

Help Your Community

Could biomimicry help solve a challenge in your community? Use the ideas below to identify problems to solve or issues you might want to improve.

For example, you might live in an area where spring rains often flood neighborhood streets and sidewalks, making your shoes wet on the way to school or work.



Basic Challenge

Think about issues that challenge you and others in your community. Make a list and show it to your friends and family and gather more ideas. Who is affected by each of the challenges? Which of the challenges is most important to you? Which impacts the most people in your community?

Once you have identified a challenge you want to solve, some things to think about might be:

- Who are the people who would be most affected by or interested in solving this challenge?
- What is a simple explanation of the impact you want to have or the function you want to achieve? Focus on a verb - what you want your design to do - not on something to make. For example:
 - We want to find a safe path to get to school.
 - We want to move extra water off the streets.
 - We want to reduce the use of single-use plastic at our school.
- Try filling in the question below with a description of what your design should do (its function). How might we _____?
Examples:
 - How might we prevent stormwater from flowing into the street?
 - How might we keep our shoes dry in wet conditions?
- What does success look like?
- What are the limitations you need to consider (time, cost, space, etc.).



Here are some other ways to identify a challenge:

A New Perspective

Imagine someone in your community. Describe them — their location, abilities and disabilities, the job they do, what they do for fun, etc. Describe the needs that person might have to live the life they want. What challenges might that person face?

Observation challenge

Go to a place that is visited by your neighbors, family, and friends, like the local library, a park, the grocery store, or a bus stop. Watch people for 20 minutes and try to identify challenges they might be facing. Are some people facing more or different challenges than others? Is everyone facing some of the same challenges?

Take inventory

Make a list of the tasks or jobs that you do in your community (at home, at school, etc.). What functions are you serving? Who benefits? Think about ways you might approach those tasks differently. What might make it easier to complete those tasks?

