

# Youth Transformers Guide

-A young changemaker's guide to action-

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# Contents

1. About the founder
2. Message from the founder
3. Definitions
4. Looking inward
5. Research
6. Content creation
7. Implementation

# About the founder

Youth Transformers is the brainchild of Maanya Pagare, a 15-year grade 10th student of a prominent IB school in Gurgaon. Maanya has had a keen interest in community initiatives. She has piloted plantation drives, cleanliness drives and traffic awareness messages. Youth Transformers is an idea born out of her own experience in attempting to create a community project at scale, and her struggles during that time. She has been actively supported by friends and family and equity contributions from prominent professionals in Gurugram.

# Message from the founder

Youth Transformers is a tech platform which aims to encourage students to initiate community services via their schools or independently. Youth Transformers makes it simpler for students to initiate, manage or participate in community projects using tools available on the platform.

Our objectives are:

- To make it easier for students to initiate community service led projects
- To make it easier for the initiators to convert their projects to large scale
- To make communication and interaction with participants and corporates much simpler
- To make project management for project leaders easier

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- To get corporates to reward innovation in community projects
- To enable participants to find projects of their interest quicker and participate in them

This guide has been designed with the aim to introduce the socially motivated and action oriented youth to the world of social interventions. We would like to take this space to laud your intentions to make this society a better place for all. As you set out on the path of being a young changemaker let this guide chaperone you through the process of developing a robust and impactful plan for your social intervention. We hope you enjoy making change in your community, as much as we do- together, we can truly make a difference.

- Maanya Pagare

# CHAPTER 1: DEFINITIONS

Before jumping into the planning process of your social cause it is a good idea to get acquainted with a few terms that are commonly used in the social action circles. Understanding these terms helps you get an idea of the kind of work you will be putting in. Moreover, equipping yourself with the relevant vocabulary will make it easier for you to understand the work done by like-minded people in the same field.

**Advocacy:** is the act of doing something to support, implement or amend a cause you care about. It is about making voices heard as often as possible and making a positive change in the lives of people who are most vulnerable. Advocacy seeks to protect rights and support different initiatives through collective action.

**Social intervention:** refers to an action that seeks to improve on a pre-existing policy to enhance the quality of life of the people who are affected by it.



Community Engagement: Often social causes that seek to have relevant impact involve a certain degree of action from the people in a society. This is known as community engagement. Every cause you take up might involve you to interact with the members of your immediate community. Community engagement involves people who are not directly associated with the cause but are needed for the success of the social cause.

Social movement: at the core of it, a social movement is an effort to bring together like-minded people to raise awareness and campaign for/against a particular policy change.

Youth Action: This term refers to the ways in which young people can get involved in policy decisions and institutions that directly or indirectly affect their life. India has a huge youth population therefore knowledge about youth action and advocacy is imperative for the holistic growth of a huge chunk of our country's population.

# CHAPTER 2: LOOKING INWARD

Before you dive into the organisational aspect of the social cause you want to take up it is important to look inward and determine in what precise ways can you contribute to the cause. Each project broadly needs people focusing on four aspects: content creation, research, implementation and outreach. A content creators major skill encompasses the art of writing while a researcher has the ability to efficiently find relevant and accurate information. An implementer focuses on the synchronisation between different processes to guarantee smooth implementation where a person working in outreach has a good grasp on social skills in a way that can attract more people to join a movement. Determining which of these broad categories suit you the most can help bring clarity to your role in the movement.

Finalising a category does not exclude you from the core organisational aspect of the cause; it only serves to streamline the process of induction of new members since both you and the new joinees will be aware of their exact roles.

Once you have narrowed down your strengths it is now time to think deeper about the cause you want to take up. To think deeper about the issue first identify the problem area. Then ask yourself the ways in which you can help. We often start off with an ambition of making a huge impact and are left disappointed when our movement falls short of tangible policy change. At this stage it is important to understand that affecting change in a government policy can take several years and not all causes you take up have to result in a policy change at a government level to be deemed successful. Therefore, it is more useful to define small, achievable yet impactful deliverables that you can implement through your social cause.

Some questions to consider while gaining clarity on your social cause are:

- 1) What group of people do you seek to impact?
- 2) What problem do you seek to alleviate?
- 3) In what ways can you involve more people?
- 4) What resources do you need and what resources do you have?
- 5) How can your local community help your cause?

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH

You are now ready to start off with focusing solely on your social cause! The first step to formulating a successful plan for taking up a social cause is research. Research forms the foundation of any impactful intervention. It helps identify the background you will be working in, the precise gap you will be bridging and the key stakeholders.

It is important to understand the background in which your social cause will function so that you can have sensitively formulated plans. Background research helps you identify the social structure the society you seek to impact is situated in. Moreover, it sensitises you to taboo prevalent in that society and teaches you ways in which you can communicate with the members of the society you seek to impact.

Even though through your deliverables the gap you will be bridging might be clear to you. However, it is important to critically analyse the existence of the gap and understand the reasons behind its existence in the first place. This process will help you identify previous interventions that have aimed to fill the gap.

A careful analysis of previous interventions can help you formulate stronger plans by helping you identify what worked for them and what did not. At this stage it is important to critically analyse these interventions and realise that not everything that worked for them is bound to work for you.

It is also imperative for you to devote a chunk of your time to doing some fact finding at this stage. We live in a time where there is no dearth of information and access to this repository of information is becoming easier everyday. However, not all information is true or correct. This inundation of information has added an extra task of distinguishing between genuine facts and fake news whenever we seek to educate ourselves. For your social cause to have authenticity it is important that it is based on well researched facts and objective information.

To determine the reliability of your source answer the 5 W's as mentioned in the list below:

Who: Who published the information? Focus on reputed and unbiased authors

What: Determine the main ideas of the article and go through the list of its references to make sure it is robust.

Where: Where did you come across this information? How official is it?

When: The time the information was published is important to determine its present relevance.

Why: Determine the motivation behind the publishing of the information.

# CHAPTER 4: CONTENT CREATION

Now that you have all your research in place it is important to consolidate it in a way that is presentable and understandable by the general public. A good way of structuring your research is categorising all the information under relevant subheadings.

A possible template to organise the information you found through your research can be:

- 1) Primary area of concern
- 2) Social/economic/political background
- 3) Possible and previous interventions
- 4) Reliable stakeholder/partners
- 5) Key deliverables

Organising your information in this form not only helps others gain clarity on the cause you want to take up it also helps you have a structured approach to your intervention. Therefore, it is not important for your writing to reflect academic or poetic excellence; it just has to be clear and precise.

Another aspect to content creation is presenting it in different ways so as to inform key stakeholders about your cause. It is important to create awareness about your cause as that will help you attract more support. A well documented robust and succinct policy brief will be more useful to gain support from your local representatives. On the other hand, catchy posters and pamphlets with bite-sized information will help create more awareness among the members of your local communities.

Content creation also involves the deft use of social media to promote our cause. Through your social media accounts you can gather the support and interest of your peers through informative and succinct posts. You can also start a fundraising campaign through your social media account and engage people from different parts of the world while enriching your resource pool.

Here are five pointers to keep in mind while creating content:

- 1) Who is your target audience?
- 2) How can they help?
- 3) Are there any language barriers?
- 4) How much do they want to know?
- 5) Is the information reaching the target audience?

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

This is probably the most exciting part of your social project! You are now at the stage where you can start implementing your intervention. The most important part of this stage is gaining clarity on the permissions you require to implement each of your action points. Take the help of the document you created in the previous stage and identify the actionable steps. Then answer the following questions for each of the points:

- 1) At what level does this point of action have an impact?
- 2) Who are the authorities that need to be informed? 3) How do I reach them? (Note down their email/phone number)
- 4) Are there any forms that I need to fill to carry out this action?

Once you have acquired the relevant permissions from the different sources of authorities define a date you want to start your implementation. This will generally depend on the time it takes for you to acquire the resources required to implement each action point. To-do lists are a helpful resource at this stage. Make an individual to-do list for each action point to help streamline the implementation process.

Once you implement your action points it is important to set up a monitoring mechanism. After you engage with people, take a moment to reflect and think about the impact your intervention has had through these questions:

- What were the final results?
- What were your key takeaways?
- Did the target impact group receive the intended intervention?
- How do they feel about the intervention?
- How can the intervention be improved?
- How well did the community around you engage with the intervention?

The answers to these questions can help you identify the ways in which you can improve your intervention or develop a better one if you choose to do another at a later stage. Moreover, if you decide to hand over the core organisation of the intervention to other concerned parties a document answering questions concerned with the tangible impact of the intervention post-implementation can greatly help them build on your fabulous social project.