

Activity 3.01 Community Mapping (The Arts)

Module: 3. Local and Global Communities

Duration: 90 Minutes

Social Development Themes: Arts

Summary

You could approach this existing activity with more creativity by imaging the workshop space to be the community itself. Look around and, using the resources you have available – chairs, tables, sticks, your bodies – physically build your community, with participants maybe playing the parts of some people that live there and interacting with each other.

Learning Outcomes:

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

Ability to identify social development issues to address in the community

Approach:

1. Ask the group to imagine that the whole workshop space represents the community they're from. This will probably be easier if the group are all from the same community but could be adapted to look at a city/region/country, if needed.
2. Ask the group questions that will help them visualise different parts of the communities they're from: Where do young people spend their time in the evenings? Who are the important groups or individuals? Who has the most status/power? Think about how people feel about each other and how they communicate with each other.
3. The group could decide to use objects to represent the people or places, or could create different areas using their bodies.
4. Once the key people and important places have been identified, give the group 20 minutes to create their community – think about the areas that the community is proud of and also the areas of concern. Participants might want to form small teams that create particular parts of the community.

Participants should get into the characters of the different people they're representing.

5. Once the community has been created and the actors are in place, you could shine an imaginary 'spotlight' on the different areas to 'bring them to life' so that we see a 10-second improvisation of that part of the community and then move on to the next group.

6. You could also imagine that an important visitor from another country is to be shown around the community. They're taken on a tour where they meet some of the people who live there. Imagine that they only have one day there – how would they make sure the visitor has the best possible time and wants to come back? What would you show them if you were a tour guide?

Debrief:

Invite the group to come back together and ask them how they felt during the activity? Did they notice anything new about their communities? Did they have any surprising interactions with other characters in the community? How was it seeing the community through someone else's eyes?

Were there any patterns or trends emerging that they hadn't seen before? Who were the groups that were left out? Were there parts of the community that felt like they had more attention or focus?

It's important to have fun with this exercise but also to make sure that the group understands what's needed. Play with the idea of creating the community in as creative a way as possible.

There may be times when the participants find it difficult to stay in the roles of the characters they're representing. If this happens, encourage them to stay in character as much as possible, to really try to see their community through the eyes of someone else. This can be difficult for people who don't see themselves as actors.

If there are people in the group who don't want to act, they could do some visual arts and create a flag that represents the community. If you have the resources you could make the flag out of fabric, paint etc. It could then hang up in the workshop space somewhere as a visual representation of the communities they're living in.

Another way would be to imagine that the local council are going to close some of the services in the community and the group need to come up with a poster or a television advert that explains why these services should stay open. What's brilliant about their community? Why does it deserve to avoid the cuts?