

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES!



Part 2:

**How can including
people help our
community thrive?**

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

developed by



Smithsonian
Science Education Center

in collaboration with

iap **SCIENCE
HEALTH
POLICY**
the interacademy partnership

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Find out More!

For additional resources and activities, please visit the *Sustainable Communities!* StoryMap at <https://bit.ly/2YdHNqB>.

Part 2 Planner

Timing note: The time used for investigations, observations, and actions can vary. When different options are listed within an activity, some options may take longer than others.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Materials and Technology</u>	<u>Additional Materials</u>	<u>Approximate Timing</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Task 1: Who is in our community?					
Discover	Consider the different identities in your community and why inclusion is important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 	<u>My Identity Map</u> (Part 1, Task 2) <u>Team Identity Map</u> (Part 1, Task 2)	15 minutes	2-9
Understand	Use a survey or other investigation to find out more about the people in your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils • Computer (optional) 		35 minutes + investigation time	2-10
Act	Create a community identity map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 		20 minutes	2-14
Task 2: How has our community changed over time?					
Discover	Reflect on and record changes you and your team have noticed in your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class board or poster paper • Audio or video recording device 		45 minutes	2-16
Understand	Record oral histories from community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio or video recording device • Paper and Pen 		25 minutes + investigation time	2 - 18
Act	Create a representation of your community's history.	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer, paper, pen 		25 minutes	2 - 21

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Materials and Technology</u>	<u>Additional Materials</u>	<u>Approximate Timing</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Task 3: Who makes decisions in our community?					
Discover	Explore decision-making in your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 	<i>My Identity Map</i> (Part 1, Task 2)	15 minutes	2-24
Understand	Collect information about how decisions are made in your community.			25 minutes + investigation time	2-26
Act	Record how decisions are made in your community and how that could be more inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 	<i>My Perfect Community</i> (Part 1, Task 1)	20 minutes	2-27
Task 4: How can including our community help us make better decisions?					
Discover	Design a shared community space to fill your own needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Colored pencils 	<i>My Identity Map</i> (Part 1, Task 2)	15 minutes	2-30
Understand	Experiment to find out whether including different people changes decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class board or poster paper • Paper • Pens or pencils 		45 minutes	2-31
Act	Analyze experiment results and decide how you want to make decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pencils 		20 minutes	1-33

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Materials and Technology</u>	<u>Additional Materials</u>	<u>Approximate Timing</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Task 5: How do we include the community in our actions?					
<i>Discover</i>	Consider what you now know, think, and wonder about your local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 	<u>Community Identity Map</u> (Task 1)	10 minutes	1-36
<i>Understand</i>	Investigate the best way to share information with your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 		20 minutes + investigation time	1-37
<i>Act</i>	Share and get feedback on your Thriving Community Goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens or pencils 	<u>Thriving Community Goals</u> (Part 1, Task 3)	30 minutes	1-39

* StoryMap extension found at <https://bit.ly/2YdHNqB>

Part 2: How can including people help our community thrive?

Remember that as **action researchers** you investigate and act on problems in your **community**. You use science and other tools to find out more about your community. In Part 2 of this Community Research Guide you will work with your team to get to know the people in your community better. You will explore who lives in your community, how it has changed over time, and who makes decisions. Understanding these things about your community will help you plan **sustainable** actions that are meaningful and long-lasting. Remember that a sustainable action is one that includes the **social, environmental, economic, and ethical perspectives**. When you can balance all four perspectives in a way that works for a long time, that is called sustainable. This can help your community now and in the future.

Remember: In this guide you and your team are in charge. You can always change the instructions in the steps to make them work better for you and your team.

Your Research Mentor

Sharing your experiences with others and learning from others' experiences is part of being a good action researcher. In Part 2, you will have a research **mentor** to help you understand some issues about making decisions in your community. A mentor is someone who has experience and can help guide you.

Meet Angela Mashford-Pringle, Your Part 2 Research Mentor



Meet Angela Mashford-Pringle. Angela (pronounced *An-juh-la*) is one of the many researchers around the world trying to help make the communities around them more sustainable. As action researchers you are also trying to make your community more sustainable. Angela will be your research mentor to help you consider how making decisions in your community might be more **inclusive** and sustainable.

Since Angela is now working with you, it is important to understand who she is. To help you, Angela wanted to introduce herself.



“I’m going to situate myself. For my people that means introducing ourselves in our traditional way. My name is Angela Mashford-Pringle. I’m from Timiskaming First Nation in northern Quebec, but I was born and raised in Toronto so I’m an urban **Indigenous** person.

“I’m from Bear Clan. I’m a mother of two. My mother grew up in our traditional territories, as did my grandmother. And if you and I were in the same community and you knew the names, I would say my mother is a Robinson, and my grandmother is a Hunter, and these would mean something.

“And our traditional territories were stolen from us. We didn’t have reserves in Quebec as my mom was growing up. The federal government in Canada sits on our traditional territory on **unceded** land. Ottawa is on unceded Algonquin land that they have not returned to us or given us any kind of treaty for in more than 200 years. So it also changes how we can live in our traditional way.

"I’m a **cis-gender** woman. I’m married; I’ve been married for almost 30 years, and I have two adult daughters.

“So that’s how we would traditionally introduce ourselves. It’s about where we came from, who we come from, and where we are today. And as for the ‘where I am today,’ I’m an assistant professor and associate director of the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health at Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. So all of those things make up me.

“When you’re talking about **identity**, it’s a lot about what are the different labels and pieces that you consider part of you.”

Before you begin the rest of Part 2, think quietly to yourself about Angela's introduction.

- What way do people in your community usually introduce themselves? What information about themselves do they include?
- How does Angela's introduction show her connection to her community?
- Are there parts of your identity map that show your connection to your community?
- Would you need to add anything to your identity map to show where you came from, who you come from, and where you are today?
- Can you see anything about Angela's identity that would help her understand different perspectives on how to help a community thrive?

Throughout Part 2 you will notice Angela sharing ideas and experiences with you. She may help you understand better ways to conduct **investigations**, add an additional perspective, or share some of the work she has done.

Task 1: Who is in our community?

In this task you will **discover** what you already know about people living in your community. Then you will do investigations to **understand** the people in your community better. Finally, you will **act** to make an identity map of your community.

Discover: *Why is it important to understand the identity of people in my community?*

Imagine that two of your classmates made a new rule for your classroom. They didn't ask anyone else in the class before making the rule, but your entire class has to follow it. Your two classmates explain, "We think we know what's best for the class, so we made the decision alone."

1. As a class, share your answers to the following questions.
 - a. How do you feel about the way your classmates made this new rule?
 - b. What would you do differently?
2. Examine your *My Identity Map* from Part 1, Task 2. Consider:
 - a. What part of your identity is most important to you?
 - b. Would you want someone who shared that part of your identity to help make the new class rule? For example, you might say, "I am a girl, so I want to make sure there is at least one girl helping to make the new rule."
3. Now gather with your team. Examine your *Team Identity Map*. Discuss:
 - a. What were some of the parts of your team's identity?
 - b. Would you want someone who shared parts of your team's identity to help make the new class rule?
 - c. Think about the beginning of this activity. How did it feel to be left out of a decision that affected you?
 - d. How would it feel different to have someone who shared your identity making the new rule?
4. Read Angela's ideas about identity. As you think about what action to take in your research area, it's important to know who is in your community. Why? Remember that you and your team will plan and carry out an action to help balance the needs of humans and other living things in your community. You need to know who is in your community so you can include their identities in the plan you make.

Angela Says . . .



We all carry labels or identities. Our identities inform our own values, beliefs, and worldview. And these things inform how we work. How we relate to and understand ourselves. How we relate to the world around us. If we don't consider identity, we cannot understand how others move through the world. We have to think about the unique knowledge and ways of being that each person and group carries.

5. Work with your team to answer the following questions. You will need these answers later. Remember that your team can decide the best way to record information. Writing is one way, but you can also draw, record your voices, make a video, or choose another way.
 - a. Who do we think are the people living in our community?
 - b. What do we think the people in our community would put on their identity maps? (If you need an example of what might be on an identity map, go back to Part 1, Task 2.)

Understand: Who is living in my community?

You and your team have talked about who you think is living in your community. Do you think your ideas were right? You can find out by doing investigations in the community. Remember that you used investigations to find out more about your classroom community in Part 1. You can use the same kinds of investigations to understand your local community better. You and your team will need to decide what type of investigation will best help you understand who is living in your community. There are many different ways to do research.

1. Read Angela's ideas about research and then start to consider some of the different ways researchers gather information about others and the natural world.

Angela Says . . .



Often the way we think about scientific research is a Western **paradigm**. In Indigenous communities we did research, but we didn't do all the academic pieces. There are different ways of knowing things about the world around us. We have to think about knowledge in many different ways. If you are researching a plant, a Western scientific researcher might understand it by pulling it apart and dissecting it. An Indigenous researcher might spend months watching it grow and trying to examine the surroundings. It's about different viewpoints. It is not that one researcher is better than the other, but rather we're doing research in different and unique ways.

2. Since you are trying to understand the identity of many different people in your community, a **survey** might be the best tool. You may have used a survey to understand your classmates better during your investigations in Part 1. A survey is a list of simple questions that you can give to a group of people. For example, you can ask, "What is your age?" Read the [Survey Instructions](#) for more information about how to give a survey.

Survey Instructions

Choosing People to Survey

- a. It is normal to want to survey only the people you know well and feel comfortable with. But try to include people you may not know as well or people who live in other parts of your community. This will help you get a more accurate picture of your community.
- b. Think about the categories on your identity map. Use those categories to try to pick a diverse group of people to survey. For example, ask people of all different ages or of more than one gender.

Ways to Give a Survey

- a. Talk to people in person.
- b. Talk to people over the phone or the Internet.
- c. Write down your questions on paper and give it to people.
- d. **Design** a survey on the Internet and send it to people.

Tips for Giving a Survey

- a. Make sure your questions are easy to understand.
- b. Ask questions that have definite answers, such as, “What things do you like to do for fun?” instead of, “What do you like?”
- c. Think back to Part 1, Task 2 when you made individual and team identity maps. Use these identity maps to help you think of what questions to ask.
- d. Some people may feel more comfortable answering surveys if their answers are **anonymous**. Anonymous means people do not list their name.
- e. Think about where you should give the survey. Is there a place in your community, either in person or online, where people gather and might be willing to answer your questions? Could you go from home to home? Would that be safe at this time?
- f. Remember that you and your team members are part of your community. Think about what you already know about your community to help you choose the best way to get information. For example:
 - Will people in your community feel comfortable talking to a student?
 - Does everyone have **access** to the Internet if you want to do an online survey?

Safety Tips for Giving a Survey

Talk to your teacher for guidelines. They will know what is safest in your community.

Physical Safety Tip: Never go alone and always be aware of your surroundings. Pay attention to local guidance on whether it is safe to interact with people outside of your home.

Emotional Safety Tip: It can be hard to talk to other people in the community. You may feel shy or nervous. Someone may tell you they don't want to talk. That's okay! It doesn't have anything to do with you. It just means they don't want to share. You can show them respect by thanking them and moving on to another community member.

3. If a survey doesn't sound like the right investigation for your team, that's okay! You can pick another way to collect information about your community.
 - a. You can investigate using books, lists, videos, maps, artwork, audio recordings, or other records of who lives in your community.
 - b. If your community has a **census**, it might include a lot of information about the community. Censuses often have information such as age, gender, family, religion, income (how much money a person or family makes per year), or race.
 - c. You can think of your own way to collect information. You could combine more than one way (for example, you could collect information from books and videos and give a survey) or create a new way to collect information.
4. Decide as a team how you will investigate.
5. Remember, including everyone is important. This is true when you take action in your community. It is also true when you investigate as a team. Try to pick a way to investigate that allows everyone on your team to participate. This is called making something inclusive. Here are some things to think about.
 - a. Time: If the investigation happens after school, does everyone in the team have time to do it?
 - b. Comfort: If you decide to walk around the community to do your investigation, make sure everyone on your team feels safe and able to do this. If not, what is another way that team members could help with the investigation?

- c. Location: If the investigation is going to happen in a specific place, how easy is it for team members to get to that place?
 - d. Format: How are you collecting information? If you are reading books or other written records, can everyone on the team easily read? Can they understand the language the records are in? If the records are on video or are audio recordings, can everyone on the team see and hear easily?
6. Now that you have decided how you are going to get information from the community, your team needs to decide what information you would like to get.
7. Talk to your team about what you might want to find out about your community. Some examples are listed here.
 - a. How old are people in the community?
 - b. What genders are people in the community?
 - c. What roles do people have in their families?
 - d. What do people do for work and for fun?
 - e. What do people say are the most important parts of their identity?
 - f. What groups do people in the community belong to?
8. Are there ways in which each person feels the same as others in the community? Are there ways in which they feel different? Next, work with your team to plan how you will collect information. For example, if you decide to pass out a paper survey, decide who will type or write the survey, who will make copies, who will pass the survey out, who will collect the finished surveys, and who will keep track of the answers.
9. Finally, conduct your investigation with your team.

Act: How will I remember all the identities in my community?

You and your team have found out information about the people who live in your community. You will need this information as you work through the rest of this guide. Use the steps in this task to help you make a record of what you found out.

1. Consider what you found out about your community.
 - a. Did you find identities different than the ones of people on your team?
 - b. Did any of the identities you found surprise you?

2. Use your results to make an identity map of your community with your team. This will help you remember all the different people living in your community. You can also include anything you already know about your community. Remember that you can make an identity map by writing, drawing, using objects, taking photos, or another way.
3. If you need help deciding what to put on your community identity map, you can use the individual and team identity maps from Part 1, Task 2 as examples. You can also include the answers to these questions.
 - a. Who is living in your community?
 - b. What did people in the community say about their identity?
 - c. Are there other important characteristics that might give someone a specific point of view?
4. Title this map “Community Identity Map” and keep it separate from your individual and team identity maps.
5. Leave extra space in the Community Identity Map in case you want to add to it as you find out more information later.
6. Think about the people you thought were living in your community before you did your investigation. You recorded this information in step 5 of the Discover activity. Compare your original ideas with the results of your investigation. Discuss with your team:
 - a. What did I learn about my community that I didn’t know before?
 - b. What surprised me?
7. You probably noticed that you didn’t always guess correctly about your community. There may have been some information that was new to you. There may have been people in your community who you didn’t know about before. Investigations about your community help your team learn more, make better decisions, and take sustainable action.

Task 2: How has our community changed over time?

Just like you, communities are always changing. In this task you will **discover** what you already know about those changes. You will **understand** what other community members might know. Then you will save this information so you can use it when you are ready to plan how you will **act**. You need to understand past actions before you develop or decide future actions.

Discover: How have I noticed my community changing?

Think back to the earliest time you can remember. Do you remember what you looked like when you were young? Do you remember what you liked to do? Think about how you are now. How have you changed? Communities can change too. The people who live there can change. The way land is used can change. What people think is important can change. Scientists such as geologists can investigate physical changes in a community over time. Other researchers such as historians can investigate human actions of the past. Action researchers find out how a community has changed over time because it can help them plan actions for the future. Remember, you and your team are also members of your community. Your thoughts, feelings, and information about changes in the community are important. You are going to start this activity by thinking about what you already know.

1. Have someone in your class place four large pieces of paper around the classroom. Write each of the following questions on its own piece of paper. Leave space for the whole class to write their answers below the questions. You can also do this activity by sharing ideas online, recording your answers on video, or another way.
 - a. “What things in our community are new?” (For example, buildings, natural spaces, roads)
 - b. “What things are no longer found in our community?”
 - c. “How has who lives in our community changed?”
 - d. “How do we feel about the changes in our community?”
2. Write your answers to each question on the papers.
3. Move around and read other people’s answers.

4. You might notice that another person in your class has different ideas about how the community has changed. They may have noticed something different than you.

Emotional Safety Tip: Different people can have different opinions. Considering different opinions may help the group think better together. It may feel difficult to disagree with someone's ideas or have them disagree with yours. If someone shares an idea that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset, it is okay to say so or to stop the conversation. Remember, everyone should disagree with ideas, not with people.

5. Now each team member will create an **oral history** of their experience in your community. An oral history lets people share the story of their past. Oral histories can have a lot of information. They can be used to see how communities change over time. You will learn more about investigating using oral histories with other people in the next activity. But first you will record your own oral history.
6. Use an audio or video device to record your history. Or, if you prefer, you can make a record by writing or drawing.
7. Imagine you were telling the story of your time in your community to someone who did not know you or your community. These questions can get help you started. Share and record your answers.
 - a. What is your earliest memory of your community?
 - b. What are some of the changes you have noticed?
 - c. What changes have affected you the most?
 - d. What are some things about your community that make you proud?
 - e. What are some things about your community you hope will change in the future?
8. Share your oral history with your teammates, if you are comfortable doing so. Listen to your teammates' histories.
9. Think about why it might be important to know the history of a community before making decisions about that community. Discuss with your team:
 - a. If we were making a decision about our community, what changes would it be important to know about?
10. Ask yourself quietly:
 - a. Is everyone's history the same?
 - b. Why is it important to hear the histories of other people?

Understand: How has my community changed over time?

In Task 1 you and your team collected information about the people living in your community. Now you will investigate how your community has changed over time.

1. Decide the best way to investigate how your community has changed over time. One good way might be to talk to people who have lived in your community for a long time. Read the *Oral History Instructions* for more information.

Oral History Instructions

When you talk to people and record information about their past, it is called an oral history. Oral histories create a record of what people or communities were like in the past.

Choosing People to Talk to

- a. Think about who might know the most about how your community has changed. For example, it might be people who are part of Indigenous groups, older people who have lived in the community a long time, a local historian, people who build new things or tear things down, or leaders who make decisions. (Indigenous means a group of people or other living things that are native to a place and have not migrated from elsewhere.)
- b. It is important that all the people of your community are included and represented in this work. As a team, try to talk to people with a variety of ages, genders, jobs, incomes, religions, ethnicities, or other identities.
- c. Think about the many ways that people can share information and try not to leave people out. For example, someone in your community may be deaf or hard of hearing and use sign language to communicate. If you do not use sign language, ask your teacher if you can find an interpreter to help you collect an oral history from that person.

- d. Talk to people who live in different parts of the community so you can learn how many parts have changed over time. As a team, try to talk to people who live in all parts of your research area.
- e. Conducting oral histories can take a long time, so you may decide to talk to just one person. That is okay. If everyone on your team interviews at least one person, you will have enough information to complete the activity.

Ways to Record an Oral History

- a. You can use audio or video to record an oral history.
- b. You can also write or draw to make a record of the ideas that are shared with you.
- c. You can talk to people in person, over the phone, or using the Internet.

Tips for Collecting an Oral History

- a. Make sure you ask permission to record a person's answers.
- b. Ask permission to share the oral history with the rest of your team, class, or other people in the community. People might be more willing to talk if their oral history is anonymous.
- c. A person may have photographs, drawings, or other objects that help them tell their oral history. Ask the person to describe the object and make sure you record their description.
- d. If it feels like someone didn't answer your question, don't be afraid to ask the question again in a different way.
- e. Let the person you are talking to answer the questions in the way they want. Be patient. Listen carefully. Understand that they might give answers that you didn't ask for.

Safety Tips for Talking to People

Talk to your teacher for guidelines. They will know what is safest in your community.

Physical Safety Tip: Never record an oral history alone and always be aware

of your surroundings. You might want to suggest recording the oral history in a quiet public place.

Emotional Safety Tip: It can be hard to talk to other people in the community. You may feel shy or nervous. Someone may tell you they don't want to talk. That's okay! It doesn't have anything to do with you. It just means they don't want to share. You can show them respect by thanking them and moving on to another community member.

2. Read the additional ideas Angela has about collecting oral histories from others.

Angela Says . . .



Make sure that you're an active listener. While a person is talking to you just listen and wait until they're done, and **reflect** before you actually start talking. You need to make sure that the space is welcoming and inviting. And you need to be welcoming and inviting. Don't make faces when they say something you don't like. You need to actually pay attention and figure out what it is that they're telling you.

3. If an oral history doesn't sound like the right investigation for your team, you can pick another way to collect information about your community. For example, you can:
 - a. Investigate using books, lists, videos, maps, artwork, audio recordings, or other records of the history of your community. If your community has maps or photos from different years, they could show you what changed from year to year.
 - If you use books, videos, or other pieces of information, remember to think about who made these records. What if people were living in your community before books were written or photos existed? It is important to try find out their history as well!

- b. Investigate using census data. You can compare a recent census with one from the past to investigate how the community has changed.
 - c. Think of your own way to collect information. You could combine more than one way (for example, you could collect information from books and videos and collect oral histories) or create a new way to collect information.
4. Now decide what information you want to get from your investigations. Your team can use these questions as suggestions or write your own.
 - a. How has the community changed over time?
 - b. What buildings, natural spaces, roads, or other things are new?
 - c. What things are no longer found in the community?
 - d. Have you noticed any changes in who lives in the community?
 - e. How do people feel about the changes in the community?

Emotional Safety Tip: People may tell stories that are difficult for them to talk about. Some stories might be hard for you to hear. People you talk to may also have opinions that you disagree with or that make you uncomfortable. It is okay to pause or stop an interview if you are uncomfortable or upset.

5. Plan your investigation. Decide what needs to be done and who will do each part. For example, if you are recording an oral history you will need to decide who will find people to talk to, who will talk to each person, and who will help record the oral history.
6. Work with your team to conduct your investigation.

Act: How will I remember how my community has changed?

You and your team have investigated how your community has changed over time. You will need this information as you work through the rest of this guide. Use the steps in this activity to help make a record of what you found out.

1. Share what you learned from your investigations. Discuss with your team:
 - a. What surprised you?
 - b. What was something that you didn't know before?
2. Take out the four pieces of paper that the whole class worked on before in the Discover activity of this task.
 - a. How were your answers similar or different from the information you collected from others?

- b. What information would you like to add?
- 3. Work with your team to understand the information you collected by answering these questions.
 - a. How has our community changed over time?
 - b. How have changes in the community affected the people who live here?
 - c. How do people in the community feel about these changes?
 - d. What do we need to remember about how our community has changed when we are making decisions?
 - e. What else do we want to learn about our community?

Angela Says . . .



One of our teachings is “seven generations back, seven generations forward.” You have to think about seven generations behind you and the seven generations about to come. By looking back, we can see what previous generations did to be sustainable and in balance with Mother Earth. It also gives us knowledge of how to move forward. What’s old is new again! Many people in the world know three generations of their family. Think forward beyond that. What would you like to see in 2070? What do you want the world to be like at the end of your life cycle, looking at the next seven generations?

- 4. You and your team will need to keep a record of the information from this activity so you can plan actions that include and represent your community. Here are some suggestions.
 - a. Put all the oral histories you collected, plus your own, together in a single recording, such as a podcast. Your team could add their own voices to the recording and add explanations or other facts. You can find more information about how to make a podcast at the Smithsonian Science Education Center’s Don’t Call Me Extinct Podcasting module, found at <https://ssec.si.edu/dont-call-me-extinct-podcasting-module>.
 - b. Make a visual timeline of the community with drawings, symbols, words, photos, or objects.

- c. Look at your community records to see if any timelines already exist. What would you add to them? What would you take out or change?
- d. Add information to your Research Area Map. For example, you could add a note that a group of houses sit where there used to be a grass field.
- e. Add information from the oral histories to your Community Identity Map. For example, if a member of the community says that it used to be easier to find a job but now it is much harder, that is an important part of the community identity.

Task 3: Who makes decisions in our community?

Remember in Task 1 you thought about how you would feel if someone made a decision about your class without talking to everyone. People make decisions about your community too. In this task you will **discover** how you are involved in making decisions. You will **understand** who makes decisions in your community. Then you will get ready to include your new information in making decisions about how to **act**.

Discover: *Who makes the decisions that affect me?*

Knowing who makes decisions is important, especially when the decisions affect how you live your life, the place you live, or the people you care about.

Remember the goal of this guide is to take action. You might have to ask for help or permission to complete your action. If you know who makes decisions in your community, you can ask them for permission if you need to. If you find out which people are usually left out of decision-making in your community you can include them in planning and taking action. In this activity, you will think about how you are included in the decisions in your life related to creating **thriving** communities.

1. Answer the questions in the *Who makes this decision?* chart about who makes decisions in your home and community. You can answer these questions by yourself or with the people who live in your home. For each question, record anyone who helps make the decision.
2. You can write this information as a list, record people's spoken answers, type answers into a computer or other device, or choose another way. Below is an example of a written version.

Who makes this decision?	Me	Other children in my home	Adults in my home	My local government
What place will I go when I want to be outside?				
What will be in the shared space in my community?				

Who makes this decision?	Me	Other children in my home	Adults in my home	My local government
Will our home be close to our neighbors?				
How will we use the space in our home?				
What kinds of public buildings will we use (for example, libraries, schools, hospitals)?				
How will we get to places we want to go (for example, bike, drive, use public transportation)?				
What will happen to the things we throw away?				
When will we buy new things?				

3. Think quietly to yourself: Do you wish you were included in more of these decisions? Why or why not?
4. Look at the identity map that you made in Part 1, Task 2.
 - a. Are there any parts of your identity that make it harder for you to be included? For example, if your community does not let people vote until they are 18 years old, your age may make it harder for you to affect local government decisions.
5. Think back to the Discover activity in Task 1 of this part. It described two of your classmates making a new rule in your classroom without asking you. Pause and remember how that made you feel. Could your classmates have made a good decision about you without including you?
6. Now think about your local community. Answer the following questions with your team.
 - a. Who do you think makes the decisions in your community?

- b. Who do you think you should include when you plan to take action in your community?

Understand: Who makes decisions in my community?

You and your team talked about who you think makes decisions in your community, but now you need to collect more information about how those decisions are made. You can do this with another investigation. In Tasks 1 and 2 you might have collected information using surveys, oral histories, or documents.

1. With your team, decide the best way to find out who makes decisions in your community. You could:
 - a. Use documents to find out who is leading your community and how they were chosen. Are there people who are appointed and not chosen?
 - b. Attend a meeting where the community makes decisions and record who gets to speak. Think back to what you learned in Task 1 in this part about who lives in your community. Notice who in the community is at the meeting and who is missing.
 - c. Ask people in the community about who makes decisions.
 - d. Come up with your own ideas. Use Angela's thoughts to get you started.

Angela Says . . .



We often take for granted who is a leader or in charge of a space. Our assumptions may not be true. In some communities it may not be just one person. Depending on the community, there may be a more consensus-building approach. To make decisions it may be that you need to talk to a number of people. For example, I've worked with communities where you make decisions by going to a town hall meeting and talking to everybody at once. There's not one person in charge. Knowing who makes the decisions is really important. You can find out by going to go to the community. Talk to organizations or talk to people in the community. Ask them who represents them.

2. Now that you have decided how you will investigate, your team needs to decide what information you would like to get. You can use these questions as suggestions or write your own.
 - a. Is everyone allowed to help with making decisions?
 - b. Is there one person or many people in charge?
 - c. Does our community vote on decisions?
 - d. Who is allowed to vote?
 - e. Are people able to talk about decisions before they are made?
3. Plan your investigation. Decide what needs to be done and who will do each part. For example, if you are attending a community meeting, you will need to find out the time of the meeting, decide who will attend the meeting, and who will record the information.
4. Work with your team to conduct your investigation.

Act: How will I use what I know about decision-making in my community to help me take action?

The information you collected about who makes decisions in your community will help you decide how to take action. In this activity you will create a record of how decisions are made in your community. You will need this information as you work through the rest of this guide. You will also discuss how you think decisions should be made in your community.

1. Work as a team to record the information you collected in the Understand activity. Here are some suggestions for how to record who makes decisions in your community.
 - a. Write a list, table, or a chart.
 - b. Make an audio recording of your team's description.
 - a. Draw a visual. You can use words, symbols, lines, shapes, or other drawings that help you show this information.
 - You could make a **concept map**. A concept map is a visual that helps you show information.
 - Figure 2.1 is an example of a concept map. For this example, imagine your community has one person in charge. This one person talks to a group of five community members before making decisions. You could show this with a concept map like the one in the figure. It might include one large purple square to show the one person in charge. Five small blue triangles

show the five community members. The purple square is on top because it is in charge. The blue triangles all share the same row because they have equal power.



Figure 2.1: A concept map showing how decisions are made

2. Work with your team to answer the following questions.
 - a. Who makes the decisions in your community?
 - b. Who does not get to make decisions?
 - c. Do you like how decisions are made in your community or would you like it to be different in the future?
3. Remember that in Part 1 your team imagined your perfect community. Get out your *My Perfect Community* paper. Think about the goals you made for your community.
 - a. If you want to reach your goals, who do you need to talk to in your community who helps makes decisions?
 - b. Are there people who don't make decisions but could help you take action?
4. Think about how decisions are made in your community. Is there anything you wish were different? What would make it easier for you to take action in your own community? Just as you did in Part 1, dream a little bit.
 - a. For example, maybe your community has only one person in charge. Your team may wish more people could make decisions.
 - b. Or perhaps decisions in your community do not include the ideas of young people, people without much money, or people who were born outside of the community. Your team may wish those people could help make decisions.

5. Record any ideas about how you think decisions should be made on your *My Perfect Community* paper.

Angela Says . . .



Three Ps: power, privilege, positionality. Youth have to remember those three. They need to think about how they have a position. People can say the kids and teens don't get a voice, but they actually have more power than we give them credit for. Youth can make decisions that can put them at the table. Almost every organization I work with has some kind of youth component to it. I think young people don't understand how their voice will be heard. They need to say, "This is what I want you to hear for me, and this is why I want to sit at your table."

Task 4: How can including our community help us make better decisions?

In this task you will **discover** how it feels to be in charge. Then you will **understand** the differences between including everyone or just a few people in making decisions. Finally, you will find out how important it is to include others when making decisions about how to **act**.

Discover: What are my ideas?

You and your team talked about who makes decisions in your community. Now you will think about decisions you would make if you were in charge.

1. Take out the *My Identity Map* paper from Part 1. Remember things you like or hobbies you have. You can use these ideas to get you started in this activity.
2. First you need to do a little imagining by yourself. Imagine there is a shared community space, maybe like the one shown in 2.2. You are in charge, so you can decide how the space will be designed.



Figure 2.2: A shared community space waiting to be designed

3. Think about:
 - a. What kinds of things would like to be able to do in this community space? For example, maybe you really like to ride your bike. Would you want the space to have a fun place to bike?
 - b. How would your senses feel when you are in the space? For example, maybe you like the color purple or the smell of roses or the sound of running water. How could those things be part of the space?
 - c. How would you like to interact with other people in the space? For example, maybe you like playing games outdoors with a big group of people. Is there a way the space could help you do that? Or maybe you like spending time alone. Is there a way to design the space to help you do that?
4. Write or draw your ideas on a piece of paper. Be as specific as possible. If that is not possible, record your voice or a video explaining your ideas.
5. Do not share these ideas with anyone else. You need to keep them secret for the next activity.
6. Fold up your paper or give another record of your ideas to your teacher.

Understand: *How can working together help us make better decisions?*

A community is not just one person. It is many people. Working together with many people can take time and patience. But usually it helps a community make better decisions. In this activity you will investigate to see if this is true in your community. This investigation will help you understand why it is important to include people when making decisions.

1. You are going to do two experiments. You will need a large group. If you have a large team (12 people or more) you can work as a team. If you have a smaller team (2 to 11 people) you may want to work together with another team or even your whole class.
2. Start with Experiment 1. You can do this experiment two ways. Option A is a little easier. Option B is a little more difficult. You and your teacher can decide which option is best.

Option A: Easier

Remember in Task 1 when you thought about how you would feel if two of your classmates made a rule for the whole class without talking to you? Now you will experiment to notice what happens if only two classmates make decisions for your whole class. Will they be able to make decisions that work for everyone?

- a. Have a teacher pick two of your classmates.
- b. The two classmates will design a shared community space that they think is best for everyone. The two classmates can use their ideas from the Discover activity.
- c. No one else should talk or give ideas.
- d. As the two classmates design the space, they should write, draw, or otherwise record their design so everyone can remember it later.

Option B: More Difficult

Remember at the end of Task 3 when you thought about how decisions were made in your community? Now you will experiment to understand how the process of making decisions can affect those decisions.

- a. Think about how decisions are made in your community. There might be one or more than one leader making decisions. There might also be advisors or other people involved.
- b. You and your classmates will take on decision-making roles that are similar to the ones in your community. For example, if your community has one person in charge with five advisors, then pick one classmate to be in charge. Pick five other classmates to be advisors.
- c. Either your group or your teacher can pick the people who will play each role.
- d. Now the decision-makers need to design a shared community space that they think is best for everyone. The decision-makers can use their ideas from the Discover activity.
- e. No one else should talk or give ideas.
- f. As the decision-makers design the space, they should write, draw, or otherwise record their design so everyone can see it later.

3. After you have finished either Option A or Option B, come back together as a class or team. This is the end of Experiment 1. You will discuss the results later.
4. Now start Experiment 2. In this experiment you will try to make decisions in a different way.
5. In Experiment 2, your whole group will design a shared community space together. Everyone should share their ideas. Share your ideas with as many people as you want. Think about the ideas you wrote, drew, or recorded when you were in charge of the design in the Discover activity. These are the ideas you should share.
6. Design a shared community space together in a way that works best for your group. For example, you could:
 - a. Use the board and have different group members draw on it.
 - b. Have group members move around and talk to each other to share ideas.
 - c. Use another way to record everyone's ideas.
7. As a group, write, draw, or record your design for a shared community space. You have now finished Experiment 2. You will discuss the results in the next activity.

Act: Why is it important to include others when making decisions about my community?

Now you will compare the results from your experiments. You will think about how the way you made decisions affected the decisions you made. This will help you decide how you want to make decisions about taking action in your community.

1. Pull out the designs from Experiments 1 and 2 and display them next to each other.
2. Silently notice any differences and similarities between the two designs.
3. Now have your teacher take out the folded pieces of paper or recordings that show each person's ideas for your imagined shared community space. Either:
 - a. Unfold these pieces of pieces of paper and display them for everyone to see. Move around the room by yourself and notice all the things that the people in your class want.

- b. Or, if you recorded your voices, play those recordings for everyone to hear. Listen to the ideas of everyone in your group.
4. Compare the ideas from your classmates with the designs from Experiments 1 and 2. Discuss as a whole group:
 - a. Did the design from Experiment 1 or the design from Experiment 2 match more of the things people in your class wanted in their shared community space?
 - b. When you have a shared community space, why is it important to think about what everyone wants?
 - c. Which design do you think would be better?
5. Now think about how decisions were made in Experiment 1. Only some of the people in your group were able to share their ideas.
6. Ask one of the decision-makers to share how it felt to make decisions for everyone.
7. Ask one of the classmates who was not a decision-maker to share how it felt to have someone else make decisions for them.
8. As a whole group, discuss:
 - a. Were there ideas that were missed in Experiment 1 because everyone did not get a chance to talk?
 - b. Would it have made a difference if the decision-makers had talked to the others before making a decision?
 - c. What else would have helped the decision-makers make better decisions?
9. Now think about how decisions were made in Experiment 2. As a whole group, discuss:
 - a. How did it feel to make decisions as a big group?
 - b. What did you like about making decisions this way?
 - c. What did you not like about making decisions this way?
 - d. Did everyone's ideas make it into the final design or were there some ideas that got left out?
 - e. If some people's ideas got left out, why was that?
 - f. What else would have helped your group make better decisions?
10. Gather as a team. Remember what you learned in Task 3 about decision-making in your local community. Discuss:
 - a. Are there people in your community who do not get to share their ideas?
 - b. How do you think that makes them feel?

- c. How could your community decision-makers get ideas from more people?
 - d. How would decisions in your community change if more people were involved in the decision-making process?
11. Think about the way you make decisions as a team. As a team you can choose to make decisions in a way that includes everyone. Discuss with your teammates whether you think you need to change the way you are making decisions.
 12. Take out your Thriving Community Goals. As a team, you have the chance to choose how you think decisions *should* be made in your community. Do you want or need to add a goal to your Thriving Community Goals related to the way decisions are made in your community? If so, add that goal now.

Task 5: How do we include the community in our actions?

Learning from and working with your local community is a process that does not end. As action researchers you continue to **discover** what you know and what you still need to find out. To take action you need to partner with your community. So, you need to **understand** the best way to communicate with your community. Finally, you will use this information to **act** and get feedback on your community goals.

***Discover:** How do we want to make community decisions?*

You have discovered information about your local community. Now you will think about what you already know and what you still need to find out. Your team has investigated your community in several ways. Get out your Community Identity Map from Task 1, your record of how your community changed from Task 2, and your record of your community decision-making from Task 3.

1. Work with your team. Title a sheet of paper or a digital document Part 2 Organizer. Make three columns. Write the words “Know,” “Think,” and “Wonder” at the top of the columns.
2. List or draw everything your team knows about your community in the *Know* column. Include anything you learned from your investigations. And include anything you already knew about your community because you experienced it yourself. Consider:
 - a. Who is in our community?
 - b. How has our community changed?
 - c. Who makes decisions in our community?
 - d. How can including the community help us make better decisions?
 - e. For example, maybe you know that there are people living in your community who are thought to be different in some way. You can write that down.
3. List or draw everything your team thinks about your community in the *Think* column. Consider:
 - a. Why are certain people picked as decision-makers in our community?
 - b. Does decision-making our community exclude certain people?
 - c. Do we think there are problems with the way decisions are made in our community?

- d. For example, maybe you think it is a problem that decision-making in your community excludes the ideas of the people who are thought to be different.
4. List or draw everything your team still wonders about your community in the *Wonder* column. Consider:
 - a. Are there questions you still have about people in your community?
 - b. Are there actions you could take that would change your community for the better?
 - c. For example, maybe you wonder if you could include the ideas of people who are thought to be different when you are making decisions.
5. Keep the *Part 2 Organizer*. You will need it again.

Understand: *How can we share what we have learned with others?*

You have gotten a lot of information from your community. Action researchers also give information back to the community. Partnering with your community means understanding the best ways to reach them. In this activity you will investigate the best ways to communicate with your local community.

1. First read Angela’s ideas and think about why you believe it is important to share information you find out with your community.

Angela Says . . .



Sharing your research with the community is an important part of the relationship you are building. I think it’s so important for researchers to do that. Don’t be “helicopter researchers,” where they come in, they ask their questions, they leave, and then they never come back. If we don’t give back to communities and share what we have learned, how are they ever going to change, grow, or be better? When you share back with the community, they can use your results to implement changes or create policy. Figuring out who needs to do what in order to make a better place, that’s what research should really be doing.

2. Think about how you get information about what is going on in your local community. Do you:
 - a. Hear it from others, like your friends and family?
 - b. See or hear it on television or radio?
 - c. Read it in print, like a newspaper or flyer?
 - d. Use the Internet, like an online news site or social media?
 - e. Read it on a cell or mobile phone, like through SMS/text alerts?
 - f. Get it another way?
3. Talk with the rest of your team. Share with one another how you get information. Discuss whether you trust some information sources more than others.
4. Now you need to talk to other community members to see how they get their information.
5. There are several ways you can do this. You can choose one or two methods to get more information. You can:
 - a. Interview: Have each team member talk to a few people in the community about how they get their information. It may be easiest to talk to people who you already know, like trusted adults or friends.
 - b. Survey: Design and give a survey that asks questions about how people get information.
 - c. Observation: Move around your local community and notice how information is communicated. Are there billboards, signs, announcements, radio programs, or other things you notice that are designed to communicate information?
6. Come back together and share the information you learned with the rest of your team.
7. In the future, you will need to communicate with your local community. Using what you learned, think with your team about:
 - a. What is the best way to communicate with the people in your local community?
 - b. Are there some people who get left out of community communications? For example, billboards and signs can exclude people who have low vision or are blind, or who can't read the language of the signs. Are there ways to communicate that include everyone in the community?

8. Record these ideas to help you remember how to communicate with your community. You can title a piece of paper Community Communication and write down your ideas. Or find another way to help you remember, like drawing a picture or recording your voices.

Act: How will we change our goals after thinking about other perspectives?

You have learned that including more people can help you make better decisions. As a team, you have made decisions about goals you think will help your community thrive. Now you will get opinions on those goals from other people in your community. Then consider if you want to change any of your goals.

1. Think about a person or some people in your local community who know your community well. Some ideas might be:
 - a. Parents or other trusted family members who live in your local community
 - b. School leaders, like a teacher or principal
 - c. Elders or other trusted adults in your community
 - d. Other children or teenagers
 - e. Another idea you have
2. As a team or on your own, share your Thriving Community Goals with the person or people your team chose. Ask them:
 - a. Do these goals make sense for our community?
 - b. Are some of the goals more important than others?
 - c. Are there goals that should be added?

Emotional Safety Tip: Sometimes people you talk to may have different opinions than you. That's okay. Listen respectfully but remember that just because someone else believes something does not mean you need to believe it. It is okay to pause or stop a conversation if you are uncomfortable or upset.

3. Come back together as a team. Discuss:
 - a. Did anyone you talked to have ideas that surprised you?
 - b. Which ideas did you agree with?
 - c. Which ideas did you disagree with?
4. Do you want to change your Thriving Community Goals after hearing some new ideas? If so, do that now. Remember, just because you talked to someone with different ideas does not mean you have to use those ideas.

You and your team make the final decision about which goals you think are most important.

Angela Says . . .



Come at the research with your whole heart. Be mindful of people and try to be inclusive of everyone. If you've done the research and if you're passionate about the results, the community will see that. If you did it in a good way, the community's going to want to take up your recommendations and your results. Because I've seen communities decide to create programs and services and policies that will change things, based on what you say. Youth have a bigger voice than they give themselves credit for. They seem to think that adults aren't listening to them, but we really are. The problem is you're coming with new, fresh ideas. Sometimes older people are kind of set in our ways and not listening well enough. Don't give up hope that your actions and your research is not important, because it is.

Congratulations!

You have finished Part 2.

Find out More!

For additional resources and activities, please visit the *Sustainable Communities!* StoryMap at <https://bit.ly/2YdHNqB>.

Glossary

This glossary can help you understand words you may not know. Feel free to add drawings, your own definitions, or anything else that will help. Add other words to the glossary if you would like.

Access: Able to reach a place, thing, or idea

Action researchers: People who use their own knowledge and information they find out from their community to make decisions and take action on important issues

Anonymous: People do not list their name

Census: A list of information about people in the community which may include age, gender, family, religion, income (how much money a person or family makes per year), or race

Cis-gender: A person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned female at birth and thinks of themselves as a girl or woman.

Community: A group of people that have a place or other thing in common

Concept map: A visual that helps you show information

Design: Decide on the look and function of a building, space, process, or object

Economic: About money, income, and use of wealth

Environmental: About the natural world

Ethical: The fairness of something

Housing: A building or other structure where people make their home

Identity: Characteristics that make up each person or thing

Inclusive: Making sure no one is left out

Indigenous: A group of people or other living things that are native to a place and have not migrated from elsewhere

Investigation: Finding out more information

Mentor: Someone who has experience and can help guide you

Observation: Recording what you notice without adding your own opinion

Oral history: Recording information from people about their past

Paradigm: A way of thinking about the world

Perspective: A specific way of thinking about the world around us

Reflect: Think carefully about something

Social: About the interaction of people in a community

Sustainable: A balanced, long-term approach to social, environmental, economic, and ethical concerns

Survey: A list of questions that you can give to a group of people

Thriving: Something that is working or growing well

Unceded: Territory or items that have that have been taken without permission from the original owners

Other words:



SCIENCE
for Global Goals

Parents, Caregivers, and Educators
Action Plans can be shared with us by using hashtag #SSfGG!

Twitter
[@SmithsonianScience](https://twitter.com/SmithsonianScience)

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ScienceEducation.si.edu

Smithsonian Science for Global Goals (SSfGG) is a freely available curriculum developed by the Smithsonian Science Education Center in collaboration with the InterAcademy Partnership. It uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework to focus on sustainable actions that are student-defined and implemented.

Attempting to empower the next generation of decision-makers capable of making the right choices about the complex socio-scientific issues facing human society, SSfGG blends together previous practices in Inquiry-Based Science Education, Social Studies Education, Global Citizenship Education, Social Emotional Learning, and Education for Sustainable Development.

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