Portland State University (PSU) brought together local nonprofits Street Roots and the Mapping Action Collective (MAC) in order to map community assets for the Portland Metro Area in a way that will be useful, maintained, and accessible. PSU, Street Roots, and MAC collaborated to develop a data management workflow that will allow Street Roots’ Rose City Resource, a hardcopy social services guide, to be digitized. The digital format of the Rose City Resource will be more accessible by social service providers, community members, and planning departments. This will increase the visibility and continuity of service provision for Portland’s most vulnerable community members.

Location

This project aggregates and visualizes data for the Portland Metro area. Primary collaborators are located in downtown Portland and directly serve Portland’s houseless and poverty-stricken communities.

Implementation Partners

The project is a collaboration between the Mapping Action Collective (MAC), Street Roots, and the Northwest Open Data Exchange (NODE) at PSU. MAC is a data-visualization and data analysis collective that uses GIS to support spatial justice. Street Roots creates income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change. The Northwest Open Data Exchange (NODE) is PSU’s Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies’ community research data-sharing system.

Process

The Rose City Resource had historically been maintained as a pdf with no searchable data organization, meaning it was not mappable. Many people had approached Street Roots looking to digitize the guide, but because the data was unstructured and needed updating every six months, projects had fallen flat. MAC and PSU worked with Street Roots to parse apart the data they collected into a queryable schema that meets basic data quality standards for use in multiple applications. Now, Street Roots is maintaining the resource with their own staff via this schema. This sustains both a higher quality resource guide and the multiple applications that will utilize this data through the Northwest Open Data Exchange.
Climate Resilience Projects
Community Asset Mapping

Funding

The project was financed through an external grant, with in-kind donations from PSU’s Institute for Metropolitan Studies.

Resilience Assessment Outcomes

The initial resilience assessment identified a need to more accessibly visualize ongoing work within the community to address resilience concerns. Assessment participants wanted to see who was doing what kind of work, which organizations were doing related work, and what the distribution of this work looked like for the Portland area. Cataloging community resilience work from scratch using resilience-specific terminology would have been a vast undertaking and would have required a dedicated mechanism for updating the information. Instead, PSU sought out existing community service inventories that could be maintained by the organizations working directly with the people utilizing these services. This provides a base foundation for PSU’s asset map to build upon.

Vulnerabilities Reduced by the Asset Map

- Exposure to extreme heat and extreme cold
- Displaced populations/ migrants
- Drugs/ alcohol abuse
- Food insecurity
- Homelessness, and informal housing/settlements
- Lack of social cohesion
- Unemployment

Strengths Reinforced by the Asset Map

- Community cohesion and partnerships
- Utilizing academic researchers for community benefit
- Building community organizational capacity
- Communicating needs and capacities of frontline communities to service providers and planning professionals

Monitoring Impact

Indicators to measure impact of this project include 1) the longevity of the relationship between Street Roots, MAC, and PSU’s Institute for Metropolitan Studies; 2) access to service data by service providers and planners; 3) continuity of service provision efforts; and 4) the continued utilization of the workflow by other community organizations.

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