

Activity 1: Questions for Change Makers

Identify a civic issue or topic that is of concern to you and your community. With that issue in mind, read through and answer the questions below imagining what you might do to raise your voices and respond to this issue.

If you would like to dig in more deeply into the questions below and/or explore all 10 Questions for Change Makers, visit the following website: <https://yppactionframe.fas.harvard.edu/>.

My Issue:

What is the most important thing about this issue that you want to share?

Who would you like to reach? Who is your intended audience?

Who might you reach by mistake? Who could your un-intended audience be?

Why does it matter to me? *What is your passion? Where does it come from?*

Start with the experiences and interests you and your friends already can't get enough of, and connect that engagement to civic and political themes. Popular culture fandom, for example, is a great source to harness. Overall, you and your peers know a lot about a lot, and you've got all sorts of authentic ways to bring your friends on board. Use that expertise to build traction for your cause by finding unexpected alignments. And take the time to figure out why your passion matters to you.

This issue is important because...

Where do we start? *The first move is important. We want to pull the right lever for it.*

Go where your peers go. Can you make use of spaces where you and your friends and associates already gather to connect and pursue shared interests? (Hint: for right now at least, text and mobile are key). Perhaps you're interested in building a stand-alone platform? Think twice before you do. A custom platform is easier for opponents to hack and probably harder for your friends to use, than a common mainstream, commercial platform. But remember that existing platforms have their own cultures, which you'll need to consider and fit into.

We can get started by...

How can we make it easy and engaging? *People are busy; they all have something on their plates already. How can we grab their interests and persuade them to join us?*

Remember that some engagement is better than none, and think early and often about your target audience. How can you engineer an array of entry-points and pathways to participation for your community? Where are the opportunities for light-touch engagement that is potentially powerful in itself and also a possible gateway into deeper involvement? Make acting easy, so your users can co-produce your civic and political engagement.

We can make it easy and compelling for others to get involved by...

How do we get wisdom from crowds? *“Wisdom of crowds”—This is among the best advantage you can enjoy in our digitally connected world.*

Invite investigation and critique. Create openings for your friends, associates, and even strangers to dig into, verify, challenge, and contribute to the knowledge-base you provide, and stay open to evolving purposes. Don't act like you know the whole story. Because you don't. There is wisdom in crowds.

We can get feedback and more information about this issue by...

Are we pursuing voice or influence or both? *Yes. Raising awareness is key.*

Changing what people care about already makes a difference, and just getting your views into the public conversation is meaningful. Making the invisible visible is already an important civic and political action and a form of activism. Are you also trying to drive change beyond visibility? You'll need that raised awareness to elevate civic and political engagement over time.

Our ultimate goal is to...

How do we get from voice to change? *How can we turn our voices into influence and bring about actual changes?*

Is your goal is to convert voice to influence over policies, institutions, or concrete practices? If so, you'll need to move beyond raising awareness to mobilize specific actions on the basis of the attention you manage to get. How can you get traction—real change in concrete practices, institutions, and policies? The research shows that this often comes from a mix of digital and face-to-face organizing. But it's also possible to achieve influence with online-only tactics. Make sure you know what your targets are, and what changes you want to see. Then you can figure out whether building numbers online and taking aim at your target's reputation, or criss-crossing the line into hybrid online-offline efforts makes more sense.

I think we can bring about change by...