We will do a few activities together over the next 45 minutes from YELL and Mikva challenge. One is to help youth understand why they should care about their community and to examine their own beliefs about being change agents in their community and the other activity is to help youth examine their community, and identify the issues in their community they are passionate about.

**Defining Community:**

We are going to start with defining community.

You can ask your students co construct a definition of community (in pairs, or all together) (YELL p 154 or Mikva Challenge p 44 and 45.)

For ease of time, we will share our definition from this am

***Community Defined:***

*A group of people who share a common geography, or other characteristics- cultural, ethnic, religious, other interests (neighborhood, faith community, skateboarder community, black community)*

Have students create a class list of the different communities they belong to (communities can be based on geography, ethnicity, common interests). Find out where there are similarities and differences.

**Why should I care about my Community?**

Activity: why should we care about our community? (Mikva Challenges p 64-66)

Now that we understand what community means, let’s think about why we should care about our community?

We will do an activity to see what level of commitment and responsibility you all feel towards your community

I will read some statements and you will stand by the corner that best represents if you agree with that statement. There are four choices: Strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree or disagree. Once you go to the statement that matches how you feel, you will have a minute to share with the others in the corner why you stood there. Then one of you peers will present your reasons. If time permits, allow for rebuttals and for people to move corners if persuaded.

-I care about my community.

- I have a responsibility to help others in my community.

- People have a responsibility to help others in their communities.

-I have an obligation to help others in my community.

- I feel good when I help others.

- It is not my job to pick up a piece of trash I see on the ground on my way to school.

- How other people act in my community impacts me.

- How I act in my community impacts others.

- Politicians should be the ones to decide what happens in/to my community

**Debrief**

Who lives in our communities? (We all do)

What would happen is no one stepped up to make their community a better place?

Supplemental activity: post quotes around the room about being change agents( see Mikva challenge p 66) Have students pick the quote they like the best and share with a peer why that quote spoke to them. Popcorn out responses.

**What is your neighborhood?**

For purpose of our action civics project we will focus on neighborhood as our community (you may decide instead to focus on school, on city, or on an issue that is more global)

Activity1. Have students view of map of neighborhoods and put pins I the area they live and see how many of the students live in the same neighborhood. If you go to google maps they can also see streets, parks, schools etc…. We did this in a prior training.

Activity 2: ask students to share words to describe their neighborhood (YELL p 154)

**Envision the ideal neighborhood**

Activity: Let’s envision and ideal and perfect neighborhood: draw (YELL p 156)

Please draw a picture of your ideal neighborhood: What are its boundaries, what are its assets, strengths or amenities, what are the things you love about this neighborhood (people, landscapes, physical features, business, social services, teams/clubs, schools, services, atmosphere, housing, streets, trees, street lights, parks, libraries, things to do, etc…)

You can also use this map to help students understand what is public and what is private( an important concept as we talk about making changes in our community)

Have students present their ideal neighborhood

Debrief

What do you notice as similar or different on all the ideal neighborhoods?

What are those things that are public in the neighborhood and what is private?

Raise your hand if you feel you live in an ideal neighborhood?

What are some things you might want to change to make your neighborhood more ideal?

**What is your real neighborhood?**

**Activity a: REAL Neighborhood:** Provide students a map of their neighborhood that shows the street boundaries. Make sure they are clear of the boundaries. On a piece of paper describe in words the REAL neighborhood as it currently exists. Split the paper in half and on one side note what you like and what assets exist In your neighborhood (explain assets to students) and on the other side note what you would change, what you do not like or are concerned about or would like to change in your neighborhood (Mikva challenge p 49-59 and YELL page 154-159).

Help students reflect on what is public and what is private.

**OR**

You can also have students draw their real neighborhood…… identifying both assets and challenges

**Activity b:** Another option would be to walk the neighborhood and take pictures of what your students like and what they do not like or would want to change. They can also record what they see in the neighborhood map you gave them.

**Activity c:** another options is for students to review data about their neighborhood

**Activity d:** another options is to interview stakeholders in the community/host an in class panel of stakeholders to talk about the assets and challenges of the neighborhood

**Getting to the key issues of concerns that students want to work on—FIRST CUT:**

Activity: By team, have students star the top three assets they like and the top three things that they are most concerned with in their community that they would be willing to work on to change…see if there are any concerns that get the most votes.

Each team to present to class their real Neighborhoods its top three assets and the top 3 things they want to change and why they feel these are the most important. Students share if what they want to change is within the domain of public or private entities.

Create a class list of all the top concerns

Have students vote again as a class on their three top concerns. You can give students time to make a pitch to the class on certain concerns, before they vote. Have them consider what is public and what is private.

You can either have students work in neighborhood teams on one issue per neighborhood, or you can have students work on issues that cross neighborhoods.

**Debrief**

What did you notice about the issues that students felt were important?

Which of these issues can be addressed by government? Which by private parties?

What would be different in the community if you were able to get the issue/challenge removed

Image that you were able to get this issue challenged fixed/removed….Use one word to describe how would you feel for having played a role in doing that?

**NEXT STEPS (More to come in November!)**

- Researching the issues  
- Getting to a policy response versus a service response  
- Who has power to make decisions about your issues (public versus private, what government entity, who are the decision makers)