in 2017 focused on addressing LGBTQ rights in Greater Port Townsend, WA. Seven LGBTQ youth collaborated with the Center to create a 9-minute play which was transformed into series of interactive performances for 13 policymakers and a general audience of over 150. This legislative theatre process helped pass a slew of local policy changes including a mandated LGBTQ awareness training for healthcare professionals and educators. Jefferson Healthcare also commissioned the Mandala Center to create a Transgender training video which has been required viewing for over 600 health care providers and support staff. For more information, visit: http://www. mandalaforchange.com/site/applied-theatre/theatre-of-the-oppressed/transgender-youth-legislative-theatre-project/

Legislative Theatre in Action
To see how Legislative Theatre actually works, watch Theatre of the Oppressed NYC's short video about their work: https://vimeo.com/111220179

Photo Credit: NY Theatre of the Oppressed

DRAMA

LEGISLATIVE THEATRE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify an issue of community concern** that could benefit from being brought to the stage in a participatory public format.

2. **Become familiar with the Theatre of the Oppressed and legislative theatre methodology.** Watch the short video about the Legislative Theatre process linked from pg. 139 and see the list of 'Additional Resources' on pg. 143 for more details.

3. **Recruit and convene participants/actors who have familiarity with the issue.** Performances are most powerful when they draw from the lived experiences of those most directly impacted by an issue. Actors need not be formally trained, though must have an interest in theatre and must fully understand the scope of their participation. Select a neutral and comfortable meeting location, and begin with icebreakers to open up the floor for group discussion about the issue.

4. **Create a series of short plays about the issue.** Starting with the second group meeting, begin to create a series of plays about specific aspects of the issue and select roles for each actor. Take into consideration the core issues that impacted community members would like to see addressed and resolved and ensure they are being clearly communicated in each play.

5. **Rehearse and plan for the performances.** Meet several more times to refine and rehearse the plays, and begin planning for the performances. Select an accessible, public location or integrate the performances into an existing community event. Publicize the event through multiple mediums (flyering, social media, word of mouth, etc), and invite the general public and key audience members, including policy makers/decision makers.

6. **Perform the plays for and with a broad audience, including policy makers.** During the performances, invite audience members (spect-actors) to join and act out potential ways of addressing and providing solutions to the challenges proposed that could result in policy changes.

7. **Vote on the proposed policy changes.** After the performance, hand out pieces of paper to the audience so they can begin writing the suggested solutions to the various challenges proposed in the plays. Have a team member quickly review and tally all suggested solutions, and then place them into categories. Select 5 of the suggested solutions for performers to further improvise/act out. Invite the audience to suggest ways of improving and expanding upon the solutions, and take a vote. Document the list of proposed solutions or policy changes.

8. **Facilitate a post-performance discussion.** After the performance and voting ends, invite the audience to reflect on the experience. Ideally this part is led by an experienced facilitator. This person would pose questions such as: Where have we been? Where are we? Where are we going? From there, he or she would focus on specific policy proposals that were raised, and ask the audience: 1). What law do we need? 2). How do we make sure it is effective? 3). How do we get legislative power? 4) How do we build the balance of forces? Documenting this process (ideally live streaming/video recording) is essential.

9. **Follow-up with policymakers to pursue policy changes.** After the performance ends, connect with the actors and policy makers who attended the performance to continue advocating for the policy changes proposed by the audience.

This approach to Legislative Theatre was adapted from processes undertaken by the Mandala Center for Change.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Plays can be performed by 4-25 participants, including initial actors and spect-actors. Total audience, including policymakers, can be much larger.

TIME

Between 3 - 12 weeks (minimum), includes time for creating, rehearsing, promoting, and performing the play. The performance itself, along with participatory voting, can run approximately 1 - 4 hours.

MATERIALS

Journals
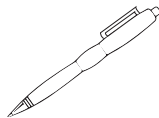
Pens

Accessible, public meeting/performance space
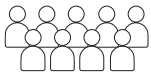
Large audience or group of people that are gathered

Poster boards/flyers

Red, yellow and green index cards for voting on proposed solutions

Props and costumes for the performance

Microphones

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Boal, Augusto. Aesthetics of the Oppressed. Translated by Adrian Jackson. Routledge, 2006.

- Boal, Augusto. Games for Actors and Non-Actors. Translated by Adrian Jackson. Routledge, 1992.

- Boal, Augusto. Legislative Theatre: Using performance to make politics. Translated by Adrian Jackson. Routledge, 2002.

- Boal, Augusto. Theatre of the Oppressed. Translated by Charles A. & Maria-Odilia Leal McBride. Urizen Books, 1979.

DRAMA

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY ACTION THROUGH STORY MAPPING

OVERVIEW

Story maps and story lines can serve as powerful tools for affirming, amplifying and uniting the voices of those most directly impacted by a community concern and, in so doing, mobilizing a community to action. In combining audio, visual, and in many cases geospatial elements, these platforms can help to humanize data and deepen our understanding of a particular event or community challenge through demonstrating the magnitude of impact within a given geographic area. While these public storytelling platforms can take many different forms, they share the unique quality of activating public discourse, facilitating connection and collaboration amongst those who have courageously shared their experiences, and making the case to policymakers that a particular issue needs to be addressed.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Shift public opinion, engage in direct action, and influence public policy

- Map and create visual displays of community power

- Increase visibility and understanding of social inequities or community struggles

- Cultivate empathy and accomplice-ship with those most directly impacted by a community issue

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- When a large number of community members in a particular place have stories to share about a particular concern, event, or social issue that are not being covered by traditional media

- To share deeply moving personal accounts without revealing the identities of those who may be targeted for speaking out

- To highlight or address urgent issues of social inequity that require community mobilization

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Sandy Storyline

In the aftermath of natural disasters, the voices of those most directly impacted by the devastation are often toned out or altogether dismissed by mainstream media, leaving many searching for answers and struggling to recover in silence.

In the case of Hurricane Sandy, however, a group of documentarians took matters into their own hands. Within weeks of Hurricane Sandy's initial destruction, Sandy Storyline was created as a participatory documentary platform aimed at collecting and sharing multimedia stories of those who had been directly affected by the storm and mobilizing community action in the rebuilding process. The platform, which categorizes stories based on the location of the storyteller, and also by specific themes such as 'displacement' and 'rebuilding', has helped to humanize this historic event, to facilitate personal connections and healing, and to spur community dialogue about the importance of governmental accountability and truth telling in the face of such tragedies.

With hundreds of stories collected, Sandy Storyline is one of the largest living archives of testimonies about Hurricane Sandy, and the stories continue to be shared through traveling, interactive exhibits. The project has also received a number of honors and accolades, including the Award for Transmedia at the Tribeca Film Festival. For more information, and to hear the stories, visit: https://www.sandystoryline.com/locations/

Photo Credit: Sara Baicich/Sandy Storyline

STORY MAPPING

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify the issue you are trying to mobilize a community around and build a team.** Bringing together a team with a diverse set of skills (research, design, tech, activism and organizing, etc) gives you greater chance of success in a story mapping project.

2. **Select a story mapping platform (ie Storymaps, Neatline, etc).** Different platforms offer different features, so it is worth testing out a few and reviewing the project demos and templates before determining which is the best fit for your project. If you are new to creating maps, please visit pg. 64 to review Tips for Map Making. The list of 'Additional Story Mapping Projects and Resources' on pg. 155 may also be useful in demonstrating the range of approaches your project could take.

3. **Develop a set of questions to ask project participants.** Test out the questions first on a few trusted members of the team, or on an ally of the project and continue to adjust these as needed. For more information on documenting personal stories and life histories, please visit pg 94.

4. **Invite those most directly impacted by the issue to share their story.** If possible, partner with a trusted local organization who can help circulate the opportunity to their membership. Ensure that participants fully understand why their stories are being recorded and how they will be used. For more information, check out Building Trust in Collaborative Reasearch on pgs 97 and 105.

5. **Record and edit the stories of participants.** Be sure to include the participants' location (if they agree to this) as well as an image of their choosing to accompany the audio recording. If you have not yet used audio equipment or editing software, 'Audio Recording Tips' and, 'Audio Editing Tips' on pgs. 62 and 108 respectively, may be helpful.

6. **Incorporate audio/video recordings onto your selected mapping/tech platform.** Most story mapping platforms have tutorials to walk you through the steps.

7. **Share the map publicly and target those you most want to educate and influence.** Launch parties and other outreach events are a good way to continue to build the network of individuals involved and to mobilize communities to take action around the given issue. For more information on how to use the story maps to mobilize communities, please see pg. 155.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The more the better, but at least 50 stories should be collected within an identified geographic area.

TIME

Several months - years

MATERIALS

Cell phone or recording device

Computer

Storymapping app or technology

PLATFORMS FOR CREATING STORY MAPS AND STORY TIMELINES

- **Storymaps -** https://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/
- **Storymap Tutorial -** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GAlx7WAzyk)
- **Ushaidi -** https://www.ushahidi.com/
- **Neatline -** http://neatline.org/
- **Vojo -** https://civic.mit.edu/tool/vojo

"Maps and digital storytelling make the obscured processes of displacement, and who it most directly impacts, more visible. Centering life-histories and documenting the relationships between eviction, development, rental cost, and policing...is one way we feel we can contribute to movement building for housing justice and cultural survival"

- Anti-Eviction Mapping Project

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Stories and Data for Resisting Displacement

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is a data visualization and storytelling collective documenting the dispossession of San Francisco Bay Area residents upon gentrifying landscapes. Maintaining anti-racist and feminist analyses, as well decolonizing methodologies, the project creates tools and disseminates research that contributes to collective resistance and movement building. For more information, and to listen to the stories, please visit: http://www.antievictionmappingproject.net/narratives.html

photo credit: Anti-Eviction Mapping Project

Additional Story Mapping Projects and Resources

• **Atlas of Radical Cartography -** http://www.an-atlas.com/

• **Community Story Mapping Guide -** http://iel.org/sites/default/files/Community_Story-Mapping_Guide-2015-04.pdf

• **Improving Community Opportunity through Story Mapping (Guide & Case Study) -** https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/download?fid=3958&nid=4494

• **Media Movement History Timeline -** https://www.movementhistory.org/

• **Story-based Audio Public Service Announcement -** https://contratados.org/

Resources for Mobilizing Communities to Action

• **Community Tool Box -** http://ctb.ku.edu/en

• **Creative Strategies for Social Intervention and Disruption -** http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/creative-disruption/

• **Economic Democracy Training Series: Building Leadership for the Next Economy -** http://colab.mit.edu/resources/economic-democracy-training-series

• **Organizing for Power -** https://organizingforpower.org/organizing-resources/

• **Organizing for Social Change -** http://www.resourcesforsocialchange.org/

PROMOTING POLICY
CHANGE THROUGH
PHOTOVOICE

East Boston, Nuestra Casa

Cientos de familias latinas están siendo desplazadas de sus hogares en East Boston. No espere a que el problema toque a su puerta: todavía podemos organizarnos para resistir y quedarnos en la comunidad.

¿Le han subido la renta drásticamente? ¿Ha recibido carta de desalojo? ¿El landlord no quiere reparar las condiciones de su vivienda? Sin importar si tiene papeles o no, usted tiene derechos. Venga a las reuniones comunitarias, donde abogados de la Universidad de Harvard y la organización City Life/Vida Urbana se han aliado con los inquilinos de East Boston para ofrecerles asesoría legal gratuita en estos casos. Si nos unimos será más fácil quedarnos en el barrio.

¿Dónde y cuándo son las reuniones? 28 Paris St. (Junto a Maverick) Todos los miércoles de 6:30 p.m. a 8 p.m. (Cena incluida)

Encuentra más historias en www.facebook.com/EastBostonNuestraCasa

East Boston: Nuestra Casa

A comienzos de los noventas miles de inmigrantes latinos empezaron a establecerse en East Boston. De acuerdo con cifras de 2013, más de 44 mil personas habitan el barrio y el 57% son latinas. Maverick Square, el centro de nuestra comunidad, está rodeado de cafés, panaderías y carnicerías colombianas, de tiendas brasileñas, de restaurantes mexicanos y salvadoreños. Sin embargo, todo puede cambiar pronto: las rentas no dejan de subir y, si no hacemos algo, en pocos años la comunidad latina podría ser solo un recuerdo.

Postcard Journalism

Postcard Journalism was started in East Boston by Jorge Caraballo Cordovez as a way to humanize the experience of displacement, educate residents about the housing crisis, and circulate opportunities for addressing it.

For more information, visit: https://medium.com/@jorgecaraballo/what-is-postcard-journalism-50901a649ee3

OVERVIEW

When images are what is needed to tell a powerful story, with or without sound, photovoice is a creative and participatory method that is often used in participatory action research or social change efforts. Pioneered in 1992 by Caroline C. Wang of the University of Michigan and Mary Ann Burris of the Ford Foundation, the method employs photography, storytelling, and group dialogue to deepen a community's understanding of a particular issue or concern. Photographs that humanize and shed light on a particular community problem are taken by those who are most impacted by that problem, and captions or written stories are recorded to accompany those images. An exhibit of the images is then shared with policymakers or other decision-makers as a way to initiate a community dialogue and propose a solution to the problem.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Humanize, increase awareness of and provide opportunity for critical reflection around a community concern
- Co-produce and share ownership of research
- Empower marginalized communities and underrepresented voices that are directly impacted by the issue at hand
- Transfer audio visual and storytelling skills into the hands of community members
- Influence public policy and create social change for those most impacted

WHEN TO USE THIS METHOD

- When an opportunity presents itself to work in deep partnership with a community organization/institution around an urgent issue of shared concern that you'd like to see addressed
- To employ an accessible and enjoyable method for capturing information about a community concern
- To protect the personal identities of those who may not be in a position to speak about their concern

PHOTOVOICE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Identify a research focus and issue of shared concern by the community.**

2. **Recruit Project Participants.** Photovoice projects are typically (and ideally) led by those most directly impacted by a community concern.

3. **Train community members in photovoice methods.** Participants may need an introduction to basic photography and visual storytelling. See pg. 164 and 167 for additional resources.

4. **Discuss ethical issues and informed consent.** Participants may need background on the ethical issues associated with research involving human subjects.

5. **Experimental Photoshoot & Analysis.** Experiment with photographing and meet for initial data analysis discussion to learn from participants' experiences/ potential pitfalls.

6. **Repeat step #5 several times.** Continue to encourage several more photoshoot outings to collect footage and then meet 2-3 more times to reflect on the process and the experiences of photographers.

7. **Set deadline for completion.** Collect all film and digital footage. Create a bank of all final images and accompanying story/sound recordings, if relevant.

8. **Synthesize.** Codify narrative themes emerging in the data and identify images and stories to showcase in the exhibit in partnership with the photographers.

9. **Co-produce photovoice exhibit.** Participants have a major role to play in co-curating and co-organizing the exhibit, and in presenting the project to policymakers.

10. **Target decision-makers/policymakers to attend the exhibit and discussion.** After the exhibit, identify any follow up steps to continue to advocate for community change around this issue.

11. **Debrief and evaluate process/lessons learned.** What worked well? What was surprising? What were some of the unintended impacts? What would you do differently next time?

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Suggested size of 7-10 participant photographers in order to create a safe space while ensuring diversity in perspective and experience

TIME

Several months – years.

MATERIALS
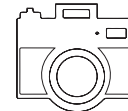
Cameras
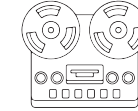
Audio recorders (purchased, rented or borrowed)

Journals

Pens
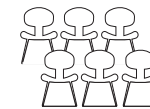
Accessible meeting and exhibit space

Projector/laptop for community presentations

Powerpoint presentation

Poster boards/flyers

PHOTOVOICE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What do the images you have collected mean to you?

• What do you see?

• Why did you take this picture?

• How does this relate to our lives?

• What is happening?

• Why is it happening?

• What can we do about it?

• How could this image educate others?

• What themes/similarities do we see across all the images that have been collected?

ADDITIONAL TIPS

• **Partner with a Trusted Community Organization/ Institution -** Partnering with a known and trusted organization or institution, can facilitate outreach to impacted members of a community to identify photographers for the project.

• **Allow Time to Build Relationships with Photographers -** Photovoice requires a commitment to relationship and trust-building over a period of months or years. Once the project is underway, you must allow for several rounds of community meetings to discuss the process, experiences of taking the photos, and issue at hand. The time intensive nature of the process also may mean some participants will drop out along the way.

Free Platforms for Recording Sound and Story to Accompany Photovoice Images

• **Voice Recorder:** https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.starwapps.photoVoiceRecorder&hl=en

• **PhotoVoice:** https://apkpure.com/photovoice-voice-on-pictures/com.photovoice

Composition - Use the "rule of thirds" for well-balanced and composed photos. Instead of placing your subject in the center, place them in one of the four intersections created if your image is a grid of nine rectangles.

Focus - Make sure what you want to be in focus is in focus. It often helps to keep a subject's eyes in focus as something to fix a gaze on.

Perspective - Taking shots of the same subject from different angles or positions helps ensure that you will have the perspective you need.

Ethics - Know your rights and the rights of your subjects, and beyond this, be mindful of what may or may not be appropriate to shoot. You need permission to photograph if not in a public space.

Exposure - Take advantage of the hour after sunrise and hour before sunset as ideal times to capitalize on natural light. Purchasing or creating a low cost reflector can help control light during other times of day.

Reflection - Make use of reflections in mirrors, windows and bodies of water.

Invisibility - When possible, use your zoom and give your human subjects room to breathe. If you are too close, they may not feel or behave as naturally as they would if you weren't there.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
Promoting Food Justice through Photovoice

In Holyoke, Massachusetts, a youth participatory action research initiative employed photovoice as a method for engaging young people in documenting and discussing issues they experienced and witnessed with regards to public health, the environment, and community food systems. Through a partnership between the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Fertile Ground, the Holyoke YMCA, the Holyoke Health Center, the City of Holyoke, and Nuestras Raíces, a community and economic development corporation trying to improve the quality of school meals, the youth participants explored the path of food from farm to school cafeteria through photography and other methods. As a result of their research and the policy changes proposed, the local school committee signed a new food services contract in an effort to better collaborate with nearby farms and bring more local produce to food cafeterias. For more information about Participatory Action Research, please visit pg. 131. For the full article, please visit: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13549839.2016.1274721?scroll=top&needAccess=true

photo credit: photo credit: Krista Harper

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Photovoice Manuals

- http://www.pwhce.ca/photovoice/pdf/Photovoice_Manual.pdf
- http://foodarc.ca/makefoodmatter/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/VOICES_PhotovoiceManual.pdf
- http://www.wpunj.edu/uppc/images/UPinPC+Photovoice+Facilitator+Toolkit+Final.pdf
- http://systemexchange.msu.edu/upload/Photovoice%20Training%20Manual_systemexchange.pdf
- http://people.umass.edu/afeldman/Photovoice.htm

Visual storytelling, Camera Techniques & Photography

- http://www.joshphotos.com/teaching/teaching-resources/
- http://www.joshphotos.com/teaching/teaching-resources/community-media-websites/

GLOSSARY

Acoustic Ecology

Acoustic ecology is an interdisciplinary field focused on the study of humans (and other animals) and their sound-mediated relationship to the environment. Acoustic ecology includes research on social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the soundscape, including study of the impacts of noise, documentation and preservation of natural and cultural soundscapes, and design of acoustic environments.

Tips: Apply principles of acoustic ecology to consider the interrelationships between humans, animals, and the environment.

Field Recording

Field recording refers to both the practice of capturing sound on location and the object of the on-site recorded material. As a recorded object, it usually takes the form of tape or digital file. Field recording is a common practice in radio, audio journalism, sound art, ethnomusicology, and anthropology.

Tips: Use field recording to deepen our sense of the environment and articulate sense-based research and planning with and for communities.

Frequency

Frequency refers to the pitch of the sound. It is the rate of change in air pressure. Frequency is measured by the number of cycles per second (cps), or Hertz (Hz). The human hearing range is between 20 and 20,000 Hz. High pitch sounds tend to project farther. Humans and animals tend to increase the frequency of their voice/sounds in loud environments.

Tips: Consider frequency measures of the acoustic environment when assessing the hearing impact of sounds.

Noise

Noise is socially and culturally defined, as it refers to what is unwanted and undesirable by a particular group of people, and this varies from person to person. For this reason, what is considered to be noise is often contested between residents, constituents, policymakers, and governments. There are many dimensions to noise, though it is often measured by decibel levels. Noise pollution usually refers to sounds that exceed a policy-defined decibel threshold based on the fact that loud sounds are sometimes perceived to be harmful to the health of a community.

Tips: Use community members' definitions to drive the discussion about the community impact of noise. Decibel measurement of sound energy is only a start.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to inquiry that values the knowledge and lived experience of the communities effected by the problem being researched and seeks to place greater control over the processes of problem definition, research design, knowledge-building, problem-solving, and research product design and dissemination in the hands of community members. In this sense, PAR intends to transform unequal power relationships between marginalized groups and those traditionally considered 'expert' researchers and decision-makers.

Tips: Ensure that community research collaborators co-create the process and outcomes of the research together.

Periodicity

Periodicity refers to the regularity with which sounds occur in the environment over time. Periodic sounds can govern people's sense of space and movement. By analyzing field recordings, we can determine the time between similar events and measure how often they occur. Studying the periodicity of sounds provides a temporal dimension to a soundscape, enabling us to understand how sound, like vehicular traffic, for instance, occurs and changes over time.

Tips: Use periodicity to assess a particular place and make policy recommendations for healthy and safe communities.

Sound Energy

Sound energy is measured in decibels (dBs). The rate of dB increase is logarithmic, which means that for every 3dB increased, the sound energy is doubled. A sound at 83dB has twice as much energy as 80dB. This matters when measuring energy and wearing hearing protection. Sound energy can be measured objectively, but its impact on people can vary. Two people or animals standing next to each other can experience entirely different sound worlds.

Tips: Use decibel measures to assess harmful sounds and consider results in light of a community's social and emotional response.

Soundscape

Soundscape refers to the sounds that we hear in an acoustic environment. An enjoyable soundscape is one that contributes positively to our sense of health and well-being. The term arose from R. Murray Schafer's World Soundscape Project with the intent to draw attention to sounds in the urban environment and the impact of noise pollution through listening immersively and collecting field recordings.

Tips: Use soundscape to access how community members listen immersively in an acoustic environment and represent plans for future acoustic environments.

"Rhythms. Rhythms. They reveal and they hide. Much more diverse than in music, or the so-called civil code of successions, relatively simple texts in relation to the City. Rhythms: the music of the City, a scene that listens to itself, an image in the present of a discontinuous sum."

- Henri Lefebvre

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A project by the Community Innovators Lab.