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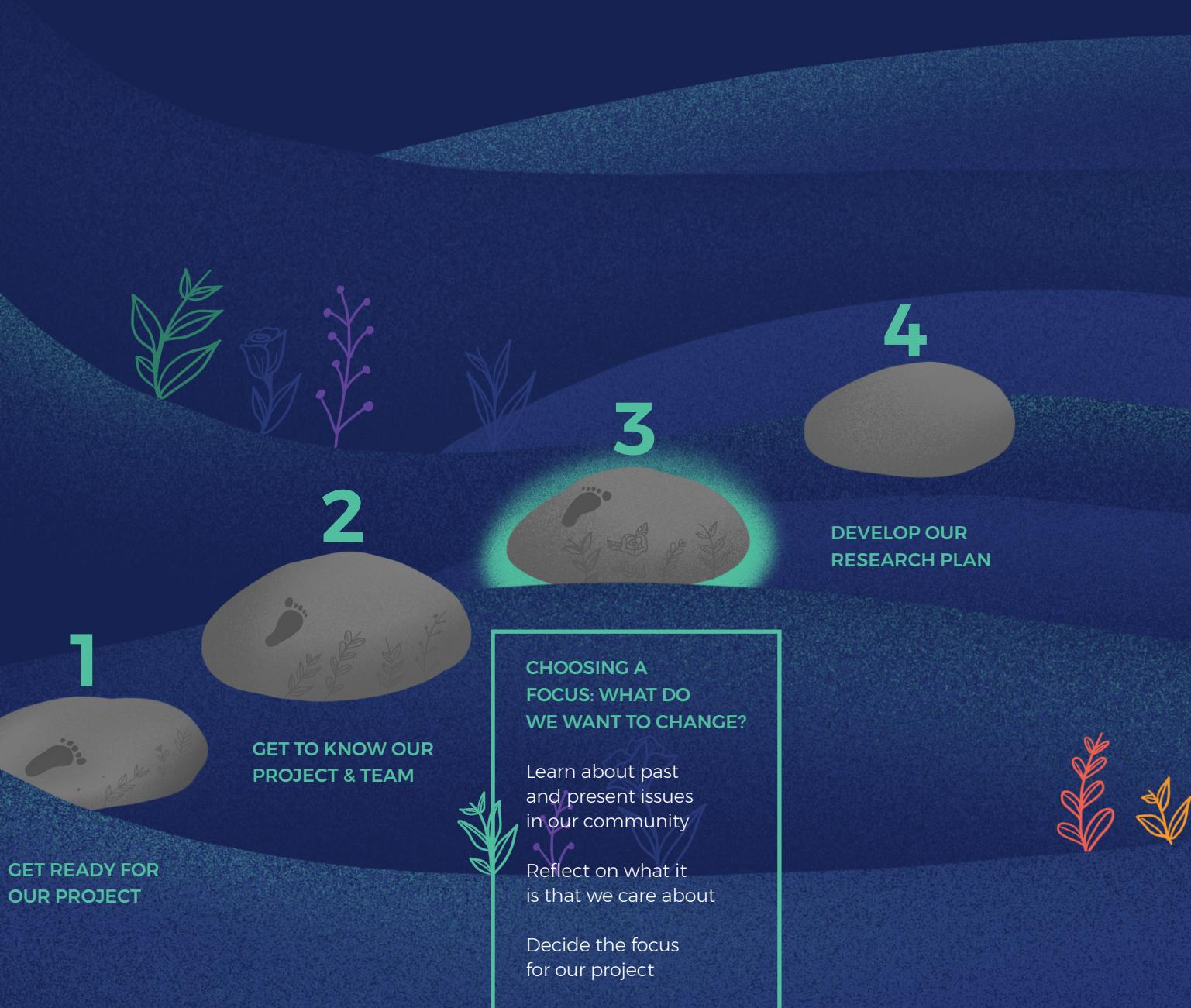


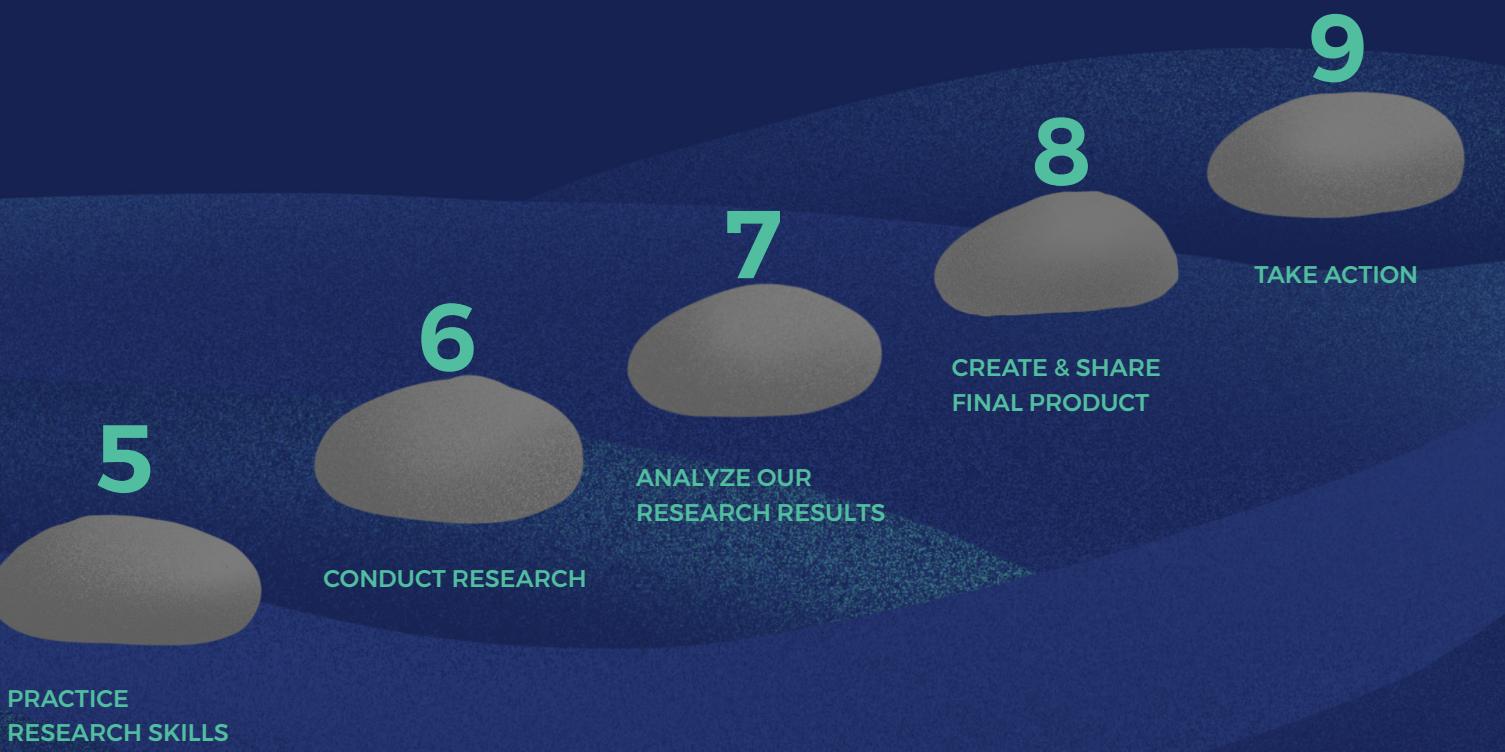
Stepping Stone 3

*in the CFCL Youth-Led
Participatory Action Research Series*

Choosing A Focus: What Do We Want to Change?

Stepping Stones





Stepping Stone 3

Choosing A Focus: What Do We 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 past and current issues shaping your community as well as your own personal experiences.

1



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.



2



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)

3



Choose your project's focus

- » (Activity 3.5) Choosing an Issue (deciding what you want to take on as a group)

3.1 ACTIVITY

Mapping Matters Skits



Objectives

- » To learn how maps can be powerful tools.
- » To understand that maps can be used to oppress and make change.

Time Needed

45 minutes

Materials

- » Role play scenarios, maps and role descriptions (all supplementary materials can be found in the Making Youth Data Matter Curriculum here: [insert new link](#))
- » Flip chart paper
- » Markers

Introduction

- » Now that you have discussed data and mapping and your experiences with them, your group will explore how maps have been used as a powerful tool—a tool of oppression and a tool for 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 the group has heard about redlining and/or unincorporated areas. Supporting participant 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 make yourself available to each group to assist them and consider extending the time allocated to this activity.

- » Prepare for this activity by printing out the scenarios and maps ahead of time and familiarizing yourself with all the materials.

Instructions

- » Start out by giving an example of how maps and/or data have affected your own life. You might have a story about your community where you grew up, or about your family histories. For example, one family history described by a facilitator 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 3-minute role-play skit and answer questions from the rest of the group.

Debrief

Reflect on the activity as a full group using these discussion questions:

- » What jumped out at you 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

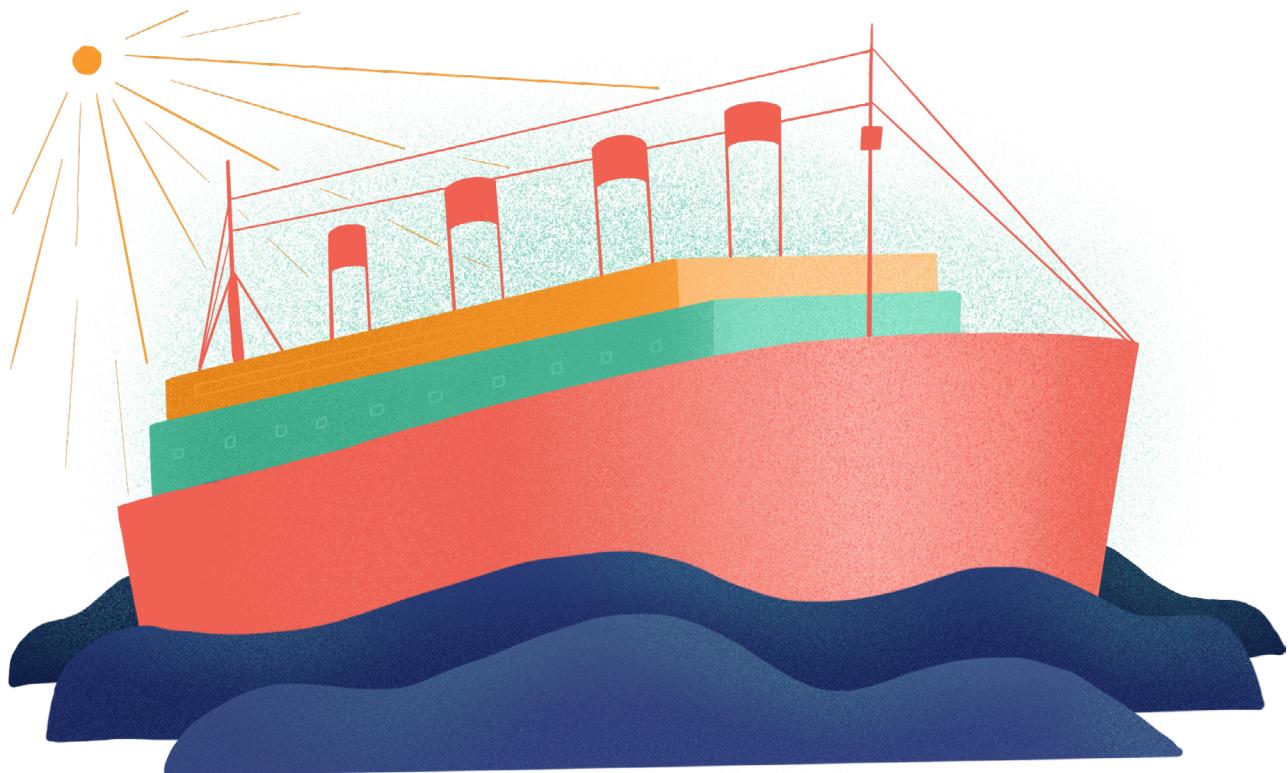
Introduction

The Boat Metaphor is an exercise used to be able to talk about power and how power 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 group visualize what is being discussed. 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 flipchart paper, drawing 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're all in the same boat? (Answer: No – some have more power than others)
- » 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 the group to give examples of what they 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 the group to give examples of what they 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 wanna 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
- » Now ask the group to give examples of what they 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

3.2 ACTIVITY

The Boat Metaphor (cont.)

Originally created by Hugh Vasquez | Modified by Youth In Focus

- They do all the work to keep the boat functioning and moving forward
- » Draw an X on the bottom of the boat in the third class / steerage area. 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: People at the bottom/everyone on the boat)
- **Ask:** Who has the most current, 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 current, accurate, up-to-date information about the nature and extent of the problem (they can tell you exactly when it happened, what it sounded like, how much and how fast the water is coming in, what passengers may have already gotten swept away in the hole in the boat, 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 their voice when those at the bottom of the boat try to

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 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-led action research, because it is 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 action

steps on how best 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 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 young people 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

- » To map out what issues or needs exist in your community or school.
- » To develop context for your research project.
- » To begin to look at power structures and their roles in decision-making.

Time Needed

60 minutes

Materials

- » Flipchart paper
- » Markers

Introduction

This activity will provide an opportunity to brainstorm and map out issues and analyze how the built environment contributes to these issues. The facilitator will engage the group in a brainstorm and debrief. This activity is best conducted in a circle.

Instructions

1. Have the group list and describe what their IDEAL community or school looks like. Chart their ideas on flipchart paper, placing check marks next to any idea that is stated multiple times.
2. Now have the group describe what their community or school REALLY looks like. List these ideas on a separate sheet of flipchart paper.

Debrief

Have the group discuss what they feel after looking at how different the two lists' descriptions are using the following guiding questions. Refer to the flip chart sheet for which questions to chart answers for.

Sample Flip Chart #1



Sample Flip Chart #2

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 is 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

- » To learn how mapping can be used as part of the research process.
- » To develop context for your research project.
- » To identify what issues or needs exist in your community or school.

Time Needed

30 minutes

Materials

- » Flipchart paper
- » Markers

Introduction

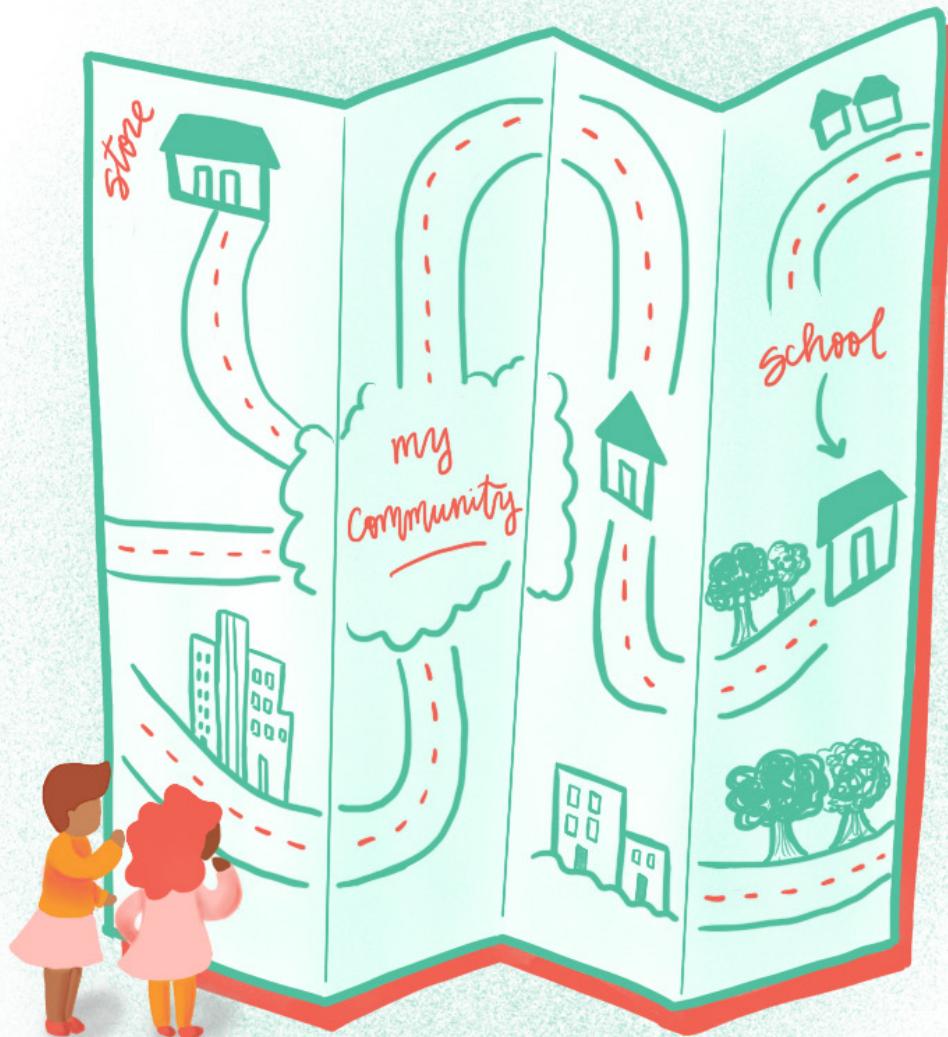
This mapping activity will provide a visual to help think about what spaces we have in our community. What do we have access to? Why do we make the choices we make? Does our community look the same or different as other communities around us?

Instructions

The facilitator should provide an example first. Give groups 15 minutes to come up with the plan for their map and draw it. After 15 minutes, ask groups to present their maps.

In teams, draw your school and/or community. Using symbols or pictures, draw what you have in your community and/or school:

- » 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 groups present, ask:

- » What did you notice about each other's maps? What was similar or different?
- » What do you think or feel about your 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 answers to this last question on a flip chart to be used as you move into choosing an issue]

3.5 ACTIVITY

Choosing an Issue



Objectives

- » To explore and examine possible research topics.
- » To narrow down significant research issues.
- » To select a research topic.

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 Real vs. Ideal activity
- » Post-it notes
- » Pens

Introduction

It's time to select the issue that we want to research in order to make change in our school or community. We have mapped out our community, examined what's really going on, and even pictured what we want to see for our school, community, and lives.

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 a different color post-it for each column (or, different marker colors for each).
- » Hang up notes from Real vs. Ideal activity.

Pass out post-it 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 post-it.
- » Ask them to stick their post-its to the chart.
- » Once all the post-its 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).

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 Issue to the Ideal?
EXAMPLE: Liquor stores on every corner of our school's	Grocery stores and fruit stands.	Liquor stores bring in a lot of profit. Grocers don't want to set up their business in our		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
Place Post-Its 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 would a goal be for a project on this issue?

- » Is this an issue that you want to change or improve?
- » If you changed this issue, how would it improve your school, community, etc.?
- » 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.

