Design for Change
Cardboard Challenge
Playbook

GLOBAL CARDBOARD CHALLENGE
INSPIRED BY CAINE’S ARCADE
Design for Change & Imagination Foundation

Design for Change (DFC) is a global movement of young people who believe that change is possible and they can drive it.

Through a simple four step methodology:

**feel • imagine • do • share**

a framework rooted in design thinking, educators and students are empowered to create positive changes in their schools and communities. Through the DFC experience, young people build their character and strengthen key 21st century skills.

Since its inception in 2009, DFC has reached students in over 40 countries, received over 18,000 stories of change, and has impacted over 2 million children with the spirit of ‘I CAN’.

In 2015, both DFC and the Imagination Foundation were named Champions in the LEGO and Ashoka challenge to “Re-imagine Learning.” Because of their similar values and goals, they joined forces in 2016 to present a special “DFC Global Cardboard Challenge”!
Background
Inspired by the short film, ‘Caine’s Arcade’, the Global Cardboard Challenge is an annual event presented by the Imagination Foundation to celebrate child creativity and the role communities can play in fostering it. In September, kids of all ages are invited to build anything they can dream up using cardboard, recycled materials and imagination. Then on October 1, 2016, communities will come together and play!

Since 2012, the Global Cardboard Challenge has impacted over 500,000 participants from more than 60 countries, including Australia, Bosnia, China, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Visit here to read reflections from past cardboard challenge organizers, and here here to watch select participant videos.

Why is the Cardboard Challenge important?
The Global Cardboard Challenge gives children an opportunity to explore their imaginations and unleash their natural creative talents. As they design and build, they engage in a simple learning process called Creative Play. It teaches valuable 21st century skills like critical thinking, resourcefulness, perseverance, and collaboration. It also brings communities together to foster and celebrate child creativity!
What is Creative Play?

Creative Play begins with inspiration and culminates in the sharing of an original artifact made by the child using whatever tools and materials are available. In this process, kids open up their minds to what’s possible, take chances, solve problems, collaborate and become better creative thinkers and doers. These are the critical “21st century skills” the whole world is talking about.

inspire
It starts with wonder
Stories, new experiences, and child interest get kids excited about learning, exploring and making. Curiosity and wonder kickstart creativity. Watching and discussing the video, “Caine’s Arcade,” is often a great place to start.

imagine
Tap into divergent thinking
Think of new possibilities and explore wild ideas – the sky’s the limit. Encourage kids to share ideas (no matter how wacky) in a group setting because this can unearth new and even better ideas. Optimism is key here, and anything is possible. You can start to sketch out designs and mix-and-match ideas. Freely play with materials to get further inspired.

build
Just build it!
Work with physical materials to build whatever you can imagine. Take one great idea, or combine a few, and make a project out of it. Keep a record of the different things you try. It’s about using materials and tools, about making, constructing, measuring, cutting... Take note of challenges (e.g., maybe the idea doesn’t work in real life the way you first thought). Recognize constraints and work to overcome them.

play
Test the limits
Interact with your own and others’ creations to see what works and what could be even better. Provide suggestions to each other for ways to modify the various artifacts to make them work better. Iterate and tinker within an environment of playful experimentation.

share
Reflect on learning
Document your process through stories, pictures, and video, and share what you’ve made in a meaningful public context. This can be with family and friends, other Challenge participants, or online. Ask for and receive feedback for your work. Let your work inspire others.

Though decades of research supports the power of Creative Play, it’s important to remember it’s a natural process for children, requiring few resources and little facilitation. Just prepare yourself for a big mess!
Introduction to FIDS

Design for Change believes that all children are designers of change. DFC uses a four step methodology rooted in design thinking to provide a simple and easy framework to help young people do good: **Feel, Imagine, Do, Share**

![Feel](image)
Young people observe and list the issues in their community that bother them.

![Imagine](image)
They interact with folks in their community to identify points of intervention and possible solutions.

![Do](image)
They develop and implement a plan of action, keeping in mind resources, budget, time and skills.

![Share](image)
They share the story of change and inspire others to get involved or start their own project.

It can sometimes be daunting for young people to first understand what they care about and then to do something about it. Feel, Imagine, Do, Share (FIDS) provides a clear and simple framework for young people to begin, by showing empathy to themselves and those around them in the Feel stage, brainstorming possible solutions in the Imagine stage, iterating and implementing their ideas in the Do stage and finally showcasing and inspiring others in the Share stage.

Though both Creative Play and FIDS highlight empathy in the creative process, FIDS makes it a special focal point of the Feel stage. Therefore, empathy is a highlight of this special Design for Change version of the Cardboard Challenge!
**What is the DFC Cardboard Challenge?**

The Design for Change (DFC) Cardboard Challenge is an opportunity to approach cardboard creativity through the lens of FIDS. This approach highlights empathy (Feel) in the creative process. To accomplish this, the DFC Cardboard Challenge incorporates certain “constraints” that are designed to ramp up a child’s feelings in the creative process, increasing their resourcefulness, patience, and reliance on each other.

**“Constraints” of the DFC Cardboard Challenge**

The DFC Cardboard Challenge will include a list of special “constraints” to increase a child’s empathy, resourcefulness and overall creativity. These constraints are primarily focused on limiting a child’s mobility, and include the following. Feel free to choose one or more from the list as you see fit, or offer each child a choice. Keep in mind how much time you have, the ratio of children to adults (it’s harder to facilitate with fewer adults!), and the age of the children:

1. Participant will be blindfolded
2. Participant must constrain one hand to pocket
3. Participant must use limited resources e.g., limited cardboard or tape
4. Participant can’t talk
5. Participant can’t use scissors

Note: you are not limited to these constraints. Please feel free to come up with constraints of your own.

The goal isn’t to police these constraints or demand a child follow them rigorously; rather, to have children try their best and reflect on the struggles, challenges and opportunities they present. Encourage patient reflection and, most of all, fun.
3 Design for Change Cardboard Challenge Examples

Here are a few different scenarios to help you think about your DFC Cardboard Challenge. But remember: the DFC Cardboard Challenge can happen anywhere and every event is different, so just have fun, be creative and make it your own!
The Uplift After School Program Build Mock Shelters

Super Simple, Little Prep

Location: School Gym

Duration: Three hours after school

Participants: 5-10 students and afterschool teachers/mentors

Teachers from the Uplift After School Program first hear about the Design for Change Cardboard Challenge through an online newsletter. They register to participate in the Oct 1st event and begin by gathering all the necessary materials: cardboard, scissors, tape and markers. They start to inform students about the Design for Change Cardboard Challenge, the rules, the parameters, the themes, and the methodology informed by the Cardboard Challenge Playbook.

They host the Cardboard challenge for students in the school gym where there is lots of space. Students work in teams of 2-3 to identify a problem in the community they care about and build a solution using the materials provided. However, there is a twist. Each student must place one hand behind their back or in their pocket for the duration of the challenge. This helps them build empathy and encourages them to work together as a team to accomplish the task at hand.

Students choose to focus on homelessness in the community, working together to build mock shelters. They are so inspired they decide to share their project at a parent teacher event at the school later the same week. They also post pictures and videos chronicling their experience creating a cardboard masterpiece.
Mid-Size, School-based involving children who have exposure to service

Location: Classroom

Duration: Three days, 1-2 hours per day during the school day
Day 1: Exploring problems from the community perspective (Feel)
Day 2: Brainstorming project and implementing solution (Imagine and Do)
Day 3: Sharing cardboard construction with the rest of the group (Share)

Participants: 25-35 students and afterschool teachers/mentors

On day 1, Ms.Till and teachers across multiple disciplines introduce the DFC Cardboard Challenge to their students. They download the DFC Cardboard Challenge Playbook and show the film “Caine’s Arcade.” They use the film as inspiration, breaking it down into the design thinking elements: Feel, Imagine, Do, and Share. Ms.Till invites a few members of the community to speak with the students. During class time, students work together to determine strengths and challenges of their community by directly interacting with those who live in it.

Students work with community members again on the second day to identify a problem they would like to solve using cardboard. They break out into groups and begin to think about a limitation that would make it challenging to execute their cardboard creation e.g., they can’t see, they can’t use scissors etc. By including a constraint, the students build awareness, empathy, problem solving and creative thinking skills. With the constraints in mind, students begin to brainstorm possible solutions and put them into action. Finally, students construct, prototype and iterate on their solution using the materials provided. They solicit feedback from each other and continue to refine and reflect on their designs.

On day 3, Ms.Till and her class organize a cardboard structure showcase and invite community members, parents, faculty and students to see the cardboard solutions. Students have the opportunity to talk about what they learned, and how they were able to transform the community and themselves.
**YMCA of Greater Lakes County Celebrate Empathy**

**Larger Scale, Community Based Event, Youth Program**

**Location:** Youth Center

**Duration:** Three weeks, 2 hours/week during evenings or weekends  
Week 1: Exploring problems from the community perspective (Feel)  
Week 2: Brainstorming project and implementing solution (Imagine and Do)  
Week 3: Sharing cardboard construction with the rest of the community (Share)

**Participants:** 50-75 students and afterschool teachers/mentors + 50 members of the community who attend

During the first week, mentors from the YMCA are notified about the Cardboard Challenge from their head office. They sign up to take part and download the Cardboard Challenge Playbook. They create an online invite and RSVP system along with a Facebook page to promote the event. They choose to host the event in the YMCA community Center inviting other staff members and students from neighboring youth programs to participate.

During the second week, mentors source all necessary materials by working with local grocery stores and recycling plants. Students spend the first hour talking about issues in the community they’d like to solve. They pick one problem to move forward with and brainstorm possible solutions. In preparation of the Cardboard Challenge, mentors have outlined a series of constraints students must pick from when executing their project e.g., blindfold, no talking, not allowed to touch materials but can provide instruction and feedback.

The third week is here and the main event kicks off. Students begin to work in teams to construct their solutions using cardboard and recycled materials. Students take time to share their creations with other teams, then YMCA mentors lead students through a reflection discussion to talk about how it felt to have a constraint, how they were able to work together, and how this exercise applies to everyday life.
Both Imagination Foundation and Design for Change are proud to be named Champions in the LEGO Foundation and Ashoka’s challenge to “Re-imagine Learning”.  

#Play2Learn  

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#CardboardChallenge #DFC  

cardboardchallenge.com/designforchange