My Community

Facilitator Guide

Learning objectives

- Sustainable communities meet the needs of people, the planet, and the economy.
- We all have a role in creating a more sustainable future.
- We can work together to make our communities more sustainable.

Materials

- "My Community" activity guide and sign
- "Changing Communities" image sheets
- Markers
- Paper

The activity guide, sign, and images can be downloaded from *www.nisenet.org/sustainability* or *sustainabilitykits.asu.edu.*

Preparation

Read through this facilitator guide, look at all the activity materials, and practice the activity with a friendly audience until you feel comfortable with it. (Note that the guests have an activity guide they can follow, which has the same step-by-step instructions as this facilitator guide.)

Step-by-step instructions

This activity is meant to promote conversation about how places change over time, and how, together, we can shape our communities to be more sustainable. As facilitator, you can encourage guests to consider how we can balance the needs of people with the potential impact our choices have on the natural environment and the economy.

There are no "right" and "wrong" choices in this activity—different communities and individuals have different needs and values. The point of this activity is not to encourage guests to reach any particular conclusions, but rather to think about what their community is like today, and how they'd like to shape its development for the future.

1. Ask guests to draw a picture of their neighborhood.

   Tip: Guests can do this at any scale, from any perspective, and include any elements they choose. You can prompt their ideas by asking them to put in the things in their community that are most important to them. For example, children often include their home and school.

2. Once their drawing is complete, begin presenting them with the "Changing Communities" images one at a time. Each card shows an example of a space that a community might want

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to find a new use for, and a couple examples of what the community might choose to do. Ask guests to consider why a space might change and what purpose the change would serve. Ask what might be good about the example options presented, and what other options the communities might consider.

Tip: To avoid implying that there is a "right" or "wrong" choice for community change, you might frame your questions in terms of what is positive about different options, and how different choices might benefit people, the environment, and the economy.

Tip: Start with just 2–3 of the "Changing Communities" image cards. Guests may not need to see all the images and you can always share more as the conversation progresses.

3. Once they have viewed all of the cards (or as many as they're interested in), and reflected on how places can be changed to make neighborhoods more sustainable, ask them if they would like to add or remove anything from the drawing of their neighborhood. Invite them to draw their new additions in.

   Tip: You can ask what they wish they had in their neighborhood, encouraging them to think about things that would make their communities more sustainable. This might include things that they have experienced in other places but don't have locally.

   Tip: Often, young guests will add something to their community that is connected to activities they enjoy. This offers an opportunity to extend their understanding about sustainability. For example, if a guest adds a soccer field because they like soccer, you can ask questions such as, "What do you like about soccer?" and "Soccer is fun! What else does soccer do for us?" Through additional questioning, you can help broaden their view beyond individual preference ("I like soccer") to broader social good, such as recreation, health benefits, and social interaction ("Soccer lets people meet new friends and get exercise").

   Tip: Some of the questions visitors might consider with relation to their own communities are:
   - Environmental health: Does your community have plants and trees? Would it be a benefit to reduce pollution in your community?
   - Accessibility: Can you easily get to the things you need for your day-to-day life, such as the grocery store?
   - Transportation: Are there safe ways to get around your community, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit?
   - Recreation: Are there places for you to play and meet up with others? What do people in your neighborhood do for fun?
   - Health: How do you stay healthy in your neighborhood?
   - Education: Where are the schools in your neighborhood?
   - Economy: Where do people work in your neighborhood?

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