Worksheet 1: identifying your project

Adapted from the Dwight Hall Method.

The Dwight Hall Method was created to help students deliberately think through creating social change.  You will be challenged to think through the problem you are attempting to address and what impact, if any, your intervention will have.  Ultimately, this tool should help uncover new paths forward in your work.

Because it is challenging to complete in one sitting, this tool should be used as a framework for project development and as a basis for discussion with project mentors.  While challenging, you will need to spend some time reflecting on each question.

Please answer the following questions thoughtfully. Giving these questions adequate consideration will help you in approaching your project and explaining your intentions to others.

If you wish to talk about your plans to an adviser at Dwight Hall or a Fellowships adviser please be in touch at fellowships@yale.edu and we will help you make those connections.

For more information on the Method, please go to: <http://dwighthall.org/resources/practice-tools/method>

# Identifying a Problem

In 250 words or fewer, identify the specific problem or challenge that you wish to address and why it is a problem.

* How can addressing this problem or challenge lead to a significant improvement in social justice or benefit society at large?
* What evidence do you have that indicates the nature or scope of the problem, such as who is affected and on what scale?



# Analysis

Why does this problem or challenge exist?

* What are the root or underlying causes?
* Are there hidden causes or other dynamics in play that are not easily seen from the surface?
* What are the history of and factors in the circumstances in which the problem is occurring?
* What information have you been able to gather about the problem, whether data or direct information from people who are experiencing the problem or are directly involved in the circumstances?



# Define the Need

How can the problem be restated as a need or opportunity?

* What can be changed about the circumstances or root causes that would mitigate the problem or create new opportunities or benefits?
* What is the need for change?



# Theory of Cause

What is causing this need and are there underlying causes or multiple causes or do the causes vary depending on the individual circumstances or category of persons?

* What systems exist that contribute to this need?
* What needs to change in order to address this need?



# Hypothesis for Change

Propose your hypothesis for change.

* How would the change you are proposing address the problem and lead to a significant improvement in social justice or benefit society at large?



# Designing the Intervention

Describe the details of how you will intervene to create the change you propose to make.

* What other efforts already exist and is your solution detracting from those, duplicating them unnecessarily or reinventing something that has already been addressed?
* What will this intervention cost, both in terms of time and money?
* Who will implement it? How will you sustain it over time?
* What unintended consequences may occur as a result of taking action?
* If you are applying for a fellowship to support this project, bear in mind that fellowship projects usually take place within a specified time period – how will you ensure that your project will be sustainable in the longer term?



# Identifying Resources

What resources will you need in order to implement your proposed intervention: material, financial, human, etc.?

* Where will you get these?
* What is already available that you can tap into?
* What is your proposed, detailed budget? This should show that if you have these items (personnel, materials, transportation, fees, etc.), which cost the following amounts, you will be able to affect the following number of people in this way.



# Implementation

Describe your initial plans for implementing this intervention. What are the short- and long-term steps you need to take to be successful?



# Measuring and Evaluating Results

What is your plan for how you will gather the results of your intervention before you begin?

* Do you have a baseline measurement so you can measure impact over time?
* What does success look like, and how will you measure it?
* How do you plan to monitor, measure and evaluate continuously throughout the project to make sure it is continuing to succeed and remain effective?



# Refine and Demonstrate

What is your plan for continuous evaluation of the results of your intervention?

* What makes your good idea sustainable over the long-term and constantly improving?

