

## Social Entrepreneurship: Business For Good

### Design Challenge inspired by Fridtjof Nansen

#### OVERVIEW

Inspired by how Fridtjof Nansen and the Nansen Passport helped refugees gain safety and asylum, students will use the design process to develop a product or service that helps solve a problem (not make money) as social enterprises do. Feel free to tailor this experience to meet the needs and interests of your students, retaining following essential elements:

1. Students should develop a product or service that helps address a real-world issue and social cause.
2. Their focus should be on developing solutions to help people affected by a social issue they feel most passionate about addressing.
3. Students should follow the 5 steps in the design process to guide their design challenge.

*What can this look like?*

- Students can work individually, with a partner, or in a small group
- This design challenge can be done in the classroom, as part of an after school club or project, or a combination of at home and in-school work
- You can make this design challenge as small or large scale as you'd like, and complete it in a couple of weeks (dedicating one day to each of the stages of the design process below) or extend it to a month or semester.
- Steps in [the design process](#):
  - Step 1: Empathize
  - Step 2: Define the problem
  - Step 3: Ideate
  - Step 4: Prototype
  - Step 5: Test

(students should be encouraged to return to any of the above steps to continue problem solving and iterating until they've found an effective and sustainable way to take action)

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#### **Before you begin:**

1. Have students watch this video on the Design Process to understand the different stages they will go through in this Design Challenge: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0VX-aU\\_T8&ab\\_channel=Sprouts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0VX-aU_T8&ab_channel=Sprouts)



## **Social Entrepreneurship: Business For Good**

### **Part 1.**

#### **What is Social Entrepreneurship?**

Social entrepreneurs care about improving something for the greater good—it might be starting a school for young children in an impoverished area who don't have access to a good education; or it could be inventing a better way to bring clean water to a community in need. Social entrepreneurs are not primarily interested in starting a company to sell things and make money. They want to help people, or the environment, or something that will benefit the world or a community.

#### **Materials:**

- Notebook or paper for brainstorming

#### **Steps:**

- Ask students to brainstorm topics that they care about that they want to explore.
  - Examples might be safety, health, or the environment
- Once they have a list of topics, students can start to think about the issues that exist around those topics.
  - Examples: climate change and human impact on the environment; access to healthy food in poor communities; access to clean water; access to quality health care

### **Part 2.**

#### **Design process step 1: Empathize**

Once your students have identified a topic and an issue they care about, guide them through the first step of the design process: Empathize.

#### **Materials:**

- Student worksheet: Step 1: Empathize

#### **Steps:**

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Explain to students that in this step of the design process, they will need to learn as much as they can about the people most directly affected by this social issue.
3. Students can learn more about their selected issue by doing "research," that can take any of the following forms:
  - Field trips
  - Reading
  - Online research
  - Conducting or listening to interviews
  - Watching documentaries
  - Listening to podcasts
  - Exploring social media from trusted sources



### Part 3.

#### Design process step 2: Define the Problem

Once your students have spent time learning about the first-hand experiences of people affected by the issue they chose, it's time to have them narrow down the issue to identify one problem they want to address.

By the end of this step, the goal is that students have a specific and clear problem statement that will guide the rest of their Design Challenge.

#### Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 2: Define the Problem

#### Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Before students can identify solutions, they first need to figure out what problem they'd like to solve.
  - Have students go back to their list of topics and issues.
  - See if they can get as specific as possible with the problems they would like to solve. It may benefit them to do some research around the topics they are passionate about to learn more.
  - They can brainstorm a list of problems or do word webs/concept maps.
  - Once they have identified problems, they should pick their top 3-4 ideas and identify the customers, or audience for the problem they are solving.

#### Supporting resources

- ◆ This article on food insecurity is a good one to read and use to model with students how to identify a problem. <https://www.carnegie.org/topics/topic-articles/scholarship-policy/how-feed-increasingly-hungry-world/>

3. In addition to the student worksheet, you may have students use any of the following additional strategies to help them define the problem and create their problem statement:

- Peer discussion
- Journaling
- List making
- Drawing
- Idea mapping
- Sharing possible actions with people affected by the problem (if possible) for feedback



#### Part 4.

##### Design process step 3: Ideate

Now that your students have selected one specific problem and crafted a problem statement, they are ready to have some fun coming up with ideas for their social enterprise!

##### Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 3: Ideate

##### Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. As students ideate encourage them to be bold, creative and unafraid of listing as many possible ideas as they have to complete this challenge. Let them dream big and go for quantity - the more ideas the better!
3. This is a good opportunity to remind students about what it means to be a social entrepreneur and what a social enterprise is (see part 1 of this Design Challenge).
4. Have students go back to their list of problems. Ask them to brainstorm solutions and then narrow in on the one they think may be the best. They can share their ideas with each other, and other people they know to get feedback—is this a viable solution to the problem I’m trying to help solve?
  - Optional: have students watch this TED Talk about digital passports: [https://www.ted.com/talks/karoli\\_hindriks\\_why\\_the\\_passport\\_needs\\_an\\_upgrade](https://www.ted.com/talks/karoli_hindriks_why_the_passport_needs_an_upgrade)

#### Part 5.

##### Design process step 4: Prototype

In this stage of the design process, students will create a quick model that can demonstrate the essential components of the product or service their social enterprise will provide, and get feedback on the value it adds or problem it helps solve.

##### Materials:

- Student Worksheet: Step 4: Prototype

##### Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Remind students that a prototype is meant to be created quickly so they can test and get feedback on their idea in the next step of the design process. Explain to students:
  - Prototyping is a way of being more efficient and effective.
  - It allows them to better understand if they have come up with a solution that meets the needs of their target user, how it could be better, or to try a completely new idea *before* they put in the time and effort of creating a fully developed product or service.



## Part 6.

### Design process step 5: Test

Once your students have developed their prototype, it's time to share it with others for feedback! Ideally your students will be able to test their prototype with their target users. If this is not possible, the next best option is to have them get feedback from people outside their classmates—other members of the school community, local community, or local experts in the field.

#### Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 5: Test

#### Steps:

1. Review the student worksheets for this step in the design process.
2. Help students connect with an appropriate audience to gather feedback.
3. Work together to brainstorm questions students should ask during this test phase that will help them gather specific information they can do something productive with. For example, instead of asking "do you like this?" students could ask a series of more targeted questions like "What do you like about this?", "What don't you like about this?", "Is this useful or helpful to you? How so?", etc.

## Part 7.

### Share & Reflect

Celebrate your students' hard work and achievements! Consider having a class celebration where students or groups can share the story of the journey they took in this design challenge. Invite others to come and look, listen, and ask questions. Remind your students (and any invited audience) that this Design Challenge was not simply a "school project," but rather the same exact process designers, engineers, scientists, and many others use in the real world every day to develop solutions to complex challenges.

#### Teacher resources for Design Challenge:

- Read more here about social entrepreneurship: <https://www.uschamber.com/co/start/startup/what-is-social-entrepreneurship>
- Read more here about problems and solutions: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shamahyder/2021/08/27/how-to-become-an-entrepreneur-find-a-problem-and-be-the-solution/?sh=637602eb59ef>
- [Write a Problem Statement](#) (teacher and student resource)
- [The Design Thinking Process](#)
- <https://www.nfte.com/free-resources/> (student entrepreneurship)
- <https://www.teachersguild.org/approach> (design thinking)

