Hope 4 Change
Primary Content Area: Art

Introduction
No one is more familiar with the troubles of students in an underserved community than the students themselves. Often times, however, students have difficulty identifying the needs of their community because they are inside the issue and know nothing else. Using the poem “Where I’m From” by Willie Perdomo as a model, students expressed an image of their neighborhood. Then, through Mikva’s Issues to Action guide, students investigated the needs of their community. Students identified peer pressure and lack of job training and family involvement as the root causes of strife in their community.

They formed committees to address each issue. The Peer Pressure committee is working with Alternatives, Inc. to establish a Peer Mediation system at Orr Academy. The committee on Family Involvement designed Saturday events to draw students and their families to participate in lively and educational seasonal activities. Finally, the Job Training committee is working to recruit a training program which will get students ready to get and keep gainful employment.

Project Goals
- Students will be able to identify issues in their community and their root causes.
- Students will learn that their expertise on issues is valuable.
- Discover and address the root causes of issues in the community.
- Students will learn to use art to promote or address an issue.
- Students will learn to create intention before they make art- to answer why it happens or why it is important instead of what happens.

Procedure/Project Sequence
(Based on the Mikva Challenge Issues to Action curriculum: The Six Steps)

Become a Mikva Issues to Action Teacher
http://www.centerforactioncivics.org/classroom-activism/

Preparation
1. Students read Willie Perdomo’s Where I’m From.
2. Students write their own Where I’m From to illustrate their neighborhood.
3. Students paint their poem onto a silhouette of themselves to create an abstract self-portrait.
4. Teacher leads students in an investigative brainstorm of issues in the community, revealed by students’ writings.
5. Students investigate the root causes of the problem guided by Mikva’s Root Causes Tree. This link will take you to a lesson developed by Mikva Challenge on exploring root causes http://www.centerforactioncivics.org/site/files/963/122146/411514/565738/Root_Causes.pdf
6. Students create a collage based on their root cause writing OR why their chosen issue is important to them.
7. Students trace their collage onto a linoleum block, and practice carving until they feel they have enough control of the tools to start on their linoleum block.
8. Students make a print from their carved linoleum block.
9. Students create solutions to root causes with teacher’s guidance.
10. Students create, distribute and collect data from surveys to gauge if solutions are on-track.

**Action**

11. Teacher divides students by solutions and interests to create an action plan through grant writing. For example:
   - Root Cause: Lack of Communication. Solution: Peer Mediation
   - Root Cause: Lack of Family Involvement. Solution: Monthly Family Events
12. Students present plans to administration to garner support.
13. Put action plans into action!

**Reflection**

Students reflect on the efficacy and sustainability of their solutions.

**Community Partners/Resources**

Mikva Challenge
312.863-6340
[www.mikvachallenge.org](http://www.mikvachallenge.org)

Alternatives, Inc
[www.alternativesyouth.org](http://www.alternativesyouth.org)
Naomi Milstein - NMilstein@alternativesyouth.org

Youth Guidance
[www.youth-guidance.org](http://www.youth-guidance.org)

Chicago Jobs for Youth
[www.jfychicago.org](http://www.jfychicago.org)

**Addendum**

This project addresses the following Illinois Common Core Standards and Social Emotional Standards

**CC.K-12.W.R.7** Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CC.K-12.SL.1** Comprehension and Collaboration: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CC.K-12.SL.5** Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

**IL Social/Emotional Learning**

3B — Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
3C — Contribute to the well-being of one’s school and community.

**Cross-Curricular Connections**

Connections with Social Studies, English, AVID and Math could be made during this project.