

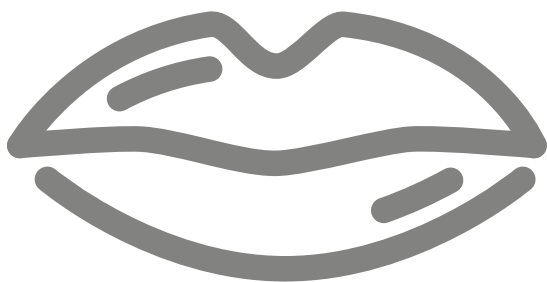
## Adolescents and expression

**The Adolescent Kit supports adolescents to express themselves through the arts, in order to promote their wellbeing, learning, and engagement with their communities.**

Working with the arts can help adolescents to express ideas and feelings, learn life skills and experience the world around them in new ways. Different types of art can connect adolescents with their cultures and heritage, and give them opportunities to contribute creatively to their communities.

In humanitarian contexts, opportunities for adolescents to express themselves through the arts are often disrupted. The challenge of day-to-day survival leaves adolescents little time to play in creative and artistic ways, or to pursue types of art that interest them.

Exploring the arts can help adolescents to improve their emotional wellbeing. Through drawing, painting, singing or dancing, they can take a break from the stress and difficulty of their circumstances. They can express difficult feelings in safe ways, (for example by telling or writing a story), and use their imaginations to explore hopes and concerns. In conflict-affected communities, adolescents can use traditional and other types of art to support each other's healing after experiences of violence or loss. In other cases, adolescents, just like adults, may simply find joy and comfort in the experience of creating art.



Working on arts projects, individually and in groups, can help adolescent girls and boys to develop new abilities and life skills. Through different types of art, adolescents learn new ways to express their feelings and ideas, and to interpret what they see and hear around them. Arts such as storytelling and drama help adolescents to develop empathy and respect, by allowing them to explore the experiences and feelings of other people, real or imagined. Arts like drafting and sketching allow adolescents to strengthen their perseverance and patience. Collaborating on arts projects such as

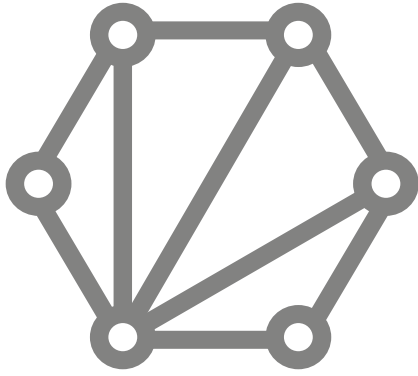
exhibitions or performances also gives adolescents a rich opportunity to practice interpersonal skills. They learn to communicate, plan, make decisions and solve problems.



Expressing themselves through the arts can also support adolescents to connect positively with their communities and to build social relationships that are important for their wellbeing. By involving adult community artists in activities with the Adolescent Kit, adolescents can benefit from their experience and knowledge and learn more about their traditions and culture. Adult artists may also enjoy the energy and creativity of young people, and help them to take on positive roles in their community.

### The arts include:

- ▶ Drawing
- ▶ Painting
- ▶ Creating murals
- ▶ Making collages
- ▶ Singing
- ▶ Dancing
- ▶ Chanting
- ▶ Playing musical instruments
- ▶ Story telling
- ▶ Writing stories, poems or plays
- ▶ Drama
- ▶ Improvisation
- ▶ Craft making
- ▶ Photography
- ▶ Video
- ▶ Sculpture



The arts can also be a way for adolescents to take positive action. For example, adolescents can use the arts to share life-saving messages and useful advice with their communities. As educator-artists, adolescents around the world have used drama, dance, song and art to inform their communities about violence, disease and other risks associated with humanitarian situations.

When adolescents share works of art, they can bring new energy and vibrancy to their communities, and help to restore some of the creativity that may have been lost through disaster or conflict. Adolescents' exhibitions of drawings, paintings or sculpture and performances of dance, drama or music can also serve as valuable forms of entertainment for communities, providing opportunities for people to gather and have fun in challenging circumstances. In this way, adolescents can contribute to their own recovery and to that of their families and communities.