

WHERE I LIVE: A COMMUNITY MAPPING TOOL

Introduction

Inclusive and rights-respecting communities are places where all young people, without distinction, feel like they belong, feel respected and feel happy. These are communities where young people can share their ideas and opinions, practice their culture, express their identity, and actively participate in making decisions that affect their lives. The goal of this activity is to map areas in communities where children and youth face exclusion and discrimination, while also providing them with the opportunity to discuss the changes they want to see.

Discussing Racism and Discrimination

The Community Mapping activity encourages children and youth to consider places in their communities where they may or may not feel included and accepted. This activity may elicit difficult conversations. For example, instances of racism experienced at school or experiences of mistreatment at home or in public spaces may come up. Facilitators need to be aware of their own biases, practice cultural sensitivity and withhold judgement. When planning this activity, facilitators should:

- Ensure that guardian/parental consent is obtained if they are working with minors.
- Adopt a trauma-informed approach¹. This includes providing mental health support and wellness spaces for participants.
- Consider the fundamental principles for working with children, including those relating to non-discrimination and the best interest of the child.

If you require additional support in this area, refer to Equitas' [Guidelines for working with children](#) (pages 6-7) or contact Equitas.

It is important to plan enough time to build trust and to establish a relationship with the children before starting. Refer to Equitas' toolkits for icebreaker ideas and consult our team for resources about trauma-informed practices. Also ensure that your organization has policies and protocols in place for handling disclosures or instances of bullying or abuse. Feel free to adapt this activity to your facilitation style, comfort levels, as well as the age and demographics of the children and

¹ A trauma-informed approach allows human rights educators to carry out their activities, particularly activities related to sensitive topics, in a manner that mitigates the risk of reproducing harm. For more information on integrating a trauma-informed approach, see Equitas resource "[Integrating A Trauma-informed Approach Into Human Rights Education Work That Addresses Gender-based Violence.](#)"

youth you are working with. If you need additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out to your friends at Equitas.

Gathering responses

The results from this activity will help inform the actions that need to be taken towards generating change. Therefore, it is **essential that facilitators record the discussions that take place during and after the activity**. You can use the **attached** response gathering form for [children](#) and for [youth](#) to type your notes or print it to take notes manually. **It is essential to capture what children and youth have to say in a way that is authentic to them**. We encourage staff to write down verbatim what children and youth say during the activity and in response to the discussion questions. It is important not to color what they say with our perception of what they might mean, but to ask lots of clarifying questions. We recommend asking every discussion question as proposed on the discussion portion of the activity to be able to dig deep and capture as much as possible. It is useful to have two staff lead this activity so that one person can take notes, and the other one can focus on facilitating.



Community Mapping

Purpose of the activity

For young people to map areas in their community and reflect on barriers to participation, inclusion and acceptance.

Time: 35-45 minutes
Age: 6-12+
Materials: Flipchart/ large pieces of paper, pencil and pens, colored pencils and markers
Principal values: Responsibility
Other values: Respect for diversity, cooperation

Rights

In this activity, we will be exploring issues related to several different children's rights. These include:

- Right to know your rights (Article 42)
- Right to know your own language and culture (Article 30)
- Right to non-discrimination (Article 2)

How to play

1. Divide participants into groups and ensure each group has a large flipchart and colored markers.
2. Let participants know that this activity contains a couple of steps. First, they will be drawing a map together, and second, you will gather to chat about what they drew.
3. To introduce the game, ask the members of the group what the word *community* means to them.

Variation: Ask participants to write (or draw) on a post-it what the word *community* means to them and stick it to a blank flipchart.

4. Ask each group to draw a map of their community on their paper. They should include the places that are important to them, such as their home, school, shopping mall, metro/subway station, bus stop, community center, sports arena, swimming pool, park, library, church/temple/mosque, etc. Ensure everyone has enough time to draw/write down at least 8 – 10 places on their map. Encourage group members to add locations they may have forgotten as you share the next few steps.

Variation: Depending on your group, you may choose to do this activity individually. For example, this may be suitable if you are working with youth who live in different communities. Ask each member of the group to draw the map on their own piece of paper.

5. Share the list of rights below with each group. You can also share more children’s rights from the [Convention of the Rights on the Child](#). Ask the group if they knew they had these rights, or if they are surprised by any of them. Ask if anybody has any questions about children’s rights.
6. Ask group members to highlight places on their community map where they feel their rights are respected (e.g., draw a heart around or beside the location on their map).
7. Next, ask group members to highlight where they feel their rights are not respected (e.g., draw an “X” beside the location on their map). Encourage group members to add locations they may have forgotten, or they have thought about during the exercise.
8. Let the group know that you will now start a discussion based on what they drew. Refer to the discussion questions below and make sure to record everything that young people say using the response gathering form.

Variation: You can modify the discussion questions based on the purpose of your training. For example, if you want to focus on mapping decision-making spaces, you can ask “where in your community are decisions made”, “who are the actors (present/absent) in those spaces, why do you think that is?”. Make sure to modify the wording of your questions depending on the age of participants, etc.

To close the activity, debrief the discussion by highlighting what the group said about potential avenues for action and change. Make sure to explain that the purpose of gathering this information is to help young people to come up with ideas for issues they want to address and to link human rights issues with racism, discrimination or other forms of injustice. Mention that they themselves can take action, and that Equitas can support them to:

- Pursue a project in their community (See [Equitas Community Action Projects](#))
- Connect with local leaders.
- Mobilize and join efforts with others in their community.



*You can refer to Equitas' workbook [*Youth at the Heart of Change: How we can influence local decision-makers using global goals*](#). This workbook will help you craft a message to reach out to decision-makers. Also, keep in mind that Equitas offers relevant workshops on several topics that impact youth. Feel free to reach out to us for more information!

9. Depending on the group of participants, consider capturing the results of your activity and discussion, as well as the possible proposed solutions, into a document that youth will receive afterwards. Keep in mind that this activity draws a lot of information from the group. It may feel discouraging for youth to 'sit' with (and be left contemplating) all the challenges they will have fleshed out; and so, it is important that facilitators stress their desire to help youth address their concerns. You may offer participants support to build a Community Action Project, offer to bring them together with decision makers in upcoming spaces to talk about the issues they have identified, or offer to connect them to other organizations for additional support. Remember that Equitas can help you do this too!



List of rights

LIST OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS	
The right to be treated fairly	The right to rest
The right to go to school	The right to a clean environment
The right to express your opinion and be heard	The right to live with your parents
The right to a religion	The right to choose your friends
The right to a home	The right to participate in cultural and community life
The right to healthy food	The right to information
The right to medical care	The right to move to another country if you are a refugee
The right to play	The right for indigenous peoples to practice their culture
The right to safety	The right to have obstacles removed in order to participate if you have a disability
The right to food, clothing, and a safe home	The right to know your rights

Discussion Questions

***We suggest these questions for children 6-12 years old**



Feel:

- Did you like this activity? Why or why not?
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Think:

- What is a place you love in your community?
 - What makes your community yours?
 - Where in your community are your rights respected?
 - Where in your community are your rights **not** respected?
 - Where are places in your community where you feel included or accepted? Why?
 - Where are places in your community where you do **not** feel included or accepted? Why?
 - Do you think you are heard by adults in your community? Why or why not?
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Act:

- What are things children can do to help each other feel included?
 - What are things adults can do to help children feel more included?
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Discussion Questions

***We suggest these questions for youth ages 12+**



Feel:

- Did you like this activity? Why or why not?
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Think:

- Where in your community are your rights respected?
 - Where in your community are your rights **not** respected?
 - Where in your community do you feel included or accepted? Why?
 - Where in your community do you feel excluded? Why?
 - Are there places in your community where you have witnessed or experienced racism or discrimination?
 - Are you able to express yourself and be heard in your community? Why or why not?
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Act:

- What are actions you and your peers can take to address exclusion, racism and discrimination in your community?
- What are actions adults can take to reduce exclusion, racism and discrimination?



Community Mapping Activity with Youth from *La Maison d'Haiti* (October 2022)



Community Mapping Activity with youth from *Projet Orion* (October 2022)

