

# Engaging Youth: Planning Activities

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## **Brainstorming**

Provide a prompt or question to engage young people in brainstorming ideas. To make it more interactive provide large sticky notes or recycled sheets of paper and have them write down ideas with markers; one idea per sticky note/paper. Ask them to post them on a wall. If you use recycled paper, provide painter tape to post the papers. Once all the ideas are up on the wall, participants can organize them in themes or priorities.

## **Action Planning**

If planning an event or project, ask young people to describe the desired outcome or goal. Participants can brainstorm action steps, organize action teams, and develop a time line. Use a sticky wall (thin nylon fabric) or a large sheet of butcher paper, 3 by 7 feet or more, treated with temporary adhesive spray. The advantage of the sticky wall/paper is that posted papers can be easily moved around and organized in different ways. It allows the planning process to be inclusive and interactive and provides good visuals as well. See a detailed description of this activity in the “Consensus and Action Planning” handout.

## **SWOT**

The SWOT is a well-known planning method to assess and analyze the feasibility of a project. The group identifies:

S – Strengths: What are our strengths? What are we good at? What resources do we have?

W – Weaknesses: What are our weaknesses? What don't we do well? What don't we have?

O – Opportunities: What are opportunities around us we can use? Who and what can help us?

T – Threats: What is happening around us that can be a threat or obstacle in our way?

The SWOT can be done as a group discussion with one person writing ideas on a large sheet of paper that is divided into four quadrants. Or, to make it more interactive, post four large sheets of newsprint on a wall (with space between them), each labeled with one of the SWOT steps. Young people can break into small teams and rotate through the stations, adding their ideas to each SWOT category. Once the SWOT is done, participants can identify themes, gaps, and resources needed, and adjust project goal and scope.

## **Draw a Picture**

Post a large sheet of paper or butcher paper (3 by 6 feet or larger) on the wall and invite young people to draw what they would like to see happen in the future, e.g., the type of community they would like to live in. Ask them to dream and think big. Debrief the activity by asking youth to compare their future vision to their current community. Discuss what they have already and what is missing.