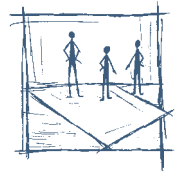
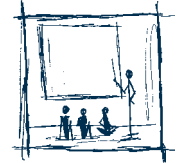


THE PROJECT SEQUENCE

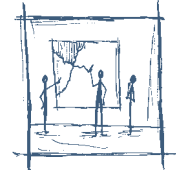
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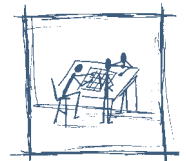
ORIENTATION AND TRAINING



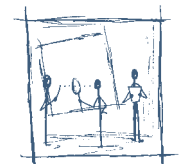
**GATHERING DATA
AND SKETCH MAPPING**



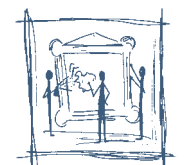
**TRANSCRIPTION OF DATA
ONTO NEW MAPS**



VERIFICATION OF DATA



**CORRECTING AND
COMPLETING THE FINAL MAPS**



5

STEP TWO: THE FIRST WORKSHOP

The first workshop provided the Surveyors with an orientation to the mapping project. Project leaders brought together the Coordinators and the Surveyors for the first time to discuss objectives, methodology, the sequence of tasks, logistics, and other project details. At the core of the workshop, the Surveyors were trained to gather information on physical features and land use in the communities by filling out a questionnaire, drawing community maps, and recording additional relevant data in a notebook. The workshop in Honduras lasted four days; in Panama it was only two and one-half days due to scheduling problems.

In both Honduras and Panama, the first workshop was held in the region that was to be mapped. In Honduras, it took place in Puerto Lempira, a town of approximately 3,500 people, and the capital of the Mosquitia. This site was ideal. It is situated at the hub of the region, and both MOPAWI and MASTA have their headquarters there. MOPAWI has a large building on the edge of town that served as dormitory and lecture hall/cartography room and was perfect for the first workshop as well as the two subsequent workshops. In Panama, the first workshop was held in the village of Arimae, a mixed Wounaan-Emberá community of 373 people located near the northern end of the Darién along the Pan-American Highway.²³ While the village setting lent reality to the proceedings, there was no closed-off facility for holding the workshop sessions in semi-isolation from the community.

The Panama workshop was thoroughly improvised and only lasted two and a half days, much shorter than it should have been. This was due to the disjointed organizational structure at the start of the project, the lack of preparatory work in the communities, and the limited time that Andrew Leake, who had experience with the methodology, had available to assist in structuring the event. For convenience, we piggy-backed the workshop onto the tail end of a meeting of Emberá and Wounaan leaders that had been scheduled for other purposes. When this meeting was over, a few leaders stayed to participate in the workshop.

²³ By contrast, the second and third workshops in Panama were held at a large, well-equipped facility of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in the town of Gamboa, a 45-minute drive by car from Panama City.

Leake had been enlisted to set up the project. He had spent several days in Panama City explaining as much as possible about the methodology to project staff, but because of a prior commitment he could spend no more than one day at the workshop. He had written out some notes on his experience with the Honduran workshop and left them with Nicanor González of Native Lands, and Genaro Pacheco and Geraldés Hernández, the Emberá and Kuna Coordinators, respectively. These notes served as something of a guide. After Leake left, they did what they could, which was not much because they had no prior experience with this sort of project. In the end, the workshop was not a very good orientation for the Surveyors.

In Honduras, all of the Surveyors went through the first workshop. In Panama, only 19 of the 21 Surveyors were present, all of them Emberá and Wounaan; the Surveyors for the Kuna areas (from the zones of Wargandi and Púcuru/Paya) had not yet been selected because of poor communication between project staff and the Kuna leadership. The Kuna Coordinator, Geraldés Hernández, was present; just after the first workshop was completed, he contacted Kuna authorities in the two zones, and they selected the Surveyors.

In Honduras, the workshop was carried out in Spanish and Miskito, the two primary languages of the Mosquitia (virtually all of the other indigenous groups speak Miskito along with their own language). In Panama, it was carried out in Spanish and Emberá (the Wounaan all speak Emberá; no Kuna

were present except Hernández, who speaks Spanish).

AGENDA FOR THE FIRST WORKSHOP

Although there was shortfall in Panama, the first workshop in both countries was scripted to cover several principal tasks. These included:

(1) General orientation: Project leaders explained to the Surveyors, in considerable detail, the purpose of the project and the methodologies to be used. In Honduras, project leaders went over the technical sequence of the project, instructing the Surveyors on the types of data they had to gather in the field and how they should go about this. Leake explained the context of the project and its objectives, and discussed project administration, team composition, logistics, and related matters. From the start, it was stressed that this was a technical exercise, not a forum for political agendas. The success of the project would depend upon the degree to which the entire project team was able to stay out of controversy and stick to the task, which was to gather information from community members. Leake presented a similar introduction to the project in Panama, basing his remarks on the experience in Honduras.

(2) Questionnaire: In both countries, project leaders and the Surveyors developed a questionnaire dealing with land use, and a form for taking a census of the communities in their zones. The questions on land use were

short and direct, asking only the names of places where villagers carry out subsistence activities. Questions such as “What are the names of the places where people hunt?” and “What are the names of places where people gather medicines?” were followed by five lines for the names of sites. Activities covered included hunting, fishing, farming, and the gathering of medicines, firewood, building materials, and fruit. The Surveyors were then given instructions to place the names on the hand-drawn maps that they were to prepare for each community. In this way, much of the land use information was to be found in two places, allowing for cross-checking.

The questionnaire used in Honduras was prepared by MOPAWI staff and then modified — largely simplified, for it was judged to be too long and unwieldy — by the indigenous participants during the first workshop. In Panama, the questionnaire was modeled after the Honduran experience and was almost exactly the same (see Appendix B). Added to this was a census form designed to do a complete population count of the communities.

In both countries, project leaders ran the Surveyors through several practice sessions with the questionnaire and the census forms. The Surveyors broke

into small groups and interviewed people in the community about economic activities, practiced short speeches explaining the purpose and objectives of the project, and generally did a dry run for approaching community members and eliciting information. They then returned to the workshop center, reported on their findings, and critiqued each other. Perhaps the most important function of this exercise was to break down reticence and boost self-confidence with interviewing people and gathering information; it also gave participants practice in writing things down.

(3) Community maps: The Surveyors were given no instruction in Honduras and very little in Panama on techniques for drawing sketch maps. In Honduras, Herlihy felt that the questionnaires and the notebooks were more important — the sketch maps were viewed more as supplementary to these tasks. Consequently the Surveyors “...were asked to draw sketch maps of the data they collected, though no training was given in this regard. It was thought that training might stop the Surveyors from developing the cognitive maps together with local informants” (Herlihy and Leake 1997, 718).²⁴ Some 1:50,000-scale government topographic sheets were displayed in the workshop, and the idea of supply-

²⁴ *Whether or not rudimentary instruction in cartographic technique inhibits the creation of cognitive maps can, of course, be debated. Our subsequent experience in Bolivia, Cameroon, and Suriname shows that it enhances rather than impedes their ability to draw maps and allows them to represent local realities much more effectively without inhibiting their creativity. It liberates them, equipping them with the basic tools they need to express themselves cartographically, by showing them how to represent distance, scale, relative proportions, symbolism, and so forth. Beyond this, in our view, learning the basic techniques of cartography — how to put maps together, read them, and use them — is an extremely important skill for indigenous peoples, as it is for everyone. It allows them to work with and negotiate with conservationists and government agencies on common ground, as it were, permitting them to participate more fully in matters of mutual concern.*

ing the Surveyors with them when they went into the field was considered but rejected. According to Herlihy and Leake:

As with the idea of training people in drawing maps, these sheets could inhibit the independent drawing of the sketch maps by the surveyors. They would also require the surveyors to be trained in map-reading, and for them in turn to explain them to their respective communities before they could locate the information on them (ibid.).²⁵

Somewhat understandably, "...some surveyors had problems with the collection of information and were unable to draw the sketch maps" (ibid., 729–30).

In Panama, Leake, who set up and guided the first workshop, followed this lead and downplayed the importance of sketch maps. At the same time, logistics failed and there were no 1:50,000 topographical sheets to show to the Surveyors. Most of the Surveyors were given a handful of sheets of blank paper and several ordinary pencils. Some received nothing and had to scrounge for paper. No colored pencils were distributed; Surveyors who eventually used them had to find them on their own back home. González, the Kuna cartographer, felt during the workshop that the Surveyors should be instructed in

basic cartographic techniques, and did so after Leake left; but he was unable to give participants more than a few hours of explanation on the final day of the workshop. Because of this shoddy preparation, only five Surveyors produced complete, well-crafted maps; five or six did not do any maps; and the rest came in with bits and pieces on loose sheets of paper, without much coherence.

(4) Notebooks: Beyond the questionnaires and the sketch maps, the Surveyors were encouraged to keep notebooks with supplemental information that did not fit in the questionnaires or on the maps. The notebooks were to contain commentaries on the names of rivers, mountains, hills, lagoons, etc. (e.g., historical origins, unusual facts, changes in names through time); types of game animals, fish, and vegetation prevalent in different areas; time (distance) between one place and another; the number of streams between one point and another; bifurcations in rivers; comparative size of rivers; degrees of curve in rivers (sharp, easy); unusual land features; and so forth. Some of the information was linguistic, historical, and cultural, while some helped to locate places and names on the maps and calculate distances. In the end, some notebooks were more complete than others; as a rule, the younger Surveyors were more comfortable with note taking since this had been an

²⁵ This statement contradicts the testimony of several Surveyors and Coordinators. Interviewed shortly after the mapping was completed, they said they had been given photocopies of government base maps at the first workshop and instructed to fill them in with land use activities in the communities. A number of these maps are in folders stored at the MOPAWI office.

important activity for them in school in the recent past.

(5) Letters of introduction: Project leaders and tribal authorities drafted an official letter of introduction that would be carried by the Surveyors

into the field. The letter explained the objectives of the project, the general task of the Surveyors, and the need for cooperation from the community. These letters were useful in that they formalized the process, giving it a more serious aspect.

Few had a clear idea of how they were supposed to gather data for the maps when they returned to their communities. Compounding this vagueness on what to do was the lack of understanding and discussion of why it had

to be done. Even the scanty treatment given in Honduras to the political importance of mapping was absent. In retrospect, it is now clear that the disarray of this workshop presaged much of the confusion that was to follow.