

Adolescents work in groups to create a model of a community they imagine.



 3/5

 1/5

 3/5

 30-45 min



## Activity Overview

### Purpose

Imagine and create a model of a community in which adolescents have all the opportunities and support they need to develop their competencies and pursue their goals.

### Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Communicate ideas through drawing, building and modeling.
- ▶ Explore how physical and social environments can influence their development.
- ▶ Explore and set goals for how they can positively influence their communities.

### Competency domains

Hope for the future and goal setting; Creativity and innovation.

### Works well for

Circles in which adolescents can work well in small groups; Circles of adolescents who are discussing their goals for developing and using competencies.

### Phase

Connecting.

### Before

Adolescents should have had an opportunity to identify competencies that they want to develop and use, using the **Setting group goals** activities, or other activities such as **Our challenges, our solutions** and **Personal assets inventory**.

### After

If adolescents have made 'permanent' models of the community they envision (drawings or collages), keep them. If they have made temporary models (assembled out of found objects that are to be reused later for something else), keep them as long as possible, or summarize the key features of the community that adolescents identified as relevant for their competency goals. Use models or summary notes as a basis for further discussion and planning around the competencies they wish to develop, and their goals for using those competencies.

### Preparation

None needed.

**1**

Begin the activity with adolescents sitting together in a group or circle. Ask adolescents to recall the goals they set in previous sessions for competencies they wish to develop, and/or ways they would like to use those competencies to make positive changes in their own lives or communities. Write a few phrases or words that summarize their competency goals on the white board or a large piece of paper where everyone in the space can see it easily.

**2**

Divide adolescents into small groups. Give each group one large piece of paper.

**3****||| Facilitator says:**

"In this activity we are going to create a model of a community that you imagine. The community is a community in which adolescents like yourselves have all the opportunities and support they need to develop their competencies and pursue their goals."

**(Note:** Adolescents can focus on a specific set of competencies that are related to their group goals, or can explore all of the Ten Key Competencies in this activity, depending on the current focus of their activities.

In your imagined community...

- ▶ In what places do you learn competencies, and how do you learn them?
- ▶ In what places do you practice competencies, and how do you practice them?
- ▶ In what places do you explore competencies?
- ▶ Where are good places for reflection?
- ▶ In what places do you spend time with families? With friends? With other people?

**4****||| Facilitator says:**

You are going to use all of these materials to make your model. You can make a three-dimensional model in which you build models of the different places in your imaginary community, or make a flat model. (Note: Adolescents can create a 'permanent' model by taping or gluing items to their paper, or they can make a temporary model by resting items on their drawing and then discarding them later, after photographing the model and/or summarizing the most important community features that were represented on it.) Place the materials that adolescents will use to create their model in a location where all of the adolescents can access them, or distribute materials to each group.

**5**

Let adolescents draw and build their models for 20 minutes, or for as long as they seem interested and engaged, leaving time to debrief and share.

**6**

Ask the groups to finish their models. Hold a gallery walk in which all of the adolescents walk around the space to look at each other's models. If a camera is available, take photographs that you can use in adolescents' future discussions.

7

### Sharing and Takeaway:

Ask each adolescent group to present their model to the whole circle, and to explain the key features they included and why they are important for adolescents' development and use of competencies.

### Discuss:

What places in your imaginary community already exist in your own community?

- ▶ What are some other places that you imagined and that do not exist in your community, but that you imagined for this community?

- ▶ As you were doing this activity, what did you think or learn about how your environment can affect adolescents' development?
- ▶ What did you think or learn about how you (and adolescents like you) can or do shape your environment?
- ▶ What did you learn or think about how your environment can affect your ability to make positive changes?
- ▶ What did you learn or think about how your environment can help you?
- ▶ Is there anything in your imagined community that you could try to build in your own community?

### Do & Don't



Let adolescents choose what features of their community to include or not include, even if they include or do not include places that a typical community might or might not have.



Let adolescents represent key features of the community in their models in whatever way they wish.



Tell adolescents what to include in their model, even if they leave out places you think are important.



Rush to have a discussion about risks and dangers (e.g. safe evacuation routes, dangerous places to avoid) when adolescents are doing this activity for the first time. Instead, let them use this as an opportunity to explore their communities through their own eyes. However, you may wish to have a follow-up activity focusing on risks and safety if you think it is important for their protection.



Push adolescents to share information about their own personal experiences if they don't want to. (Instead, ask them to describe a day in the life of a typical adolescent boy/girl or an adolescent boy/girl like them.)



Ask adolescents to draw the community or place where they lived before a crisis that has affected them, or before being displaced (unless they suggest this themselves.)



Don't include dangerous materials in the building project.

### Adaptation

If materials for drawing are not available, or if adolescents want a more active experience: They can create a temporary model with found items, placing them on the ground or floor.

If there are blind or visually impaired adolescents in the group: Create tactile models with three-dimensional features that all adolescents can explore with touch. (This is an easy adaptation if adolescents are creating three-dimensional models with small models of the different places their models represent.)

## Environment

Indoor or outdoor space. Quiet.

## Supplies

- ▶ At least one large piece of chart paper for every group of adolescents (or something else for them to draw on).
- ▶ At least one pen, pencil or marker for each adolescent.
- ▶ Found or discarded materials (that are clean and can be handled safely) such as: scraps of drawing or paper, discarded magazines or newspaper, discarded water bottles, discarded plastic bags, rocks, branches, leaves, scraps of cardboard, bottle tops, can tabs, plastic straws, string, rubber pieces, used bags from chips or snacks, tooth picks, tinfoil. Note: Be sure not to use hazardous materials of any kind.
- ▶ Other materials for creating a model: glue, scissors, tape.

## Improvise

Create models of other ideal spaces, whether smaller or larger: a school, a home, a park, a market, a country.

## Continue

Adolescents can work on new drafts of their models, practice their drawing or other art skills, and exhibit their work.

Adolescents can create a story about the imaginary community, such as the imagined history of the community and how it came to exist, or stories of the people who live in the imaginary community, and challenges they might take on and resolve together.

Use the models to catalyse ideas for community projects that they can take on together. For example, adolescents could identify a specific place in their community (unused space, school, park, community centre, community kitchen) and plan a project to make that place more like the place they imagined in their community.