

GUIDELINES: ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

An important objective of the Mapping our World process is to provide young people with the opportunity and skills to reflect on their lives and to gain a better perspective on the many factors which structure their existence. The accumulative impact of combining these individual perspectives into an overall analysis can be very powerful and insightful.

There are many useful techniques for analysing information. Two we have found particularly effective with young people are the web chart and the Delphi analysis method. In the group analysis/community research unit we have also described other techniques which combine research with analysis of information.

As well, we would like to provide some tips we have learned from our work:

1. The analysis should be integrated into the process from the beginning.

This can be done in both formal and informal ways. For instance, putting up the artwork provides an opportunity for the group to compare perspectives and experiences. To encourage the group's analysis include a comments chart with the artwork. At the beginning of each session the group can review and evaluate what was accomplished in the previous workshop. In the group discussions it is useful to appoint an observer who gives a summary of the main points made by the group.

2. Questions to frame the research and analysis should be established from the beginning of the process.

Some questions we have found useful:

- * What do we cherish in our lives? What do we hold most dear? What is particularly important to us?
- * What are some of the problems or concerns that are repeatedly identified? How do we cope with these difficulties? What factors are contributing to these problems?
- * In looking at the artwork what are the main feelings that are being represented?
- * In listening to other youth and examining our community, what did we learn?
- * How are our lives different than those of adults? What special concerns do young people have inside this conflict?
- * What are some issues and concerns that only girls identified? Only boys? What are the differences? Why do those differences exist?
- * What are our main strengths? If we could change one thing in our community, using these strengths, what would it be?
- * What are our main needs? What can we do to support each other? What support do we need from others?
- * How can we promote peace amongst young people?

3. The analysis should be a group activity where adult programmers participate and offer their opinions.

In our experience, youth welcome the information and opinions that adults can bring to a discussion. In fact, if adults do not participate, young people can feel that this is just an empty exercise which will have no real results.

4. The analysis should be as concrete and focussed as possible.

In conflict zones there is a tendency to speak in exaggerated and pessimistic terms. While not disputing the many difficulties, one role of this analysis can be to establish exactly what the main problems are and to substantiate this with facts.

5. The analysis can include suggestions for programs.

It can be enough to just identify the main concerns and strengths. However, it is good idea to take the next step and ask young people for their opinions as to what would be the best programming strategies to support their needs and to enhance their strengths.

Because young people often have little or no experience with program development, it is important to explain the process by which an organization develops his programs. In some cases, it might be a good idea for young people to evaluate and change an existing program in light of the information and analysis of the mapping process.