

THE WICKED 7



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The Wicked7 Project is a collaborative project co-founded by Philip Kotler and Christian Sarkar. The project invites intellectual and creative contribution from individuals, institutions, businesses, and governments. Please don't submit an entry if you are in a country that could get you in trouble with your local laws. Anyone is eligible to submit their ideas. The entries should be legible and no larger than 1 MB in size (jpegs are preferred). All entries must be in English. If we use a part of the whole of your submission you will be credited as a participant, and your name listed as part of the final work. There are no financial rewards. All submissions are licensed as Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) (CC BY) - see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

More info: www.wicked7.org

As the world faces a growing number of existential challenges, our governments and institutions are failing us precisely at the moment we need them most.

But what if we could come together to *map the causes* of the world's **most urgent problems**? The Wicked7 Project is an extension of the [ecosystem of wicked problems](#) developed by **Christian Sarkar** and **Philip Kotler**.

Participants will be introduced to a new wicked-problem discovery tool, and asked to create their own **cause and effect maps** for the problem or problems they choose.

All maps submitted will be judged by peers as well as a team of judges. Those selected will be acknowledged as contributors to the **"wicked-pedia"** – a reference map which integrates all seven wicked problems and the underlying causes.

Get Started

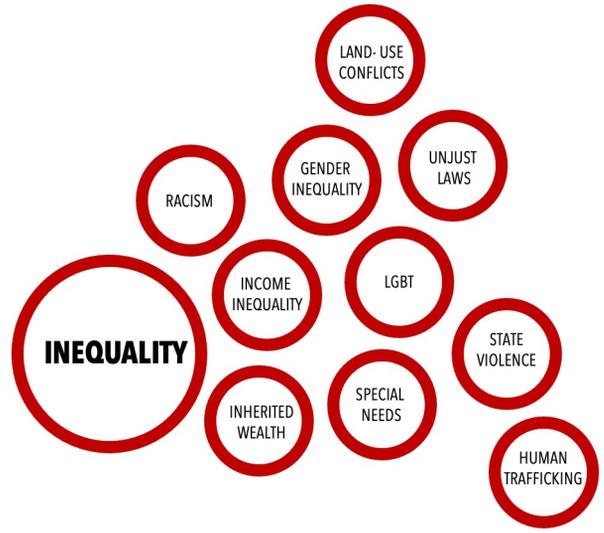
1. Read the rest of this guideline.
2. Start **research** and the **mapping process**.
3. Submit your problem map for critique and review at <https://www.digital-cosmos.com/wicked-7/> (registration required)
4. Make changes; submit your **revised map**.
5. Stay connected – if any part or the whole of your map is selected, you will be invited to participate further.

Rewards

What can you win? Nothing, except **recognition** from future generations – and the gratitude of a dying planet.



Mr. Peanut, by [Clark Fox](#)



MAPPING THE CAUSES & EFFECTS

Begin with the problem. Try to define it clearly – in this case it's *Inequality*

Break down the problem into smaller, component problems. List them all.

Start asking **WHY** for each of the component problems: Ask why is this happening? What are the root causes? Keep asking *why* (remember the 5whys?). This process should give you the technical reasons why a problem is happening.

Now let's look at **systemic** reasons. Ask what possible systemic reasons could have caused the problem – going back in time. History often holds the key to how and why a problem started as a chain of events and actions.

Ask: what happens next if we do nothing? This will give you some sense of the future, especially when you examine the systemic effects one by one.

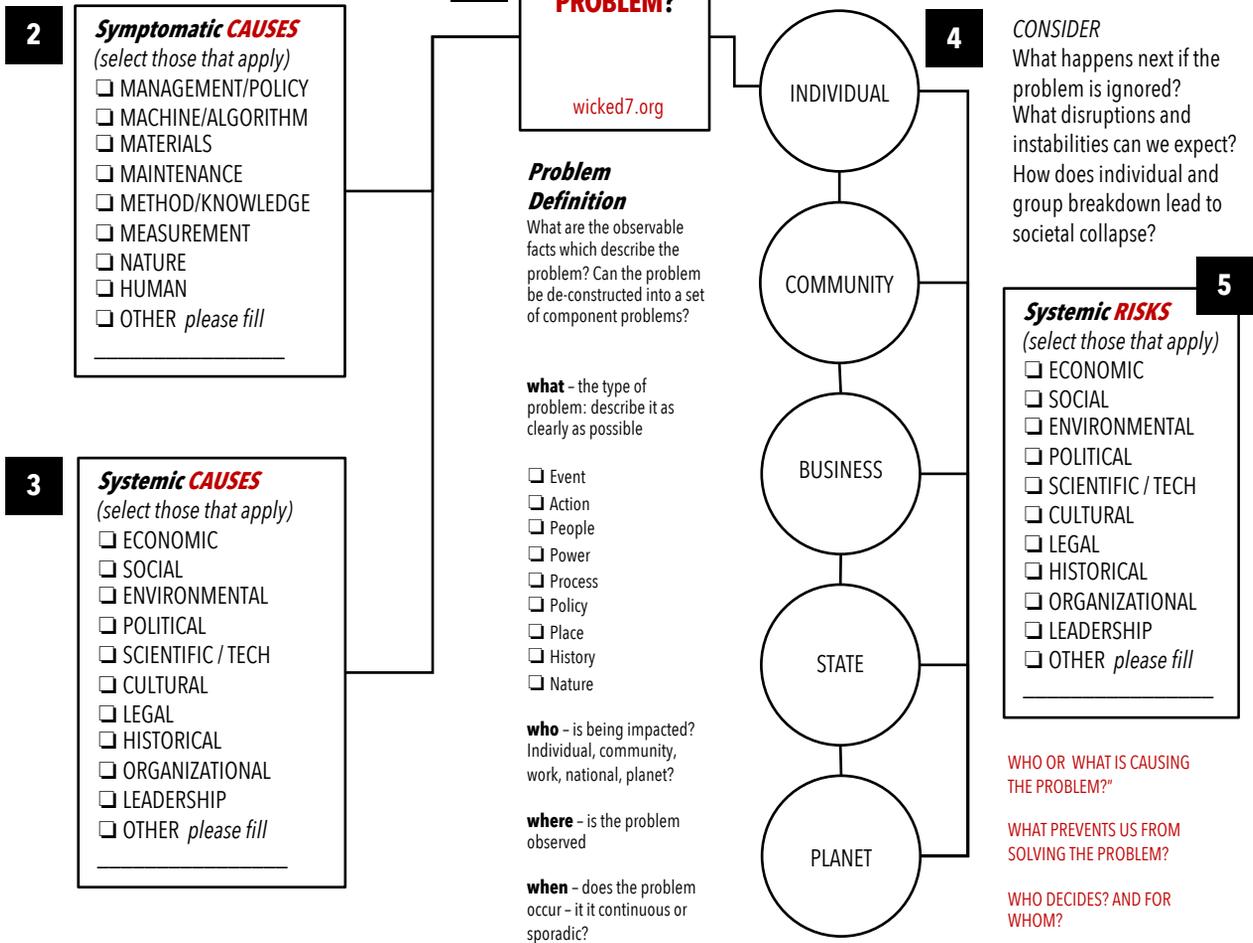
WICKED PROBLEM #2 (W2) INEQUALITY

Submission phase starts on May 1st, and will be open until May 31st, so be sure to *sign up*, and get involved!

WICKED PROBLEM EXPLORATION GUIDELINES

ask **"WHY?"** to find the **CAUSES**

ask **"WHAT NEXT?"** to find the **EFFECTS**



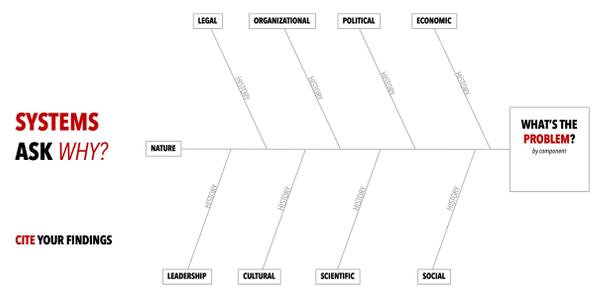
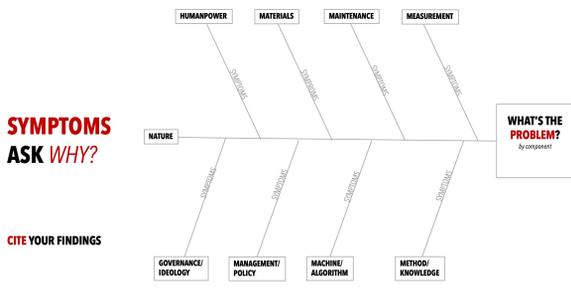
1 Begin by defining the problem based on observable and verifiable facts. Describe what the problem is and who or what it affects. How often?

2 Ask **"why did this happen?"** to go backwards in time – what are the sources of the problem? What evidence is there to show that this is a cause? Cite the articles, reports, or observations which support your premise.

3 Once you have identified the symptomatic or technical causes for a problem, begin exploring the possibility of underlying **systemic** causes. Are there economic reasons why this is happening? Social reasons? Historical reasons? By un-entangling the threads of events that led us to the present, it is possible to uncover the root-causes of our present-day problem. Again, cite the data or evidence to back up your claims.

4 Consider **"what next"** if the problem is not addressed. Consider the **"impact chain"** from individual to community to nation to planet. Use *personas* for convenience.

5 If a wicked problem is ignored, its impact multiplies across many systemic dimensions. What happens to the **economic system** (and all other underlying systems) for the individual in a specified community? Country? Planet?



SYMPTOMS AND SYSTEMS

The distinction between the two types of sources cannot be stressed enough. It is the systems-root-cause analysis which will likely un-entangle the causes we are looking for.

CITE YOUR FINDINGS

As you begin to research the causes and effects of specific problems, make sure to **cite** your sources of information.

EXAMPLE [DOWNLOAD PDF](#)
GENDER INEQUALITY + CLIMATE CHANGE

