

# Part 1: Skills for Strong Partnerships

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Getting to know others – their history, likes and dislikes, sense of humor, perspective – doesn't happen overnight or without work, however fun the work may be. As you've probably learned, forging strong relationships is a slow process of building trust that requires time and effort.

Forming a youth-adult partnership is no different. To form a strong, successful, and sustainable youth-adult partnership, your participants will need to develop certain skills and attitudes and understand both the benefits and challenges of this kind of relationship. The activities and tips in this section are designed to help you and your participants do just that.

## ACTIVITY: WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AT 15 YEARS OLD?

A successful youth-adult partnership requires that participants grow to understand and relate to one another. When young people and adults gain the other's perspective, their work together is strengthened. Prompting adults to recall themselves at age 15 is a way to break down barriers between generations and create a sense of commonality. Barry Cheekoway of the University of Michigan developed this activity in his publication "Adults and Allies." Mi Casa revised the activity for use in their community.

### OVERVIEW

This exercise is generally most effective as an icebreaker at the start of a meeting. It offers the opportunity for young people to share stories about their life and for adults to recall their own youth. Youth and adults are paired up and given questions to guide their conversations. These two-person conversations segue into a larger group discussion about the forces that facilitate or limit youth-adult partnerships.

### OBJECTIVES

- To share participants' experiences as young people
- To identify commonalities between youth and adults
- To identify positive characteristics of community involvement for youth and adults

### TIME REQUIRED

Approximately 30 minutes

### SUPPLIES

You will need a flip chart on which you've written basic information about the workshop (e.g., objectives) and copies of **Handout 2A** for each participant.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
<b>Step 1: Setting the context</b>	5 min	Welcome participants to the workshop and review the workshop’s objectives. Ask them to think back to when they were 15 years old: to remember the clothes they wore, the people they hung out with, how they felt about the world, and why they felt that way.	Flip chart with workshop objectives
<b>Step 2: Creating pairs</b>	5 min	If participants are already well mixed as a group, ask them to pair up with someone they don’t know well; if not, ask them to count off by twos, to make sure that people aren’t paired with someone they might know. As a final precaution, ask if any pairs are well acquainted, and if so, pair them with others.	
<b>Step 3: Listening and sharing</b>	20 min	Invite the pairs to share with their partner, using the questions on <b>Handout 2A</b> as a guide. It’s important that they get to the questions about how adults took part in their communities as youth. Another way to encourage conversation is to ask one person to share for 10 minutes while the other listens, and then switch roles. If participants are 15 or younger, ask them to answer the questions based on their lives now.	<b>Handout 2A</b>
<b>Step 4: Reflecting</b>	10 min	Gather as an entire group. Ask the group a series of discussion questions. You may want to use the flip chart to jot down notes from participants’ answers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What did you have most in common with your partner? What was different?</li> <li>■ Share one of your partner’s stories.</li> <li>■ When you were young, how were adults involved in your community?</li> <li>■ When you were young, what kind of community service or community change were you involved in?</li> <li>■ What did you learn from the conversation?</li> <li>■ How can we carry these lessons forward into our work together?</li> </ul>	Flip chart Markers

## HANDOUT 2A: WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AT 15 YEARS OLD?

In pairs, consider the following questions:

- What was it like being 15 years old?
- Where did you live?
- What did you look like?
- What made you different?
- What was important to you – what did you think about a lot?
- How did you feel?
- Who were the young people who participated actively in the community?
- What were they like?
- What did they do?
- What kept you from participating more actively in the community?
- What could you have done to participate more actively?
- Who were the adults who worked well with young people?
- What were their qualities or characteristics?
- What could adults have done to help you participate more actively?

