

Community Mapping

Objective: To identify problems and potential issues in youth's communities.
To identify the larger power structures that feed into these problems.

Time: 1 hour

How Many: up to 30

Materials: Butcher Paper, Markers, Large Map of Your City, Yarn and Pins for Map.

Source: Adapted from SOUL Curriculum

Enroll: Have youth come to the map and put a pin where they live and connect a piece of colored string from their home to school.

What do you notice about the map?

Do/Experience:

Part One: Visualization

Ask youth to close their eyes as you talk them through a walk in their community. Speak slowly and calmly as you invite youth to visualize their community in the DAYTIME.

You are walking through your community: What is on the streets? What do the buildings look like? What do the people look like? What are they doing? Are there any children around? Animals? Where do people live? Where do people work? What can people buy there? How are people getting around? Are there trees, flowers, or bushes? Is there garbage lying around? Does it feel safe? How can you tell?

Now imagine that it is dark. What, if anything, changes in your community?

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Community Map

[Note: Use the map from the Enroll, to put youth into groups based on where they live. Try to have as few categories as you can. If there are youth who are from places where no one else is from, they should join into one group to do a community map of the area around the school.]

We are going to go through the first step in taking action, which is identifying issues, that we see everyday in our communities. Pick 1-2 youth to be artists.

What did you see about your community in the visualization? Note: if youth get stuck, bring up questions you asked in the visualization. As people talk about what they see, artists will draw out people's ideas on butcher paper.

Process: What do you notice about the map?
Looking at this map, what are some PROBLEMS that you see?
What are some issues our community faces?
(If they mention things that are not on the map, have artists add them).

What would you say is the biggest issue?
On the map, circle the issues that youth say are the biggest.
If there are more than 3 or 4, narrow it down to the 3-4 most prevalent issues.

Label: This is one of the activities we will do to learn more about community and school issues. Part of understanding issues, is identifying the root cause of the issues. Now we want to spend time trying to determine the root cause of some of the things we see in our communities.

In the US, we value individualism and so we sometimes think individuals are responsible for everything. (E.g. if someone isn't working it is because they haven't tried hard enough to get a job, if a street is dirty it is because people litter too much. What could be other reasons a street is dirty?)

But the individual is only one factor in the equation of the problem. There are systems in place that make things easier for some people and harder for others.

- Sexism
- Racism
- Classism
- Heterosexism

Demonstrate:

Class Discussion:

Pick one example of the problems on your community map.
Discuss as a class what the root problem is for this issue.
What "isms" contribute to this problem (racism, sexism, etc.)?

Work in Groups:

Divide the class into 3-4 groups, one for each of the main issues on the community map. In their groups, they will look at the community map to

determine what the root cause is and to see where the “isms” fit with this issue.

Each group answers these questions (write questions on the board)

Which of these “isms” applies to this issue?

How specifically do you see them played out (interactions between individuals, in laws, in unwritten rules of how the community works, etc.)?

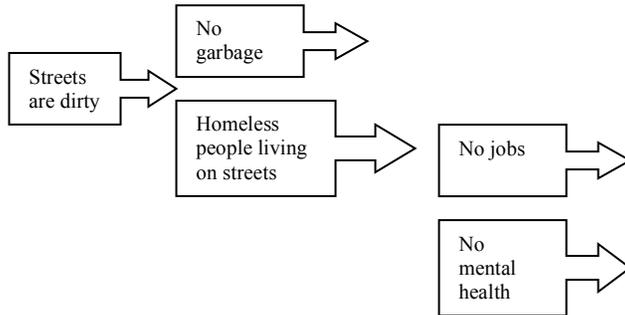
Each group should be prepared to share with the rest of the class.

Review: What are the first steps of a campaign?
Why are they important?

Celebrate: Do a quick visualization with youth picturing what their community would look like if the 3-4 issues/problems no longer existed.

Getting to the Root

You want to see what might be some root causes for the community problem you are seeing. Each time you get a cause, ask, "Why is it that way?" You want to trace each possible cause to its root. For instance, if the community problem is that the streets are dirty, some causes might be homeless people on street, not enough garbage cans and streets don't get cleaned. For each of these causes, ask WHY it is that way. Homeless people on street—not enough jobs, no mental health services. WHY are there not enough jobs, etc until you have gone AT LEAST 4 steps away from your original problem. Draw the relationships like a flow chart.



Do/Experience:

You will need one worksheet for EACH community problem you are looking at.
What community problem are you focusing on?