Community **Futures**
Community **Lore**

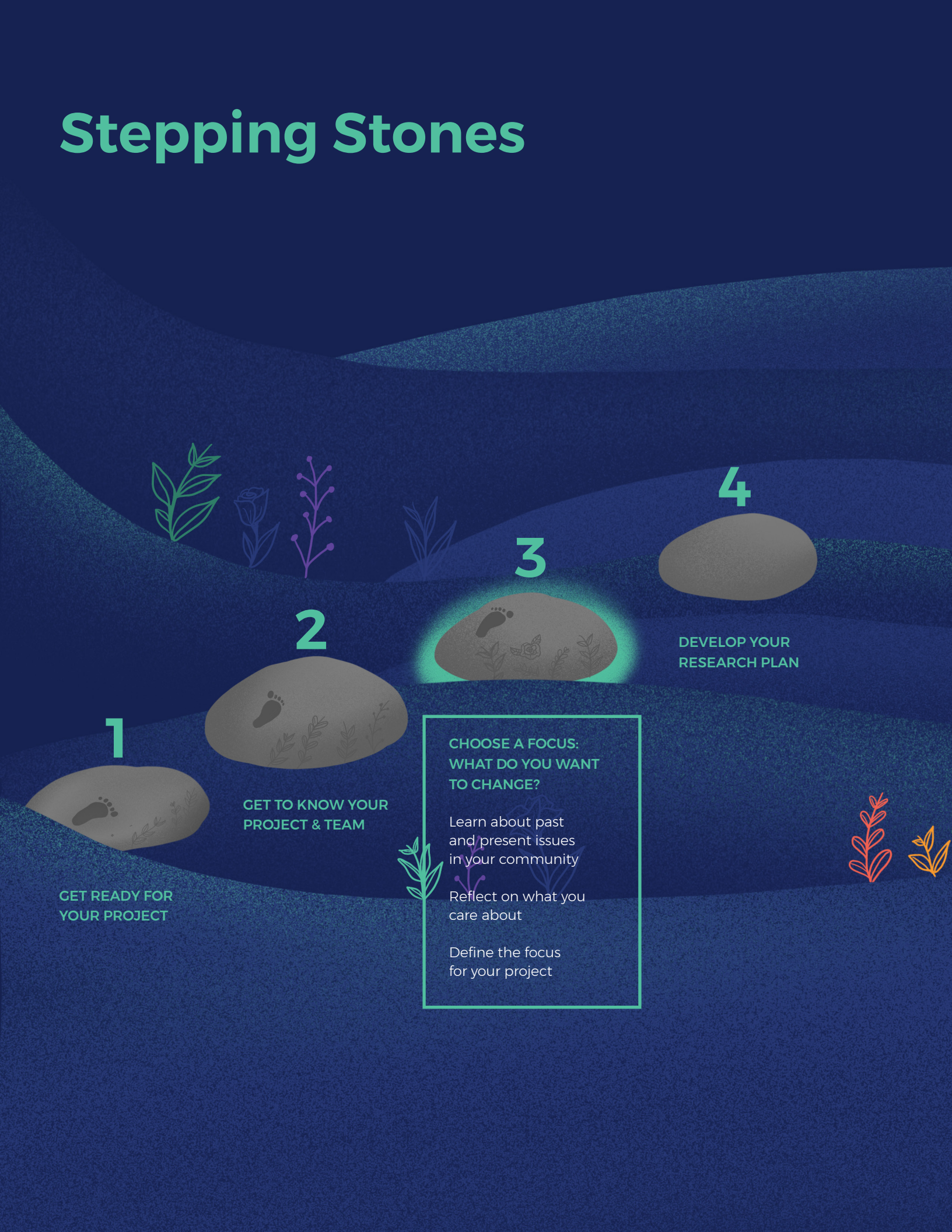
03

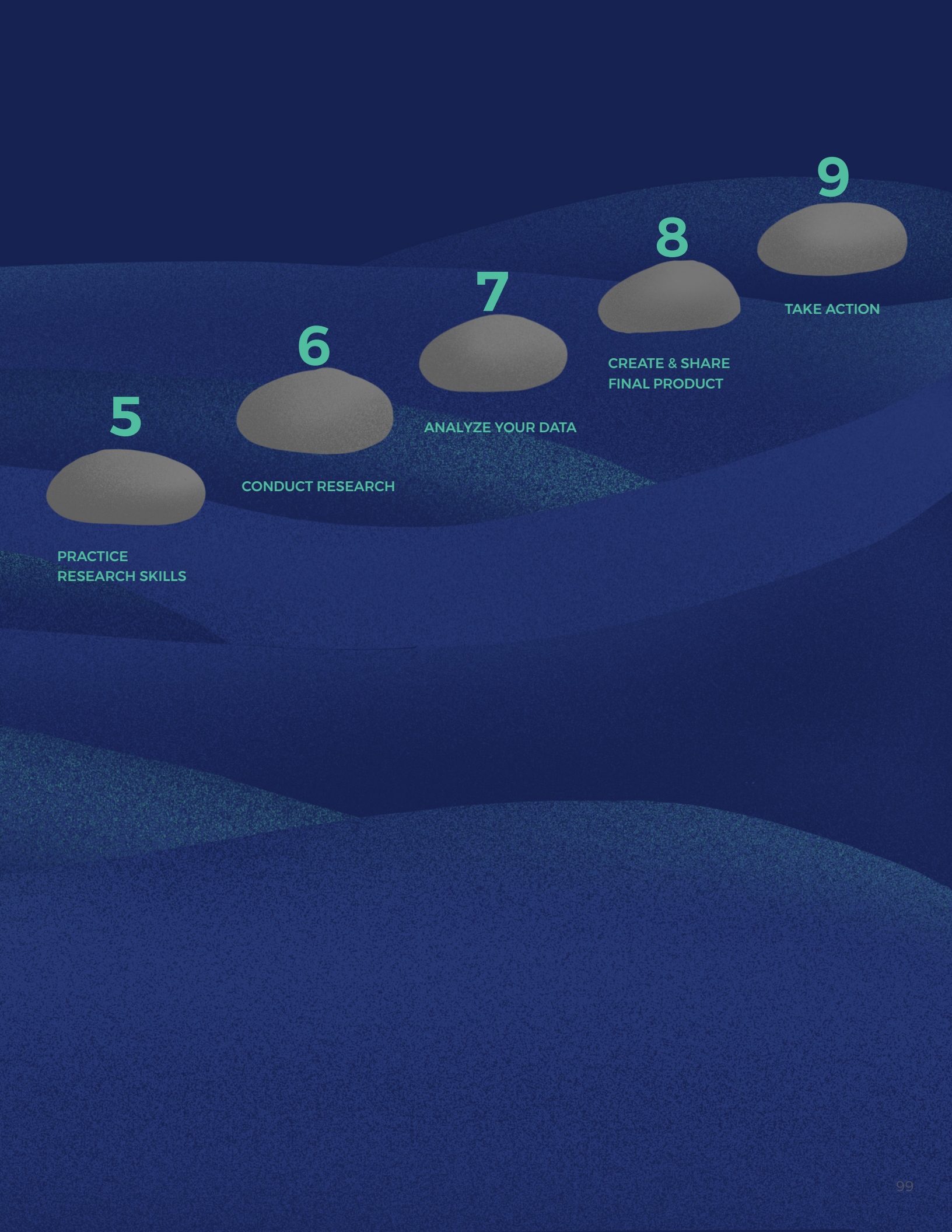
Stepping Stone 3

in the CFCL Youth Participatory Action Research Series

Choose A Focus: What Do You Want to Change?

Stepping Stones

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PRACTICE
RESEARCH SKILLS
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CONDUCT RESEARCH
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ANALYZE YOUR DATA
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CREATE & SHARE
FINAL PRODUCT
9
TAKE ACTION

Stepping Stone 3

Choose A Focus: What Do You Want to Change?

It's time to dive in and think critically about your community! In Stepping Stone 3, you will choose your project's focus after exploring the issues shaping your community as well as your own personal experiences.

Reflect on your project's historical and present-day environment

- Activity 3.1: Mapping Matters Skits (understanding histories of community investment/disinvestment)
- Activity 3.2: The Boat Metaphor (exploring power and who has it)

Stepping Stone Tips

- This phase requires teammates to work closely and have critical conversations. Trusting relationships are key, so make sure some team building has already happened!
- Adult allies – now is the time to step back and allow youth leaders to lead and make decisions!

Time Commitment: 3 – 5 sessions.

Explore what you already know about your community and what's important to you

- Activity 3.3: Real vs. Ideal (examining your community's present and imagining its future)
- Activity 3.4: Community Issue Mapping (identifying community challenges and resources)
- Activity 3.5: Data Ground-Truthing (engaging with publicly-available data)

Choose your project's focus

- Activity 3.6: Choosing an Issue (deciding what you want to take on as a group)

3.1 ACTIVITY

Mapping Matters Skits

Adapted from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change's Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum:
https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/Making%20Youth%20Data%20Matter%20Curriculum.pdf

Objectives
- Learn how maps can be powerful tools
- Understand that maps can be used to oppress and make change

Time Needed
45 minutes

Materials
- Role play scenarios, maps and role descriptions can be found here: https://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu/resources/Activity3.1Materials.pdf
- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Introduction
You've discussed data and mapping and your experiences with them. Now your team will explore how maps have been used as a powerful tool—for both oppression and social justice—through role playing and creative skits. You will also learn about their impacts in your community.

These scenarios can be overwhelming, especially if this is the first time that your team has heard about redlining and/or unincorporated areas. Supporting your teammates' understanding is critical and it can be helpful to prepare any adult or youth co-facilitators ahead of time. If you are the sole facilitator for the activity, ensure that you are available to help each group and consider extending the time for this activity.

Print out the scenarios and maps ahead of time and familiarize yourself with all the materials.

Instructions
- Start by giving an example of how maps and/or data have affected your own life. You might have a story about the community where you grew up or about your family histories.
- For example, one facilitator's family history highlighted how the shifting of Mexican/US borders on the map resulted in his family suddenly finding themselves living in the US rather than Mexico. The goal is to show how maps can help to tell your story.
- **Suggested Language:** Now let's take a look at some other examples of how data and mapping have been used to impact communities.

Instructions (cont.)

- Preparation for role playing the scenarios:
  - Break participants into 2-4 groups.
  - Hand each group a scenario sheet and the supporting materials.
  - Have groups take 20 minutes to:
    1. Read through the background information and scenario.
    2. Answer the guiding questions.
    3. Develop a 3-minute skit based on their scenario.
- Presentation of the skits:
  - Have each group perform their skit and answer questions from the rest of the team.

Debrief

Reflect on the activity together as a team using these discussion questions:

- What was most impressive about these scenarios?
- What was the role of maps in these scenarios?
- Who used the maps, and how did they use them?
- Do you see the effects of these types of practices in your community?
- Do you think that these kinds of practices have lasting impacts on communities? Why or why not?
- Could either of the scenarios be seen as a positive way to use data and maps? If so, how?
- What do you feel about the power of mapping and data after this exercise?

3.2 ACTIVITY

The Boat Metaphor

Originally created by Hugh Vasquez | Modified by Youth In Focus

Objectives

- Explore power, identify who has it and analyze how it works in our society
- Understand the potential power of alliance building
- Understand the importance of youth voice and youth experience as experts in addressing and solving problems that young people must deal with

Time Needed

45 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

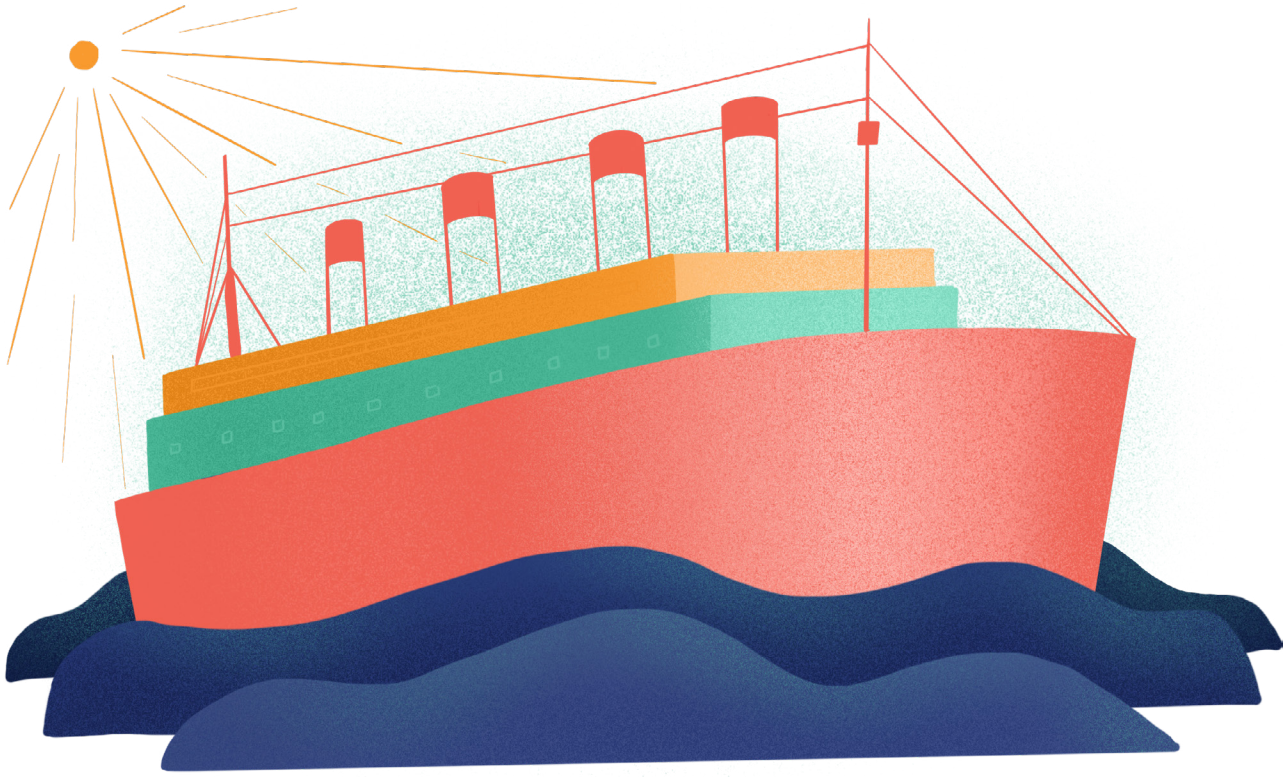
Introduction

The Boat Metaphor is an exercise used to talk about power and how it works in our society. The activity uses the metaphor of a boat with multi-level decks for its discussions, and you can refer to the movie Titanic if it helps your team visualize the discussion. If you are short on time, you can skip the "Power Brainstorm" at the beginning of this activity and the follow-up "Power Over vs. Power With" piece at the end.

Instructions

Power Brainstorm: (5 minutes)

- Write the word "power" in the middle of a sheet of flip chart paper and circle it. Have group members brainstorm what power means to them. Write these words all around the flip chart paper, with lines or spokes connecting each word to "power" in the circle at the center.
- Save this sheet because you will use it again at the end of the activity.



Instructions (cont.)

The Boat Metaphor: (30 minutes)

» **Ask:** When it comes to power (access, decision-making, etc.) would you say we all have equal power? (Answer: No – some have more power than others)

» **Draw:** On a sheet of flip chart paper, draw a boat with three distinct decks:
- First Class – has many big windows (this deck is the smallest and on the top of the boat)
- Second Class – has a few windows, but smaller than those in First Class (this deck is a little larger and is in the middle of the boat)
- Third Class / Steerage – no windows (this is the largest 'deck' or half the boat, and it's on the bottom)

» **Say:** This boat has different levels that different people live on – first class, second class, and third class/ steerage.

» **Ask:** Can you give examples of what you think it's like to live in first class? Examples may include:
- Lots of room to move about
- Fresh air
- First class passengers can go anywhere on the boat
- Lots of fancy, expensive food (more than you could eat)
- Private room with its own hot tub, king-size bed, great view
- Room service - people serving you

» **Ask:** Now what do you think it's like to live in second class? Examples may include:
- Nice, but not as nice as first class
- Can move around your deck, but if you want to go to first class you need permission.
- Need to share your room with a roommate or two; shared bathroom, too
- Food is okay, but you eat cafeteria style – need to clear your own plate
- Only a little window to look out

» **Ask:** Now what you think it's like to live in third class / steerage? Examples may include:
- Everyone is cramped together – 4-5 bunk beds in one room/ sleep on the floor
- Room, bathroom, eating area are all dirty - rats, cockroaches
- Not allowed to visit 2nd or 1st class
- No fresh air – stuffy, dank, hot, dark
- Bad food and not enough for everyone
- Full of machinery (engine, boiler room) – oily, dirty, dangerous
- They do all the work to keep

3.2 ACTIVITY

The Boat Metaphor (cont.)

Originally created by Hugh Vasquez | Modified by Youth In Focus

the boat functioning and moving forward

- **Draw:** Draw an X on the bottom of the boat in the third class / steerage area.
- **Explain:** Explain to the group that the boat hit an iceberg. Now, there's a hole in the boat!

Information – Who has the information?

- **Ask:** Who ought to be worried? (Answer: Everyone! People at the bottom are the first affected, but everyone may drown if the boat sinks. We are all connected and dependent on each other.)
- **Ask:** Who has the most accurate, up-to-date information about the nature and extent of the problem? (Answer: Those closest to the hole)
- **Say:** Some say the captain in the bridge, up in first class, has the most information because they have staff and computers that can tell them what's going on. Actually, the people who are next to the hole have the most accurate and up-to-date information abou the problem (they can tell you exactly when it happened, what it sounded like, how fast the water is coming in, what passengers may have already gotten swept away, etc.)

Communication – Who has power? Who controls the information?

- **Ask:** When people begin to find out about the problem, whose voice is heard most clearly throughout the boat? Is it the captain or those at the bottom of the boat? Why? (Answer: Captain controls the PA system throughout the boat, he tells staff what to do and how to handle it, etc.)
- **Ask:** What happens to the voices of those at the bottom of the boat when they let others know what is happening? What happens to that information as it travels up to the top of the boat and to the captain? (Answer: It gets distorted and changed, like in the game "telephone." Sometimes the people at the bottom of the boat even get blamed for the problems—as in "Why did you break the boat?")

The Boat as a Metaphor

- **Say:** We are going to rename the boat: This is the U.S.S. _____ (fill this in with a system your team members are familiar with. If you're in a school, you may name it the "U.S.S. Education System." If you're working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, you may name the boat the "U.S.S. Safe Community for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth."
- **Brainstorm:** Brainstorm problems by asking "Is there a hole in the boat? How can you tell?"
- **Ask:** Who has the current, most accurate, up-to-date information about the nature and extent of the problems? (Answer: the youth)

» **Say:** THIS is the reason why we are doing youth participatory action research, because it's the young people that hold the most accurate information about what the problems are that youth are facing. Through this process, you will be gathering more information from other youth about how they see the problem and based on this information, you will come up with steps on the best way to solve those problems!

Power Over or Power With?: (10 minutes)

» Go back to the "Power Brainstorm" you did at the beginning of the activity.

» **Ask:** Ask youth to identify which words on the power brainstorm are about exerting "Power Over" another group. Then, ask them to identify any words that are about "Power With" or sharing power.

Debrief

Close out the activity by discussing and reinforcing the fact that young people are the experts about problems that they face and should be the ones leading efforts to solve them. Also emphasize the importance of having "Power With" youth instead of "Power Over" youth in order to solve the problems together.

3.3 ACTIVITY

Real vs. Ideal

Objectives

- Map out what issues or needs exist in your community, school, or other focus organization
- Develop context for your research project
- Begin to look at power structures and their roles in decision-making

Time Needed

60 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Introduction

This activity will provide an opportunity to brainstorm community issues and analyze what contributes to them. Engage your team in a brainstorm and debrief. This activity is best conducted in a circle.

Instructions

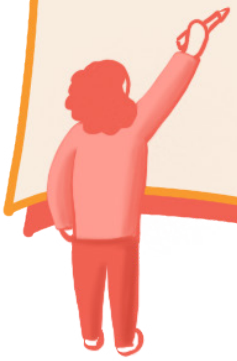
- Have the group list and describe what their IDEAL community (or other organization) looks like. Chart their ideas on flip chart paper, placing check marks next to any idea that is stated multiple times.
- Now have the group describe what their community REALLY looks like. List these ideas on a separate sheet of flip chart paper.

Debrief

Have the group discuss what they feel after looking at how different the two lists' descriptions are using the following guiding questions.

Sample Flip Chart #1

Describe what your ideal school or community looks like.



Sample Flip Chart #2

Describe what your school or community really looks like.

Guiding Questions

- How do you feel about how different the IDEAL and REAL are on these lists?
- Why do you feel things are the way they are?
- What's needed to create change in your community or school?
- Who has the power in the community or school to make the decisions about what is needed?
- How much say do you feel you have in these decisions?

Save these charts. They will be used in creating your team's research question and other later activities to address the needs that have surfaced through these exercises.

3.4 ACTIVITY

Community Issue Mapping

Objectives
- Learn how mapping can be used as part of the research process
- Develop context for your research project
- Identify issues or needs that exist in your community or school

Time Needed
30 minutes

Materials
- Flip chart paper
- Markers

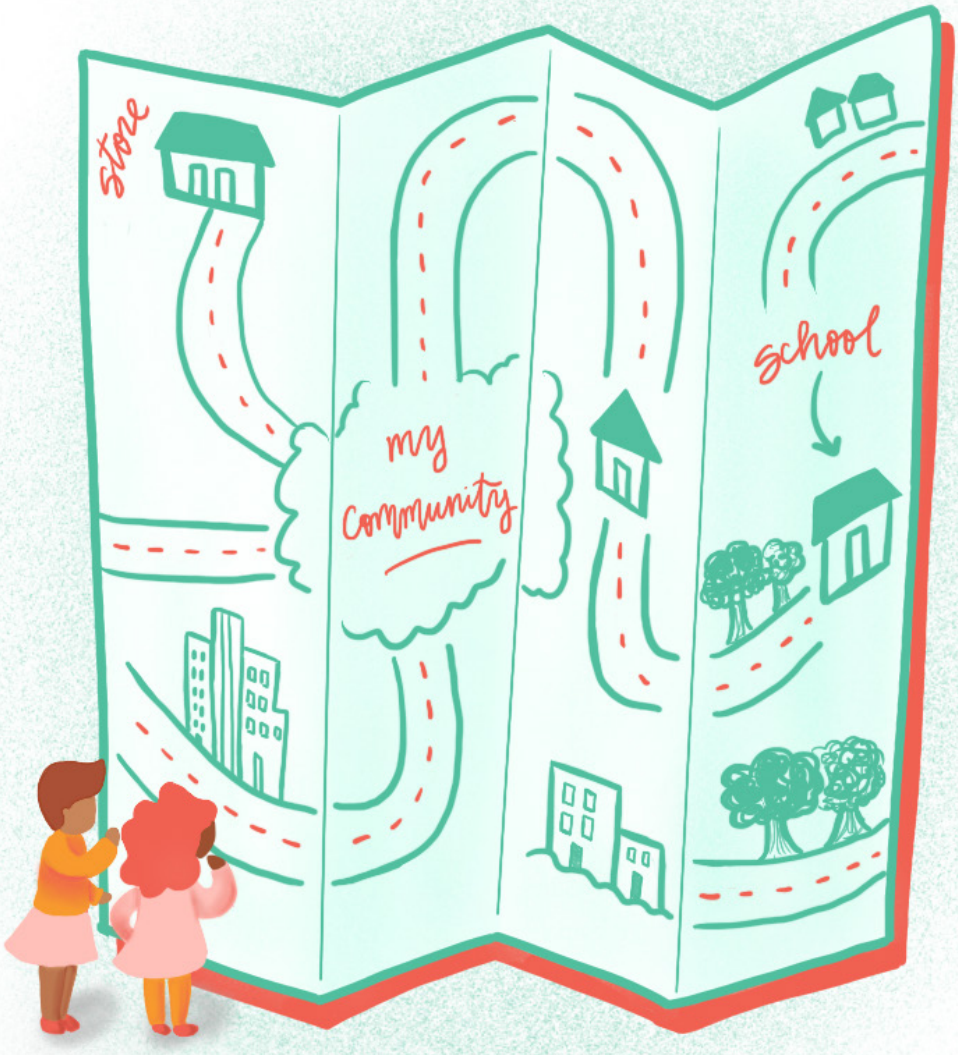
Introduction

This mapping activity will provide a visual to help your team think about what spaces you have in your community. What do you have access to? Why do you make the choices you make? Does your community look the same or different from other communities around you?

Before facilitating this activity, draw your own community map to share as an example.

Instructions

- Start by providing an example, then break your team into smaller groups. Have groups take 15 minutes to plan their map and draw it. After 15 minutes, ask groups to present their maps.
- In teams, draw your community, school and/or other focus organization using symbols or pictures:
  - What are key locations, places of interest and personal landmarks for you? Places you or your family frequent? Places you think are special or supportive? Places you try to avoid?
  - Where do young people hang out and what spaces do they usually fill?
  - What transportation do young people use to get around? What routes do young people use to travel through the community?
  - What resources and assets serve youth? What locations present challenges, barriers, or dangers for young people?



Debrief

After the groups present, ask:

- What did you notice about each other's maps? What was similar or different?
- What do you think or feel about the environment in your community or school?
- What do you think about the spaces provided for young people?
- Would you consider your community to be a youth-friendly place, based on this map?
- Based on your maps, what issues do you see in your school or community? (Chart the answers to this question on a flip chart. These will be used as you move into choosing an issue)

3.5 ACTIVITY

Data Ground-Truthing

Objectives

- See what data already exist about your community/school/organization and your potential topics
- Compare publicly-available data to your own knowledge of conditions on the ground

Time Needed

60 minutes

Materials

- Computers/tablets/smart phones with internet access
- Projector or large screen connected to computer for website demos
- Ground-Truthing Worksheet (attached)
- Pens/pencils
- Ideas generated from Activity 3.3: Real vs. Ideal and/or Activity 3.4: Community Issue Mapping

Introduction

As you work to identify and frame your project's issue, it's good to review related data that are already out there. While you may agree or disagree with it, you'll want to understand what publicly-available data can tell you about your community/school/organization and your potential topics.

While access to official data are important for community change work, they often don't tell the whole story. Ground-truthing is one important practice to help you critically engage with publicly-available data. It allows you to use your observations "on the ground" and knowledge from your own lived experiences to validate, expand upon or push back against official data and the stories that are told using those data.

Activity Preparation

For this activity, you'll need to identify and familiarize yourself with one or more data or data-mapping sites ahead of time that your team will explore. There are many of these sites that come and go. Look for some that might focus on your region or your team's topic(s) of interest, seeking out trustworthy data sources such as school districts, local government agencies, state agencies, etc. If you're in the United States, one starting point for primary data about your city or region is the U.S. Census Bureau (https://data.census.gov/cedsci/).

You can also find secondary data sets that combine data, some of which are displayed on maps. For an example, check out the Putting Youth on the Map resource from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change (https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth). To

familiarize yourself and your team with this data mapping tool, you can also explore the activities in the accompanying Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum (https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources.html#learn).

For additional support learning how to find the best available data, check out Activity 5.2: The Data-ing Game. Once you've chosen one or more data or mapping sites for this activity, make sure you're comfortable using them and can understand and explain what's there.

Instructions

- Start by providing a live demo of the site(s) to walk your team through what's there and how to navigate through it. Or just download relevant data ahead of getting together and use that.
- Pass out copies of the Ground-Truthing Worksheet to all participants.
- Divide up your team into pairs or small groups and have them work together to explore the data and maps and answer the questions on the worksheet.
- Be available to answer questions and troubleshoot any data questions and technology issues.
- When everyone is finished, come back together as a team to share what was discovered and reflect on everyone's reactions and responses.

Debrief

Debrief the activity with the following questions:

- How comfortable would you feel using these data and mapping sites again on your own?
- How can we continue to build our skills engaging with publicly-available data?
- How can you see us using these data and maps further in our YPAR project?
- Based on the ideas we generated from this activity, what potential issue areas or questions might we want to focus on with our YPAR project?

Helpful Hints

- This activity can be facilitated in a number of ways, depending on your team's access to and proficiency with technology. For those with more limited access or capabilities, you can lead them through an exploration of the site(s) together as a whole team. You can also identify and print out key data points and maps ahead of time and bring those in for your team members to interact with offline.
- If you want your team members to explore specific maps or data points on a site, you can create a data scavenger hunt with step-by-step instructions. For examples of what this can look like from Putting Youth on the Map, check out this link: https://interact.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/youth/resources/curriculum/PYOM%20Sample%20Training%20Activities.zip

Ground-Truthing Worksheet

1. Were you surprised by any of the official data or was it as you expected? Describe your initial reactions.

2. What important data points stand out to you from the publicly-available data and mapping site(s) you explored?

A)

B)

C)

3. Based on these publicly-available data, what potential challenges and/or strengths can you identify? Who seems to be the most affected by them?

4. What similarities or differences do you notice between what the publicly-available data are saying and what you already know about conditions in your community/school/organization? *(Feel free to refer back to ideas your team generated in Activity 3.3: Real vs. Ideal and/or Activity 3.4: Community Issue Mapping.)*

5. After examining all of these official data and comparing them to your own experiences, what questions come to mind that you might want to investigate further?

A)

B)

C)

3.6 ACTIVITY

Choosing an Issue

Objectives
- Explore possible issue areas
- Narrow down potential issue areas
- Select a focus

Time Needed
30–60 minutes

Materials
- Issue Chart (see attached example)
- Tape
- Markers
- Any research the team has done on any of the issues
- Ideas generated from Activity 3.3: Real vs. Ideal
- Sticky notes
- Pens

Introduction

You have mapped out your community, examined what's really going on, and even pictured what you want to see for your school, community, and lives. Now it's time to select the issue that you want to work on in order to make a change.

Instructions

- Hang up your Issue Chart (see attached example).
  - Define each column and offer the example provided or one that you come up with.
  - Designate different color sticky notes for each column (or, different marker colors for each).
  - Hang up notes from "Real vs. Ideal" activity.
- Pass out sticky notes and markers/pens to each participant. Team members can work individually or in small groups.
  - Ask them to write down a response to each of the columns on the corresponding sticky notes.
  - Ask them to stick their sticky notes to the chart.
  - Once all the sticky notes have been hung, have the group read through their responses.
  - Discuss each issue that participants present.

Encourage the group to use issues they have already identified in their "Real vs. Ideal" activity (i.e. what is "real" is also a possible "issue" to work on). This is also an opportunity to use your team's preferred decision making process. See Activity 2.4 in Stepping Stone 2 if you need additional help with this.

Issue Chart
Sample Flip Chart

You should write the column headings/words in bold on your issue chart. You can also write in this example or one that you come up with. Have your research team continue to fill down the chart, using the attached instructions.

Issue & Example of the Problem:	Ideal (What We Want):	Challenges or Barriers to Working Towards the Ideal	Allies (Who Will Support Us)	How Can We Get from the Real to the Ideal?
Liquor stores on every corner of our school's neighborhood.	Grocery stores and fruit stands.	Liquor stores bring in a lot of profit. Grocers don't want to set up their business in our neighborhood.	City officials Neighborhood activists	Get city officials to invest in local grocery businesses. Petition liquor stores to leave our neighborhood. Work with liquor stores to provide more options like fruits, vegetables, and other healthy and affordable food.
Place Sticky Notes here →				

Guiding Questions

After mapping out each of these issues, which one seems most important and interesting for this team to work on?

- Who does this issue affect?
- How does it affect them?
- How many people are affected by this issue?
- Are you interested in this issue?
- Is this an issue that you want to change or improve?

What is a possible goal for a project on this issue?

- Is this an issue that you want to change or improve?
- If you address this issue, how would it improve your school, community, etc.?
- What kinds of information do we need to work on this issue? How could we use research?
- Is this issue researchable (given our timeframe, available resources, etc.)?

Is there anything else we need to find out about before we choose an issue to work on?

Which important, actionable, researchable issue do we want to work on?

Congratulations!

You are on your way to creating important change in our world.

About Community Futures, Community Lore

STEPPING STONE GUIDES

The CFCL Stepping Stone guides were developed based on the original work of the Intercultural Oral History Project/Tibet, the Intercultural Oral History Project/Nepal, Community LORE, Youth In Focus and the Putting Youth on the Map program at the UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Many, many individuals, communities and projects contributed over a period of more than twenty years to CFCL's approach to YPAR (youth participatory action research). For the full set of Stepping Stone guides, YPAR stories, background on the CFCL approach, and a list of project credits visit the website: ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu

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