

Activity 3.26 Community Investigators (The Arts)

Module: 3. Local and Global Communities

Duration: 90 Minutes

Social Development Themes: Arts

Summary

The activity encourages participants to notice what's new and to see parts of their communities they might not have seen before, or at least see some parts differently. Throughout the toolkit we're offering participants tools to help reconnect with themselves and the world around them, and to explore how they perceive the communities they're living in. As a technique, this probably works best in urban areas where the workshop is being delivered in the participants' own community, but it could be adapted to use the workshop space to represent aspects of the community.

Learning Outcomes:

Understand the concept of community and connections between local and global community

Approach:

1. Tell the group they will spend 5 to 10 minutes walking around the space/workshop area/nearby, asking the question: What do you notice? This could be sounds, smells, buildings, people – encourage them not to bring any judgement to the thoughts or feelings, just be aware of the parts of the walk that take their interest.
2. Invite participants to briefly share their experiences, in pairs or small groups.
3. Ask participants to then walk for another 5 to 10 minutes in the same area, this time asking the question: What patterns do you notice? Again, this could be the people in the street, the patterns on the walls, the rows of flowers etc.
4. Repeat the process and invite participants back to ask them to share experiences with somebody different.

5. Again, ask participants to walk for 5 to 10 minutes in the same or a similar environment. This time ask participants to slow down; to go at less than half the pace they'd been going in the previous walks.

6. Repeat the process and invite participants back and share what they noticed this time, as they slowed down.

7. The last instruction is to spend 5 to 10 minutes on their own, thinking about how they felt on the walks, connecting with their thoughts and feelings but not holding onto them for too long. How do they feel about themselves? How do they feel about their communities?

Gather the group and ask them to find a space. They are going to repeat the walk for a final 10 minutes but this time they should think of a question that relates to the change they want to see in their communities. It could be about the problem or the potential solution. Encourage the group to be specific.

Facilitators should ensure there is at least 30 minutes to debrief this, as it can be a powerful experience. Did anything shift? Did people see anything differently?

Debrief

Did participants experience anything unexpected or unusual during the activity? Did they find any of the walks harder than the others? Did they see their communities differently? Were there things they appreciated more or parts that frustrated them?

How might this exercise make us think more about issues in the community and how to approach them?