



# Social Innovator

*“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”*

—Anne Frank,  
young diarist

**G**irl Scouts are always on the lookout for ways to help others and make a difference. But how do you go from identifying a social problem to developing a great solution? This badge will show you how! And with the skills of a social innovator in your pocket, you'll be able to create Take Action projects for your Leadership Journeys or your Gold Award that are useful, informed, and truly do change the world.

## **Steps**

1. Explore the big picture
2. Make connections
3. Build empathy for people affected by your issue
4. Develop a solution from a specific point of view
5. Practice pitching ideas and getting feedback

## **Purpose**

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to think like a social innovator.

Developed in  
partnership with  
Jump Associates



## Innovation Lingo:

The innovation business has a language of its own. Here are some terms you'll see in the badge:

- Social innovation
- Crowd sourcing
- Biomimicry
- Empathy
- Iterate

Every step has three choices. Do **ONE** choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

## Tips Before Takeoff

Before you begin, identify the issue you'll focus on. You'll want it to be specific and small enough in scope that you can really explore it—and close enough to your heart that you care about it! Perhaps:

- ▶ **Math and science education** at your school
- ▶ **Promoting exercise** at your former elementary school
- ▶ **Trash** below an overpass in your community
- ▶ **Wheelchair accessibility** at a playground
- ▶ **A dangerous intersection** in your neighborhood
- ▶ **Homelessness** in your town
- ▶ **Access** to a farmers' market
- ▶ **Light pollution** in your town

# My Issue:





**STEP****1 Explore the big picture**

You need to understand how an issue fits in the world at large before you can form a strategy to make a difference. Pick one choice to expand your understanding of your chosen issue. Here, we've used "healthy eating" as an example to show how each choice offers possibilities for exploration.

**CHOICES - DO ONE:**

- Find five social trends.** Our idea of how to eat healthfully has changed over time. People have taken various approaches like counting calories, eating a low-fat or no-carbohydrate diet, or buying only organic foods. Watch the news, talk to a parent or other adult, or explore the Web to find social trends related to your issue. Jot down your thoughts on how these trends impact the issue—for example, eating no carbohydrates could mean bakeries sell less bread.

**OR**

- Identify five instances where technology impacts your issue.** Trends in science, engineering, and technology affect issues and how we can address them. For example, in decades past, artificial sweeteners revolutionized the snack-food industry. Today, genetically engineered food often dominates the headlines. Find five technological developments that could influence your issue.

**OR**

- Find five businesses or groups that impact your issue.** In healthy eating, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) services deliver in-season, locally grown produce to subscribers. Pro sports leagues offer programs encouraging kids to get active and burn calories. Research businesses and nonprofit organizations working in your topic area and jot down what you find innovative about their approaches.



A social trend or local economy's downfall?



Are technological advances becoming unhealthy?



Will supporting local farmers benefit your community?

**More to Explore**

**Create an infographic.** Infographics help distill complex information, especially when there are a lot of variables and trends involved. The graphics present information in a way that's easy to understand. Make an infographic that helps others understand your issue. Check out the example on page 4 for inspiration!



# The Power of Infographics

Produce travels 1,500 miles on average from farm to table. We can minimize the distance our food travels by buying food grown locally. But how do we know what's local

to our area when? This infographic shares that information in a season-by-season list of when 10 common fruits and vegetables are locally available around the United States.

A note also shares that "available food in neighboring states should be similar." How's that for packing a lot of useful and information in a one vibrant, impactful graphic?

## A PLAN FOR ALL SEASONS

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GOOD

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## The Big Picture in Communication

The need for people to communicate with one another is timeless—but innovations have certainly changed the method over time. These innovations have also changed the ways we relate to one another.

### STEP 2 Make connections

Innovative ideas come from all sorts of places. Great innovators aren't always the ones with the big ideas. They're often the ones who make interesting connections and pull inspiration from the world around them. Here are some ways innovators get inspired. Try one to begin developing innovations for your issue.


#### CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Crowd sourcing.** Crowd sourcing helps you get ideas from a very large number of people. A question for healthy eating could be, "What are tips and tricks you use to eat healthfully?" Post your questions to your social networking profiles, send an e-mail, or hand out a survey. Get at least 30 responses.  
**OR** -----
- Biomimicry.** Sometimes nature already has the answers to an issue. Some fabrics, glass, and paints have the same water-repellent properties as a lotus leaf—when water rolls off, it takes all the dirt particles with it. Imagine doing dishes or laundry when all you need is a spray of water! Look at plants and animals to see if nature has some solutions to your issue. See page 6 for examples related to healthy eating.  
**OR** -----
- International ideas.** What can you learn from other cultures about your issue? In healthy eating, many vegetarian diets suggest the common Mexican combination of rice and beans, which makes a complete protein. Doctors and dietitians sometimes suggest the French practice of eating small portions of rich foods. And if someone wants a "trick" to take smaller, slower bites, they might use Chinese chopsticks to pick up their food. Look at how three cultures address your issue: Explore books and photos from other places, talk to someone from another culture, or get on the Web.

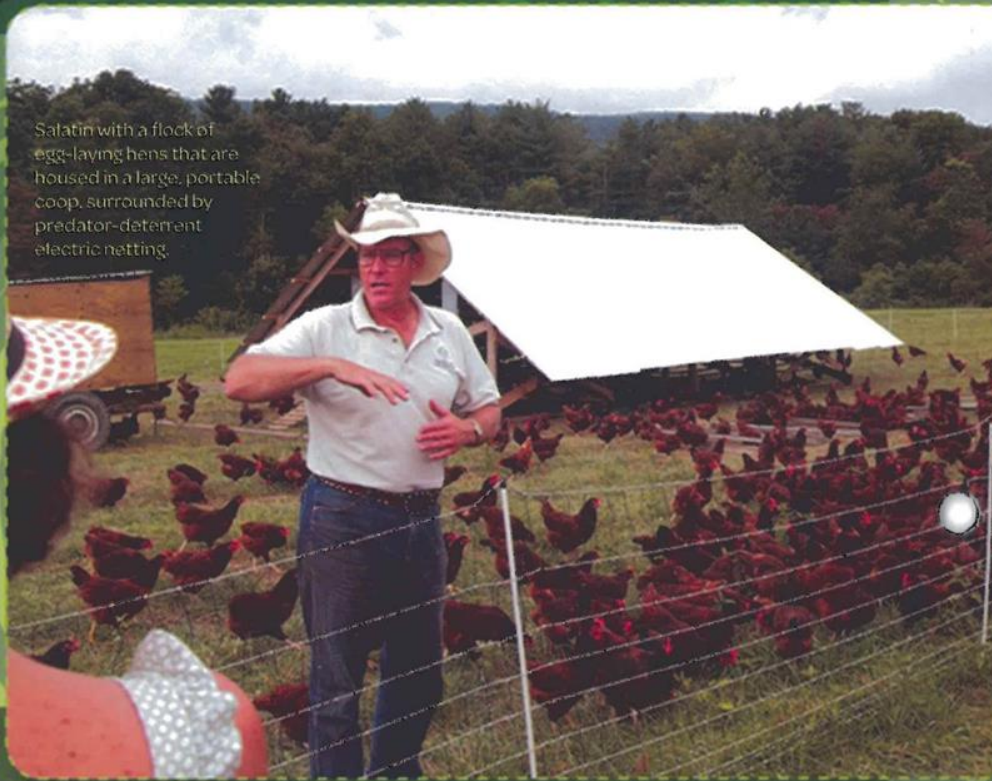




# Biomimicry in Healthy Eating



Salatin with a flock of egg-laying hens that are housed in a large, portable coop, surrounded by predator-deterrent electric netting.



Flicker user DARDPUTS/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**A**griculturalists from the Land Institute, a nonprofit group based in Kansas, are looking to the natural world for better ways to grow crops. Traditionally, farmers have planted one crop across an entire field. But in nature, forests and meadows have all sorts of plants growing together. This creates a healthy ecosystem that naturally prevents the plants from being destroyed by pests. Today's agriculturalists are trying to find a way to combine different crops and limit the use of artificial pesticides and fertilizers.

**W**hen Joel Salatin of Virginia's Polyface Farm wanted to raise cows and chickens in a way healthy for his pasture, his animals, and the humans who finally eat them, he looked at the natural habits of cows, chickens, and grass. As it occurs in a patch of natural grassland, his pasture contains a variety of grasses. When they've grown high, he sends in the cows to eat their natural grass diet. They gobble the grass, and are followed

by the chickens, since birds in nature follow herbivores. They clean up the pasture by eating the tasty grubs in cow manure, and also help by leaving their own droppings behind—which add nitrogen to the soil and allow the grass to grow healthy again for another grazing round. So Salatin follows nature's pattern, and the whole system stays healthy—including the humans, whose food contains no antibiotics or chemicals.



**STEP****3 Build empathy for people affected by your issue**

Gaining empathy—that’s being able to connect to the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of others—helps innovators develop a gut sense of which ideas could work and which won’t, and how to make existing solutions better. Here are some techniques innovators use to build empathy.

**CHOICES – DO ONE:**

- Spend a day in the life.** A great way of gaining empathy is trying to experience someone else’s point of view. Think of someone who’s trying to address the same issue that you are, or who lives with your issue every day. If your issue is wheelchair accessibility, you might think of someone who uses a wheelchair. Follow their routine for a day and journal your observations. How was your experience different from your typical day?

**OR**

- Be someone’s shadow.** For half a day, shadow professionals or someone with values related to your topic. Record their activities and your observations. If your issue is healthy eating, you could shadow your school’s cafeteria chef or someone who’s decided to become vegetarian. Remember, being someone’s shadow means barely being noticeable—ask them not to change their routines to accommodate you. Jotting notes can make people feel self-conscious, so practice your stealth note-taking skills!

**OR**

- Interview an expert or professional in your topic area.** Sometimes the easiest way to gather information about the situation you want to improve is by piggybacking on experts who have already done related work. To learn about healthy eating, you could interview a nutritionist or a food scientist about improving the food system. Prepare questions in advance, or bring some ideas you got in the first step.

**Patricia Moore**

In the mid-1970s, designer Patricia Moore worked at one of the top industrial design firms in the United States. During a meeting, she asked if the company could design a refrigerator that would be easier for someone with arthritis to open. She was told that the company did not worry about “those people,” and she was furious.

So Patricia decided to see what life was really like for the elderly. She wore makeup that made her look 80 years old, plugged her ears to impair her hearing, wore glasses that blurred her vision, put on a brace that made her hunched over, and wore shoes that made it hard for her to walk. Patricia was in her twenties, but she spent the next three years experiencing life as an elderly woman. She used her experience to design a line of products that were easier for the elderly to use, like vegetable peelers with rubber handles. Today she travels the country advocating for senior citizens’ rights.





## CAREERS TO EXPLORE

Innovation manager  
Industrial engineer  
Cultural psychologist  
Trend watcher  
Social worker  
Venture capitalist  
Nonprofit coordinator  
Health care innovator  
Science journalist  
Landscape architect  
Management consultant  
Fashion designer  
Foreign service officer  
Lobbyist  
NGO publicist  
Advertising account associate

### STEP 4 Develop a solution from a specific point of view

**True or false: There's only one solution to every problem.**

**False!** The “best” solution depends on what your role is and the responsibilities you have. For example, as a student, you could promote healthy eating at school by starting a contest with friends to see who can go the longest without drinking a soda. If you were part of school administration, you could replace unhealthy snacks in vending machines with healthier foods. Try at least one of these scenarios to consider solutions to your issue from a specific perspective.

#### CHOICES – DO ONE:

- As a parent.** How do moms and dads address your topic? Some parents don't serve dessert unless kids finish their vegetables. Others don't buy unhealthy snacks at the store. Pick three possible innovations you discovered in steps 2 and 3 and refine them using a parent's perspective.

OR

- As an engineer.** An engineer might design smaller plates and bowls that encourage people to eat less, or a refrigerator that stays locked except during mealtimes. Filter through the ideas you sourced in steps 2 and 3. What ideas can be engineered into a product? Refine and draw three product concepts that could be solutions for your issue.

OR

- As a business owner.** A business could be a health-foods grocery store, or a phone application that helps people keep track of their diet. Use your research from steps 2 and 3 to develop three business ideas. It could be a product, service, store, restaurant, or anything else!

**Tip:** If none of these perspectives feels right for your issue, choose one that one does—use your point of view, that of a teacher, a woman, a politician, etc.



**STEP****5 Practice pitching ideas and getting feedback**

You've developed some innovative approaches to impact your issue. Do at least one of the following to share your ideas with others and get their feedback. You can pick one solution you particularly like, or present a range of solutions.

**CHOICES – DO ONE:**

**Make a business concept.** Before starting a business, social innovators develop a concept. Use the worksheet on the next page to help you. Then share your plan with someone who runs a business or nonprofit related to your issue and discuss their feedback.

**OR**

**Present to people who might use your innovation.** You might do a skit that demonstrates how your idea works, or share a slide show that pitches your idea to a policy maker or small-business loan officer. After your presentation, ask your audience for feedback.

**OR**

**Design a magazine advertisement or video commercial.** The ad should explain or demonstrate at least one of your ideas. Share your favorite idea(s) with other Girl Scouts, parents, or a professional in your issue area and listen to their feedback.

**More to Explore**

**Improve your social innovation—and represent it.** Great innovators love feedback and use it to spark their creativity to solve a problem even more effectively. Take the feedback you received and revise your business plan, create a new presentation, or edit your ad. Share it again! Innovators call this “iterating”—since the greatest ideas never stop getting better.

**Great Feedback Questions**

- What do you like about my innovation?
- What's not working for you?
- What are two suggestions to improve it?





# Social Innovation Concept Worksheet

**Name** *What name captures your idea?*

For Neighbors By Neighbors

# EXAMPLE

**Tagline** *What's the snappy, one-sentence description?*

Get delicious, seasonal food grown just around the corner!

## Core Need

*What's the most important need this meets?*

Many people want to eat locally but don't have the time to seek out local foods, or don't know how to start. And many people have backyard soil that could be a functioning garden, if they had help.

## Concept Description

*What is it and why is it good?*

A vegetable delivery service that provides boxes of seasonal, fresh food to community members. The produce would be provided by neighborhood gardeners and consist of both excess vegetables and vegetables grown specifically for FNBN. FNBN might offer free seed packets and send in helpful student gardeners to plant them. FNBN might even take care of the plants, so all the "neighborhood gardener" would need to provide is space.

## Impact

*What kind of impact do you want to make on your community?*

FNBN helps amateur gardeners connect with hungry neighbors. It makes eating locally, healthfully, and sustainably fun and easy. I'm aiming to get everyone in my town to use FNBN at least once a week.

## Inspiring Visual

*What does it look like?*

**For Neighbors  
By Neighbors**



## Resources

*What and whom do you need to help turn this idea into reality?*

Neighborhood gardeners willing to grow extra produce in their gardens, or offer their garden space to FNBN gardeners—or others who would like to grow things. Students and youth who need jobs in the community could learn basic gardening skills through FNBN, and make money to help their families.

## Funding

*How will this social innovation concept get funding and sustain itself over the long term?*

FNBN would charge a subscription fee for weekly boxes of produce. Subscribers could sign on for a whole year, a couple of months, or try out the service for a week or two. Employees could bind books of neighbor-suggested recipes to distribute to interested customers for a small additional fee. FNBN would be able to support itself and wouldn't need donations.

**Page 11 is a blank worksheet for you to fill in with your idea.**



# Social Innovation Concept Worksheet

**Name** *What name captures your idea?*

**Tagline** *What's the snappy, one-sentence description?*

## **Core Need**

*What's the most important need this meets?*

## **Concept Description**

*What is it and why is it good?*

## **Impact**

*What kind of impact do you want to make on your community?*

## **Inspiring Visual**

*What does it look like?*

## **Resources**

*What and whom do you need to help turn this idea into reality?*

## **Funding**

*How will this social innovation concept get funding and sustain itself over the long term?*





### ***Add the Badge to Your Journey***

While you are identifying an issue to explore for this badge, consider topics that might lead you to some interesting “sisterhood innovations.” Check out the examples of Sisterhood projects in *MISSION: SISTERHOOD!* as a starting point. Maybe you’ll identify and explore an issue area in this badge that you want to turn into a whole Take Action project.

### **Now that I’ve earned this badge, I can give service by:**

- Using a variety of methods to inspire solutions to problems at home, at school, or in my community
- Identifying issues I care about as the first step toward a Take Action project for my Leadership Journey awards or Girl Scout Gold Award project
- Guiding younger Girl Scouts to identify social issues they care about for their Take Action projects



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***I’m inspired to:***