




# Student Introduction

**Figure 1.** The student sit-ins in department store restaurants were part of a protest movement that led to the end of legal segregation in the United States ("[Civil Rights](#)" [CCO](#))

You, the Designer!



When you think of creative designers, what is the first thought that comes to mind? Visual artists? Product designers? Clothing designers? Building designers? We often think about design in terms of physical things we can see, hear, and touch. 

But design, and design thinking, isn't just for physical products. We can use the creative processes associated with design to change people's experiences and relationships -- with each other and the natural and built environments -- for the positive too. Whether you consider *direct action*, *indirect action*, *advocacy* or *research*, design thinking is critical. The very best social interventions require the same consideration of those affected by change as product designers have to use. And designing for social change, solving problems in communities, and meeting people's needs in all forms, can be just as exciting for you as creating a useful product or a beautiful piece of art. In fact, famous product design critic Ralph Caplan once described the lunch-counter sit-ins in the United States, a protest associated with the Civil Rights Movement, as the greatest design of the time period (see **Figure 1** above). He said that design is fundamentally "a process for making things right" (Quito).

Cities, with their dynamic networks of people and systems, need energetic changemakers like you to understand how they work and to use your initiative, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking to make them better. The United Nations estimates that by 2050, 68% of the world's population will live in cities, up from 55% right now ("68% Of the World"). Urbanisation isn't a new phenomenon, but is accelerating. This is good news! Cities, because of their human and physical networks, offer enormous possibilities for people's incomes and creativity, and for moving to a more sustainable way of life. But urbanisation also brings challenges for those who live in cities and around them, and for those who will move to them. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is only the most recent example of those challenges.



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# What is Youth Mayors?



Youth Mayors is a global think tank of young leaders who are investigating urban promise and problems. Young people everywhere are developing solutions to help cities adapt to the environmental, social and economic challenges of the 21st century. Taking local action and then scaling it to larger communities can even result in powerful global change, like we have seen with Greta Thunberg's school strikes for the climate.

The Youth Mayors Field Guide is written for students who want to make change in their communities. It is intended to be a flexible source of information, instruction and tools that can be used by students, in groups or alone, to investigate and initiate change. It can also be used in or out of the classroom by teachers and mentors who are supporting students with their projects. More information for teachers and mentors can be found towards the end of this Field Guide in the [Teacher Information](#) section. The Youth Mayors Field Guide DOES NOT eliminate **ambiguity** and the risk of failure in action projects. It is not a roadmap to success. Ambiguity and risk of failure are fundamental to changemaking. If you can embrace them, you will become more creative and confident, and more willing to take initiative.

The modules in the Youth Mayors Field Guide use **systems thinking** and **design thinking**, as well as a big-picture **Doughnut model** to help young changemakers like you learn how to make YOUR world a better place, like city mayors do. Empathising with people, as designers do, and understanding the systems that affect people's lives is critical to creating effective solutions. The video below from [Ideo.org](#) makes this point well.





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It is critical to understanding people and the systems that drive their behaviour. You need to observe how they interact with their environment and each other. You need to capture information that reflects their experiences. Watching and talking to people gives you clues as to what they think and feel and what they need.

As a changemaker it is very important that you engage with people directly and often, so you get a deeper understanding into their beliefs, values and emotions. You need to immerse yourself in their experience to understand first-hand who you are designing for. This is the best way to find creative solutions to their problems and meet their needs.

The Youth Mayors Field Guide will help you:

- to connect and collaborate with stakeholders in your community,
- to use complex systems thinking to understand the community you live in,
- to use design thinking to identify and frame problems and find user-centered solutions,
- to become more comfortable with ambiguity,
- to plan and manage projects, and
- to share your learning and scale your ideas to multiply your impact.

Your involvement is more important than ever before. If you are prepared to take initiative, think critically, empathise, and collaborate, you can have an enormous positive impact on those around you!

## How to Use the Youth Mayors Field Guide





## I Youth Mayors Field Guide has 4 Stages and 15 Modules:

- Stage 1 - Investigating - 5 modules
- Stage 2 - Planning / Designing a solution - 5 modules
- Stage 3 - Taking action - 1 module
- Stage 4 - Sharing and scaling - 4 modules

In each Module, there is an explanation of what should be done to successfully execute that stage of the project. In addition, there are three project examples of how the Modules would be carried out in different contexts. Finally, there is a set of tools you can use -- like graphic organisers, templates, and detailed instructions -- to help you work on your project. The Field Guide is mainly structured and oriented on **direct action**. However, there are many tools here that can be very useful for **indirect action, advocacy, and research**.

The Youth Mayors Field Guide can be used in a number of ways:

### 1. As a complete project

You can think of the Field Guide as a menu that you can follow from the beginning to the end of a project, following all the steps. This would be useful, for example, if you have a project requirement for school, like the IB Middle Years Programme Community and Personal Projects or the IB Diploma Programme CAS project. However, it is also useful for other independent projects you may try.

Be aware that you may not want to follow every module in the order that they are presented. Some actions from modules need to be carried out at the same time. For example, in Stage 1, you would be investigating behaviour patterns (Module 1(b)), systems (Module 1(c)) and mental models (Module 1(d)) all at the same time through interviews, surveys, observations or other tools.

It is also important to understand that different projects will require different amounts of time to complete the various stages. **Figure 2** outlines a sample timeline for a project that lasts one academic semester in the northern hemisphere. Your project will likely differ, but this can give you an idea how to plan the four stages. This was developed using a Gantt chart structure. If you would like to learn about that to develop a plan now for your project, see [Module 2\(c\)](#).



	August		September				October				November				December			January					
	WK34	WK35	WK36	WK37	WK38	WK39	WK40	WK41	WK42	WK43	WK44	WK45	WK46	WK47	WK48	WK49	WK50	WK51	WK52	WK1	WK2	WK3	WK4
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Planning																							
Taking Action																							
Sharing																							
Scaling?																							

**Figure 3.** A sample timeline for an entire project with a Personal Project Exhibition (PPE) at the end. Yours will differ from this, especially if you are not tied to a school schedule for completing a project. Scaling has been left with a question mark because you may not scale at all, but if you do there are many possibilities. ([CCO](#))

## 2. As a reference toolbox

You can also use the Youth Mayors Field Guide as a reference and a toolbox, like a plate of snacks instead of a full menu. You may not always be carrying out a big project in all its stages, but may need guidance on a particular activity like interviews, or a skill like making a project plan. The Youth Mayors Field Guide is divided into logical stages, with tools relevant for various activities. You can dip in and out of the Field Guide as needed for your social interventions, activities or other related school assignments.

Throughout the Youth Mayors curriculum, you will find useful activities to help you practice the skills needed to investigate, come up with ideas, plan, execute and share your projects. There are two types of activities.

- **Practice Activities** help you practice your skills, regardless of whether you have a project already in mind.
- **Project Activities** will get you using your skills for your own project.

Together, they will help you develop into a Youth Mayor changemaker.

## Documenting Your Doing



**Figure 4.** Documenting doesn't have to be dull - photographs, video/audio, drawings and other media can make your project come alive for others ("[Documenting](#)" [CC BY 4.0](#))





Whether whether you are doing a full project or using the Field Guide for reference and tools, it is important to document what you are doing in some way. You may need documentation of your activities for a school assignment or exhibition or for work. Or you may want it later for sharing your project with a group, or writing project proposals for grant money. You may also want to document your process in social media, but be sure to check local age requirements for social media platforms and talk to your parents or guardians. You can learn more about documenting your research and work in [Module 1\(e\)](#).

## A Final Word on the Starting Point

There are two possible points of entry to a Youth Mayors project.

In one case, you may want to help a community, but you may not know what the community's needs and problems are. In this case, it makes sense to take time to get to know the community further so you can identify the problems by engaging with those in the community. For example, you may want to get involved with supporting a local assisted living centre for people with disabilities and to understand better what the needs of this community are. Once you have identified a problem, you can do further research on that problem in the community to fully understand it.

However, in some cases, you already know about a problem, particularly if you experience it yourself or in your community or have learned about it in school. In that case, you start your research by directly investigating the problem through engagement with the community. For example, you may have noticed that there is no place to store or park bicycles in your neighborhood. Taking this problem in hand, you should engage with people in the neighbourhood to find out how they are coping with this problem and develop a solution for it.

**Figure 5** can help you think about the two possible entry points to a project and how they are related.



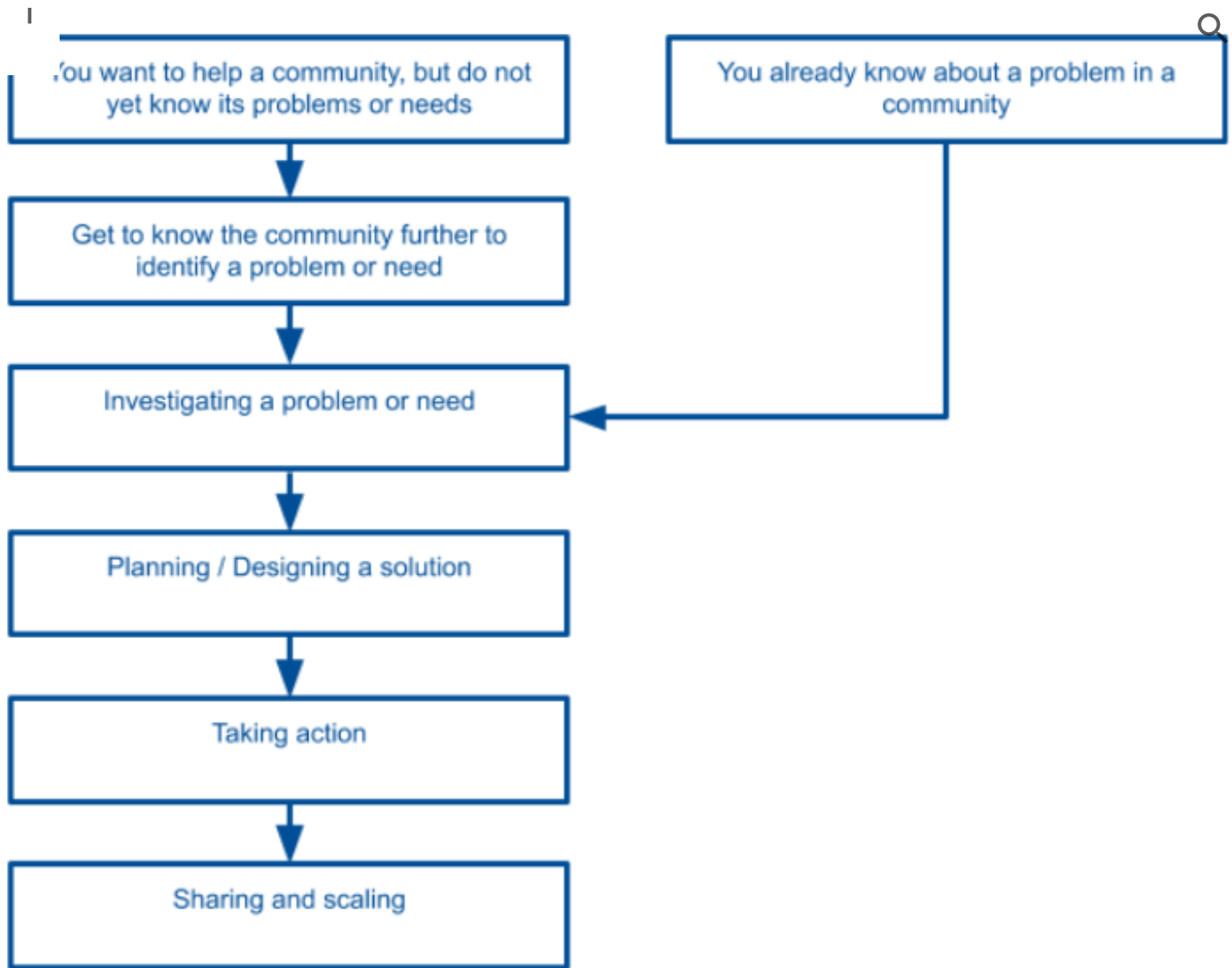


Figure 5. Two entry points to a Youth Mayors project (CCO)

# Let's get started!

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