

# Sample Project Sketches for Out-of-School Time

Select a project from the following examples that you think would appeal to your students. Which project would connect to their interests? Expose them to new ideas? Challenge them to think critically or creatively? Explain your choice to your table. As a group, discuss the qualities of engaging projects.

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## **1-Our Planet, Our Problem**

*How can we be better caretakers of our environment?*

Students investigate an environmental concern that has local implications (such as habitat loss, biodiversity, or air pollution). They research causes of the current situation, gather stories and data about how this issue has changed over time, and investigate possible solutions. They select one do-able, sustainable solution and design a campaign to encourage others to join them in addressing the problem.

## **2-Let's Be Fair**

*How can we share and be fair?*

Students learn firsthand how rules and laws help people get along. The facilitator sets up a situation in which students are faced with a problem of scarcity: six handheld game consoles are distributed randomly among 25 eager students. After a period of chaos, students feel compelled to construct rules that govern individuals' actions for the good of the group. This experience leads to conversations about how communities function, culminating in a new set of rules written by students, for students.

## **3-What This Neighborhoods Needs Is...**

*How do we engineer the designed world?*

Students take on the role of product designers and develop an improved food truck design. They interview vendors and customers to determine: needs of users, problems with existing cart designs, cost factors, opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship. They conduct interviews to learn how food carts are used by entrepreneurs in various locations. Teams make their plans in SketchUp and present final designs to a panel of potential investors.

## **4-Stop, Thief!**

*How can we protect our possessions?*

The local newspaper reports that bike thefts are on the rise. Several students share that they know someone who has had a bike stolen. They investigate the issue by

examining police records, conducting surveys, and analyzing data for patterns. They interview experts (bike shop owners, bicycle commuters, etc.), and create a public service campaign to inform the community about strategies to keep bikes safe.

## **5-Work the System, Change the World**

*How can we make a difference?*

Students investigate an issue that concerns them and take civic action. In the process, they explore the relationships between the issue, their proposed actions, and the public policy they need to work within or attempt to change to make civic action possible. Students develop a convincing argument for their position, study opposing views, defend their solution, and use public speaking and social media to rally others to their cause.

## **6-City Makeover**

*How can we convince our peers that our city's not boring?*

Convinced that their community seems boring to young residents, students decide to give their city a makeover. One team researches recreational opportunities and creates interactive Google maps, including descriptions of favorite hikes, bike routes, and skate parks. Another team focuses on identifying indoor resources, such as a public-access film studio, makerspace, and computer centers. They share their project with the Chamber of Commerce and are interviewed by local radio station about their efforts.

## **7-Speaking Their Truth**

*How can we get others to hear our stories?*

After an inspiring visit by a spoken word poet, students decide to share their own stories in a public event. They explore a variety of genres before deciding how to “speak their truth.” Knowing that they will be performing for a public audience, they polish their work through multiple rounds of peer critique, revision, and rehearsal.

## **8-Under the Big Top**

*How can we entertain our community as circus performers?*

After reading a picture book about the circus, children decide to develop their own circus acts to entertain community members. They form teams to specialize in gymnastics, clowning, and magic tricks, and get advice from professional performers.