



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING

BY THE NUMBERS

- Five Extension colleagues from four land-grant institutions have collaborated to refine REM
- Over 2,000 individuals have been trained by this team.
- This innovative evaluation tool has received three national awards.

SCHOLARLY PRODUCTS

- *A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping*, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. www.lib.umn.edu/publishing/monographs/program-evaluation-series
- *Ripple Effects Mapping: Advanced Facilitator Guide for In-depth Rippling*. Washington State University Extension, pubs.wsu.edu
- *Using Ripple Effect Mapping to Evaluate Program Impact: Choosing or Combining the Methods That Work Best for You*. Journal of Extension. joe.org/joe/2012october/tt6.php
- *Ripple Effect Mapping: A radiant way to capture program impacts*, Journal of Extension. www.joe.org/joe/2015april/tt1.php

2019 ISSUE

Everyone who casts a “stone” and tries to do work that affects communities or individuals for positive change really wants to know, “What are the impacts of my work? or have I made a difference?” No matter how simple or complex the effort, there are often things that resonate and create change that they never see or know if it truly matters. Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is an accessible tool that came from the desire to capture these stories of impact and document what happens as a result of your work. The origins and history of REM is embedded in community development, yet being adapted to other areas of study and research.

RESPONSE

REM In-Depth Rippling, emerged in 2010 to identify impacts of a community leadership program in Washington, Idaho and North Dakota to solve the central question – how do you evaluate the impacts of a multi-year, complex and evolving program? Hundreds of communities across seven northwestern states participated in this intensive, 18-month program between 2004 and 2010. Identifying both immediate and lasting impacts of this work presented a challenge due to program length and multiple, evolving program activities involving many residents at different times and in different capacities.

Ripple Effects Mapping is a creative, participatory evaluation technique to discover intended and unintended outcomes of your work. It is a useful tool to use when total program impact is difficult to conceptualize and measure with other evaluation methods. It can also be used in mixed methods evaluation strategies, as it can complement and ground truth quantitative methods. With information gathered during a REM session, you can share the information with funders, partners, and decision makers. The flexibility of the tool enables you to conduct a Ripple Effects Mapping mid-program and/or post-program with these additional benefits:

- A participatory and appreciative approach that engages stakeholders;
- Group validation of results;
- Activities connected to a larger purpose for participants to see emerging patterns and trends;
- An opportunity for reflection, growth and celebration; participants are often more positive and hopeful when they see what they have accomplished;
- Adaptable to a wide-range of ages, cultures, communities and content areas and;
- A good starting point for strategic planning.





QUOTES

We found the Ripple Effects Mapping fit our evaluation needs perfectly! We brought together diverse participants from a complex regional pilot project and, in a short amount of time, gained a comprehensive overview and a plethora of rich details. We learned specifics well beyond what our standard surveys would reveal.

—Gloria Flora, Director, Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition

Ripple effects mapping moves beyond the things that are easier to measure, such as body counts and satisfaction, to powerfully capturing those deeper impacts about meaning and purpose, over time, that matter the most in real communities, and contribute to lasting social change.

—Cornell University training participant

I am especially impressed with the evaluation method built into the proposal (Ripple Effects Mapping by Hansen-Kollock). This is a more rigorous and well-designed approach to evaluation which directly involves extension partners than I typically see in AFRI proposals.

—Comment from a USDA-Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) grant reviewer

IMPACTS

Evaluations for REM train the trainer workshops have been uniformly positive with these follow up evaluation surveys:

Cornell University faculty workshop (2017): 37 respondents to an evaluation survey implemented one month after training:

- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that this method of impact mapping is valuable for capturing the impact of various engaged learning programs.
- 86% agreed or strongly agreed that they learned approaches that will be valuable to their program.
- 22% already used the method within the month following the workshop.
- More than half planned to use it in the coming month.

Conference workshop for the Washington State Nonprofit Association: (2015), 32 respondents reported on a Likert scale (1 = Disagree, 5 = Agree):

- 3.7 reported this workshop added to their level of knowledge
- 4.3 believed the workshop as interactive
- 3.8 left with tangible things they can implement

It continues to be a powerful tool to help build awareness and meet the ever-intensifying challenge to evaluate and validate complex programs. REM's evolution was convergent, emerging from two separate efforts, and has been tested in many programs, both national and internationally. Ripple Effects Mapping is an adaptable tool that can be modified for a variety of subjects, evidenced by the journal articles citing the method. It has been cited in variety of journals from the areas of community development, public health, education, Extension and impact assessment.

Topic examples from published articles include:

- childhood obesity prevention
- asset-based community development
- impacts for water quality professional engagement
- coalitions: early learning, food, hunger and community health
- youth and adult programs
- building equity
- building resilient communities
- farm results
- public health
- diversity training in higher education
- business retention
- building leadership and poverty reduction
- arts collaborative
- sustainable harvest
- community and Master Gardeners
- child care quality
- tourism assessment

More Ripple Effects Mapping resources are available on the Project & Program Evaluation page at ppe.cw.wsu.edu