

An Introduction: Action Guide - Educator Version

What happens now?

Now that your students have finished all of their Training Sessions, it is time for them to form their Young Heroes Club and begin working on their Community Action Project!

We are relying on the leadership of the faculty advisor team at your school to guide students through the project process. You will also have our full support along the way to provide resources, help overcome challenges, and celebrate successes.

What is this guide?

We feel strongly that the following pages will help students to meaningfully engage with the project process. This educator guide gives you some context and facilitation suggestions for using the student Action Guide. However, you will not necessarily see specific instructional strategies mentioned for each page. We want the implementation of the club meetings to remain flexible and allow you to be creative and utilize the strategies that work best for you and your students.

How is this resource organized?

The student Action Guide leads students through each step in the process of a Community Action Project. This educator version of the Action Guide provides context for each page the students see. You will see the following sections on each page of your resource:

- Purpose = a brief rationale
- Student Outcomes = the outcomes we hope to see in this step of the project process
- Facilitation Suggestions = ideas for introducing key concepts and utilizing student worksheets

WELCOME TO YOUR YOUNG HEROES CLUB ACTION GUIDE!



Training Sessions 1-5 of the Young Heroes Outreach Program introduced you to the powers that YOU have to make change in your school and community. Now you can turn your training into reality by being part of the Young Heroes Club!

The following pages of your Action Guide will help you plan and complete a Community Action Project that truly makes a difference!



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Community Action Project Overview

Purpose:

This page reminds students that working on their project is a process. Students often want to jump right into the “doing” without fully understanding what they want to accomplish or taking the proper steps for their project’s greatest impact.

Student Outcomes:

- Understand that they will work together on a project that affects their own community
- Know the steps for completing a successful project
- Know the order of project steps
- Understand that some steps can happen multiple times throughout the project (Investigation and Reflection)



COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT OVERVIEW

What is the Community Action Project?

As a Young Heroes Club you will choose an issue that matters to you and take action to make change on that issue. The end result of all that hard work is called your Community Action Project.

Here are the steps to completing your Community Action Project:



Facilitation Suggestions:

Encourage students to flip through the pages in their Action Guide, and point out that the worksheets correspond to the project steps outlined on this page.

Emphasize to students that Investigation and Reflection should happen throughout the project, not just at the beginning and end. Our hope is that students become confident experts on their issue, and think critically about their project’s goals and progress.

Ideally, you and your students will have enough time to work through each project step thoroughly, using the Action Guide worksheets provided in the following pages. Some steps might only take part of a club meeting. Others, like planning and completing the project, will take multiple meetings.



What kind of issue should our club choose?

Your issue should be:

- 1) Something that directly affects your local school and community
- 2) Something that interests you and your club members
- 3) Something your club will want to work on in the long term

Who will be helping us with our Community Action Project?

Each club's Faculty Advisors and YHOP Trainer will be working together to help! Here is a breakdown:

Faculty Advisors	YHOP Trainer
Lead all meetings	Help lead some meetings
Set expectations for club members	Follow expectations set by Faculty Advisors
Provide help in person	Provide help in person, but mostly online
	Provide extra ideas and resources

What is the Young Heroes Club End-of-Year Celebration?

When: Saturday June 7th

Where: National Liberty Museum (AKA your Young Hero training headquarters)

Who: All Young Heroes Clubs; family and friends of club members; YHOP Trainers and museum staff; sponsors who fund the Young Heroes Outreach Program

What: An Exhibition of each club's Community Action Project; a Young Heroes Club Awards Ceremony; food, fun, and celebrating each other's accomplishments!

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Facilitation Suggestions:

You may want to make a timeline together as a club. It might help if they think about it with the End-of-Year Celebration as the finish line. You may want to map out each step of the process and give a benchmark date for when you will move on to the next step. Students should be included in this activity to increase their planning abilities and allow them to engage their own metacognitive skills.

Strategically reminding students of the End-of-Year Celebration throughout the project process can motivate them to stay on task and remain focused on their goals. Students should also keep in mind how they will record their progress and represent their accomplishments at the Celebration (such as photos, videos, and other visuals).

Community Action Project Overview

Purpose:

Students need to know that while they are leading the project and making many of the decisions, there are adults there to help guide them. They should also keep in mind how much time they have left before the End-of-Year Celebration. This will help your club know how much time you can spend on each project step.

Student Outcomes:

- Understand that they will work together on a project that affects their own community
- Recognize whom they can turn to for different kinds of support during the project
- Know the date of the End-of-Year Celebration, and calculate the amount of time they have to complete all project steps before this Celebration.



Step 1: Identifying the Issue

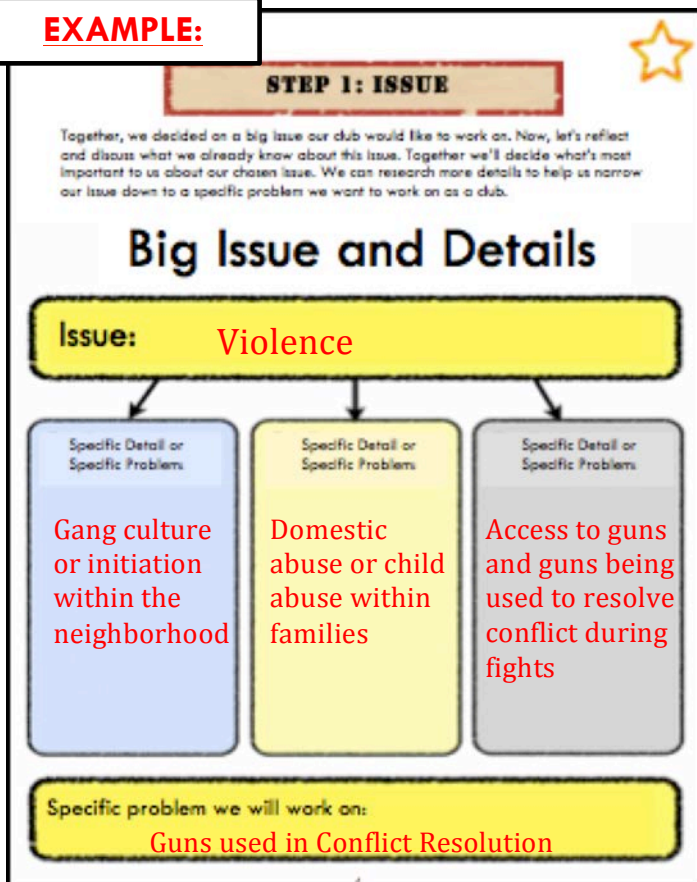
Purpose:

The issue that students vote for is often very broad in nature and may not be very specific to their school or community. This worksheet is intended to help students narrow their issue to something more narrow and detailed.

Student Outcomes:

- Identify the broad issue that won the vote
- Brainstorm what smaller problems make up the broad issue
- Consider how this issue impacts their community
- Decide together on a more specific, detailed problem to work on for their project.

EXAMPLE:



STEP 1: ISSUE

Together, we decided on a big issue our club would like to work on. Now, let's reflect and discuss what we already know about this issue. Together we'll decide what's most important to us about our chosen issue. We can research more details to help us narrow our issue down to a specific problem we want to work on as a club.

Big Issue and Details

Issue: Violence

Specific Detail or Specific Problem:

- Gang culture or initiation within the neighborhood
- Domestic abuse or child abuse within families
- Access to guns and guns being used to resolve conflict during fights

Specific problem we will work on: Guns used in Conflict Resolution

STEP 1: ISSUE

Together, we decided on a big issue our club would like to work on. Now, let's reflect and discuss what we already know about this issue. Together we'll decide what's most important to us about our chosen issue. We can research more details to help us narrow our issue down to a specific problem we want to work on as a club.

Big Issue and Details

Issue:

Specific Detail or Specific Problem:

Specific Detail or Specific Problem:

Specific Detail or Specific Problem:

Specific problem we will work on:

Facilitation Suggestions:

This worksheet helps flesh out your students' prior knowledge and personal experiences with the particular issue that won their vote. This is a good opportunity to discuss the reasons why this issue was important to them, and narrow the focus for their Community Action Project.

Here are some other helpful strategies to go along with the student worksheet:

- Have students think about the Who, What, Where, Why and How related to your issue to jump-start their thinking, leading them to be more specific and detail-oriented.
- Do a free write to get students thinking about what the broad issue means to them or how they would explain it to someone else.
- Have a group discussion and draw a thought web on the board.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATION



Reasons to investigate:

- a. Gather facts and evidence related to your issue
- b. Understand root causes of your issue, so you know how to take action
- c. Become an expert on your issue



Some ways you can investigate are:

- a. Internet Research
- b. Reading books, magazines or newspapers
- c. Talking to people who are affected by your issue
- d. Contacting other organizations working on your issue

Fill out the following charts to help you organize your investigation!

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Facilitation Suggestions:

You can start by utilizing the resources list that each club will get from the Young Heroes Outreach Education Team. This list will be tailored specifically to your issue.

Here are some further ideas to help your club members investigate:

- Take the club down to the school or local library to check out books, newspapers, and other resources
- Look into reserving a school computer lab or individual computers for an investigation-themed club meeting
- Ask someone from a local organization to speak with your club – the National Liberty Museum can help in coordinating this
- Assign individuals and/or a small group of students to conduct research on their own and report back to the club

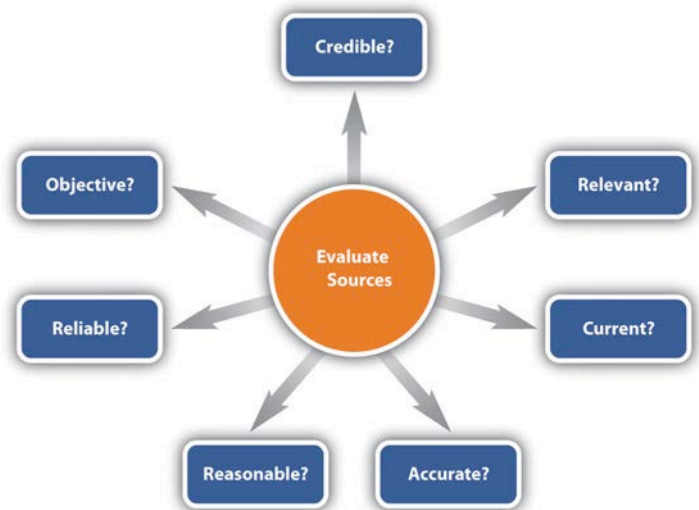
Step 2: Investigation

Purpose:

Investigation is an important first step for students to engage in *before* deciding how to take action. Students may initially care about an issue without knowing much about it. By the end of the project, they should feel like experts on their chosen issue.

Student Outcomes:

- See the value in learning more about an issue before trying to make change
- Identify a variety of sources for information about the issue
- Prepared to talk about or describe the issue to other people, as needed
- Discover evidence for the root causes of their chosen issue



Don't forget to remind students to check their sources!

Step 2: Investigation

Purpose:

Students can use the next two worksheets to think about how their project and actions contribute to a larger movement or effort related to their chosen issue.

Student Outcomes:

- Know whom the issue impacts
- Identify organizations that they can learn from and work with
- Know whom they can petition for change in relation to their issue.

EXAMPLE

Facilitation Suggestions:

You may want to go over this worksheet's questions with students before and after they research their issue. The "before" discussion can identify students' prior knowledge; the "after" discussion can emphasize new knowledge, resources, and potential partnerships with individuals or local organizations.

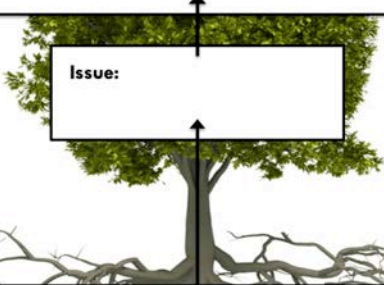
Emphasize to students that these questions are not the only ones worth asking about their issue. Challenge students to think of other questions people might have.

Keep in mind that students should not view Investigation as a one-time action. Investigation is always valuable and has different purposes throughout the project.

Now that you've found all of that important information, let's pinpoint what's causing your issue. A **root cause** is something that is behind the problem, or causing the problem.

Write your Issue, its root causes and impact in the spaces provided.

Effects and Impact of Issue



Issue:

What is causing this issue? Who or what is part of the problem?

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Facilitation Suggestions:

It is important to emphasize that students investigate *before* they fill out this worksheet. Otherwise, they may not challenge themselves to gain new knowledge about their issue.

The difficulty about this concept for students is that more often than not root causes, like the roots of a tree, are beneath the surface. You have to do a little digging to discover them and realize how deep they go. The analogy of a tree is particularly helpful for students and this worksheet reinforces that connection.

You may need to model this process for students with a different, familiar problem first, in order to make the goal of this worksheet clearer for them. For example, a common misconception students have is that root causes are the reasons why an issue is “bad.” Those reasons are actually the effects/symptoms of the issue, not its root causes.

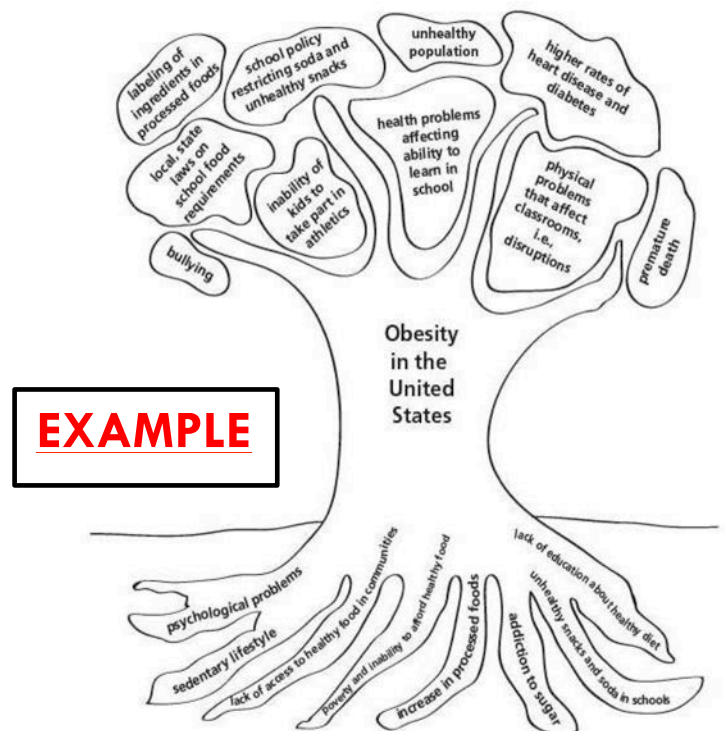
Step 2: Investigation

Purpose:

Addressing root cause is an important step for effectively making change. We aim for students to think critically about what causes their chosen issue so the changes they work towards are long lasting. Without attempting to understand and address the root causes of an issue, change may only be temporary at best. Identifying root causes is also a great exercise in critical thinking for students.

Student Outcomes:

- Discover reasons why an issue is occurring
- Understand concept of root cause
- Make connections between the causes and effects of an issue



Step 3: Goals

Purpose:

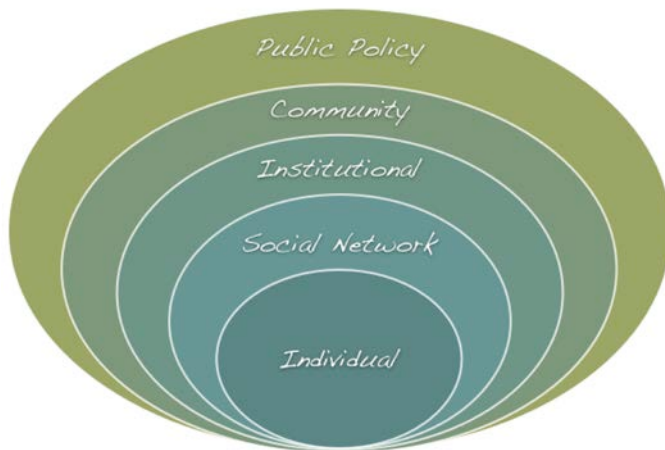
Students need to know that their Community Action Project will not be a quick fix and may not result in a large change right away. They should be able to see however, that their project is contributing toward the bigger change they hope to see someday.

Student Outcomes:

- Discuss and decide on what change they hope will happen with their issue
- Identify how they will know if their project has been a success in contributing towards change
- Identify 3 specific project goals

Facilitation Suggestions:

Students need to understand that real change doesn't happen overnight. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an incredible agent of change. He took actions that started a movement and resulted in legislation that ended segregation. However, that change resulted from lots of projects and efforts that took place over years of time. So every action taken or effort that is made should be understood as contributing towards more and better change.



There are different levels/spheres in which change can happen!

STEP 3: GOALS

Now that you know the root causes of your issue, you can set goals for your project.

The change we hope to see because of our project is...

Specific goals help your club stay on track with your project. Specific goals should:

- Work on root causes
- Be specific (with details)
- Be realistic (should be able to meet them within this school year)

There are specific numbers, actions, and accomplishments that will prove that a project made a difference. Write your main goal and then specific project goals below!

Example of Specific Project Goals:

- Get the local news to do a story about our project
- Get 250 signatures on our petition
- Receive a positive response from a decision maker
- Get 100 people to write letters to a decision maker
- Inspire 50% of our school to get involved

Our Club's Specific Project Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



You may want to have a whole-group discussion about this worksheet. Students should come to an agreement on what change they would like to see related to their issue (at the top of their worksheet). This is a larger, overarching goal.

Specific project goals can be a vehicle for contributing towards the larger goal. They remind students of what is realistic to achieve given the time, resources, and power they have. Use the sample goals to come up with your own. Returning to these specific goals is a good way for students to gauge progress and stay motivated.

STEP 4: ACTION STRATEGIES



Now that your club has set goals, decide what actions you should take to best achieve those goals!

Remember that your Community Action Project will need to include one action for each of these Action Strategies:

Direct Action – An activity that calls attention to an issue and demands change of decision makers through various forms of public demonstration.

Persuasive Action – An activity that tries to convince someone to act on an issue by sharing evidence and showing that other people agree with your demands.

Awareness Action – An activity that informs people about an issue by giving facts and information.

- Organize a march
- Organize a rally or protest
- Organize a walk-out
- Organize a sit-in
- Organize a boycott
- Organize an assembly

- Write a letter to a decision maker
- Write a letter to the editor of a news source
- Give a speech
- Have community classes or meetings
- Organize a petition

- Make and post signs
- Hand out flyers
- Create a public service announcement video
- Write and perform a song, poem or dance
- Paint a mural
- Use social media

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Facilitation Suggestions:

This step will likely require additional Investigation. Students may want to find out what actions people have taken in working on the same issue.

Also, it could help them to see how actions from the past look differently when used today. For example, some actions now involve things like social media, or new technology like video editing, which can make the project even more engaging and powerful! Students can use their own 21st century skills to come up with actions that fit into the strategies they were taught.

You may want to brainstorm a list of actions your club could take (related to your issue), and add them to the boxes/lists on this page.

Step 4: Action Strategies

Purpose:

Defining and reviewing the Action Strategies is an important step to take. It will encourage students to challenge themselves and move beyond the actions they already know about. Students should get creative with their actions and not feel limited to what they are familiar with or even what is in these lists.

Student Outcomes:

- Review the three different types of Action Strategies: Direct, Persuasive and Awareness
- Add actions to the Action Strategies lists
- Brainstorm actions the club can take, related to the club's chosen issue and think about how they contribute to the greater change they want to see



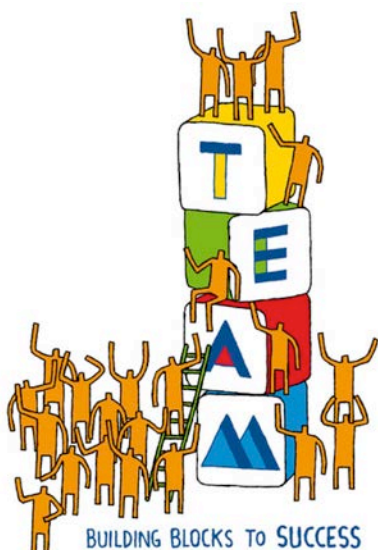
Step 4: Action Strategies

Purpose:

A strong Community Action Project includes at least one action from each Action Strategy type. Doing one action alone is often not as effective in igniting change. When multiple actions come together, the project is richer and much more dynamic. Students should think about how the actions they choose will intersect with each other, and contribute to the project as a whole.

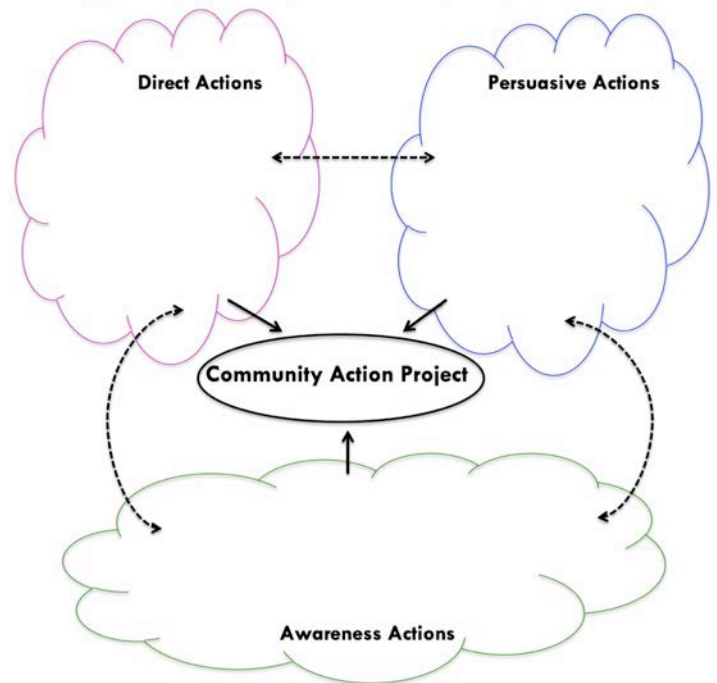
Student Outcomes:

- Choose 3 actions for their project (one from each strategy type)
- Make connections between the different actions they take
- Understand how the actions they take inform and enhance their project overall



Together
Everyone
Achieves
More

Write ideas for project actions in each category. Think about how each action supports the project and how different actions are connected to each other.



As a club, choose one action from each category to use for your project.

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Facilitation Suggestions:

Use the visual on the corresponding student worksheet to discuss actions your club will take, and how these actions can come together in one powerful project. You may want to have students write the club's chosen actions into the separate bubbles, and then discuss the connections (with other actions, and with the whole project) as a club.

For example, the awareness action might be how you get the word out about an event. The persuasive action might be how you convince people that the change you're asking for is important, or how you gain support in the community. The direct action could be how students actively demand change they want from a decision maker or the greater community. Remind students to consider using technology and 21st century skills as well as more traditional actions.

STEP 5: PROJECT PLANNING

You will need to decide how these actions can come together as a project for the club. Think about how you could contribute to each action by taking on the different Hero Roles you learned about.

Direct

Persuasive

Awareness

Arts:		
Investigating:		
Organizing:		
Speaking:		
Writing:		

Decide which action you want to work on based on how you think you can best contribute to the project. Use the resources provided by your Training Team to know how to get started taking the action you chose.

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Facilitation Suggestions:

Briefly review with students the 5 Roles from the training sessions. Then, discuss the actions the club has chosen, and identify together which roles would be useful for those actions.

For example, if the club has chosen to write a petition for their persuasive action, the Roles that might be useful are: Investigating (gathering facts), Writing (creating the petition), and Speaking (explaining the petition to people and getting signatures).

The concept of matching students up with different Roles is similar to students identifying which of the multiple intelligences they feel they have. This theory by Howard Gardner is very powerful and affirming for all students, but especially those who don't quite fit the mold of the average student.

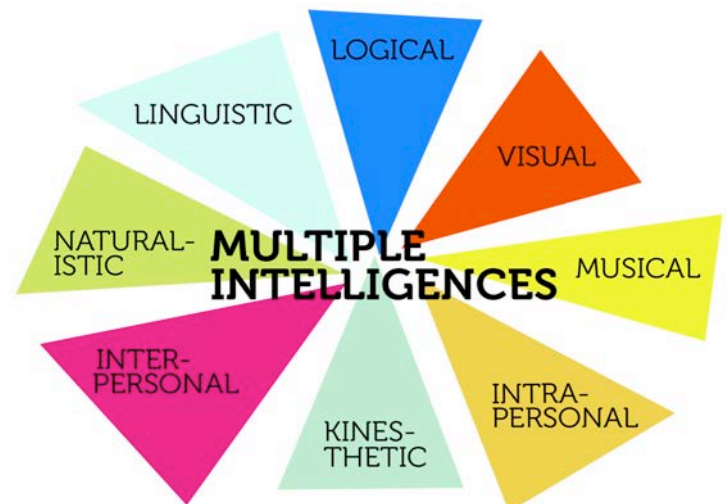
Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Purpose:

This activity provides an opportunity for students to think about what they can personally contribute to the project. Not every student is going to be engaged by every action or part of the project. The best way to keep every student feeling excited and valued is to allow them to identify which Roles they would feel comfortable taking on. For example, a student might not want to make a speech but would love to design the flyers promoting an event.

Student Outcomes:

- Recall and define the 5 Roles they can take on as a team making change
- Identify which Roles they would feel confident about taking on personally
- Think about how each Role can contribute to the actions the club chose



Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Purpose:

The following 3 planning pages are meant to be a step-by-step guide to project planning. They are separated by Action Strategy so that students can fully commit to planning each action. Students should understand that there is a sequence and process for each type of action. There are also reminders to do reflection both at the midpoint and end of the project.

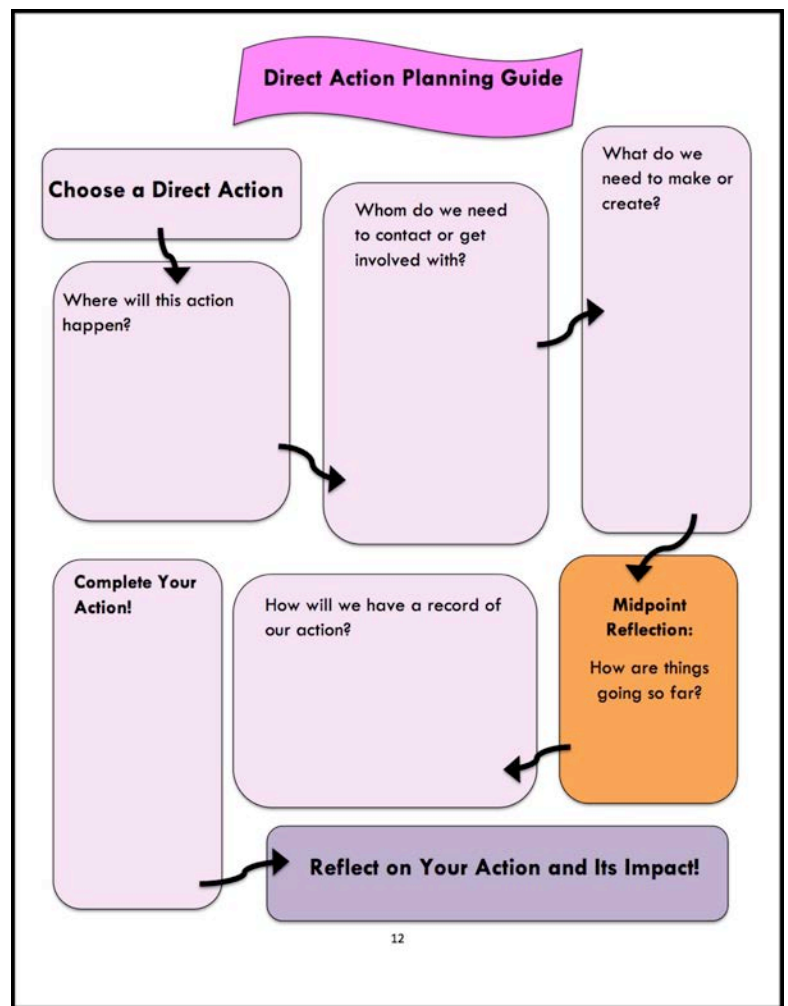
At this point, you may want to assign individual students or committees to each action, and then combine everyone's efforts for the final project.

Student Outcomes:

- Focus on what needs to be accomplished for each action, and for the whole project
- Answer important questions related to each action's implementation
- Reflect on progress of the project as a whole



Image: <http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-change/>

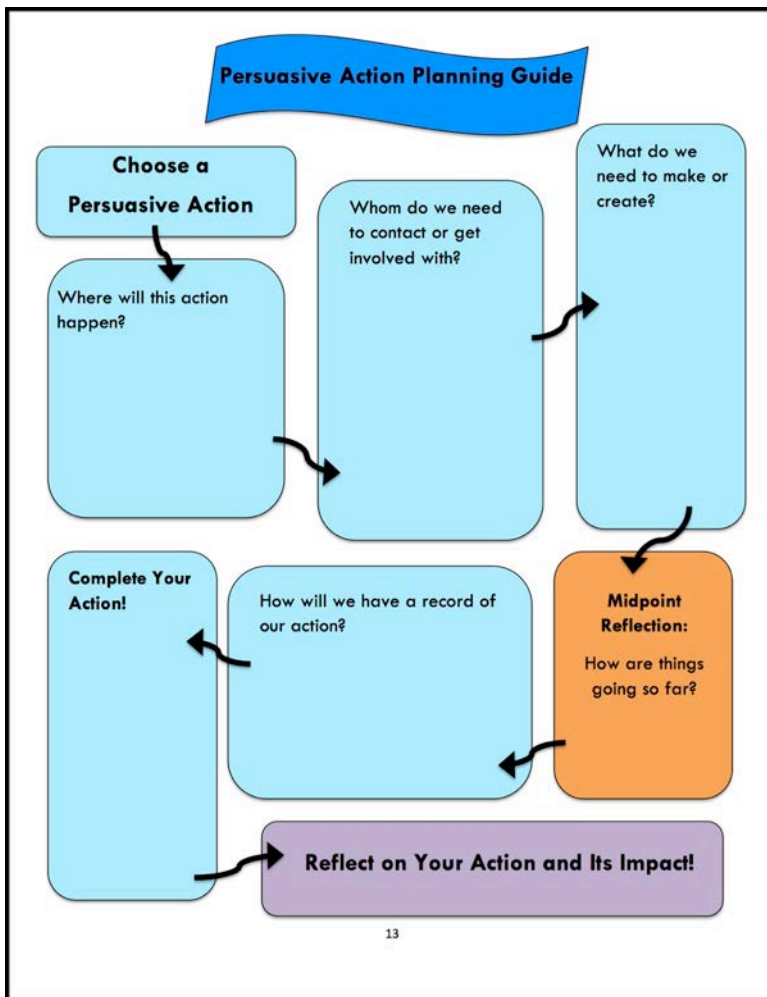


Facilitation Suggestions:

Direct actions involve students expressing their concerns publicly and acting on them! This strategy provides an important opportunity for students to voice their desire for change and clearly identify themselves as agents of change.

Direct actions often involve making the project highly visible to the greater community and to key decision makers. These decision makers are people who have the power and influence to start taking real steps towards making the change your students are working toward.

It is important for students to understand that direct action can be on an individual scale (like refusing to buy something). However, direct action is most powerful when it is made very publicly and engages people outside of the confines of the club!



Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Purpose:

Please see the Purpose stated on the first page for Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Student Outcomes:

Please see the Student Outcomes stated on the first page for Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

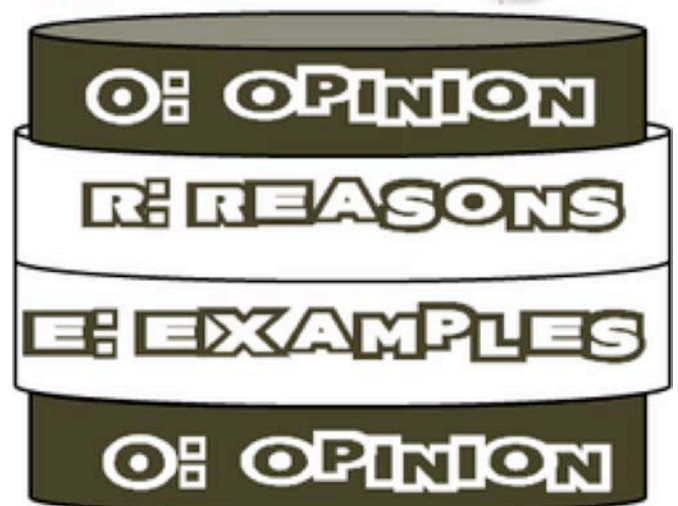
Facilitation Suggestions:

Persuasive actions are important for convincing decision makers to take the steps needed to make change. They can also be used to convince community members to join your students' cause.

Persuasive actions will mirror many of the concepts students are already learning in school regarding persuasive writing and speaking. Students need to identify reasons why they feel/think the way they do. Then they need to give authentic examples to provide evidence that will support their argument. Students need to be reminded that it's not enough to just express an opinion and expect others to agree.

An important final step, which is not included in the "OREO" graphic on this page, is to offer specific action steps other people should take once they have been convinced about the issue.

Persuasive Writing



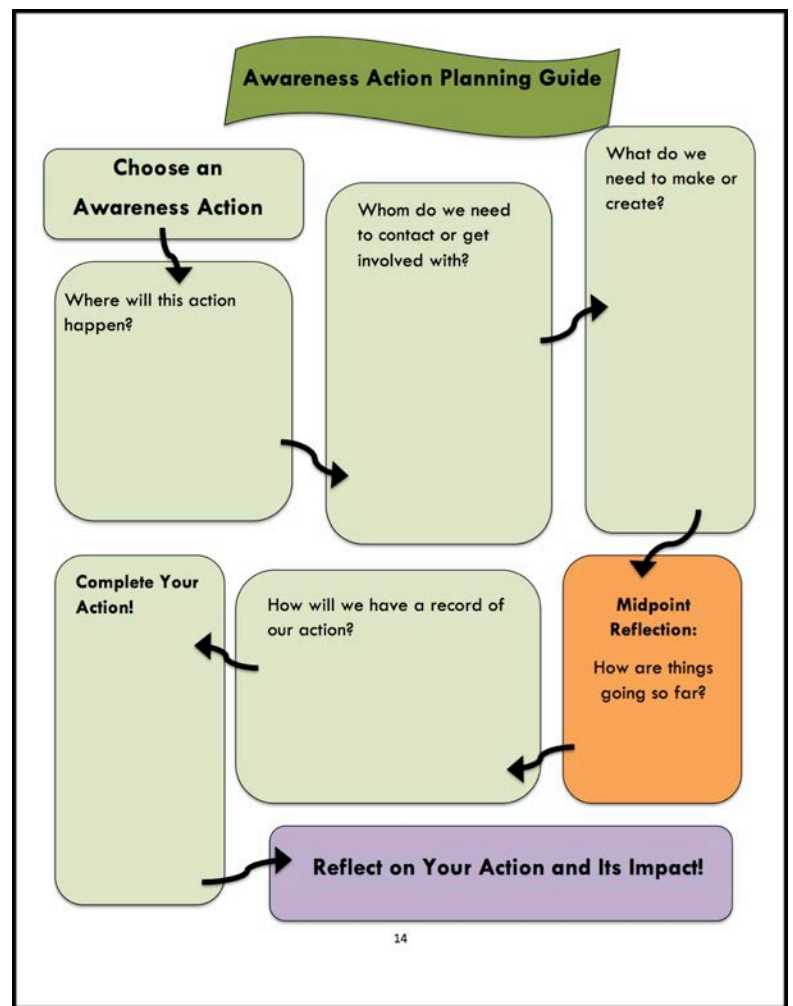
Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Purpose:

Please see the Purpose stated on the first page for Step 5: Planning/Doing Project

Student Outcomes:

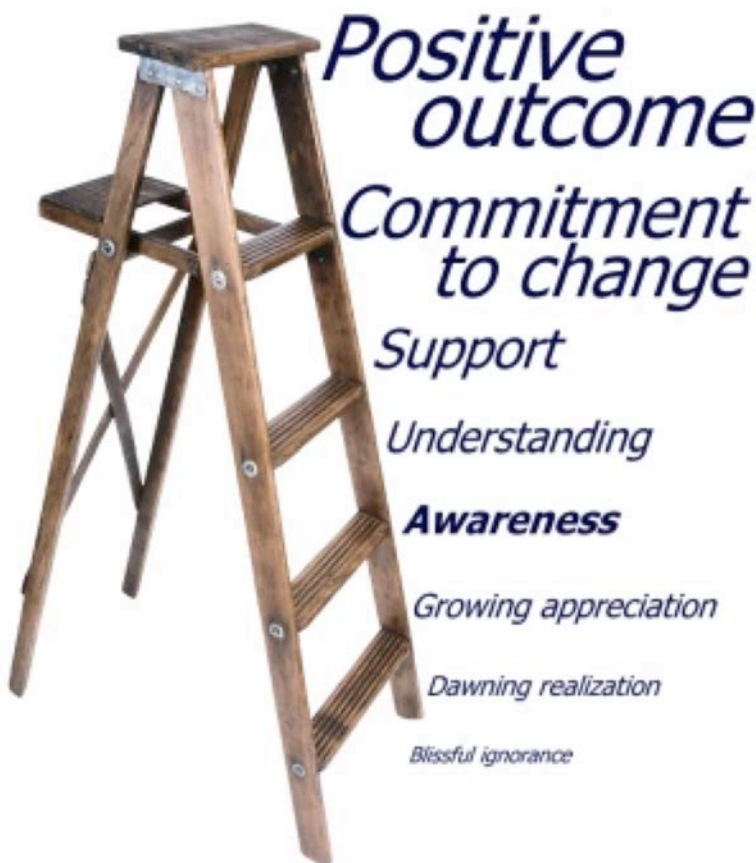
Please see the Student Outcomes stated on the first page for Step 5: Planning/Doing Project



Facilitation Suggestions:

Awareness action is so much more than making a poster about your issue. It requires thinking about who needs to be educated about your issue and what change you hope to see once people are more informed. It means considering what would get people's attention and keep them interested enough to want to take action. It involves being strategic about using just the right amount of information, so you do the issue justice without overwhelming your audience.

Creativity is your students' biggest asset when it comes to raising awareness. The more creative and unique they are with their action, the more attention and participation they will attract. Also, remind students that awareness is part of a continuum, not an end goal in itself (see the ladder image to the left).



STEP 6: REFLECTION



You should be reflecting on your Community Action Project from the moment you begin until after it is completed. The following charts will help you reflect midway through your project and then again once your project has been completed.

Midpoint Reflection

1. Are we on track for meeting our project goals?

2. What might we need to do differently as a club to still meet our goals?

3. How are we going to get feedback about our project? Decide as a club which methods below make sense for your project:

Community Surveys	Recording Reactions and Observations	
Collecting Feedback Cards	Polling Audiences	Doing Interviews

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Facilitation Suggestions:

Students should use this mid-project reflection sheet to check back on the goals they set, and evaluate whether the project is currently on track to meet those goals. Each planning guide page includes a reminder to complete this step.

Also, they should start to prepare for how they will collect feedback. This will inform their evaluation after the project is complete.

In line with using metacognition, students should be able to monitor and evaluate their own ideas, decisions, actions and progress. They should also be able to use this evaluation to make improvements and move forward toward a successful outcome.

Step 6: Reflection

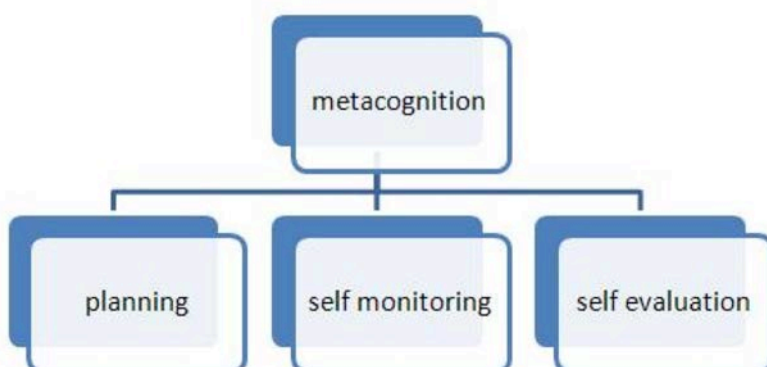
Purpose:

Although this page is toward the end of the Action Guide, it should be used in the middle of the Community Action Project planning process. Students will get the most out of their projects by regularly and actively reflecting on their progress. After completing this sheet, students may even decide to make changes to ensure their project is effective and successful.

Mid-project reflection is an important part of engaging students in metacognition. Metacognition is proven to be highly effective in helping students succeed, helping them become independent and self-aware learners.

Student Outcomes:

- Take time to assess their decisions and reflect on project progress
- Decide whether or not to stay on course or change their approach
- Understand the value of reflecting before project completion



Step 6: Reflection

Purpose:

As with the mid-point reflection, these questions prompt students to think critically about their project. Students should see if their project outcomes have aligned with their project goals. They can take this time to review any feedback they received throughout the project. They should assess the impact that their project has had on the issue, the community affected by the issue, and the club member themselves. Lastly, they should consider how to share their project with others.

Student Outcomes:

- Identify the outcomes of their project
- Think critically about project impact and whether or not project outcomes have aligned with goals
- Identify next steps and ways to stay involved with their issue

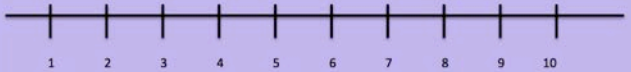


Remind students that not all the impact or effects of their project will be visible/physical. Some impact is harder to see like changes in attitudes, rules, or norms of behavior.

Final Reflection

1. Which of our goals did we meet and which goals were we not able to meet? What might we have done differently?

2. How well did we meet our goals? Rate from 1-10 by circling the number.



3. Review feedback your club has gotten about your project. How does it help you understand what impact your club's project has had?

4. How do we plan to share what we did with other people? How can we keep working on this issue?

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Facilitation Suggestions:

Measuring success and impact for projects is a difficult task. There is a burden of proof that requires forethought. Students should try to get feedback in the form of surveys, interviews, responses or some sort of record of reactions. Reviewing this feedback will help students define success as more than just finishing a project.

Be sure that students have the time to not just reflect, but also plan out how they can share what they accomplished and learned with other Young Heroes Clubs and the greater community. One way they will do this is at the End-of-the-Year Celebration at the National Liberty Museum. Regardless of the project's outcomes, students should now see themselves as part of a larger movement for change. Students should think about what they could do to stay involved.



Facilitation Suggestions:

The stars on this page match the stars on the first page of each project step in the student Action Guide. (Stars are in upper right corner). The star on the project step's first page should be placed when students begin working on that step. Then, they should place a star on this page once a step has been completed. This accumulation of stars helps students feel motivated by seeing that measuring progress in smaller, tangible accomplishments.

Students will be recognized as a club at the End-of-the-Year Celebration at the museum. Students should understand that the Community Action Project was a team effort and everyone played an important role in making it happen. This includes the super important role of their faculty advisor(s)! Way to go, everyone!

Step 6: Reflection

Purpose:

Hard work and commitment deserve recognition! This page allows students to affirm themselves for completing each step of the Community Action Project process. They can think back and realize all that they have accomplished and congratulate themselves on a job well done!

Student Outcomes:

- Feel affirmed for their work and commitment
- Reflect back on how much they have accomplished throughout the year
- Become motivated and feel empowered to follow this process to do their own versions of Community Action Projects in the future



You may want to take time in your last club meeting to recognize and affirm each student's individual strengths and contributions in the context of the project.