THE OASIS

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PROJECT

Lead and Impact Program: Addressing Youth Homelessness

Based on The Oasis documentaries

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Introduction

About

This program encourages students to develop their understanding of youth homelessness whilst learning to design and lead a social impact project within their community. By the end of the program, students will have honed their leadership and project management skills by using a Design Thinking approach to identify and work towards solving a problem.

Program Overview

Students work in small teams to lead a co-design project in their school using a Design Thinking approach. Over eight weeks, they will complete four learning modules requiring them to:

- Reflect and Research
- Explore and Analyse
- Design and Decide
- Implement and Evaluate

Reflect and Research

Students design a research question and select a collection method to find out how youth homelessness is perceived and/or experienced amongst the school community.

Explore and Analyse

Students examine a successful social change initiative and analyse the information they collected from their community to guide the design of their own project.

Design and Decide

Students use a variety of critical thinking tools to brainstorm and shortlist their project ideas. They will decide on a solution using one or more decision making matrix.

Implement and Evaluate

Students identify useful skills and resources to support the implementation of their project and reflect on the success of the project using appropriate self-reflection and assessment tools.

About Us

About YLab

In 2016, the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) launched a social enterprise called YLab, which is a consulting, learning and digital storytelling enterprise that brings the fresh thinking of diverse young people to complex social challenges. YLab exists to provide a platform for the unlike-minded to come together and bring design and systems thinking approaches to solve complex social problems.

We flip power dynamics by putting young people in the driver's seat of this work. YLab Associates are sourced through FYA's diverse network of young people made up of over 250 Young Social Pioneers, alumni of the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Academy and IMPACT program, local government partners, and a digital community of over 150,000 young Australians.

The Oasis school program is something special because it's been designed and co-created by YLab Associates with lived experience of homelessness, teachers and students.

About Shark Island Institute

Shark Island Institute is an award-winning independent production company based in Sydney, Australia, that makes social-impact documentaries to engage audiences, shift thinking and inspire action around social justice, the arts and the environment.

About The Oasis documentaries

The Oasis and Life After The Oasis are films which explore the stories of young Australians experiencing homelessness. Life After The Oasis revisits people from the original 2008 documentary The Oasis and explores how opportunities and experiences have shaped their lives over the last ten years. Two of the people featured in the films were also part of the team delivering the pilot of the Oasis school program.

Hello from The Oasis Project Team

Hello!

We're excited to have you as part of The Oasis Homelessness Project. This program is something special because it's been designed and co-created by us, young people with lived experience of homelessness, and teachers and students like you. We used a Design Thinking Approach to develop this project so these lesson plans are one example of what can be created when people collaborate and use these frameworks and tools. We believe in the power of the knowledge, ideas and skills of local communities. That's why we designed this to be an adventure where no one journey is the same, local community attributes are harnessed and young people are empowered with transferable skills and mindsets they can use across all facets of their life.

Over the eight weeks our aim is to support students to consider and respond to homelessness in your community in new ways, strengthen their leadership skills and make a unique impact.

Here are a few tips from us to you:

- Incorporate video or invite in people who have an experience of homelessness in its diverse forms (hint: 93% of people experiencing homelessness don't sleep on the streets).
- Incorporate small group work so students can build rapport and help support each other in their learning and project goals (these types of relationships are also great in case students are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, so they have a network to reach out to).
- Partner with community agencies (we've also included as a lesson plan activity) and school counsellor. Where possible invite them in to speak to students so they are more accessible.
- Set up peer coaching sessions for every other week which are led by students and cover where they are up to with their project, any blocks, opportunities and next steps - and resisting the urge to solve for them!
- Emphasise the process of creation over the project output itself - helping students to be present and focus on the learning rather than what school often emphasises (outputs and grades).
- Make the process as fun, collaborative and divergent from school as normal as possible - e.g. no long presentations.
- Use icebreakers each session to get into a playful connected mode e.g. skribbl.io or sketchful.
- Try out new tech tools for collaboration so students can work at their own pace and in their own time (develops autonomous working and team work skills).

We would love to hear your questions, feedback and stories so don't be a stranger and stay in touch at marymacrae@sharkisland.com.au or hello@ylab.global.

Thanks and have fun,

Team Oasis

Getting Started

Step 1: Encourage students to watch The Oasis (2008) and Life After The Oasis (2019) and explore the accompanying resources. Alternatively (if short on time), watch the journey of one character from The Oasis documentary featured on Shark Island Institute's YouTube channel.

Step 2: Each student should complete a self-assessment of their leadership and project management skills using the Skill Reflection template (pg. 7).

Step 3: After completing the self-assessment, students should be encouraged to select one or two skills they'd like to focus on developing during the program. They can create a plan for monitoring and evaluating their progress using the SMART Goal template (pg. 8).

Getting Started- Skill Reflection template

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

Reflect on how often you use the following skills and write them in the corresponding box to identify skills you'd like to develop.

Project Management Skills:

- Organisation
- Taking responsibility
- Staying focused
- Timely and efficient
- Building teams and allocating roles
- Effective use of resources
- Planning
- Delivering on objectives
- Measuring outcomes
- Reflecting and future planning

Enterprise Skills:

- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Financial literacy
- Digital literacy
- Critical thinking
- Presentation skills

Always/often	Sometimes
Rarely/Never	**Rarely/Never but interested in developing**

Always/often	Sometimes
Rarely/Never	**Rarely/Never but interested in developing**

Getting Started- SMART Goal template

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

Write a SMART goal to help you develop one leadership skills and one project management skill throughout the project.

SPECIFIC

What do you want to accomplish?

e.g. to contribute more to group discussions

S

MEASURABLE

How will you know when you have accomplished your goal?

e.g. to contribute 3 or more times in each (subject) class

M

ATTAINABLE

How can the goal be accomplished?

e.g. by preparing 15-30 mins for the class and taking 3 deep breaths before I speak

A

RELEVANT

Is the goal worthwhile? Will it meet your short-term and long-term needs?

e.g. yes very helpful for job interviews and in public

R

TIMELY

When will the goal be accomplished?

e.g. by the end of this program

T

Accountability buddy:

An accountability buddy is someone who can help you stay on track and monitor your progress.

Module 1

Reflect & Research

Students design a research question and select a collection method to find out how youth homelessness is perceived and/or experienced amongst the school community.

Activity 1– Reflect on personal experience

Print a copy of the questionnaire or use it as a template to create an online form for everyone to use.

Answer the questionnaire about homelessness to reflect on your experience with the issue.

Questionnaire

1. Do you see people sleeping rough in your local area?

   Yes No Sometimes

2. Do you interact with people experiencing homelessness?

   Yes No Sometimes *If yes, please explain your answer.*

3. How do you identify whether someone is homeless? *Long answer*

4. List reasons why someone might experience homelessness. *Long answer*

5. Do you personally know anyone experiencing homelessness?

   Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

6. Do you personally know anyone at risk of becoming homeless?

   Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

7. Do you ever worry about becoming homeless?

   Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

8. Do you think there are students at your school who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless?

   Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

9. What school projects, lessons or discussions have you had about homelessness? *Long answer*

10. Does your school provide support for students at risk of homelessness?

    Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

11. Do you think the issue of youth homelessness deserves more airtime (resources, lessons, incursions etc.) at your school?

    Yes No Maybe *If yes, please explain your answer.*

12. List any businesses or organisations you know that tackle the issue of homelessness.

Activity 2- Design a research question

1. Form a team of 2-4 students and compile the questionnaire answers to identify trends. E.g. No one personally knows someone who's experienced homelessness; 70 per cent of students think the issue of youth homelessness deserves more airtime.

2. Reflect on how your team responded to the questionnaire and use Graphic Organiser #1 (pg. 15) to record common thoughts and assumptions about homelessness.

3. Based on your team's thoughts and assumptions about homelessness, design a research question to ask the school community to determine whether they hold similar or opposing views.

4. Select an appropriate method and tools to gather responses to the research question. Consider who should participate and how many responses you will need to ensure the data is useful.

5. Appoint one team member to organise and monitor responses in preparation for the next activity.

Research question examples

- What words does our school community associate with homelessness?
- How interested is the school community in learning about homelessness and providing support to those in need?
- Does the school have an effective support system and/or make services and resources easily accessible for those at risk of homelessness?
- Is homelessness an issue for students within the school community?

Tips and tools for gathering data

Tips

1. Asking people to share sensitive information about their home life can be tricky. Carefully consider how you can create a safe space for sharing. E.g. ensuring surveys can be answered anonymously.

2. Identify a staff member who can assist with emotional support if someone feels uncomfortable during any part of the project. Make sure the support person is known and easily assessable to everyone involved. E.g. this could be a school counsellor or wellbeing officer. Include their contact details and the offer of support in any survey disseminated.

Tools

1. **The Oasis Trailer:** The trailer for the documentary could be shown to a focus group to kick-start a discussion or it could be embedded in an online survey to prompt participants to consider certain aspects of homelessness.

2. **Mentimeter:** Create a free slide presentation that allows participants to interact and answer questions anonymously. Responses are displayed in real-time which can create a platform for interesting discussion and debate.

3. **Typeform, Google Forms or Survey Monkey:** Select one of these free platforms to design an anonymous survey. Digital surveys are great for monitoring participation rates and analysing the results.

Module 2

Explore & Analyse

Students examine a successful social change initiative and analyse the information they collected from their community to guide the design of their own project.

Activity 1- Exploring successful initiatives

1. Select one initiative below which has used a Design Thinking Approach to address youth homelessness:

   - The Geelong Project: Community of Schools and Services (also known the UpStream Project)
   - Homelessness in Calhoun County Case Study https://www.appliedsystemsthinking.com/supporting_documents/TopicalHomelessness.pdf

2. Select one organisation or initiative (below) that aims to help people experiencing homelessness.

   Initiatives specific to homeless and/or disadvantaged youth:

   - Crepes for Change
   - Daggy Jumper Day
   - HoMie (streetwear clothing)
   - Good Cycles
   - Hangout for the Homeless
   - Lighthouse Foundation

   Other non-age specific initiatives:

   - The Big Issue
   - Orange Sky Laundry
   - Backpack Bed for Homeless
   - Street Smart Action Against Homeless

3. Create a 5-minute group presentation addressing the following points:

   - What is the aim/mission of this organisation or initiative?
   - What do they do? What have they achieved?
   - How did it begin?
   - What skills/attitudes would be necessary for it to succeed?
   - What support was provided along the way? (financial or guidance)
   - How could this be replicated on a smaller scale (for a school project)?

Activity 2- Sorting the data

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

Use Graphic Organiser #1 to sort the data collected from the school community (started in Module 1). The column titles can be changed to suit whatever sorting process the team agrees on. The goal is to draw conclusions about what the community knows, wants and/or needs.

My thoughts/assumptions	My peers thoughts/assumptions	Key Issues

Activity 3- Identifying the core issue

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

Problem

1. Why?

Because...

2. Why?

Because...

3. Why?

Because...

4. Why?

Because...

5. Why?

Because...

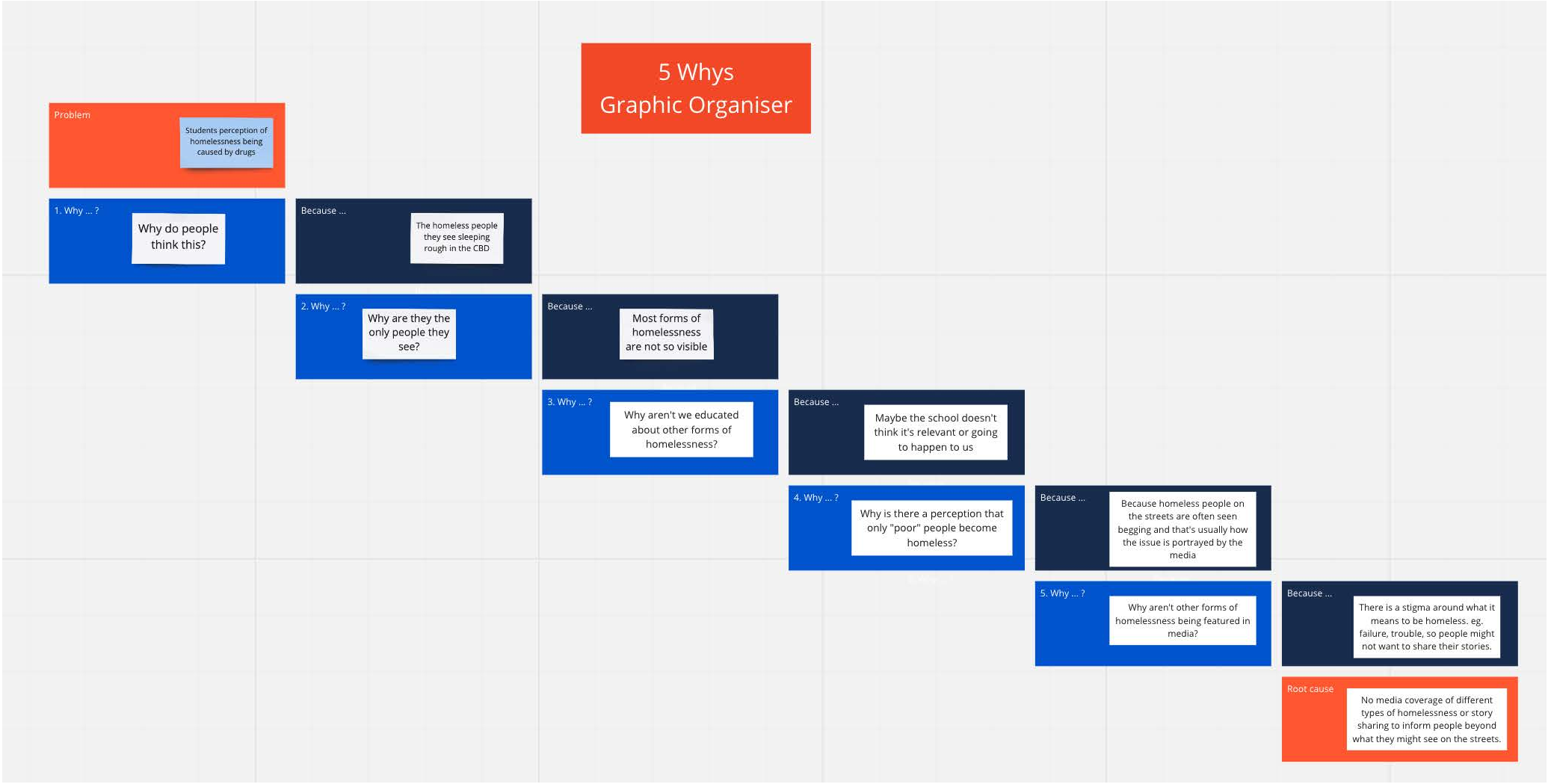
Root cause

Use the 5 Why Graphic Organiser to determine the root cause of key issues identified within the collected data. Start by selecting one key issue to write in the box labelled “problem”. Then write a “why” question in the next box to prompt critical thinking. Answer and move on until you reach the box labelled “root cause”. Consider all the answers to sum up what can be assumed is the root cause to the initial problem.

An example can be found on the following page.

Activity 3- Identifying the core issue

Example of activity on Miro.



Module 3

Design & Decide

Students use a variety of critical thinking tools to brainstorm and shortlist their project ideas. They will decide on a solution using one or more decision making matrix.

Activity 1- Rapid ideation

We will be using the process of co-design for this project.

What is co-design?

Co-design is a collaborative design process that seeks to involve all groups or individuals who will be involved in or benefit from the project.

What is Rapid Ideation?

Rapid Ideation is a process that encourages quick development of ideas without fear or judgement. Whatever pops into your head should be written down.

1. Practise the Rapid Ideation process with your team mates to understand how it works. Remember that your ideas shouldn't dictate the final solution because you need to facilitate this process with your school community to ensure the project is co-designed. If you don't have time you can also do this activity as a project team.

2. Set up a paper or virtual Ideation Station for sticky notes to be added quickly and easily. Encourage free thinking and no judgement from the team for truly creative ideas to reveal themselves.

3. Forget about the problem/issues you've previously identified and think more broadly about the concept of homelessness. Consider all the different ways you could offer support or resolve the issue if you weren't limited by time or resources. Use the below prompts and remember to think big and small. Set a timer for 2-minutes and aim to contribute a minimum of five ideas before time's up.

- How could homelessness be prevented?
- How could we support people at risk?
- How could we support people who are homeless?
- What information is needed during school?
- What information is needed in preparation for life after school?
- How could funds be raised?

An ideation station can be created easily on Miro:

Activity 2- Direct and indirect support

Continuing on from Activity 1

1. Use Graphic Organiser #2 (p.21) to categorise ideas from the rapid ideation (ideally the ideas generated by the school community) into the headings: direct and indirect support.

   What's the difference? Direct support involves working directly with people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness. Whereas indirect support focuses on creating initiatives to support those working with people at risk or experiencing homelessness.

2. Using the sub-categories as a guide, try and add more ideas so that there's at least one for each sub-category.

Sub-category explanations

- **Awareness/education-** creating programs or opportunities for people to learn about homelessness or prevention methods
- **Services-** recognising the services needed for people at risk of homelessness
- **Fundraising-** raising funds to support existing initiatives
- **Advocacy-** advocating for more government resources to support the issue

Activity 2- Graphic Organiser #2 template

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

DIRECT SUPPORT

How can you directly support youth at risk of homelessness?		
Awareness/education *e.g. Connect at risk students with those who have already experienced homelessness*	Services *e.g. Provide a hot meals service in my local area*	Other

INDIRECT SUPPORT

How can you indirectly support youth at risk of homelessness?			
Awareness/education	Fundraising *e.g. Sell 'HoMie' clothing at a school event*	Advocacy	Other

Activity 3- The action priority matrix

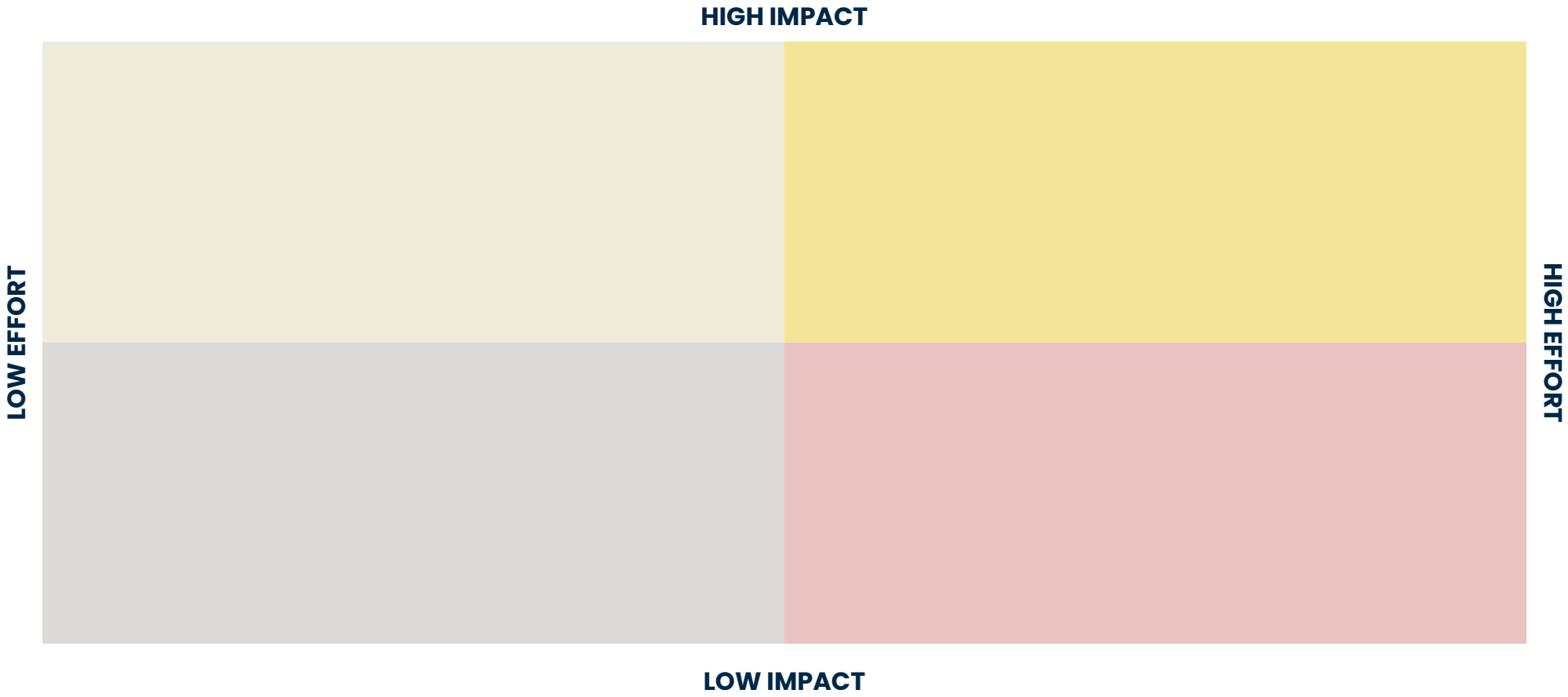
Continuing on from Activity 2

What is an Action Priority Matrix?

The action priority matrix is a tool for short-listing possible solutions based on impact and effort.

Transfer the ideas to the matrix and place them based on how impactful you think they would be, as well how much effort they would require. The aim is to try and identify the most impactful low-effort solution.

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.



Activity 4- Three lenses for innovation

Continuing on from Activity 3

What are the three lenses for innovation?

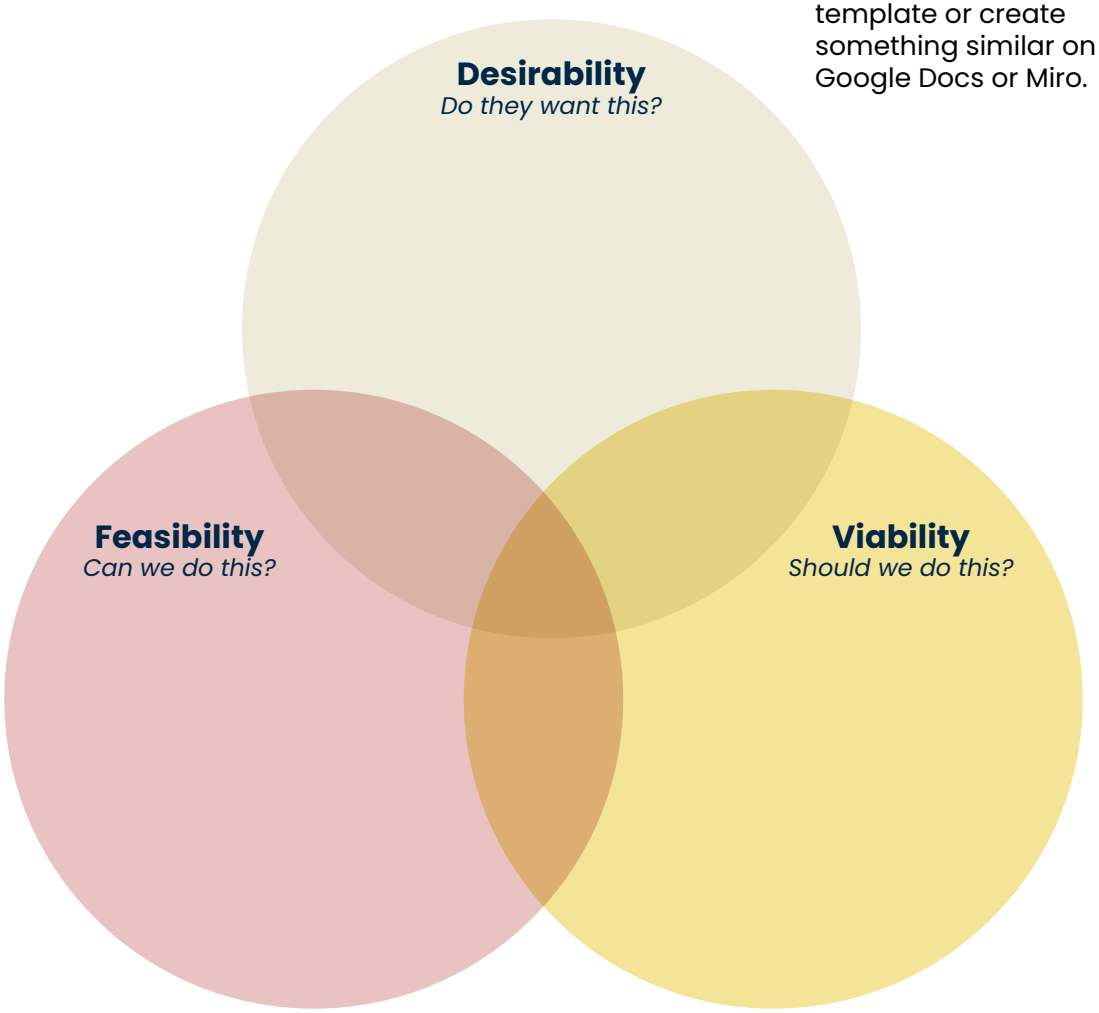
The three lenses are desirability, viability and feasibility. First you must determine whether the idea is desirable to those who'd be using it. Then you need to question whether it would be feasible based on the resources available. Finally, it's important to consider if the project has the ability to make enough money so that it's viable and has the potential to grow over time.

1. Select the top three ideas based on your findings from Activity 3.

2. Test them against the three lenses to see whether they met each of the criteria for innovation.

3. Use the findings to determine the best solution for the team project.

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.



Module 4

Implement & Evaluate

Students identify useful skills and resources to support the implementation of their project and reflect on the success of the project using appropriate self-reflection and assessment tools.

Activity 1- Skills for implementation

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

1. Using the list provided, highlight skills that would be useful for your team project.

2. Fill in the table by describing how the skills could be utilised throughout the project. Team members can identify if they'd like to focus on developing a particular skill and request the support from their team to do so.

Project Management Skills:

- Organisation
- Taking responsibility
- Staying focused
- Timely and efficient
- Building teams and allocating roles
- Effective use of resources
- Planning
- Delivering on objectives
- Measuring outcomes
- Reflecting and future planning

Enterprise Skills:

- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Financial literacy
- Digital literacy
- Critical thinking
- Presentation skills

Skill Reflection table:

Skill	How it relates to your project	Team member interested in upskilling

Activity 2- Resources for implementation

1. Compile resources that could benefit the project by completing at least one task from each of the following categories: awareness, funding, partnerships, promotion. Create a Google Slide deck to record and present your findings.

2. Present your top findings to the class and compile useful resources for everyone to access.

Awareness

1. Find a website with recently published statistics about youth homelessness and include the most fascinating three in the slide deck.

2. Find an engaging short video about youth homelessness which could be used to introduce the topic to young people. Embed it into the slide deck.

Funding

1. Find a website for crowdfunding social impact projects (other than gofundme) and identify a project that has successfully raised money on the platform to fund a homelessness project.

2. Identify one grant provider that funds projects that are similar to yours. I.e. emerging social change project. The grant can be offered by an organisation, charity, government or philanthropic family or individual.

Partnerships

1. Identify an organisation or service in your local area that's focused on tackling youth homelessness that could be a project partner.

2. Identify an organisation or service in your local area that's not tackling the issue of youth homelessness, but might like to be a project partner.

Promotion

1. Identify local community services that could help promote the group's project or write a news story to inform others about what it entails.

2. Identify a campaign about homelessness that makes you want to get involved and reflect on why you chose it.

Activity 3- Task Tracker

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

1. Identify how your team is going to implement the project from start to finish by making a list of necessary tasks. Try to include some of the resources discovered in Activity 2.

2. Identify the skills required to carry out each task and appoint team members to each. Make sure everyone has a responsibility and a clear understanding of what they are required to do.

3. Systemically carry out each task and regularly check the task tracker to ensure deadlines are being met.

4. Document the process informally by taking photos, notes or journaling the learnings, challenges and triumphs.

Task Tracker:

Task	Skills required	Appointed to	Due Date

Activity 4- Project assessment tools

1. Read through the list of ways you could assess the outcomes of your project and select the most appropriate tool(s) prior to implementing your project.

    - Focus groups
    - Surveys & quizzes
    - Informal monitoring/record keeping
    - 1:1 interviews/check ins
    - Engagement tracking (e.g. social media, survey uptake)
    - Case studies & Most Significant Change stories
    - Rubric

2. Carefully consider the design of your assessment tool(s) to track the project's progress. Depending on the purpose of the project, you might track the financial income, growth of knowledge or engagement level of participants.

3. Bear in mind, you may need to do a pre-assessment if the project outcomes are based on knowledge, perception or opinion.

4. Decide on a way to communicate the results of the project in a clear and simple way. You might like to create an infographic or short video.

Rubric Example- Awareness Campaign

Project Outcome	Method	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Increased Awareness of youth homelessness stats	Quiz	Less than 10% of students could recall accurate statistics	Less than 50% of students could recall accurate statistics	Over 80% of students could recall accurate statistics
Shifted perceptions about people experiencing homelessness	Focus Group	There was no shift in perceptions	Perceptions had changed for roughly half the group	Majority of the students' perceptions changed
Selling clothing to raise money for the homeless community	Record keeping (sales)	Less than 25% of the sales target was achieved	Approx 50% of the sales target was achieved	Over 50% of the sales target was achieved

Activity 5- Self-reflection

To complete after project implementation.

1. Fill in the self-reflection template to independently review your skill development during the program. Be as specific as possible, as your answers could come in handy when applying for a leadership role or future job.

2. Try to include a mixture of project management, leadership and enterprise skills and start by listing all the micro skills within the broader skillsets. E.g. communication involves active listening, clear instruction and empathy.

3. When describing what you did, try to include how you overcame challenges and how contribution impacted the work of others.

4. Consider what skills you wanted to develop but weren't able to due to the scope of the project. Identify any attitudes or behaviours you would like to change in order to be more productive.

Self-reflection template and example

Print a copy of the template or create something similar on Google Docs or Miro.

Skill	What I know about [skill]... (what's involved)	What I learnt about [skill] during this project... (what I did)	The aspect of [skill] I still need to develop... (what I want to do)
Example: *Organisation*	*Making schedules and working to deadlines. Prioritising tasks.*	*Since we were working virtually, it was really important to have clear roles and deadlines as we weren't speaking every day.*	*Be more self-motivated to complete work on time without team members needing to remind me.*

Activity 6- End of program reflection

1. Create a 3 x 3 table on Google Docs or Miro. Fill in the table to share what you learnt and thought about your project and the program (remove the prompts and add your answers).

2. Print your answers and discuss them with the class using one of the following suggested games:

   - **Bingo-** write a number between 1-15 in each square (nine numbers total). Delegate someone to select numbers between 1-15 at random. When a number is called, students with that number written on their page must volunteer their answer if they want to cross it off. The aim is to get three crosses in a row to call bingo.

   - **Autographs-** Walk around the room holding your answers sheet. Delegate someone to call stop and then pair with the person closest to you. Take turns to select a prompt for them to answer. Once you've listened to your partner's answer, ask them to sign their name in the box. Continue partnering with different people around the room until you have a different name in each square.

   - **Lucky draw-** Cut up the answers of all class members and place them in one large hat. Draw them at random and read the answer aloud. Guess which prompt they were responding to and ask the person who wrote it to confirm whether the guess was correct.

Something you learnt about yourself	**Something you found challenging**	**Something you learnt about youth homelessness**
Something to improve the program	**Favourite activity or aspect of the program**	**Someone you'd like to acknowledge**
A skill you developed	**How you could build on your project?**	**Free comment**

Curriculum Links Level 7-9

Design and Technologies

Creating designed solutions:

- Investigating
- Generating
- Producing
- Evaluating
- Planning and managing

Cross Curriculum Priorities

- Sustainability

General Capabilities

- Ethical Understanding
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability