

Activity 4.17 Stakeholder Mapping Through the Arts

Module: 4. Planning Social Action

Duration: 90 Minutes

Social Development Themes: Arts

Summary

An exercise that stands alone, or, if adapted could add physicality to a number of the activities in Module 3.

This particular version creatively explores the different stakeholders that are involved in a particular problem or social issue. As a tool, it can be used to understand more about different influences, agendas, wants and needs in communities, at a local, national and global level.

Invite participants to be aware not just of their thoughts during this exercise but also any other sensory experiences or 'gut feelings' that might provide insights into the issues explored.

Learning Outcomes:

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

Ability to identify key stakeholders in the community – power and decision-making

Approach:

1. Ask 1. Place an empty chair in the middle of the room. The chair represents an issue in their communities that the group have identified and would like to explore further, for example youth unemployment.
2. On a flipchart, make a list of all the stakeholders that are connected to that issue. Who or what has some kind of influence on this? For example the police, local councilors, young people. Ask the group how influential each of these stakeholders is.
3. Once the different stakeholders have been identified, ask for a volunteer to enter the space. They represent one of the stakeholders. They create an image of that stakeholder.
4. They should think about themselves in relation to the problem/issue – the empty chair. The closer they are to the empty chair, the more influence they feel they have over the issue.
5. Ask the group if they agree with the position.
6. Once the group is happy, ask the volunteer some questions in character. They should reply to the questions as if they are the stakeholder: 'How do you feel about the problem? Why? What do you want to happen?'
7. Repeat this process, adding more people (stakeholders) to the space and asking similar questions. Once all the stakeholders are in the space, invite them in character, to remind the group briefly how they feel about the particular issue.
8. Now ask what the stakeholders what they need from each other for things to progress and the situation to change.
9. Participants should also be invited to ask stakeholders questions. These, of course, are not the real stakeholders. To find out what the stakeholders really feel we would need to consult them, which could be an important step in developing a social action strategy.
10. You could also build on this by inviting a participant to sit in the chair and become the issue itself, responding to what the stakeholders are saying.
11. After hearing different perspectives, the audience and also the stakeholders should be encouraged to identify some of the things they feel would make a difference to this issue.
12. Invite participants to let go of their roles as stakeholders. The group is now able to discuss in smaller groups of four and five any possible strategies to help overcome the problem – they should focus on areas where they feel Active Citizens can have an influence.

Debrief:

The activity is a way of embodying the different parts of the community, exploring their motivation, agenda and intentions and looking at the bigger picture.

How might this activity be useful when thinking about change in our communities? Does it make us think differently about how change happens? This activity can help us to explore how stakeholders influence an issue and also how the different stakeholders are connected – changing one relationship may have an impact on others. This avoids an ‘us and them’ approach to change/progress.

What happens if a person representing the opposite of the issue positions themselves in/enters the space? In the example given above, the group might identify that the opposite is Youth Employment or Local Development. How might this affect the other stakeholders? What journey might they need to make to move closer to this new element?