

# School Citizens Assemblies: A Practical Guide

Empowering pupils and communities to take action.

# School Citizen Assemblies (SCA)

SCA is new approach that supports the development of knowledge, understanding, higher order thinking, empathy, agency, communication and collaboration skills through real world learning.

The SCA empowers young people and communities to tackle complex challenges through a creative process of collaboration, critical thinking and compassion.

# Introduction to this Guidebook

## Purpose of this Guidebook

The aim of this Guide is to support teachers to design and deliver the School Citizen Assemblies (SCA) approach.

## How to read this Guidebook

Rather than seeing it as a linear document, skip ahead to the sections that are relevant to you. The document is intended to guide you through the planning process rather than prescribing each step. Just select the parts that work for you.

# Planning Considerations

What do you need to consider before  
starting the SCA process

# Planning Considerations

What to consider  
when planning,  
designing and  
delivering your  
SCA

01

Explore the guides and decide how best to connect the SCA to your curriculum and year groups.

02

Review how the SCA could enhance the educational outcomes for your students and school. Identify any teaching and practical constraints.

03

Select your broad design challenge, the experts who could support the process and the activities relating to each stage. (select type of SCA/Guide).

04

Develop a SCA plan outlining the schedule for experts talks, activities, delivery dates and actions.

05

Introduce the pupils to the Design Challenge and SCA process.

# FAQs

How do I connect a SCA to my curriculum?

Where do I start?

How do I select a challenge topic?

Will an SCA work in my school or class?

How do I engage with stakeholders?

Will I have time to do this?

Is an SCA a form of citizen assembly?

Which Activity Guide would work best?

# FAQs -ANSWERS

There are many ways to embed the SCA into your school curriculum (see the SCA guides). You can also connect the SCA to different subject areas and interdisciplinary projects.

While the SCA pilot is based around the challenge of climate change, you can select any challenge area or issue that connects to your curriculum and interests.

The SCA is very flexible and adaptable to your class and school curriculum. You can decide how to design your SCA depending on your needs (Select the Activity Guide that suits your needs from Introductory to Extended Activities and the Generic Skills Guide for more details).

You can select how long you wish to allocate to developing and running a SCA. This could range from a simple SCA (over a day or a week) or something more advanced (over a term or embedded into the curriculum over the whole year). It's completely up to you.

You can also decide to what extent you engage with experts and stakeholders and how. From desk based research, videos and online talks, to more in-person based connections, or visits.

The SCA is more than a traditional citizen assembly. It is excellent for assembling pupils, schools, experts, stakeholders and communities to work together to tackle complex problems.

# Learning Design Principles

Principles to guide **how to design** your  
student learning experiences

# Learning Design Principles

Here are some useful principles to keep in mind when designing an SCA.

<b>Iteration, Empathy &amp; Co-design</b>	SCAs tackle complex local and global problems through an iterative co-design process of divergent and convergent thinking. They seek to engage with experts, stakeholders and communities.
<b>Adaptable/Flexible</b>	SCAs are adaptable and flexible to your needs.
<b>Knowledge, Skills &amp; Interdisciplinary</b>	SCAs assemble knowledge, skills and understanding from a diverse range of young people, experts and stakeholders.
<b>Deep &amp; Real World Learning</b>	SCAs provide real world learning and authentic experiences for pupils. These can be very engaging and empowering for learners.

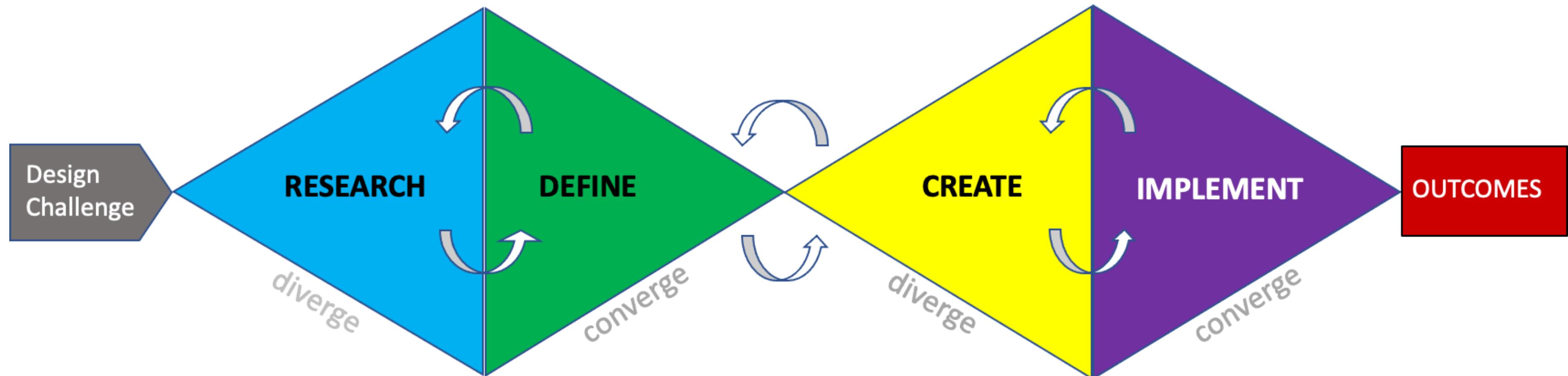
# How It Works

A practical **step by step guide** to each stage

The SCA Activity Guides provide more details and examples of the SCA process.

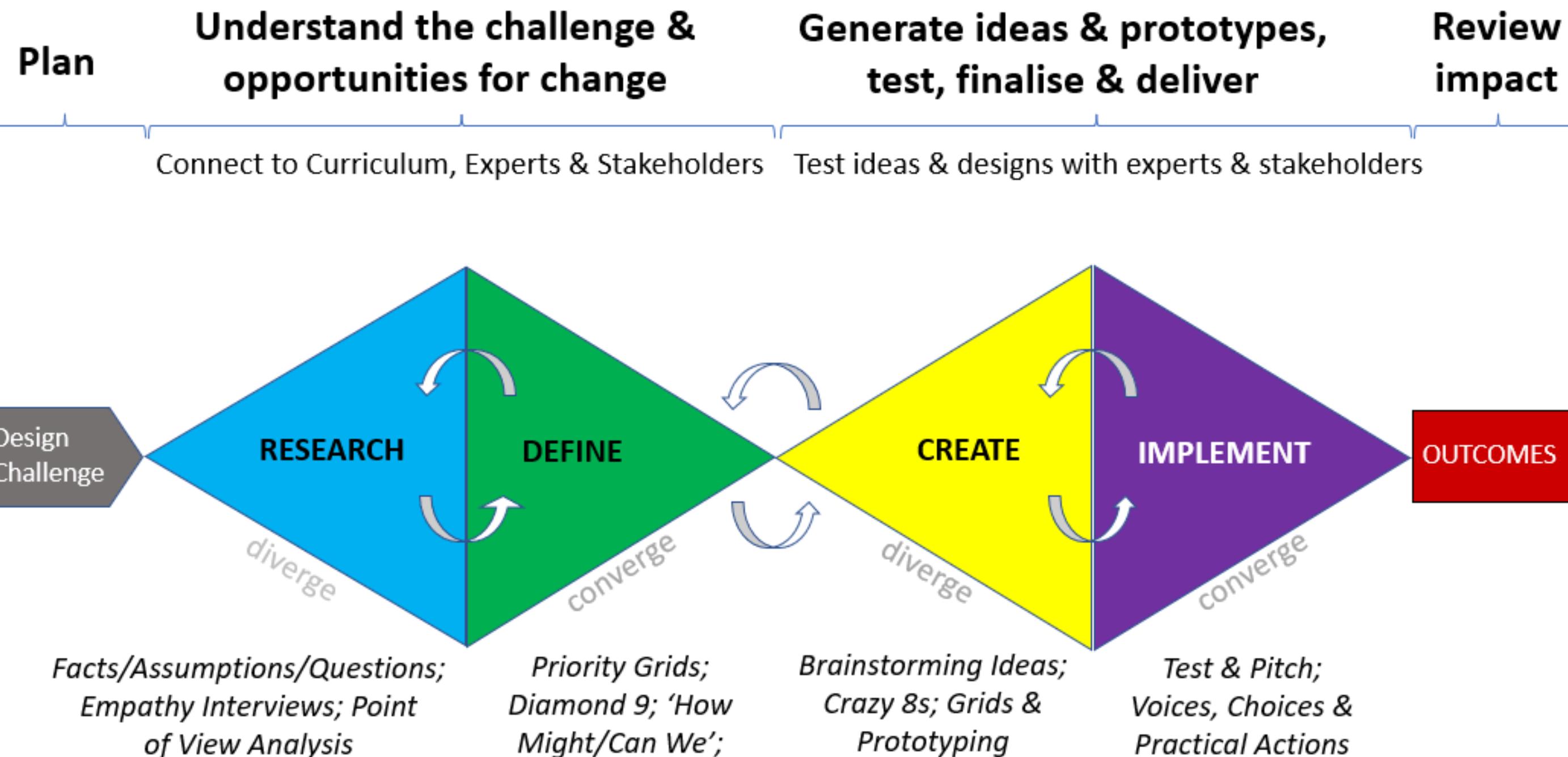
We use the term 'students' in this document to reflect any form of learner.

# SCA Challenge Process



# SCA Challenge Process (Steps & Activities)

## SCA CHALLENGE PROCESS



# SCA Process

Following the initial planning process there are five main stages. These will be outlined in the following pages.

The **SCA Activity Guides** will provide more detail about each stage and an example of implementing an SCA based around Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Select the **Activity Guide** (Introductory/Core/Extended) depending how detailed you wish your SCA to be.

# Do you begin with a Global or Local Challenge?

Do you wish to move directly onto learning about and tackling a local challenge (connected to a specific issue), or do you plan to set the scene for the local challenge by reviewing a broader set of issues or global context?

Go to **Step 1**, if you wish to increase student engagement, empathy and understanding of the wider context by setting the scene with a broader set of issues or global challenges (see the SCA Activity Guides for examples). Then move onto the local challenge (Step 2).

Alternatively, if you wish to go directly to the local challenge and focus more specifically on how to use your voices, choices and actions to make a difference, then move onto **Step 2**. You can still connect this to your subjects, curriculum areas and wider issues as you review the local challenge.

Timescales, learning outcomes and how different curriculum areas connect to the challenges can impact on this decision. You may also wish to start with a simple and focused local challenge for your first SCA, before moving onto a more embedded one next time.

# Select a Global or Wider Challenge (optional)

## Prompting Questions

What challenge would you like to focus on?  
How can you connect it to your curriculum?  
Do you want to provide some introductory information about the challenge?  
What learning outcomes do you wish to develop through the SCA? What is the timescale? Who will be involved?

## Aims & Process

Meet with the teaching staff involved in the SCA planning process.  
Select a challenge that is neither too broad or too narrow.  
Reflect on the resources and/or experts who could aid the learning and engagement process

## Activities

**Select the Challenge Focus:** Teachers often select the challenge focus. By including the students in this process, student engagement can be increased. However, this may make it more tricky to link the challenge to the current curriculum and broader learning outcomes. You can also use other experts to support the process, or ask the students to begin researching the issues. This can help with preparing for certain activities and increase engagement. Or you may select a story, videos, stakeholder account, poem, artwork, etc., to initially engage the students with the issues.

# Select a Local or Specific Challenge

## Prompting Questions

What is the focus for your local challenge (is it linked to the school, local community or another area of interest)?  
How does it connect to your curriculum?  
How much time will be allocated to the SCA process? Who will be involved?

## Aims

As in the Global/Broad Challenge Stage, but focusing on a local challenge.  
Select a specific challenge where the students can develop an understanding of the problems and solutions linked to voices, choices and/or practical actions.

## Activities

Select the local challenge focus. Don't worry about conducting extensive prior research. You may decide to teach them some related knowledge and skills (that links to the challenge). However, the students will also be developing their understanding of the challenge by exploring different areas of the curriculum, as well as expert and stakeholder knowledge. While you will support the process of research and discovery, this can be a joint endeavour. You may also decide to support them in other ways by developing knowledge, skills and empathy through a variety of activities.

# Step 1A - Research Global Challenge (optional)

## Prompting Questions

Which activities do you plan to use to understand the challenge in more detail? How can you draw on expert and stakeholder knowledge? How can you develop a greater empathy, compassion and understanding of diversity and different views?

## Aims and Processes

Select the relevant activities and the time allocated for each activity. Set the scene for the challenge. Embed and implement the activities to support the development of knowledge, empathy and understanding of the issues. Connect the broader issues to the local challenge

## Activities

**Expert and/or Stakeholder Research** – use different activities to provide the students with a greater understanding, empathy and a diversity of views connected to the challenge (direct teaching, videos, talks,, stories, accounts, images, artwork, etc..). Use in person, digital, or desk based forms.

**Capture, Label and Theme the issues** – You can also use the Facts, Assumptions, Questions activity.

**Additional Research and Stakeholder activities** to understand the issues in more depth. Mind maps can also provide a way to visualise connections between problems, issues, and/or solutions.

# Step 1B - Research Local Challenge

## Prompting Questions

Which activities do you plan to use to understand the challenge in more detail? How can you draw on expert and stakeholder knowledge? How can you develop a greater empathy, compassion and understanding of diversity and different views?

## Aims

Select the relevant activities and the time allocated for each activity. Set the scene for the challenge.  
Embed and implement the activities to support the development of knowledge, empathy and understanding of the issues.

## Activities

**Expert and/or Stakeholder Research** – use different activities to provide the students with a greater understanding, empathy and a diversity of views connected to the challenge (direct teaching, videos, talks,, stories, accounts, images, artwork, etc..). In person, digital, or in a desk based form.

**Capture, Label and Theme Issues** – facts, assumptions, and questions activity.

**Additional Research and Stakeholder activities** to understand the issues in more depth. Extended activities can include observation and empathy interviews depending on the challenge. Mind maps can also provide a way to visualise connections between problems, issues, and/or solutions.

# Step 2 - Problem Definition: Prioritise & How Might We?

## Prompting Questions

Which activities will you use to help the students narrow down their focus and select which problems to concentrate on? How can they prioritise which problems to focus on – what criteria and activities will they use?

## Aims

Select and implement the activities you will use to assemble and analyse the problems and prioritise the focus for the challenge.

Redefine the challenge (you can use HMW statements to help with this process)

## Activities

Select the 'Problem Analysis' and priority activities you wish to use.

Make sure you have a clear set of problems you wish to tackle (on pieces of paper/post its).

Select from the different activities (priority lines, Diamond 9, priority grids and How Might We).

How Might We (HMW) activities can provide a creative way to rethink the problems and direct the challenge in specific ways., while the other activities focus more on prioritising defined problems.

You can select one or more activities depending on the time you have allocated for this stage.

# Step 3 - Ideation: Brainstorming and Developing Ideas

## Prompting Questions

Which activities will you use to help the students think through new ideas and develop creative solutions connected to their challenge?

## Aims & Processes

Select and implement the activities you will use to help with brainstorming ideas and developing new solutions to specific problems.

## Activities

There are a range of activities to help develop creative and divergent thinking and assist them to generate ideas to tackle the challenge.

**How Might We Analysis and Statements** can be very useful to help think about the problem in different ways and develop new ideas and thinking around the challenge.

You can use the **Capture, Label and Theme** activity if you wish to group ideas and **priority lines or grids** can help with selecting between different options. See the SCA Guides for more activities.

# Step 4 - Implementation: From Prototypes to Actions

## Prompting Questions

Which activities will you use to help the students implement their ideas in terms of voices, choices or practical actions?

How can they prototype, test and pitch their ideas and thinking?

## Aims

Produce simple and draft forms of the ideas (as prototypes).

Pitch and Test these with others.

Implement the final product/s.

## Activities

There are many different ways that the students can implement actions to make a difference with regards to the challenge. They may wish to use their voices to inspire change, support stakeholders to make different choices, or assist change through practical actions. Some ideas may also include all three aspects.

You may find others connected to the challenge area who are willing to support the implementation of change activities.

# Step 5 - Outcomes and Evaluation

## Prompting Questions

What are different learning outcomes connected to the SCA process?  
How can the students impact on the challenge area and make a difference?  
How can you collect the work produced by the learners during the SCA process?

## Aims & Processes

Assess the learning outcomes for students engaged in the SCA process.  
Assess the outcomes for different stakeholders connected to the challenge area.

## Activities

Evaluate the connections between your SCA, subject areas, the National Curriculum and wider learning outcomes.  
Use different activities to assess the impact your actions have had on the challenge area.  
Develop ways of collecting student output from the SCA activities and process.

# Next Steps

The Activity Guides provide three different examples of implementing a SCA:

- **Introductory SCA Guide** - this guide provides an overview of a simple SCA design with a basic set of activities and an example.
- **Core SCA Guide** - this guide takes you through some additional activities and examples to implement a SCA.
- **Extended SCA Guide** - the most comprehensive SCA guide opens up a selection of a wide range of activities at each stage. You can also put together your own version by developing a simple SCA to suit your needs (by selecting and combining different extended activities at various stages).

You can also use the **Generic SCA Skills Guide (GS)** and the **Empathy Interviews Guide** for more support, examples and templates