Some Basic Asset Mapping Instructions
By Dave Daubert

Asset mapping is a process which is built on a fundamental assumption that if God wants something to be done, then God provides the resources to make it possible. Rather than starting from designing "perfect" solutions which result in "if only…" thinking, asset based development asks "What do we have and how can we use it to make progress toward what God wants to happen here?" As a result, when done well, every asset based solution can be implemented now if people are committed to making it happen. This can be useful in any ministry development setting.

Asset based ways of working are empowering and uplifting and even essential, especially when creative solutions are needed in what would be traditionally viewed as difficult or even impossible situations. In such circumstances, scarcity is too often presupposed. In reality, if God is at work in these settings already then there is an abundance of resources to be used for the mission. The key is identifying those resources and connecting them to each other in such a way as to result in creative and practical solutions. When the church reaches out into new communities, especially in places where the church has historically been absent or even ineffective, asset based solutions can provide a new hope for effective ministry. This is especially true if the outreach efforts include the assets of the people the church is trying to reach early in the process and using those assets to design church in a way that is culturally relevant and intentionally inclusive from the beginning.

Basic instructions:

Supplies Needed:
Lots of 4 x 6 file cards or ¼ sheets of paper
Masking tape
Felt tip writing markers (1 per person)
A large wall space to work on
Gifted people of God

1. This works well with groups of 4 to about a dozen. If working with larger groups, it may be fruitful to split into more than one group and make more than one asset map.

2. Give everyone a stack of paper with enough sheets to put answers on for the questions you will be asking. Sheets should be large enough so that answers can be written in large print to allow the group easily to see what is written but small enough to be worked with. 4 x 6 file cards or ¼ sheets of paper usually work well. Felt tip markers are best for writing so everyone can read easily.

3. Have each person put their initials in the bottom right corner of each sheet they use. This allows the gifts and their owners to remain connected during the work.

4. Instruct the group to respond to the questions asked by *writing one answer per sheet of paper.*

5. Ask the questions you have decided to ask. Some good ones (but not the only ones) are:
    a. List your top 3 spiritual gifts
    b. List 3 things you like to do for fun.
    c. List 2 things other people would say you are good at.
    d. List 2 things you used to like to do but can't find the time anymore,
    e. List 2 physical assets (things) you have that you are willing to donate if needed.
    f. List 2 unchurched people you know who owe you a favor.

6. If you used all of the questions above, each person should have 14 sheets of paper per person completed. Have each person attach a small piece of masking tape to each answer and tape them with the others in their work group to the wall.

7. Take a few minutes to just look at all you have to work with and then begin to move the answers (gifts/assets) around into groupings to brainstorm what you could accomplish.
    a. There are two ways that you can do this:
        i. Just let options surface in an open ended way with no preconceived outcomes. Projects could help in any area of ministry or create new ones.
        ii. Target outcomes (for example the minimum factor from an NCD survey) so that you ask, "What can we do that will improve our worship, spirituality, small groups, etc.?" It may be that if you target outcomes you may also target one or more of the asset identification questions you ask as well.
    b. Remember, it is not just grouping all of the like assets but in combining diverse assets that make for the most creative results. For example, if you get all of the people who like building and carpentry together you might decide to rehab houses, but if you get them together with people who like to write and people who have musical skills you might have them building a set for an original production of a musical. It is in the connections that possibilities appear.
    c. It may be that in mapping and moving the assets projects appear that spur new ideas of assets that were not listed previously but could be useful in the proposed work. Encourage people to feel free to list others assets (one per sheet) and add them to the map if the assets appear relevant!

8. After several ideas have surfaced have the group decide which ones they want to pursue, get commitments for the work and get started! Every idea on the map is possible because you have only used what you already have!