



**freeland**

Promoting STEAM through participatory urban regeneration

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# Social impact



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## Description of the module:

This module explores how students can identify and address social issues in public spaces through observation, inquiry, and civic engagement. Focusing on inclusion, accessibility, and community values, the module empowers students to propose and implement real-world improvements using collaborative design, digital tools, and community involvement.

## Learning objectives:

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

- Identify social problems and usage patterns in a selected public space through guided observation.
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative data collected from fieldwork and community interviews.
- Design inclusive solutions that enhance the social value of a place.
- Create promotional materials using digital tools (e.g., Canva, Padlet, Google Slides).
- Present findings and proposals to peers, teachers, and community stakeholders.
- Evaluate feedback from the community to improve their civic engagement plan.
- Understand the importance of active citizenship, inclusion, and community-based problem-solving.

Methods that will be used:

## Inquiry & Research Methods

- Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) – student-led investigation following research steps
- Outdoor observation – place-based data collection on social use and problems
- Interviews with community members – gathering qualitative data and perspectives
- Visual documentation – using photos, sketches, or maps to capture observations

### **Collaborative & Reflective Methods**

- Circle Time discussion – structured group dialogue to explore values and problems
- Collaborative group work – students working in teams to share tasks and ideas
- Feedback collection and evaluation – improving ideas based on peer/community input

### **Analytical & Design Methods**

- Data analysis with graphs/tables – organizing and interpreting findings
- Co-creation and design thinking – developing inclusive, impactful solutions

### **Digital & ICT-Based Methods**

- Use of digital tools (e.g., Canva, Google Slides, Padlet) – for design and communication
- Use of digital platforms for sharing and promotion – publishing and engaging online

### **Communication & Engagement Methods**

- Peer and community presentations – presenting findings and proposals to others
- Event planning and implementation – organizing civic action and real-world events

**School subjects involved:** geography, sociology, art, ICT, language, mathematics, civic education, ethics

## Module duration and suggested time allocation

| Step  | Duration (hours) | Description of methods   |
|---|------------------|--|
| Step 1: Presentation of the place & problem discussion        | 2                | Guided walk or virtual tour to the place, circle time              |
| Step 2: Outdoor laboratories & research                       | 4-6              | Inquiry based learning, data analysis                              |
| Step 3: Designing   | 3-4              | Brainstorming, visualization of the potential changes, co-creation |
| Step 4: Data evaluation                                       | 2-3              | Participatory presentation, feedback session, reflection           |
| Step 5: Project delivery & civic engagement plan announcement | 4-6              | Event organization, creation of civic engagement plan              |

## Step by step template

### Step 1: Presentation of the place & problem discussion

In this step, the real-world problem of urban neglect is presented and conceptualised. The presentation/orientation should be in person (outdoor activity). The goal of this step is to describe the place in terms of problems and opportunities.

To identify the problem, a guided discussion utilizing the [Circle Time](#) tool is recommended. During the Circle Time activities, questions can be used to start the discussion.

**Duration:** 2 hours

#### **Activities and methods:**

**Suggested place:** A community square, playground, or neglected shared space in the neighborhood.

**Orientation:** On-site visit or virtual walkthrough. Students are guided to observe:

- Who uses the space and how?
- What groups are underrepresented?
- What makes the space welcoming or uninviting?

**Circle Time activity:**

- “How do you feel in this place?”
- “What social issues are visible or invisible here?”
- “Who might be excluded from using this space comfortably?”

Students record impressions, observations, and emerging questions in a shared group log to support IBL later.

### Tips & Tricks:

- Focus on emotional safety: not all students may be equally confident expressing opinions on inclusion or social tension.
- Avoid letting dominant voices take over the Circle Time; use talking objects or round-robin formats to give everyone space.

### Resources needed:

- Visual aids or physical access to the location
- Printed maps and drawing materials
- Circle Time prompts and facilitation guide
- Notebook or digital tool for collaborative note-keeping

**Cross-curricular links:** civic education, ethics, language, geography

## Step 2: Outdoor laboratories & research

One or more outdoor laboratories are proposed by the science teacher. The students investigate the selected indicators following the steps of [Inquiry Based Learning](#) and they begin to focus on the topics emerged during the first step (e.g. high temperature during the summertime, vegetation's wellbeing, pollution).

One student group will recreate the place virtually with the support of the [Platform](#), while other groups focus on data collection and analysis.

The groups compare the results and put them into the platform. The result is an output in the form of report, presentation or video, that can be evaluated by teachers following the school's evaluation grid.

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Activities and methods:**

This step follows Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), where students investigate the social dynamics of a place through real-world observation:

Students work in groups to:

- Observe behaviours (who is using the space, for what purpose)
- Identify patterns of exclusion or underuse
- Interview local users or passersby (with guiding questions)
- Document conditions that affect inclusivity or engagement (e.g., lack of seating, unsafe corners, language barriers on signs)

Students write hypotheses or questions based on their observations (e.g., “Does the design of the space discourage use by elderly people?”)

Examples of questions:

- *How often do you use this space?*
- *What do you usually do here?*
- *Do you feel comfortable in this space?*
- *What do you find most problematic or missing in this space?*
- *Who benefits most from this space? And who uses it the least?*
- *What changes would improve this space for you?*

No scientific lab tools are needed; the “laboratory” here is social interaction and public space usage.

**Tips & Tricks:**

- Roleplay or model the interview process before sending students into the field.
- Allow some flexibility for creative forms of data (photos, sketches, maps, audio diaries).

## What Is an Interview?

A structured conversation to collect personal insights. Best for **deeper, qualitative information** about how people experience the space.

## What Is a Survey?

A short set of standardized questions. Best for **quick, comparable data** from many people.

## Consent & Privacy (Essential Guidelines)

Students should:

- Introduce themselves and the school project.
- Ask for voluntary participation.
- Explain how responses will be used (anonymously).
- Avoid recording names or taking photos/audio without permission.
- Skip sensitive or intrusive questions.

## Resources needed:

- Clipboards, observation sheets
- Consent forms or scripts for citizen interviews
- Questionnaire (or other source of questions) for the interview
- Recording devices (phones, tablets)
- Facilitator to support group reflection

**Cross-curricular links:** sociology, civic education, language, media education

### Step 3: Designing

With the support of teachers, students think of possible solutions to the problems that have been conceptualised in previous steps.

The [Platform](#) is used to visualise the variations of the place (e.g. lowering of temperature, growth of different plants)

The project must impact on the social aspect of the place. The work must be inclusive, collecting different experiences and knowledge from native and foreign students and citizens (family members, stakeholders that follow the project).

Suggested projects: events to communicate the research results to citizens, actions to raise awareness on climate change, games or events that include different cultures, actions to revitalize the place.

**Duration:** 3-4 hours

#### **Activities and methods:**

Students analyse their collected observations using basic STEM tools:

- Categorize responses from interviews
- Create graphs (e.g., pie charts on who uses the space, bar graphs comparing time of day usage)
- Summarize patterns in tables (e.g., observed issues ranked by frequency)

Students collaboratively design solutions to enhance the social value of the space. Ideas may include:

- A quiet zone for intergenerational dialogue
- Inclusive games or cultural events
- Signage in multiple languages
- Accessibility improvements

- ...

The Platform is used to visualize the redesigned space.

### Tips & Tricks:

- Students may have uneven experience with data handling; scaffold data analysis with visual examples and templates or use tools that allow automatic data analysis (Office Forms, Google forms...).
- Emphasize that not all good solutions are physical—social and cultural programs count, too!

### Resources needed:

- Laptops or tablets with spreadsheet or graphing software
- Drawing materials or design platforms
- Templates for summarizing data
- Teacher guidance in data interpretation

**Cross-curricular links:** mathematics, ICT, civic engagement

## Step 4: Data Evaluation

This is a work-in-progress step where the project is proposed to peers, teachers or the local community in a participatory discussion. Schools are in charge of inviting citizens and stakeholders, collecting feedback and improving the final design of the project.

**Duration:** 2-3 hours

**Activities and methods:**

Students present their research and proposed redesign to classmates, teachers, and community members.

Presentations may include:

- Charts or posters summarizing findings
- A 3D or virtual model of the reimagined space
- Testimonies or short interviews from local users

Community members offer feedback through forms, discussion, or voting stations.

Students reflect and refine the project based on feedback.

**Tips & Tricks:**

- Prepare students to receive feedback positively.
- Use different interactive tools during discussions or feedback sessions (e.g. Kahoot!, Mentimeter, etc.).
- Consider anonymous voting for shy or younger participants.

**Example of peer evaluation:**

| Criteria                | Needs Improvement               | Developing             | Good                   | Excellent            |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Clarity of Presentation | Ideas are unclear or incomplete | Ideas are partly clear | Ideas are mostly clear | Ideas are very clear |

|                                   |                                  |                                |                                |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
|                                   |                                  |                                |                                | and well explained                                   |
| <b>Use of Data &amp; Evidence</b> | Little or no data used           | Some data used                 | Data supports ideas well       | Data is used effectively and convincingly            |
| <b>Response to Feedback</b>       | Feedback was ignored or rejected | Feedback was partly considered | Feedback was accepted and used | Feedback was fully integrated to improve the project |
| <b>Team Contribution</b>          | Uneven or minimal participation  | Some participation             | Active participation           | Strong, balanced collaboration                       |

#### Resources needed:

- Presentation boards or digital display tools
- Feedback forms (paper or digital)
- Moderation support for discussion

**Cross-curricular links:** language, art, civic education, ICT

### Step 5: Project delivery & civic engagement plan announcement

The students run the final project.

Schools with stakeholders propose a civic engagement plan or actions to solve the problems of the place through an approach based on actions, civic engagement and, if possible, urban regeneration principles.

Suggested civic engagement plan: *monthly a competition or photographic exhibition (or printed materials from the digital platform, designing material), books exchange, cultural exchanges in talks with experts, open air courses deals*

*with circular economy, project or artistic expositions on specific themes deal with sustainability, inclusion and renovation of the place.*

**Duration:** 4–6 hours (includes event and preparation)

**Activities and methods:**

Students implement part of the project or hold a Community Engagement Day, e.g.:

- Host an open-air event with music, food, storytelling, games
- Present a gallery of community stories or photo exhibit
- Offer multilingual signage or activity guides created by students

The Civic Engagement Plan is presented, such as:

- Monthly “Inclusive Saturdays” with board games, intergenerational stories, and cultural sharing
- A permanent “Open Bench” where strangers are encouraged to talk
- “Community Language Tree” where each leaf is a new word in another language contributed by a local resident

**Tips & Tricks:**

- Involve students in logistics and communication to build ownership.
- Use both creative/artistic and practical elements for visibility and impact.

**Resources needed:**

- Event setup supplies (tables, posters, sound)
- Printed materials from earlier steps
- Support from families, teachers, or local authorities



- Community invitation list
- Sponsors

**Cross-curricular links:** art, civic education, entrepreneurship

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## Additional reading materials:

Count possible additional learning materials stating the names and authors with link to the material

- [A Framework for Transforming Learning in Schools: Innovation and the Spiral of Inquiry](#), Helen Timperley, Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert
- [Global Citizenship in the Classroom](#), Oxfam toolkit
- [Field Guide to Human-Centered Design](#), IDEO.org
- [Data Literacy for Educators: Making it Count in Teacher Preparation and Practice](#), Ellen Mandinach and Edith Gummer
- [Guidebook on Education for Sustainable Development for Educators](#), UNESCO (ESD for 2030)

## Appendix:

- Laboratory “Noise detectives”
- Laboratory “How hot is your city?”

## Sources:

- Count all the sources used for the creation of this material:
- Pedaste, M. et al. (2015). Phases of inquiry-based learning: Definitions and the inquiry cycle. Educational Research Review.
- Mosley, J. (1993). Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom. LDA Publishing.
- DEO.org (2015). The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design.

- Brown, T. (2009). *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Creates New Alternatives for Business and Society*. Harvard Business Press.
- Jacoby, B. (2015). *Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons Learned*. Jossey-Bass.
- UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development framework (ESD for 2030).
- Beers, S. Z. (2011). *21st Century Skills: Preparing Students for THEIR Future*.
- Boss, S., & Krauss, J. (2014). *Reinventing Project-Based Learning: Your Field Guide to Real-World Projects in the Digital Age*. ISTE.