



Finding challenges and opportunities

Adolescents identify places in the community that present them with challenges or opportunities.



4/5



2/5



4/5



30 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Use group planning and decision making to discuss good, bad and opportunity places in the community.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Plan and make decisions with others.
- ▶ Think critically about their surroundings.

Competency domains

Hope for the future and goal setting; Critical thinking and decision making.

Works well for

Adolescents who are ready to reflect on their environment and to work on projects together.

Phase

Taking Action.

Before

Adolescents should have explored and created a map of their environment through an activity such as **Our environment**. Make sure that they have their maps ready to look at together during this activity.

After

Adolescents can develop action plans based on the challenges or opportunities they identify in their environment during this activity.

Preparation

Post the map that the adolescents created in the **Our environment** session in the front of the activity space. If adolescents created more than one map, post all of them or lay them out for a gallery walk (but don't start it yet).





Finding challenges and opportunities

1

Distribute three index cards to each adolescent.

2

Facilitator says:

"Today we are going to look again at the maps you have created. We will look at:

- ▶ Places that aren't good for adolescents - places that are difficult or dangerous;
- ▶ Places that are good for adolescents - places you like to go to or where you can get something you need; and
- ▶ Places that have opportunities or potential for you as adolescents - places that have resources or could be used in a positive way." (For example an unused classroom or an empty lot.)

3

Explain:

Participants will agree to symbols that represent good places, bad places, and opportunity places and ask the adolescents to draw them on their index cards.

4

Explain:

Ask participants to attach the cards to the maps near the bad, good and opportunity places they have identified. (If they have laid out their maps for a gallery walk, the adolescents can start the gallery walk now).

5

When they have finished, review the maps together. Discuss:

- ▶ Where are the bad places? What makes them difficult or dangerous?
- ▶ Where are the good places? What makes them positive for adolescents?
- ▶ What are the opportunity places? What potential do they have for adolescents and how could they be used in a positive way?

6

Divide the adolescents into three groups (or six groups, if smaller group discussions will encourage more people to participate). Each group should focus

7

on either bad, good or opportunity places. Adolescents can change groups if they want to focus on one in particular.

Explain:

Each group should choose one of the places identified in the exercise, and discuss the following questions:

Bad places

What can adolescents do to manage or cope with the difficult things in this place?

What can adolescents do to make this place better?

Who else in the community could help to make this place better for adolescents?

Good places

What can adolescents do to use or enjoy the good things in this place?

What can adolescents do to make this place better, or available to more adolescents?

Who else in the community could help to make this place better, or available to more adolescents?

Opportunity places

What are the opportunities for adolescents in this place?

What can adolescents do so that this place fulfils its potential?

Who else in the community could help this place to fulfil its potential as a good place for adolescents?

8

Share and Take Away

Bring the circle together and ask each group to present their answers.

9

Support the adolescents to discuss whether they want to plan a project together based on their ideas for improving a bad place, making a good place more accessible, or transforming an opportunity place into somewhere positive for adolescents.



Finding challenges and opportunities

Do & Don't

- ✓ Let the adolescents identify the bad, good, and opportunity places themselves, even if they choose unexpected places, or don't identify ones that seem relevant.
- ✓ Pay attention when adolescents describe risks or negative experiences, especially as they discuss bad places - Be prepared to take appropriate steps to connect them with support if necessary (for example, if they have been victims of violence) - Inform and work with the appropriate agencies if you learn of risks to adolescents' rights, such as trafficking, recruitment into armed forces, or exploitation and abuse.
- ✗ Push adolescents to talk about risks and dangerous places if they don't want to - Focusing on negative experiences may be harmful to their psychosocial welfare.

Adaptation

Simplify:

- ▶ If adolescents find it too complicated to focus on all three topics (bad, good and opportunity places), just focus on one of them. Start with good places, so that adolescents focus on something positive.
- ▶ If adolescents find the concept of opportunity places too confusing, limit the discussion to good and bad spaces.

Different starting point: If adolescents haven't created a map of their communities, they can explore issues they have identified in other activities such as Our days or Our challenges, our solutions.

Environment

Indoor or outdoor space.

Supplies

- ▶ At least three index cards per adolescent.
- ▶ Markers.
- ▶ Adolescents' maps or work from similar activities.

Improvise

Instead of developing action plans, adolescents could create artworks or performances to describe their experiences in different places in the community.

Continue

Adolescents can develop action plans to improve places in the community based on their discussions. For example, they could:

- ▶ Organize a campaign to raise awareness about the risks and dangers of certain places in the community (and how to manage them), for other children and adolescents.
- ▶ Organize a project to turn an opportunity place into somewhere positive for adolescents --For example, an empty lot or an unused space could be cleaned up and transformed into a recreation area or a community garden, or a classroom in a school could also be used as a reading room or an after-hours homework space.



Finding challenges and opportunities

