

DECIDE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Session 21

90 minutes
OBJECTIVES:

Youth will turn their data analysis and findings into recommendations and prioritize their top recommendations.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

- Butcher paper, tape, and markers.
- Post the youth's mission and vision statements on butcher paper (if not already posted in the room).
- Write the key findings from the research analysis on pieces of butcher paper, making sure there is plenty of room for youth to write under each finding. (If there are lots of findings, group them into at least three stations in the room. The grouping of findings can be done by staff or by youth as part of this or another session.)
- Sticker dots.

I. OPENING: ATTENDANCE, SNACKS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGENDA OVERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Opening Circle (Around the World): Have each youth name one of the findings from their data analysis or name something that surprised them in their research.

II. WARM UP: FROM SWIMMING TO FLYING (10 MINUTES)

The goal of this game is to become a bird. All participants start as fish and should "swim" around the room. When a fish finds another fish they stop and play rock/paper/scissors. The winner becomes a frog and jumps away. The fish swims away looking for another fish to play with. A frog must find another frog to play rock/paper/scissors with. The winner of a game between two frogs becomes a bird and flies around watching the rest of the games. When there is only one fish, one frog, and a group of birds the game is over. Debrief: What did you think of the game? Is playing a game where most will win more or less fun than a game with one winner? How is this type of game different?

Recommendations


III. IDENTIFY RECOMMENDATIONS (40 MINUTES)

Step 1: Brainstorm the meaning and purpose of a recommendation. A recommendation is a specific solution or action that outlines how change will happen. Example youth recommendations:

- "We recommend that the administration include a youth research and leadership class as part of the school curriculum."
- "We recommend that the administration and Climate Committee of our school re-instate the peer mediation program."
- "We recommend that the city provide free bus passes to low-income students."
- "We recommend that the school district implement teacher training in positive discipline methods."

In particular, discuss the power of a recommendation that is based on data. Ask youth: What is the difference between a recommendation based on opinion and a recommendation based on data? Imagine the above statements starting with "based on our research" vs. "we believe." What makes for a stronger argument?

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Step 2: Revisit your topic, vision, and mission. Ask the group: Who remembers our vision and mission? Based on the research and analysis we have done so far, what new or more specific information have we learned about our topic? How has our view of our topic changed (or been confirmed)?

Step 3: Station Rotation. Ask youth to count off by the number of findings or finding stations you have created (see Materials and Preparation above) and then assign each number to a particular station. Hint: Instead of counting off, you can sort youth into groups by date of birth (January through April, May through August, and September through December).

At each station ask youth to read through the findings together and then brainstorm and write their recommendations based on the findings listed. After five minutes, have youth rotate to a different station and repeat the process. If youth agree with what the previous group listed, they should put a check next to that statement or recommendation. Encourage youth to discuss their ideas with their groupmates. End the rotation when youth are back at their original station. Have each group share out the key recommendations at their station and summarize how the findings support those recommendations. Cross off any duplicate recommendations (make sure they are exactly the same).

Step 4: Vote and Prioritize. Hand out three sticker dots to each person. Give youth a few minutes to vote by placing a sticker by the three recommendations on which they most want to focus. Ask youth to consider the following: Is the recommendation specific enough? Do you think it is realistic? Youth can also put all three stickers at one recommendation. After the voting, list the top recommendations on a separate piece of paper. Allow people to advocate for recommendations with fewer dots: Are there compelling reasons to re-examine one of the recommendations that received fewer votes?

IV. CLARIFY RECOMMENDATIONS (20 MINUTES)

As a group (or in several small groups if there are several recommendations), ask youth to consider the following questions:

- What is our evidence for this recommendation?
- What could make this recommendation stronger (research ideas for future groups or perhaps more research is one of the recommendations)?
- Who has the power to act or support us in acting to make this recommendation a reality?

V. CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Closing Circle Statement (Around the World): I think that the most important recommendation is...