

# Crafting Your Mission Statement

**Change  
Lab!**  
WORKSHEET

# Crafting Your Mission Statement

The purpose of a mission statement is to tell other people why you exist and what you plan to accomplish. The core elements it must contain are:

- 1 The problem
- 2 Your method of change
- 3 Scope of change

To give you some additional perspective and information on why mission statements are important, please [read this article](#) from Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR).

As the article discusses “Mission creep can stretch an organization so thin and so far that it can no longer effectively pursue its goals. In the private sector, it would seem preposterous for a coffee-roasting company to jump into the biotech business or to start manufacturing baseball gloves. Yet nonprofits routinely extend their operations in equivalent ways—they expand their programs far beyond their organizational scope and far beyond their core competencies—and no one raises an eyebrow.”

In much the same way, we at Change Better believe its critical when you’re starting your organization to take the time to craft your mission. But its also important for organizations to re-evaluate their mission and vision statements, and their theory of change, when they’re going through Strategic Planning process, or re-assessing other big picture goals.

This mission worksheet will walk you through the process, and give you a practical breakdown of how to address this, no matter when you are in your organization’s lifecycle.

## Step 1

### Mission Statement Formula Breakdown

Let’s break down these core elements of the Mission Statement Formula, so you can better understand the components, and implement them for your organization’s mission statement formula.

## 1 The problem

First you need to craft the problem that you're trying to solve. This is probably obvious to you, as its likely *why* you started your work in the first place. But how you craft that is important so that other people can be motivated by the *why* just like you.

You need to craft a statement that fully explains the issues that your work is addressing, and it's important to craft it with numbers, statistics, and comprehensive background knowledge - which lends credibility to the scope of the problem, and why it needs addressing now. These statistics should include information such as: % of population involved, scope of problem in numbers or %, a rate of affected (who this problem includes), size/scope of audience that this solution has the potential to help.

### Example of problem statement without numbers

Environmental Club at a High School: *To reduce the carbon footprint of my school, and have it operate as a green and sustainable school going forward.*

You understand what the club is trying to address, and to an extent why someone started this initiative.

### Example of problem statement with numbers

From Shining Hope for Communities: *In Kibera, Africa's largest slum, 66% of girls routinely trade sex for food by the age of 16, and many begin as early as six years old. Only 8% of all girls in Kibera ever have the chance to go to school. 1 in 5 children do not live to see their fifth birthday.*

With this statement you BOTH understand what the work is trying to address, AND you understand the scope of the problem with basic facts and why others should care as well.

## 2 Method of Change

This component of the Mission Statement Formula talks about your organization's unique approach to the problem and *how* you are going to change this problem.

This is your **theory of change**, and it incorporates the outcomes of your unique programs and structure.

It should include **measurable goals**, and your organization's **core philosophy of change**.



### Example from Shining Hope for Communities

We combat intergenerational cycles of poverty and gender inequality by linking tuition-free schools for girls to essential social services in Kenya’s Kibera slum through a holistic, community-driven approach. By concretely linking essential health and economic services to a school for girls, we demonstrate that benefiting women benefits the whole community, cultivating a community ethos that makes women respected members of society.

Take a look at [this helpful resource](#) from The Bridgespan Group on Theory of Change and Intended Impact.

## 3 Scope of Change

This piece of the mission statement formula should answer *how much* you are helping.

You’ll note that a lot of organizations don’t answer this directly in their mission statement, but it’s important to think about the scope of what you are setting out to change. This is where you can bring in a specific metric of success and/or goals for what you plan to accomplish. It can also encompass a region or demographic that you are hoping to change, rather than specific numbers of projected impact.

# Step 2

## Let’s Look at Examples

**Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL)** *To provide education, training, and health services to vulnerable Afghan women and children in order to foster self-reliance, critical thinking skills, and community participation throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan.*

### **Mission Statement Formula Breakdown**

**The problem** “services to vulnerable Afghan women and children”

**The method of change** “to provide education, training, and health services”

**Scope of Change** “in order to foster self-reliance, critical thinking skills, and community participation throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan”



### Other examples from nonprofits

**DoSomething.org** As the largest not-for-profit exclusively for young people and social change, DoSomething's millions of members represent every US area code and 131 countries. Using our digital platform, DoSomething members join our volunteer, social change, and civic action campaigns to make real-world impact on causes they care about.

**Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO)** combats gender inequality and extreme poverty in urban slums by linking tuition free schools for girls to holistic social services for all.

**The Thirst Project** The Thirst Project is a nonprofit organization that works with the support of young people to end the global water crisis by building freshwater wells in developing communities that need safe, clean drinking water. Why Water? Health and Sanitation: Waterborne diseases kill more children every single year than HIV, Malaria, and all world violence combined. Small children typically do not have strong enough immune systems to fight diseases like cholera, dysentery, or schistosomiasis. By providing a community with safe drinking water, disease rates can drop by up to 88% virtually overnight.

### Other examples from corporations

**Bristol-Myers Squibb Company** (pharmaceuticals): To discover, develop, and deliver innovative medicines that help patients prevail over serious diseases.

**Walgreens** (drugstores): To be the most trusted, convenient multichannel provider and advisor of innovative pharmacy, health and wellness solutions, and consumer goods and services in communities across America.

**Nike** To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.

## Step 3

### Craft Your Mission Statement

Now that you understand the core formula of an effective mission statement, draft your own here. If your organization already has a mission statement, analyze it against the key components above and determine how it can be improved. Don't be afraid of this task, it's a first draft or a refinement that we'll continue to work on and develop.

*Remember this formula:*

**describe  
the problem** + **describe  
your method  
of change** + **describe  
your scope  
of change**

**Write your mission statement here:**

**Workshopping your mission statement** Share your mission statement crafting with a wide audience to workshop and get feedback. See if it resonates with staff, beneficiaries, Board members, supporters, and keep workshopping the language and the setup until it feels right.

**Here are some ideas of helpful groups to get feedback from**

- Your team, your staff, your core volunteers
- Your program participants, or organizational beneficiaries
- Your board members and advisory committee
- Other nonprofit leaders in your network who have also been through this process
- The Change Lab team at Change Better –we’re here to help!  
[lab@changebetter.org](mailto:lab@changebetter.org) / [www.changebetter.org](http://www.changebetter.org)

Here are some additional resources and suggested reading if you want to dive into this topic further

- [How to Create an Effective Non-Profit Mission Statement](#)
- [Mission Matters Most](#)
- [Foundation Center Webinar on crafting your mission statement  
Defining Mission and Vision](#)