

# Engage: Connect



## Technique: Build a Partnership

As you engage with a topic, it is important to make connections between your work and similar work being done in your community, country, or globally. Forming a partnership with individuals or organizations who are already working on your big idea or challenge can provide fresh perspectives as you investigate the topic and allows you to connect your actions with actions that are already occurring.



## Set a purpose

1. With your class or small group, write 2-3 goals that you have for working in partnership with organizations. Consider what you hope to learn and how you think the organization can support the work that you are doing.
2. In this activity, you will work to form a partnership with an organization or group of people in your community who are already doing work around your big idea or challenge.



## Make a Plan

1. Using personal networks, research, and databases, identify organizations or people who you could interview. If you want to spend more time on this process, consider completing the [Connect: Identify Similar Work](#) Engage activity. In the identification process, you might:
  - a. Search on [GuideStar](#) and [Charity Navigator](#) to find organizations in your area.
  - b. Use hashtags and postings by organizations that you know of on social media such as Twitter to identify further people doing similar work.
  - c. Look at the archives of your local newspaper for stories about people or organizations working locally.
  - d. Ask family and community members if they know of any people or organizations doing the work you are interested in.
2. Once you have identified organizations, see if anyone in your group or who you know has connections to the organization. Personal connections can make it easier to start conversations about working in partnership.
3. Draft a plan for your partnership. While the final plan will need to be created together, it is important to have an idea of what you are asking of the organization when you reach out to

them. Consider:

- a. How long will this partnership last?
  - b. What can you offer to the organization to support their work?
  - c. What can the organization offer to support your work?
  - d. Will the work you do together cost money? If so, where will the money come from?
4. Coordinate with your class and teacher to determine when and how it is best to reach out to organizations.



## Execute

1. Reach out to your identified organization and set up a meeting to learn more about their work.
  - a. When you first reach out to the organization, ask for a conversation to learn more about what they do.
2. When you meet with the organization, ask questions about their work and share about the project you are working on and what you hope to do. Depending on how the meeting goes, consider asking if the organization would be willing to partner with you for your project.
3. As long as the first meeting went well and the organization's work is aligned with your big idea or challenge, set up a second meeting to discuss building a partnership.
  - a. Consider sharing what you hope to get out of the partnership and what you can offer the organization.
4. If the organization agrees to work in partnership, work together to develop and refine goals and expectations for the partnership. In this conversation, it is important to make sure everyone has clear expectations for time commitments and how you will work together to determine outputs and actions in your work.
5. Throughout the project, remain in contact with your partner organization. Consider investigation methods that allow you to learn from them and remain aware of the work that they are doing. When you determine your action concept, consult your partner organization to see how your action can build on or complement the work they are already doing.



## Reflect

1. Once you have completed your Engage activity, complete the [Engage Activity Synthesis](#) in your Challenge Organizer to summarize and reflect on what you learned during this activity.
2. Add any idea "sparks" to your [Spark-ing Lot](#).