## Exercise: Net-Map: Exploring Common Network Patterns

**Overview**

The purpose of this exercise is to provide participants with an understanding of the value of Net-Map in documenting and discussing connections between actors and how to use that knowledge. This exercise is adapted from an [exercise developed by the inventor of Net Map, Eva Schiffer](https://netmap.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/network-pattern-cards-schiffer-2015.pdf).

Net Map is a participatory technique that can help you and the people you work with answer key questions about the actors influencing an issue you’re concerned about. It is a low-tech, low-cost, intuitive, and inter-culturally applicable technique.

**Objectives**

1. To recall 10 common network patterns
2. To discuss the merits and failings of at least two patterns as they relate to unique contexts

**Time**

Total: 60 minutes

**Advance Preparation**

For every two participants, print a copy of the 10 common network patterns (on pages 3-5) and create a package of 10 cards (one card for each network pattern).

**Implementing the Activity**

1. The Facilitator will need **5 minutes** before the activity to explain the purpose of the exercise and how it will work.
2. The Facilitator will hand out sets of cards and lead the group through the exercise for **35 minutes.**
3. Participants reflect on the exercise as a whole, noting what surprised them and where how information about their overall context could assist in achieve project, program, or organizational goals. **15 minutes**
4. Wrap up: **5 minutes**

**Activity Steps**

The facilitator asks the participants to complete four steps:

1. Ask participants to split into groups of twos (with a larger group of over eight participants, divide participants into small groups)
2. Ask participants to identify a situation in which knowledge sharing is essential to a project they work on (approximately 1 minute).
3. Ask participants to review the 10 network structure cards with the goal of picking two:

* one that shows a pattern that is **harmful** to the situation you’re thinking of
* one that shows a pattern that is **helpful** to the situation you’re thinking about

(approximately 2 minutes)

1. Ask each participant to pick up the card showing the pattern that is **harmful** and show it to *all* the other participants. Describe the situation and explain why you chose the pattern (approximately 2 minutes per participant).
2. Ask each participant to pick up the card showing the pattern that is **helpful** and show it to *all* the other participants. Describe the situation and explain why you chose the pattern (approximately 2 minutes per participant).

The [results of a similar exercise](https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/exploring-network-patterns-health-and-development-workers-east%2C-central%2C-and-southern-africa) completed as part of a share fair in East Africa are documented in a case study. Eva Schiffer presents additional variations in the [original exercise](https://netmap.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/network-pattern-cards-schiffer-2015.pdf) guidance.









