Changemaking From Home
A Toolkit for Emerging Changemakers

Ideas, stories, and inspiration for sparking change
Our New Reality

It should come as no surprise to you that we are living in a historic moment. The world is rapidly changing, unfortunately not always for the good of all, and exacerbated by rising wealth inequality, polarizing politics, stigma around mental health, the climate crisis, and now a global pandemic. We now live in a world where change is the only constant and the walls of established systems are falling because they cannot keep up.

In the past, value came from efficiency in repetition (think assembly lines). People learned a skill and repeated it for life in a workplace with many walls. That is no longer the case.

Now, value comes from contributing to and adapting to change. In an everything-changing world, one must be a changemaker to play.

There is no better time than now to build a more equitable, happier, and healthier world—where everyone feels powerful, everyone can contribute, where everyone sees themselves as a change-maker. This new world requires changemakers. This new world requires you.

You have the power to have an idea, form a team, and lead positive change for your community. You are the changemaker we need to create a better world. Being a changemaker means you can embrace and create positive change. Most importantly, you have the power to activate others, which will change their lives by helping them to also find their power to change their world.

Ashoka’s community of changemakers and leading social entrepreneurs around the world are in this movement with you.

Together we can move towards a world where everyone is a changemaker

Changemaking Despite Uncertainty

Ashoka Young Changemakers lead in crisis

We see changemakers step up in crisis. Sophia, an Ashoka Young Changemaker in the US, launched Ngoma Kenya to equalizing access to the arts for children living near in Nairobi, Kenya. Although Sophia cannot travel to Kenya this year because of the pandemic, she is still enacting change from home. In just a few weeks, Sophia and her team with Ngoma Kenya provided thousands of consistent meals for dozens of families in Kenya in their network in need of humanitarian relief. In the States, Sophia is stepping up as an activist for the Black Lives Matters movement, generating public support for racial justice through protesting, education, and cultivating empathy in children.
The Power of Changemaking

A Changemaker is someone who takes action to address a problem, activates others, and works towards solutions for the good of all.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHANGEMAKER?

Changemakers are individuals who put ideas into action. They diagnose problems big and small and explore solutions to these issues. Changemakers enable others to thrive and adapt in a changing world by inspiring others to create their own solutions and work towards a more empathic and evolving world.

Ashoka thinks of changemakers as society’s white blood cells: They sense areas of trouble and infection and come to the rescue!

Changemaking is not an individual action; it is a journey. This journey starts with finding your spark. A spark is the moment of commitment. Your spark is what gives you permission to become a Changemaker.

HOW DO YOU SPARK YOUR CHANGEMAKER JOURNEY?

• Ask yourself what gives you hope? In a time of challenge, start with what motivates you about today’s world. What inspires you to take action?

• Think about what opportunities already exist! Think about what resources you have: time, talent, a social network, etc.

• When you see a problem do your research. Ask questions. Dive deep into the root causes of the problem, what systems are broken as a result of this change? What inequalities exist today because of this problem?

• Embrace your inner power! Everyone has the power to create positive change, no matter how big or small. Start off small, try something out, and iterate. You will never know unless you try.
Leading a Movement for Water Conservation and Changemaking: Garvita's journey

Garvita Gulhati is dramatically reducing water waste in India’s restaurants. When she was 15, Garvita learned about India’s water crisis and decided to do something about it. She and a friend founded Why Waste? to reduce the 14 million liters (3.7 million gallons) of water wasted daily in restaurants. She began by asking local restaurants in Bangalore to consider simple changes like filling the glasses only half-full, and popularizing #GlassHalfFull on social media.

Why Waste? was able to take #GlassHalfFull viral and eventually convinced the National Restaurant Association of India to adopt its recommendations. That extended Why Waste?’s reach to millions and cut water waste in India’s restaurants by 50%. So far, Why Waste? has saved 2 million liters of water and counting, and its activities and media presence have reached about 2 million people. The group is now working on changing national policy to press for water conservation and to declare a national water emergency.

Garvita evolved her approach, recruited friends, and built a team of young “waterpreneurs” to multiply their influence.

Why Waste?’s #GlassHalfFull concept has fanned out systematically to restaurants across Bangalore.

Now, she has set out to help all young people discover their changemaking superpower and use it for good. In 38 schools across Bangalore, and then in other cities, including outside India, Garvita introduced the changemaking bug by getting a different student each week to present and discuss stories of young changemakers. She also partnered with a media company to disseminate the stories monthly, altogether reaching 2.5 million students. As she expands this storytelling, she increasingly sees parents wanting to help their kids to be changemakers.

“The simplest of the ideas can inspire the most powerful change, and this experience is a testimony of that. Every idea matters, and that is how we are going to achieve a world where “Everyone is a Changemaker”.

Garvita

ASHoka
Ideas to get Started

WATER AND ENERGY CONSERVATION
While people are still at home, help them measure and evaluate their household water or energy consumption to be more conscious consumers. Use online tools like social media, local news sites, etc., to share methods of measuring household water and energy usage and solutions to reduce consumption.

WASTE MANAGEMENT
With the help of your team, help people in your neighborhood or residential complex understand their waste generation patterns and direct them to the right information and tools to segregate waste, compost at home, and implement other means of household waste management.

FARM TO TABLE
Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, help local farmers establish market links so small farmers in your region can sell directly to your neighbourhood. Find and connect your neighbours to a local CSA (Community-supported agriculture) group. Work with your team to enlist local store owners who can offer their storage spaces to increase shelf life of the produce, meats, and other food items.

DATA-BASED STORYTELLING
While there is a lot of data regarding climate change, communicating this data and its relevance to everyday life requires a storytelling approach. Put together a team of peers who can create and share stories informed by data and illustrated with examples of changemakers who are championing effective solutions. These stories will help nudge people to step up to solve challenges like reducing emission or promoting biodiversity.

CHANGEMAKING DESPITE UNCERTAINTY
Garvita and Kaajal take action during COVID
Ashoka Young Changemakers Garvita and Kaajal are hosting weekly conversations with young people about the changemaking journey. They are inviting participants to write and share stories of leading young so our message can reach new audiences.
Ashoka Young Changemaker Carlla is using the intrigue of astronomy to help young people gain power by mastering the scientific method. She launched Project Cosmos at the age of 16 to interactively teach astronomy and science that was missing in the Brazilian public educational system. Her goal is to promote a culture of inquiry and openness to new ideas among young people in Brazil while also ensuring that students practice critical thinking.

Alongside a team of 30 university students, Project Cosmos has reached over 1,500 students in 25 local schools and is now an official extension program of the Federal University of Amazonas. The team’s rotational leadership model enables everyone to take responsibility and lead, regardless of their academic background. Since becoming an Ashoka Young Changemaker, Carlla is co-leading the “everyone a changemaker” movement in a number of ways; with support from the Manaus Secretary of Education, she has reached 40 schools and the administrators and teachers in 499 schools with 236,000 students. She is working with parents’ groups to help them be champions for their kids, and she has presented her approach to Brazil’s main scientific congress, SBPC. Working with Ashoka and an educational publisher, she is helping to develop a course likely to reach 500,000 high school students.

While studying in multiple schools around the city of Manaus, Carlla was struck by their varying degrees of quality science education and resources. As soon as she entered the Federal University of Amazonas, she fully launched Project Cosmos. It started as a team of five teenagers who used

“Since I started my project, I began to realize that I could transform at least my school, then my neighborhood, then my city, and enact change with a real impact... Even if I wasn’t president, even if I wasn’t a politician, and even if I wasn’t a businesswoman... Whenever I see a problem around me, I think, “What can I do to help solve this problem?”
their free time to teach astronomy workshops at schools, and as they grew, Carlla persuaded her university to make Cosmos a sanctioned university project. Now, she finds herself leading something much bigger than herself. Embracing the importance of an Everyone a Changemaker world in her own community, Carlla says our rapidly changing world needs “people who fight and want a better and fairer Brazil for all.”

Ideas to get Started

DEBATE CLUB 2.0
Bring together students from different schools to host online debates on topic issues. Partner with teachers, journalists, and local associations, like Rotary Clubs, to create a broader platform for collaborative learning, local perspectives, and self-expression.

VIRTUAL OPEN MIC
Coordinate with schools or local youth centers to host virtual events for students to learn, practice, and showcase their work in the fields of performing arts, from comedy to poetry to musical talents.

ARTPASS
Show how young people can take charge of their arts education. Arrange for craft supplies to be delivered to students at their homes. Collect and share your unused supplies by passing them on to friends or neighbors. While sharing supplies, take the opportunity to suggest students create artifacts on different themes.

CAREER SUPPORT
To keep students’ motivation high, engage them by organizing talks and online discussions with aspirational role-models in diverse career tracks. Organize workshops for peers to discover their self-esteem, confidence, and self-image.
Changemaking since the age of 4: Joshua's Journey

Through Joshua’s Heart Foundation, young people create ‘Hope Boxes’, shoe boxes containing food, toiletries, and an inspirational note to share with community members experiencing homelessness. Joshua started it as a four-year-old, supported by his mother and aunts who he convinced to help him prepare and distribute food to people in need. Since 2005, the team has distributed over two million pounds of food and assisted 450,000 individuals.

When he was four years old, he was walking home one day and passed a homeless person on the side of the road and had the profound realization that many people lacked what he had. In this moment, he knew that he wanted to do something for disadvantaged people. That moment set him on the path to becoming a changemaker and was the starting point of Joshua’s Heart Foundation. His mom provided a safety net for him to fail and encouraged him to learn from his mistakes. He built a team – critical for scaling impact – which has grown exponentially into a network of over 15,000 volunteer youth leaders across America. They have a Junior Advisory Board where young people act as a "board of directors," gaining leadership experience through designing projects, fundraising, and speaking in public as youth who have started their own programs.

Since 2005, Joshua’s Heart Foundation has distributed over 2.2 million pounds of food and assisted more than 420,000 individuals experiencing homelessness. Over 15 years, they have served over 500,000 meals to families. This youth-led organization gives hope and assistance to homeless people suffering from poverty, hunger, and loneliness. They also share healthy recipes, host cooking classes, and do educational outreach to teach people ways they can help the hungry.

The Foundation is now in a number of U.S. states, as well as Nigeria, India, Jamaica, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Haiti, and Mexico. Joshua has raised over $700,000, all of which goes to those experiencing homelessness and poverty across the world. But perhaps the most lasting impact has been with the team Joshua built, indeed, a team of many teams of thousands of young people taking his model to their communities. For 15 years Joshua has continued to
attract a rapidly growing network of young people who are not waiting for adults to fix the social problems they see in the world. He has created a culture for thousands of young people to be changemakers, empowering his generation by giving them the tools and leadership experience to make a change in the community.

“I do believe if I put my mind to it and I'm stubborn enough, I will do anything that I want to do. But I think something that is a very important key is to build a team. You can't do anything alone, and nobody has really.”

Ideas to get Started

JOSHUA’S HEART CHAPTER
Access toolkits from Joshua's Heart Foundation to start your own local chapter to help the homeless in your community. This can help anyone quickly get started with raising resources, creating distribution kits, and innovating new ideas to end hunger.

Learn more at joshuasheart.org

COMMUNITY GARDENS
Mobilize residents in your area to identify and reclaim community spaces meant for parks or gardens. With a team of volunteers, use these spaces to start a community garden. The produce grown can be shared with residents or donated to a local nonprofit or school to feed children living in food apartheid.

UGLY PRODUCE
Build a team and arrange the transportation and storage for local farmers to donate their “ugly” produce to schools or non-profits.

FOOD DRIVES
Build your team and coordinate food drives in your community through fundraising, identifying distribution partners, and mapping families in need.

CHANGEMAKING DESPITE UNCERTAINTY
Ashoka Young Changemakers respond to crisis
To feed families and seniors during the pandemic, the Foundation is holding a virtual food drive to collect donations that are used to buy food for those in need. They aim to support an additional 5,000 families, distributing the food safely from vehicles. Joshua believes that you’re never too young to make a change in your community, no matter what anybody says.
Upcycling clothes for rural development in India: Wasudev's journey

When Wasudev was a teenager, he noticed his village in Vidarbha, Maharashtra, struggling with rising unemployment and consumer waste. His family also struggled for economic security; some years, his parents were unable to afford his school supplies. However, Wasudev noticed a harsher reality for young girls in his community who were frequently forced to drop out of school when their families could no longer afford to pay their school fees.

Later that year, Wasudev participated in a high school exchange program that led him to the United States. After spending time without his family on the other side of the world, he discovered a newfound confidence and embraced his independence. This confidence encouraged him to more thoughtfully play a role in his community, from mentoring younger kids to supporting his mother’s work in economic mobility for women living in rural communities like his own. Inspired by his mother, he discovered a shared passion for providing others the confidence and skills to be self-reliant and independent.

Still frustrated by the waste in his community, Wasudev had an idea. He brought together his mother and a close friend in the local garment industry to brainstorm how they could tackle not only unemployment, but also women's rights and environmental protection. At 19, Wasudev founded Silaigram, a social impact startup aiming to provide sustainable livelihoods in rural parts of India.

Today, Silaigram has upcycled over a thousand kilos of textile waste taken from nearby garment factories, rerouting the waste from where it would have ended up: the ocean or a landfill. Instead, the team invites women in rural communities, many of whom are often excluded from formal economic opportunities, to earn independent livelihoods. Exploring their own artisan craft and creativity, the design team, now made up of a few dozen women, transforms the upcycled cloth into jholas, kurtis, and other clothing and accessories. The sustainable products are then sold online.

Recently, he stepped up to bring a youth voice in his local government, which has become especially important during the pandemic. He is serving on his Mayor's response taskforce, building a tech platform and verified communication channels to bring together changemakers across the world.

"[I've] improved the skill of empathy which helped me to connect better with my peers and people of my community. This also helped me to face the challenges and the obstacles I've come across."
Ashoka Young Changemakers respond to crisis

CHANGEMAKING DESPITE UNCERTAINTY

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, Wasudev and his team built a communications channel that has gathered over 100 organizations across sectors to support Covid-19 relief efforts, collaborating with local government to distribute thousands of food supplies and hygiene kits in Nagpur City.

Ideas to get Started

LEARNING CIRCLE
Facilitate a study group for people to make best use of online courses to advance their careers by gaining new skills, getting a raise, or shifting to a new field of work. The Peer to Peer University Facilitator Toolkit is a great place to start.

Learn more at p2pu.org

FINANCIAL LITERACY
Educate people through local media, live workshops or social media about financial literacy and wellbeing. Invite local experts to share their knowledge about taxes, saving, investing, accessing credit, and more. Ashoka Fellow Jeroo Billamoria’s organization Child Finance International has created a toolkit to get started.

Find out more at childfinanceinternational.org

ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT
Identify budding entrepreneurs business and social entrepreneurs in your area and create support systems for them through peer-learning and information about various grants, loans, challenges, etc. You can also work with your Mayor and local institutions to launch an incubator and to increase ease of business for small enterprises.

TUTORING, CARETAKING & CHANGEMAKING
Provide training and business connections for people to find gainful employment as tutors or caretakers while they are in between jobs. This could also be an opening for them to explore paid positions in the fast-growing Citizen Sector.
Start your changemaking journey now!

Read more stories about how other young people had a dream, built their team, and changed their world at:

ashoka.org/