Activity 7: Culture is Everywhere

Length of Activity: 45 minutes
This activity was adapted from the 2016 Girls Only! Toolkit created from the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and Project Concern International.

Materials:
- Writing Utensils
- Paper
- String
- Hole punch
- Flashcards or small squares of paper
- Crayons or Markers

Culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Culture is often, though not necessarily, correlated with ethnicity and racial identity. Culture plays a large role in individual identities. Helping young people recognize cultural influences can help them gain a deeper appreciation for their own culture and the various cultures that surround them.

Discussion Questions:
- What is culture?
- What does culture look like?
- What is the purpose of culture?

Activity:

1) Begin by explaining that culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Explain that culture can influence who we are by directly shaping our personalities and informing our decisions.

2) Have Participants brainstorm a few examples of culture (ex: speaking English, speaking Spanish, wearing a blue and white school uniform, saying "please" and "thank you," giving your teacher a hug at the end of the day, wearing your hair in braids, using American money, wearing flip flop shoes). Record their responses on a board or large paper.

3) Explain that today they will be having a cultural scavenger hunt: they will find evidence of culture in their lives and all around. Explain that they will write their examples of culture on index cards (or small squares of paper) and draw a corresponding picture for each example. They should find at least six examples of culture around them. Have Participants walk around and explore their surroundings, whether this be in the ROOTS space or outdoors on a playground. Participants can work alone, in pairs, or in groups.

An example of six cards:

- Speaking English represented by a drawing of the A, B, C's,
- Using American money represented by a drawing of a dollar bill

- Going to church on Sunday represented by a drawing of a cross
- Celebrating Christmas represented by a picture of a decorated pine tree
- Having long hair represented by a drawing of a boy with long hair
- Eating a specific food represented by a drawing of that food

Expand the exercise! Have Participants look through magazines and books or in different spaces such as a classroom, kitchen, or other community space.

4) When Participants have finished at least six cards, punch two holes on the top of each card and string them together.

5) Have Participants share what they found on their scavenger hunts. Ask Participants to discuss what each example of culture means and the role it plays in their lives.

6) Hang the cultural scavenger hunt art projects throughout the room.