

THE SCHOOL FOR  
INVISIBLE URBANISTS  
*presents*

**A  
Young  
Person's  
Guide**

**to  
Changing  
the  
World**

# Hello.

This is a guide to changing the world made for you by The School for Invisible Urbanists.

This school is not a building, it is a group of people, mostly children like you. Children are particularly good at being invisible because they are so small and crafty. You may not know what 'urbanism' is but basically it just means that we want to make the places we live better than they are now.

Anyone can become an Invisible Urbanist, including you.

The first step is to read this guide we've made for you.

The School for Invisible Urbanists first met on Monday 2 March 2020. We had plans to change the world, starting with St Helens, the town where most of us lived.

But just as we were starting one big change happened – the coronavirus. Something none of us had any control over. Suddenly we couldn't be out on the streets any more, we had to stay in our houses. But that didn't stop us. We decided if our houses were the bit of the world we could see, then they were the part of the world we would change.

Inside our houses we have been looking and listening and imagining and creating. We have been thinking about how we can start to make the world a better place right here.

This book is your invitation to join us. Our plan is to change the world bit by bit, starting with what we can see right in front of us today. It starts with your house, but the ideas we are sharing with you will work just as well anywhere. When you're allowed to go outside again, take this guide with you and use its lessons there as well.

## We hope you have fun.

Lots of love,

The School for  
Invisible Urbanists

1.

# Being invisible.

We are invisible.

Sometimes this is a good thing and sometimes it can be a bad thing.

Being invisible means not being noticed and getting time to yourself

it means sneaking around playing pranks on people

but it also means feeling lonely sometimes

you can get left out by your friends or family

sometimes they can't find you and they think that they've lost you

and no one can see your TikToks.

When you are invisible you can have a bad hair day and no one will notice

if someone is chasing you, you can't get caught

you can't get told off

you can take what you want from the shop

you can skip school

you can stay up all night with your phone or headphones

you can throw bottles in the air and no one will know who did it

you can eat whatever you want if you were in a fight you would probably win

but your mum might lock you out because she didn't know you were outside.

We are all invisible sometimes.

Right now the streets are so quiet it seems like everyone in the world is invisible.

When you are invisible it's hard to change the world

so you have to start really small.

Make changes only an invisible person could make.

Being invisible is your superpower.

1.

# Think about being invisible.

## Being invisible.

*Get a piece of paper and write down what you think it would feel like to be invisible.*

- What do you think is the best thing about being invisible?
- What is the worst thing?
- What is a change only an invisible person could make?

2.

# Looking and listening.

When you are invisible  
and even if you're not  
you have lots of time to look  
and to listen.

This is good because looking  
and listening are always the  
first part of trying to change  
the world.

When you really look you  
notice little things that you  
haven't noticed before.

You notice what things work  
and what things don't work.

We are told all the time about  
the big problems in the world  
but it takes an expert to notice  
the small problems  
the little mistakes  
the little things that are  
broken or missing

the problems no one else cares  
about but you.

Noticing the small problems is  
hard.

You need lots of time and lots  
of concentration.

Fortunately just at the  
moment lots of time is exactly  
what we have.

We all have a lot of time at the  
moment inside our houses.

Sometimes this can be no fun  
but this too is our superpower.

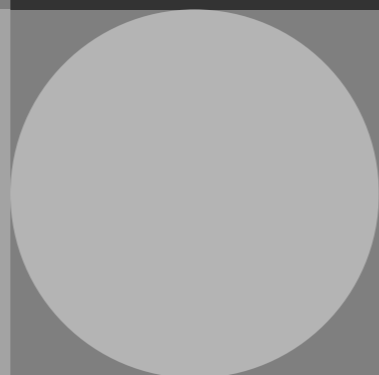
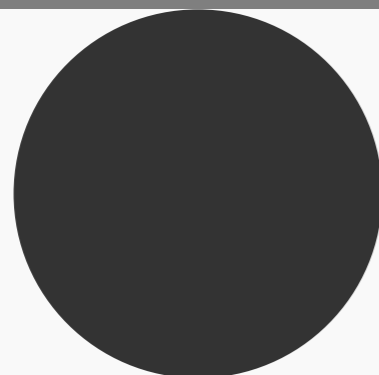
We have all the time we need  
to really look at this house  
to really listen to it  
to really learn its secrets  
to discover its small problems  
and try to fix them.

You might never get another  
chance to spend so much time  
looking at such a small corner  
of the world

noticing all the tiny things  
you've never noticed about it  
before.

2.

# How good are you at really looking at your house?



## Looking and listening.

### A.

*Get a piece of paper and try to answer these questions.*

- How many handles do you think there are in your house?
- How many yellow things do you think there are in your house?

- How many things larger than you are there in your house?

*Now go and count and find out how close your guesses really were.*

### B.

- What is your favourite room in your house?
- Which room is your least favourite?
- If you could change one thing about your house what would it be?

*Draw a map of your house.*

*Mark on it all your favourite and least favourite places.*

3.

# Thinking and dreaming.

Before you can change the world  
you have to imagine what that  
changed world will be like.

Before mobile phones existed  
someone had to imagine  
a phone you could take  
everywhere with you.

Before aeroplanes existed  
someone had to dream that  
they could fly.

We think children are  
particularly good at imagining.

It is one of our best skills.

Back at our school  
(the School for Invisible  
Urbanists)

we wanted to make  
the playground a better place

we looked out of the windows  
at the playground  
and we imagined  
hanging baskets  
and bird feeders  
and a puppet theatre for the  
big kids to perform for the  
little kids.

We imagined toys hanging  
from the trees  
and new games to play.

We imagined everyone playing  
together nicely.

Everyone having fun.

We imagined how we could  
change things.

That was the first step.

3.

# How good are you at imagining?

## Thinking and dreaming.

### A.

*Get a fork from the kitchen.*

- How many uses can you imagine for this fork?
- How could you use a fork in the garden?
- How could you use a fork in the bath?
- How could you use a fork to make music?
- How could you use a fork to draw a picture?

*Write a list of as many different uses for a fork as you can think of.*

*See if you can come up with 10 or even 20. Or even 30.*

- What about other things you can find in your house? How many ways can you use them?

### B.

*Draw a map of your house.*

*Imagine all the changes you would make if you could.*

*All the new uses you would make of it.*



4.

# Making and doing.

## Making and doing.

Doing is harder than  
imagining.

In our heads we can imagine  
anything

but in the real world

we don't have enough money

we don't have permission from  
the people in charge

we don't have a lot of time

and there's still the problem of  
being invisible.

But we have discovered  
that the secret to changing the  
world  
is just getting up and doing  
something

no matter how small that thing  
is.

Back at our school  
we turned our big ideas into  
small changes.

We made bird feeders from  
Coca Cola bottles.

We made puppets from old  
pieces of card and ice lolly  
sticks.

We made new games from ping  
pong balls.

We planted flowers in plastic  
cups and hid them around the  
playground.

We made small changes that  
might one day lead to bigger  
changes.

Or maybe they won't  
but that's also ok.

4.

**What's the  
smallest change  
you could  
make?**

**Now  
think  
a little  
bigger.**

**Making and doing.**

**A.**

*Move a chair 1cm to the left.*

*Turn a cup to face the other way.*

*Clean a dirty window.*

*Make 5 tiny changes to your house and challenge your family to see if they can find them.*

**B.**

*Look at the map you drew of your dream house.*

*Find something on there that you could do now, even in a small and temporary way.*

*If you want to plant flowers, draw a picture of some flowers and put them in the place you want the flowers to be.*

*Or if you want a tidying robot make a robot and then do the tidying yourself and tell everyone the robot did it.*

*Find a way to make your ideas become a tiny bit real.*

5.

# Being an Invisible Urbanist.

This is the nearly the end of  
our book  
(for now).

You've tried looking  
and listening  
and thinking  
and imagining  
and making  
and doing.

You've learnt everything that we  
learnt.

You are now an official  
Invisible Urbanist

just like us.

But this is not really the end.

Now you get to decide  
what you want to do  
with all your new skills.  
Now that you have become an  
Invisible Urbanist

your new challenge  
is to keep being an Invisible  
Urbanist

to keep looking  
and listening  
and thinking  
and imagining  
and making  
and doing  
in your house  
and then  
when the world reopens  
out in the streets of your village  
or town or city.

The world needs us now more  
than ever.

This is not really the end.

This is just the beginning.

5.

# What kind of Invisible Urbanist will you be?

## Being an Invisible Urbanist.

Think of 10 small ways of changing the world.

*Write each one down on a little piece of paper.*

*Put all the pieces of paper in a bowl and put the bowl on a shelf.*

*Pick out one piece of paper a week from the bowl.*

*Try to do the thing that's written on your piece of paper.*

The end.

(for now)



# Checklist of achievements

- I really looked at my house.*
- I drew a map.*
- I thought of new ways to use an old fork.*
- I drew another map.*
- I made some small changes.*
- I thought bigger.*
- I became an Invisible Urbanist.*

*This is to certify that*

*Joined the*

**Invisible  
Urbanists**

*on*

*They promise to keep making  
small changes to the world*

*until the small changes  
become big changes*

*and the world  
is changed  
forever.*

**The School of Invisible Urbanists is a project by Andy Field and Heart of Glass, created in collaboration with Year 5 children from Broad Oak Primary School.**

**Andy Field** creates projects that invite people to consider their relationship to the places they live and the people they live with. Over the last decade this has manifested itself across a range of forms and disciplines, including street games, event scores, installations, studio theatre shows and one-to-one performances.

**Heart of Glass** is a St Helens, Merseyside-based collaborative and social arts agency that is built on the belief that art has the power to bring us together and create real change, for the people of our community, and the place we call home. Our philosophy is simple: art belongs everywhere, to everyone.

If you have any questions you can contact us on [info@heartofglass.org.uk](mailto:info@heartofglass.org.uk) with the subject line 'FAO Kate Houlton - SFIU'.

**heartofglass**



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