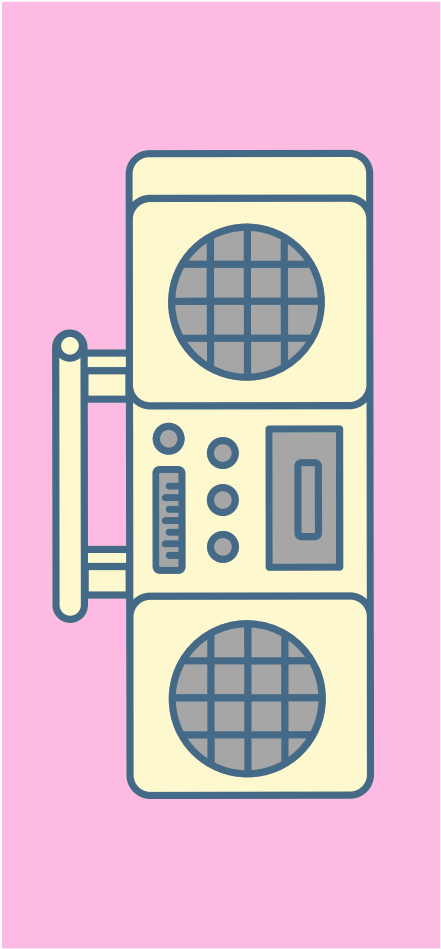
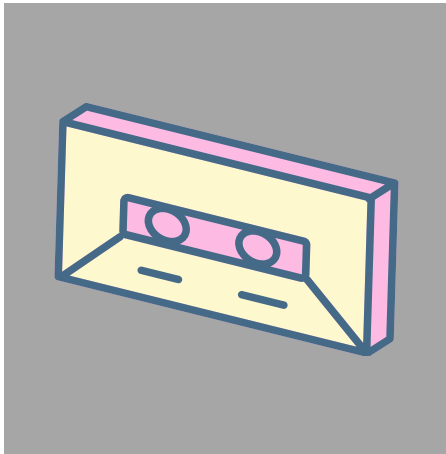


YOUTH ACTIVIST TOOLKIT.



**ALL
THE
STEPS**

**MADE FOR
YOUTHS, BY
YOUTHS.**



WHERE TO START.

An Activist by definition is “a person who campaigns to bring about political change.” ‘A person,’ any person. It may be daunting to start but no real change has ever been easy. Great activists in history were not born activists, they became passionate about an issue and took the important first step to create change. They were brave. Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban in retaliation for her campaign for women's education in Pakistan. However, refusing to be silenced, the

shooting has only caused her to speak up louder becoming a global advocate for women and girls all over the world. Harriet Tubman escaped slavery herself, but refused to sit back while others suffered. She went back to the South many times, helping bring guide slaves to the North using the Underground Railroad. Yousafzai and Tubman are just two, of millions upon millions of activists in history who took action against injustices they saw around them. And you can too. No matter your age, background, or where you come from people all over the world are demanding change.

BUT HOW?

This tool kit is designed to be a resource for individuals who want to speak up and use their voice to create positive change. It is for people who see injustice in our world and refuse to wait for someone to do something about it. It is for those who are ready to create the movements that help eliminate global issues. It is for all people. The tool kit contains tips, important steps to take, advice on how to build a movement, and so much more. While every person's path is different, this toolkit is designed to help guide all people so that they can leverage their voice in the most impactful way possible.

FINDING YOUR PASSION.

The first step in activism is to figure out what it is that you are passionate about.

To unlock this passion, ask yourself some key questions...

What makes you angry?

The key to activism and organizing is passion and commitment. It is important too that the issue that you choose to tackle is one that you care about deeply. If you care about an issue deeply, you will be more invested in your activism and the success of your movement which will in turn help you create a greater change.

What issues are fixable?

It is important to choose an issue that you believe you can really make a difference in. Some big issues might be too difficult to change today but with activists like you they will not seem so big in the future. Activists are most effective when their goals are possible to be executed. This should not stop you from dreaming big, however it is important to be realistic.

What do you have that can help?

When deciding on an issue it is helpful to look at your own strengths and weaknesses. Try to think about how your experiences can be used to make the biggest difference. Brainstorm issues that your tools that you have developed over time would help in creating change.

Are there already plausible solutions in place?

This question may seem bothersome, but it is very important. It is critical to look at what others in the activism community are doing to help eliminate this issue. Decide if you believe this solution will be effective and if it is possible to execute. If yes, that does not mean that you should not think of other solutions, but it does mean that it is likely possible for you to join a community and add your voice to the mission of others. Alone individuals are powerful, but together they are unstoppable.

What issues are most important?

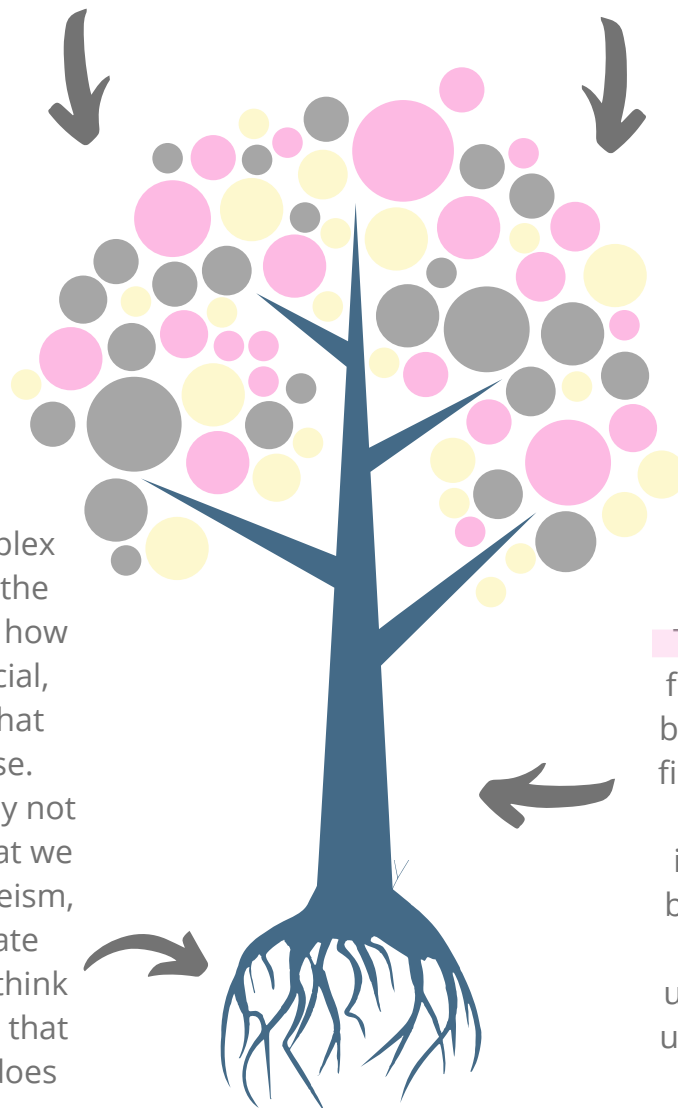
This question is very subjective. If this question was asked to a million different people, they would likely have a million different answers. However, this question is intentionally subjective. It is important that you believe that the issue you are tackling you believe is one of the most important issues in our world. Activism is difficult, and many days it may feel like change is impossible, however it is that passion that will keep you from giving up even in the toughest times.

FINDING YOUR PASSION.

Root cause of a tree tool..

you may have heard of this exercise before, however it is a very helpful tool that can be used to improve your understanding of a problem and its underlying causes. In order to create lasting change it is important to create lasting solutions rather than continuing to put band-aids on a problem. Do not let your impact be taken away as soon as you stop focusing on an issue. Be sure that your solution creates sustainable change that will be implemented for generations to come.

The leaves are comparable to the tip of the iceberg. The leaves are about identifying a problem. These are the parts of an issue that can be easily seen and identified. They are the parts that are negatively impacting individuals lives. Often, these problems can be seen in your own community.



The roots are the most complex part of the tree, but usually the most important. Think about how this problem began. The social, cultural, economic factors that caused this problem to arise. Usually these are, but certainly not limited to, the "ism" words that we often hear such as racism, ageism, or classism. In order to create lasting change it is critical to think address these root causes so that once the solution is fixed it does not rise again.

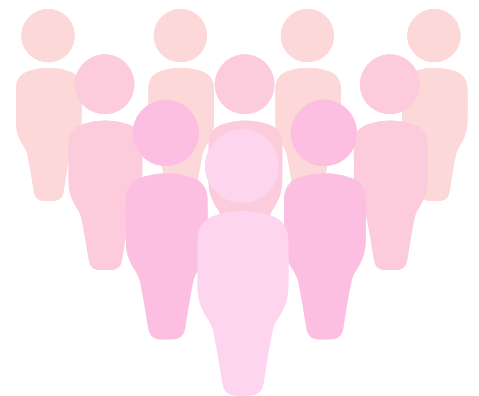
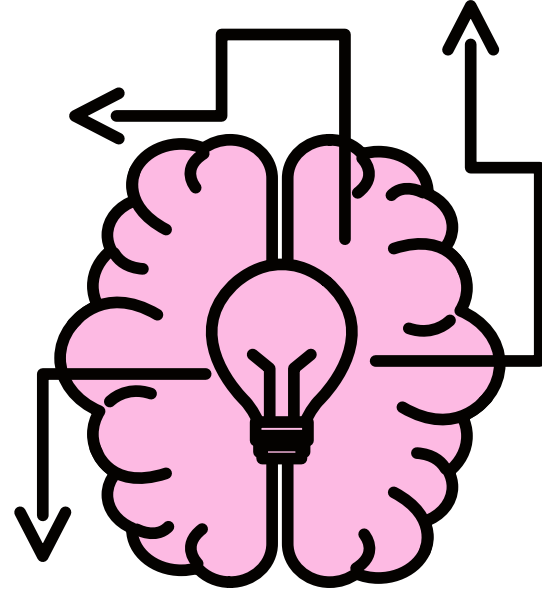
The trunk is the factors that fuel the problem. These may be cultural beliefs, ideologies, financial inequities, and other disparities between individuals. Think about the best way to help tackle these factors, it is important to understand many, seemingly unrelated things, that worsen many issues.

**SOLUTIONS.
SOLUTIONS.
SOLUTIONS.**

Now that you have identified the issue that you want to tackle it is time to plan how you are going to do this. Ask yourself what is the best solution to this issue. **Your solution should address all parts from the tree trunk exercise.** Be sure to address the root causes of an issue because that will be critical to ensure that your demands are not only met for one year, or five years, but multiple lifetimes so that future generations will not have to worry about this issue.

When you are thinking about a solution the key is INCLUSIVITY! Be sure that your solution helps all people affected no matter their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other identifying factor. For example if you are tackling the issue of period poverty through a bill that would demand that menstrual products are available in bathrooms. Be sure that this includes both girls bathrooms and non-gendered bathrooms. Without this specificity many individuals outside the gender norm would not be able to experience the positive effects brought about by this bill. Always be sure to be thinking in a mindset that recognizes the rights of all individuals.

It is critical for your demands to be attainable. The key in activism is **finding the balance to where people will actually support your plan.** Your solution needs to be realistic enough that many different people will support it. Activists that are able to make the most change think of solutions that create lasting change but do not seem overly advanced. If it seems too good to be true it often is, while a perfect world is desirable the world is not going to become perfect overnight. Small steps need to be taken to make big gains. We cannot wait to be equal but we also do not want to scare people away from our cause.

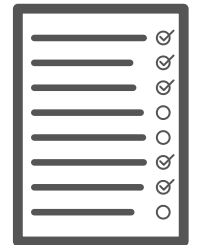


PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

To be successful, the most important words are organized and committed.

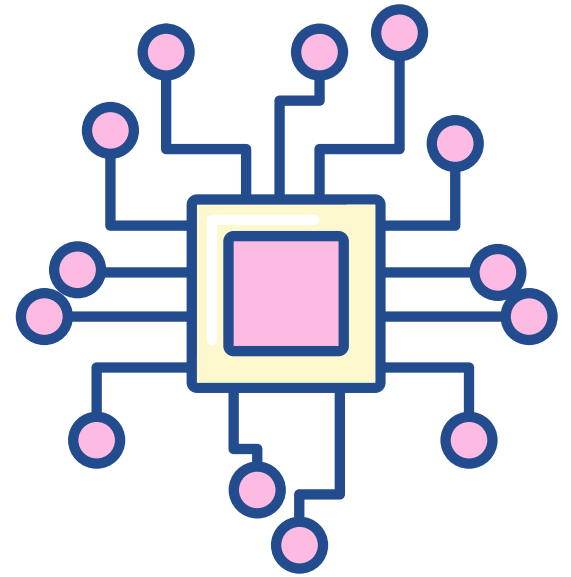
The more organized you are the faster things will get done. Your commitment needs to be unwavering no matter how difficult it may get.

To be organized you will need a successful strategy. This would include building enough power to influence others into executing your demands. Recruitment is critical in achieving this level of influence. It is nearly impossible for an individual to make grand sweeping changes, however, when many people come together, real change is possible. The more people that you are able to recruit the more your movement will grow. If you are able to successfully recruit individuals, that means that you are tackling an important cause and have a solution that people believe in. When recruiting there are many important principles to keep in mind. First reach out to a broad group of people. It is important to have a diverse member base in order to ensure that all individuals voices are heard. Get to know everyone helping to support your cause so that you can determine their best role based on their skill set. In addition, never stop recruiting, the more people working on an issue, the more people will hear about it and support your efforts. Finally, be sure to understand different people's desired level of commitment, whether it is handing out flyers at a fair or overseeing a major project, every level of commitment, no matter how small, is helpful and puts you one step closer to achieving your goal.



The next step is looking at who you need to convince and what relationships need to be built in order to execute your strategy. The difference between just a regular plan and a strategy is that a strategy requires power and relationships. A key step in your plan is deciding who these people are and the tactics you will use to get those powerful people on your side and fighting for your cause. In order to do this to do this think of it like a triangle. Place everyone you can think of that may be helpful on the triangle. The bottom of the pyramid are people that you know will be supportive of the issue, and whose support is helpful but not important enough to create change alone. The next row should be individuals whose support is a little bit more persuasive or those who will be harder to convince. Continue on until you reach the tip of the triangle. This should be the person who has the power to create the change. For certain issues this person may vary and can sometimes even be a group of people. Once you have created your pyramid start at the bottom and work your way to the top or the point!

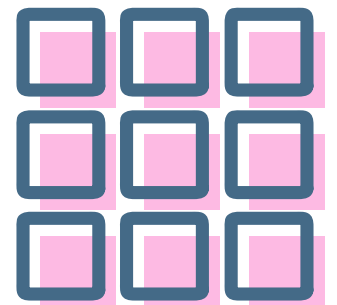
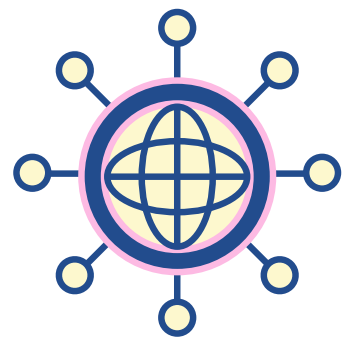
GETTING YOUR MESSAGE OUT THERE.



The last step after identifying your problem, your solution to tackle that problem, and the people who can help get you there, is amplifying your message. Message and branding are key parts of the campaign in order to help get the word out there to as many people as possible and grow your cause. Think of messages that would appeal to a broad group of people and easy to remember. The more people that remember and repeat your message the more influence you will have on a bigger group of people, and therefore the more likely the people you want to hear about your cause will hear about it.

In order to help amplify your message as much as possible it is important to use many different tactics when promoting your message. Often it is the most creative ideas that work the best. One possible tool to increase awareness of your cause is storytelling. Doing this can help people understand your journey in your activism and why you got involved, how they can get involved, and why they need to get involved now. Another idea is artwork. Art is a powerful way to communicate your message. We have all heard of the adage “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Powerful art can help grab people’s attention and really make them think about an issue. Be bold with your art and make sure it is noticed. The more interesting and different your art is the more it will stand out. Finally, in the age of technology, use of social media is critical to amplify your message. Technology gives us the power to communicate with millions from all over the world in the matter of seconds.

Take advantage of that power, and use it to your own advantage in order for it to help bolster your mission. Build your social media page to connect with more people. If they believe in what you are doing people will take about your mission and share it with their friends. The more people to see what you are doing and your cause, the more likely that change will occur.



We hope that this tool kit will help you in your future in activism. Remember to be bold and stay determined. We believe in you, but the most important person that needs to believe in you is yourself. Good luck and we cannot wait to see the positive change you will have on the world.

www.girlsempowerment.org