Problem Checklist

Choosing an appropriate community problem is the first step in developing a successful project. As you brainstorm, consider the following necessary qualities of an appropriate problem.

☐ I am a member of the community in which the problem exists.

☐ The problem does not include the words "lack of" in its description.
  o The "lack of" something is not a problem. In the harms caused by the lack, you might find an appropriate problem.

☐ The problem is an issue of social justice.

☐ People other than my friends and relatives believe that the problem exists and is urgent.

☐ I can find evidence that the problem exists.
  (Newspapers, interviews, minutes of public meetings, official websites, etc.)
  o List known sources for that evidence.

☐ I can find evidence that the problem is significant (worthy of community consideration)
  (Newspapers, interviews, minutes of public meetings, official websites, etc.)
  o List known sources for that evidence.

☐ I can find evidence that the problem is urgent (requires immediate attention).
  (Newspapers, interviews, minutes of public meetings, official websites, etc.)
  o List known sources for that evidence.

☐ Members of the community believe the problem is significant and urgent.
  o The community has considered the problem previously and took action.
  o The community has considered the problem and not taken action.
  o The community has not officially considered the problem but a diverse set of community members believe the problem is significant and demands action.
  o None of the above apply. Choose another problem.

☐ Currently, the community is not taking action or planning action on the problem.
  o If the community is acting or has plans to act, then choose another problem.
  o If the current or proposed action is controversial or will result in other problems, see your professor for guidance.

☐ I can find information about past discussions and actions regarding this problem.
  o If the problem is recent, then continue with a careful eye to whether action is planned.
  o If it is an historic problem, dig deeper to determine why the community has not acted before continuing with this problem.