



PartnerHandbook v.1.1

Your guide to creating XPs,
playlists, and badges.

LRNG

Together, we are
transforming learning
into a lifestyle to better
prepare young people
for a world where
learning never stops.

Connie Yowell, CEO Collective Shift

CONTENTS

4	Introduction
6	Design Pillars
8	Table of Elements
10	The Connected City
14	XPs
22	Playlists
28	Badges
34	References

INTRODUCTION

Imagine there's a whole world full of amazing cities, towns, landmarks, and natural wonders. Except there are no maps, no signs, and no roads. You want to explore, but you can't imagine what's out there. Most people don't explore at all, it just isn't part of the lifestyle. So you don't. You stay at home base and never go very far. Home base has great moments, but can never give you everything you need. You're restless and sure there's more to life than this.

This is learning today. A whole world full of amazing opportunities... that don't connect. Endless possible destinations, but few ways to travel and little interest in exploration.

LRNG is not a piece of education technology or a set of new programs. It's a movement to connect the

great learning experiences that already exist. As you create these experiences, we will build the tools to connect learning across all places, digital and local; to connect learners around common passions, and communities around shared goals. Let's reconcile learning with life. Let's create experiences where learning happens.

Because learning happens in all spaces, the entire community is responsible. Schools, nonprofits, companies, games, governments, caregivers, mentors, and peers are all sources of learning. Today we are building the tools that bring them together. Tomorrow we will use the network to encourage lives of exploration.

We offer this handbook as the first of many tools to support you, our partners, in this work. Use it as you start to use LRNG. Use it to build the maps, signs, and roads within your organization and across your region. Use it to help us build communities where learning is a lifestyle.

DESIGN PILLARS

Use these four design pillars as your primary reference for all content you create on LRNG. By crafting engaging experiences and gathering communities, we can help youth build the world and unlock new opportunities for the future.

1 CRAFT EXPERIENCES	2 GATHER COMMUNITIES
Focus on passions, not requirements; on formation more than knowledge transfer	Provide opportunities for youth to learn through relationships with their peers
Let learners choose their own adventures	Create meaningful interactions with a diverse community of mentors and experts
Employ learners as playtesters and co-designers; iterate based on their feedback	Challenge youth to engage with people and perspectives unlike their own
Design beyond the narrow experience; consider context, audience, and the future	Help youth build their own identities and connect them with the identity of the community

As you design on LRNG, consider the “Why?” first. The “How?” should be informed by the “Why?”. In other words, the method and activities should be informed by the purpose. These design pillars are inspired by Connected Learning design principles, but are unique to LRNG.

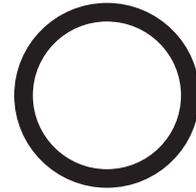
3 BUILD THE WORLD	4 UNLOCK OPPORTUNITIES
Encourage learners to use modern technologies as a means of self-expression	Consider how each experience moves a learner towards a specific new opportunity
Provide ways for learners to publish the products of their learning	Illuminate how experiences might connect learners to future career and learning paths
Challenge learners to create products that address real problems in the world	Imagine every learning experience as part of a bigger map of achievements
Allow learners to revise and improve on their ideas over time	Highlight the rewards and new opportunities unlocked by each accomplishment

TABLE OF ELEMENTS

On LRNG, we use **XPs** and **resources** to fill up the map with digital and local learning. Our tools will help you build **XPs** that bring together a learner's passion, people, and paths. **Badges** are used for wayfinding and archiving to keep track of the journey. **Badges** are not another gold star, they are digital learning credentials that signify achievement and populate a lifelong portfolio. **Playlists** forge thematic connections across learning and unlock future opportunities. These **playlists** can be simple, but they really shine when they bridge spaces, mediums, and subjects.

RESOURCE

A **resource** is a tool, a person, or piece of media content that is useful to the learner.

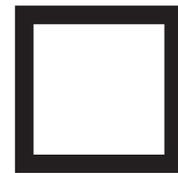


XP

An **XP** is an activity that invites the learner to participate and explains how to engage. **XPs** are supported by **resources**, which are tools or pieces of media consumed by the learner.



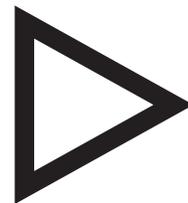
LOCAL



DIGITAL

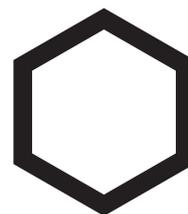
PLAYLISTS

A **playlist** is a curated group of **resources** and **XPs** stitched together into a narrative around a common theme that results in a **badge**. **Playlists** connect learning to interests and communities while unlocking real-world opportunities.

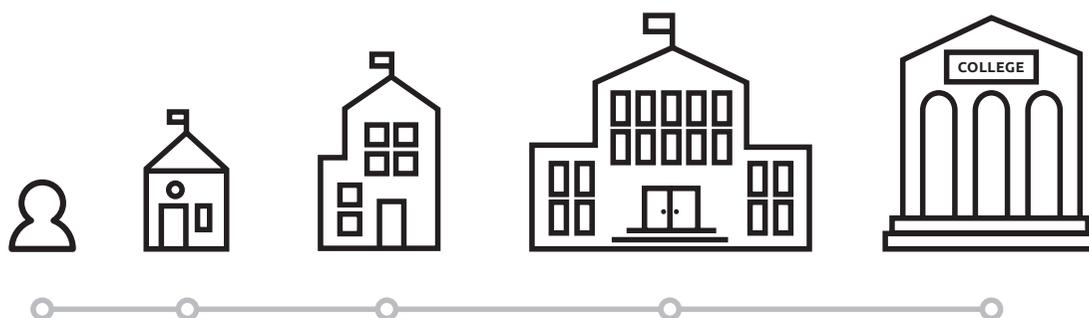


BADGES

A **badge** is a publicly shareable digital credential that unlocks opportunities and provides evidence of a substantive learning outcome.



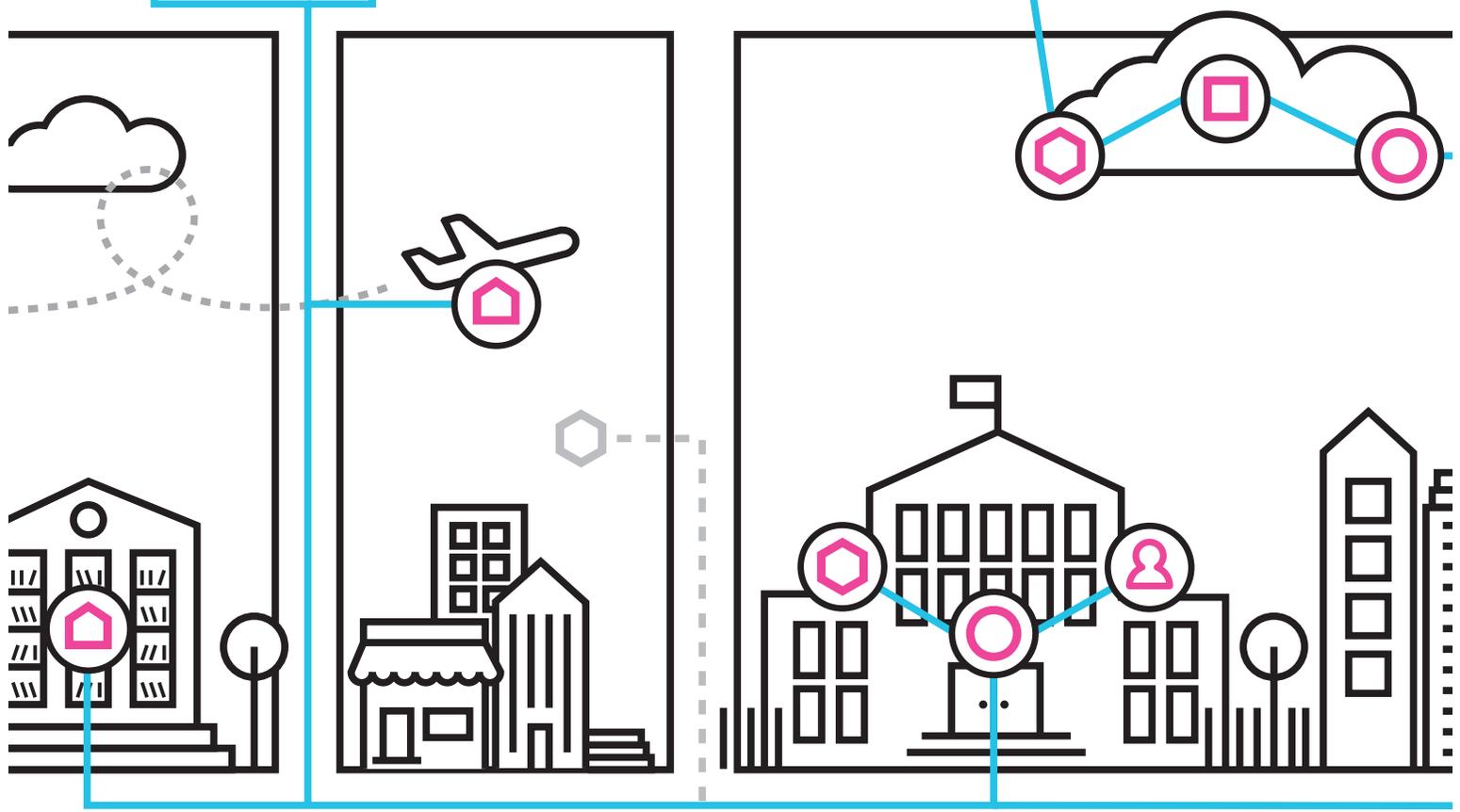
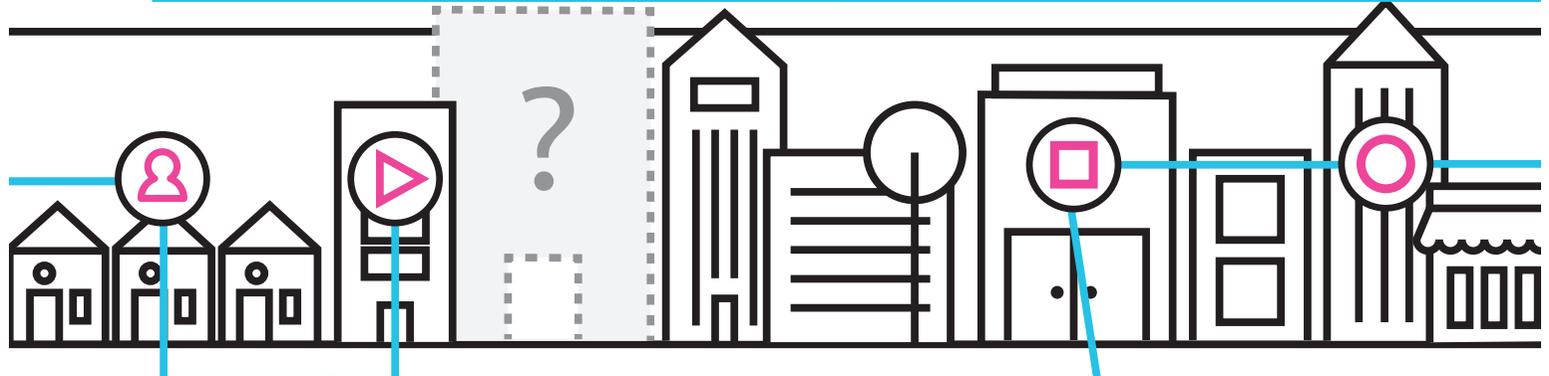
LEARNING DOESN'T HAPPEN IN A STRAIGHT LINE.

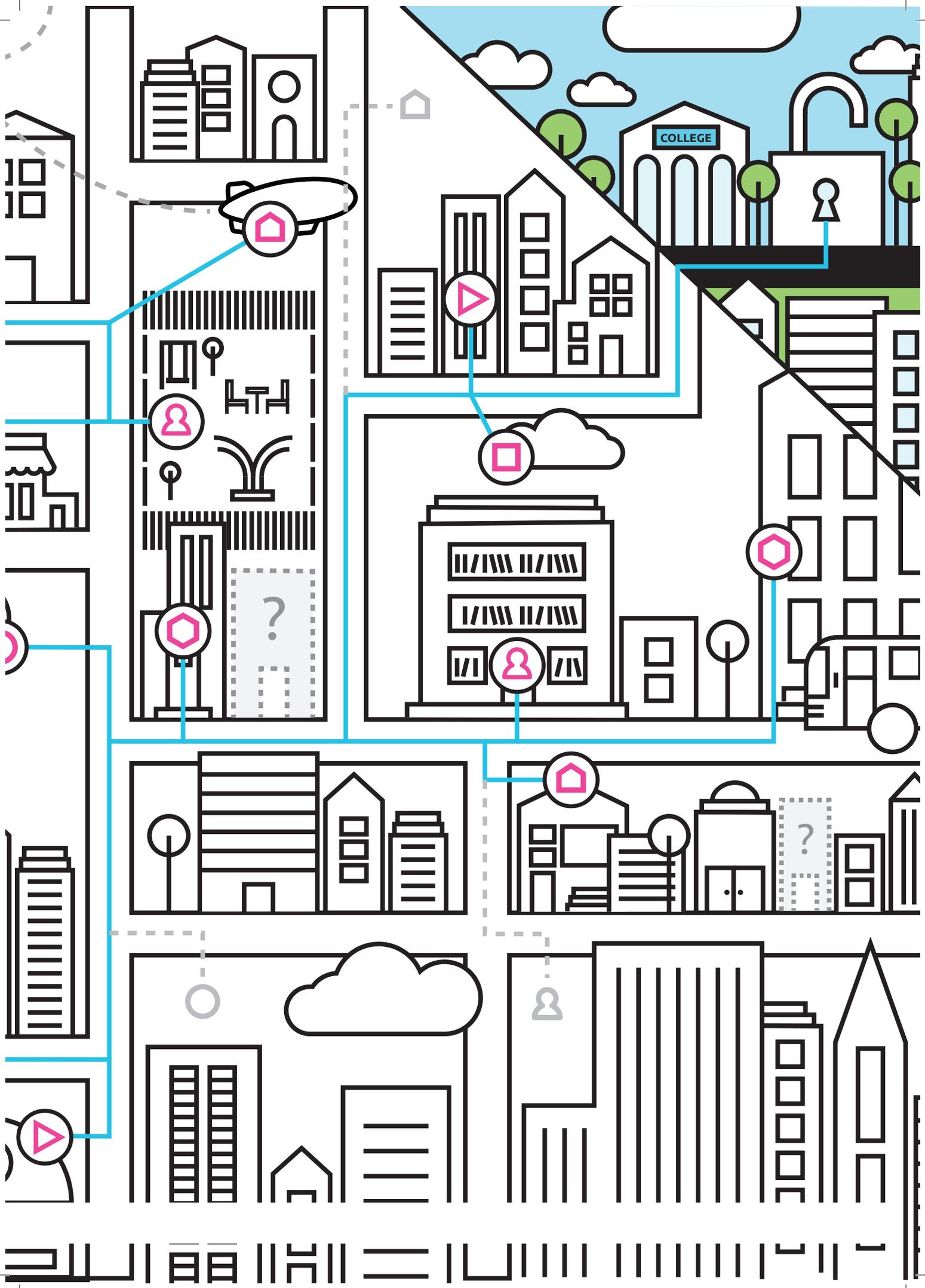




LEARNING IS EVERYWHERE.

WHAT IF IT ALL CONNECTED?





XPS

OVERVIEW

LRNG is built on 10 years of research in Connected Learning. The Connected Learning approach prioritizes experience over knowledge transfer, formation over facts. It centralizes the importance of community connections, real-world relevancy, and digital technologies. The approach bridges connections between communities, content, and practitioners. When successful, it brings together learner's passions, people, and paths.

Connected Learning takes inspiration from computer scientist and educator Seymour Papert. He observed that learners better internalize knowledge if it results in a tangible artifact. LRNG leans into this insight by emphasizing a production-centered approach.

CONCEPT

Learning experiences, or XPs, are the core element on the LRNG platform. An XP is an activity that asks the learner to take specific action and demonstrate a particular learning outcome. They are the container for all learning activities, including both local programs or events and online interactions. To get you started, here is how LRNG is thinking about XPs as experiences where learning happens:

- XPs have two types: Digital XPs (activities done online) and Local XPs (activities done in-person).
- Using playlists, you can link one or many XPs to a badge, or have XPs stand alone without an associated badge.
- When possible, a learner should submit some kind of proof for every XP. Learners can mark XPs as “complete”, but are assessed for learning outcomes when they earn a badge as a result of one or many XPs.
- XPs can have one or many resources that support them. These can be pieces of media, references to people, or tools.

DESIGN

Although there are many ways to design XPs, you can use this design process as a starting point. In addition to the LRNG Design Pillars, use these learning design methods to guide you. This process lets the **purpose** inform the **method** by asking you to set your goals before determining forms of assessment and instructional strategies.

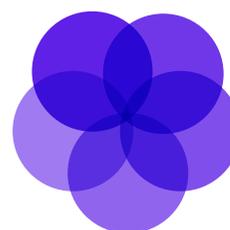
STEP 1: KNOW THE GOAL

Some learning programs are designed by thinking about the activities before clarifying learning goals. When you consider the desired result first, it focuses the design process and allows you to approach that goal with intention.

As you define your goal, explore how it aligns with different criteria: the personal expertise you have to share; the subject area you are focused on; the interests of learners; engagement with the learner's peer group, and the real-world relevance. Can you design experiences where learning happens at the intersection of these 5 criteria?

REAL-WORLD
RELEVANCE

PEER
COMMUNITY



PERSONAL
EXPERTISE

SUBJECT
AREA

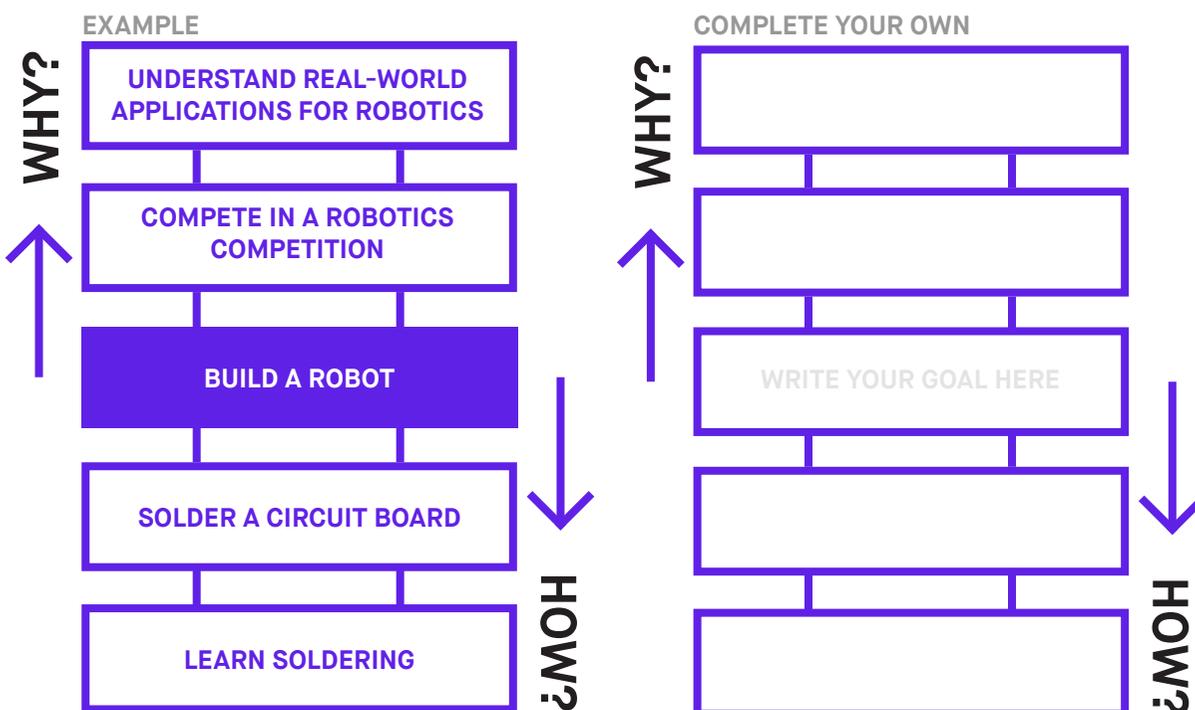
LEARNER'S
INTERESTS

Real-World Relevance: Consider looking at competency frameworks, high-supply career areas, and available opportunities. If a learner meets your learning goals, what will that unlock for this learner?

Learner's Interests: Interview or co-design with some of your learners to get to know their interests before you design your XP.

STEP 2: TEST YOUR GOALS

Use an abstraction laddering tool to make sure your goals aren't too big or too small. The goal should be appropriate to the size of the programs, and the outcome you are looking for as a result. Put your goal in the center. Ask "Why?" and "How?" to level-up your goal or scale it back. Consider choosing a smaller or bigger goal.



STEP 3: DETERMINE THE PROOF

Now that you have clarified your goals, consider what evidence learners can produce as proof. Ensure the required proof is aligned with your goals. You may have several points of assessment or production during your activities. Each time learners create a product or pause to reflect can act as a benchmark in the learning process. Most of all, consider how the creation of the proof represents a significant work of production. Consider how you are creating an opportunity for learners to build something that is used in their lives outside of the learning program.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) To what extent can learners choose their medium or materials?
 - 2) How does technology play a role?
 - 3) How does the proof address real world problems or enduring big ideas?
 - 4) How does the production of the proof lead to relevant career skills?
 - 5) Is the proof feasible for learners to produce given time and resource constraints?
 - 6) Can learners really do this?
-

STEP 4: CONNECT THE COMMUNITY

All great learning happens in relationship. Consider how to build an experience that connects to a network of peers, mentors, businesses, organizations, and experts. With your learning goals and required proof in mind, **draw some connections between your XP and other online and in-person communities.** Ensure that all connections happen in ways that are safe and appropriately mediated.

SKETCH THE CONNECTIONS:



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) How might learners connect with their peers to advance their understanding?
- 2) What community members can provide authentic context for the goals of the learning experience?
- 3) How does the XP relate to other XPs, on LRNG or in your community?
- 4) How might you use technology to connect to a community?

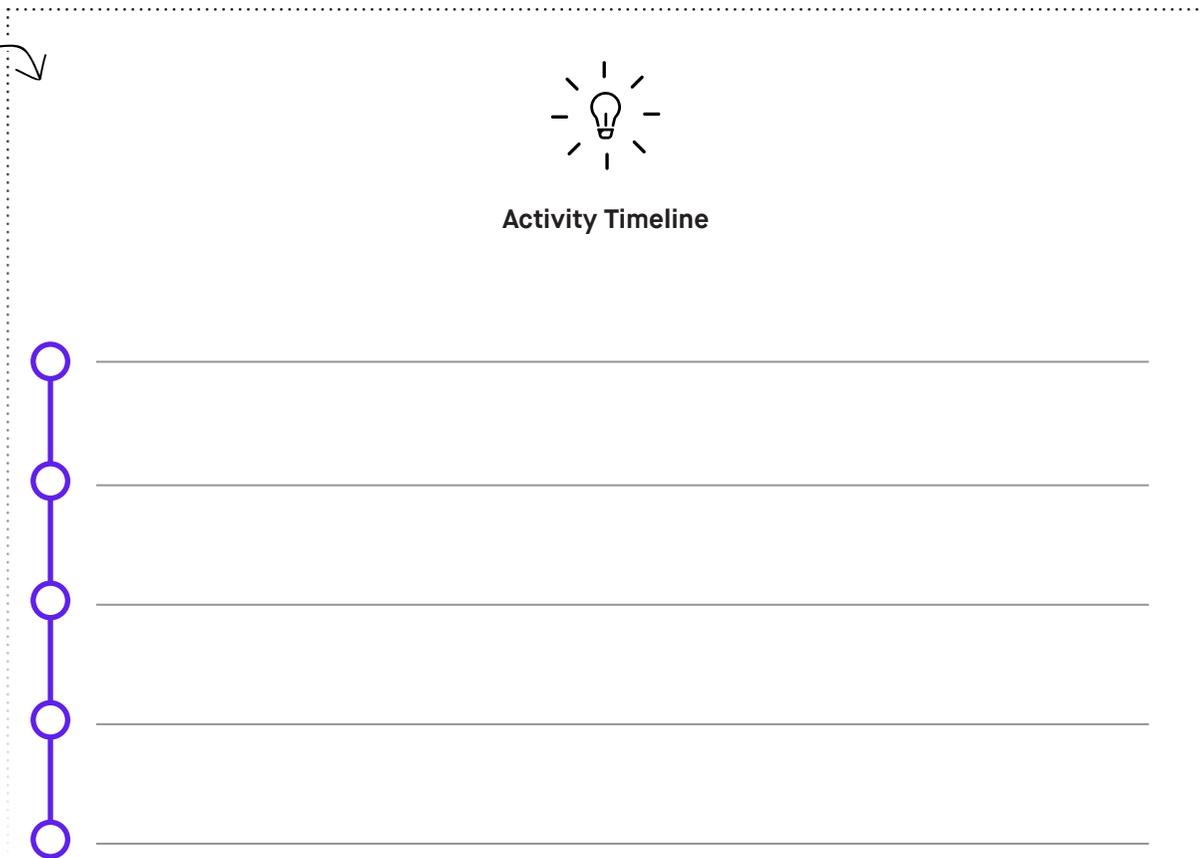
STEP 5: BUILD THE ACTIVITY

OK, let's bring it all together! Now is the time to detail the different kinds of interactions and instructions that are needed to transform the goals, proof, and community connections into a fully-fledged XP. Once you have a list of interactions, arrange them into a timeline that orders each interaction in ways that make sense for your learners and moves step-by-step toward your goals.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) How can technology play a role?
- 2) What are ways to document learning throughout the activity?
- 3) Where in the timeline can you stop to get feedback from learners?
- 4) How can learners publish the products of their learning?

Create a Timeline!



The diagram shows a vertical timeline on the left side, consisting of five purple circles connected by a vertical line. To the right of this timeline are five horizontal lines, each corresponding to one of the circles. Above the horizontal lines is a lightbulb icon with rays emanating from it, and the text "Activity Timeline" is centered below the icon.

PLAYLISTS

OVERVIEW

Playlists are learning narratives. They define the paths that connect sets of experiences and resources. Ideally, they focus on inspiration and formation more than the transfer of knowledge. The learner moves towards new expertise and, when the playlist is complete, they unlock new opportunities.

Playlists go beyond the existing learning paths we see in schools. They consist of a wide range of learning experiences, connecting learning that happens in peer communities, in and out of school, at home and online.

CONCEPT

A playlist is a curated group of resources and XPs stitched together into a compelling media-rich narrative around a common theme. Playlists craft a story that connects learning to interests and communities. The result of a playlist is a badge that unlocks real world opportunities. These playlists can be simple, but they really shine when they bridge spaces, mediums, and subjects.

All playlists should provide learners with relevant steps to advance toward specific outcomes. A badge awarded for completing a playlist should communicate significant accomplishments in that topic area.

The power of playlists lies in the opportunity for collaboration. Although one organization can design a sequence based on internal goals, multiple providers can work together to include many types and sources of learning. These collaborative playlists create a rich network of experiences for learners. As more and more playlists are built, we can start to see the connections across all learning experiences as part of an expansive network of learning.

DESIGN

Now that you've designed your XPs, let's build them up into a playlist. Designing full playlists doesn't make sense for every situation, but it can add a lot of value by connecting your lonely XP to a larger narrative. Keep in mind that there are multiple ways to design a playlist:

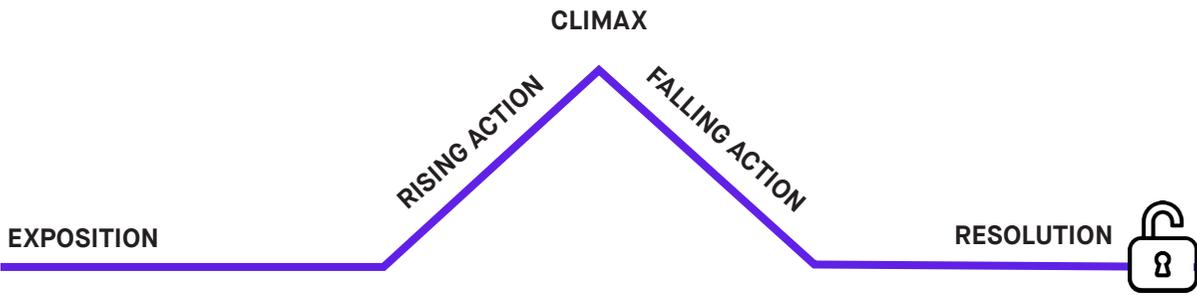
1. You can start with a set of available experiences and stitch them together into a summative badge.
2. You can start with a theme or the requirements for a badge and work backwards from that goal.

STEP 1: SKETCH THE NARRATIVE

Before you get into the details, write the story of this learning playlist. What is the theme? What is the purpose? How does it connect to the lives of learners?

Write a narrative that follows the path of one learner engaging with your playlist as part of the learner's life. In your narrative on the following page, try to address these questions:

- **Exposition:** What are the learners you work with interested in? What engaging resource or XP could you start with to capture their interest?
- **Rising Action:** How do learners start to really engage and mess around with your playlist? How can you make the story immersive by involving different partners?
- **Climax:** What real world problems do you want to engage?
- **Falling Action:** What's one way learners could be changed as a result of the playlist?
- **Resolution:** What would be a meaningful end product? What rewards does it unlock?



Playlist Narrative

Jot down ideas!

EXPOSITION: _____

RISING ACTION: _____

CLIMAX: _____

FALLING ACTION: _____

RESOLUTION: _____

STEP 2: DESIGN THE CONCLUSION

Now that you have sketched the narrative, narrow in on the learning outcomes. What is the result of the playlist? What is a learner supposed to achieve? Use the space below to describe the opportunity unlocked by the successful completion of this playlist.



Opportunity Unlocked

Once you finish designing your playlist, design a badge to represent the summative achievement of the collected XPs. Read more on badge design in the next section.

STEP 3: SKETCH A LEARNING SEQUENCE

- Grab a big sheet of paper and arrange XPs (and maybe some extra resources) that can fill the playlist.
- Think about any information or experience learners might need before engaging with each XP. Use this information to help define the order of the narrative.
- Once you have filled in some XPs, use the scope and sequence you have so far to help you identify what might be missing.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY COLLABORATORS & DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

- Once you have exhausted the XPs within your program, think about what additional XPs are needed to complete your playlist narrative.
- What other programs can you collaborate with on this playlist? Do more XPs already exist that could help you complete the playlist? Pursue collaboration wherever possible so that the learner's experience is diverse, connected, and engages multiple parts of their life.
- Next, identify great digital learning opportunities and include them on the playlist as well. You could find these on the LRNG platform, or find content elsewhere and add them to LRNG as a new digital XP or resource.

BRAINSTORM COLLABORATIVE CONTENT:

_____	→	_____
(New XP or resource)		(Source)
_____	→	_____
(New XP or resource)		(Source)

STEP 5: REFINE THE NARRATIVE

- Step back and consider your playlist. Write a description of what the learner will accomplish and what opportunities completing this playlist will unlock.
- Now that you've added your own XPs and mixed them in with other Local and Digital XPs through collaboration and discovery, does your playlist still work?
- Does your playlist live up to your original narrative?
- Find at least one piece that is missing and add the finishing touches. Here are some more questions to challenge you to refine things:
 - Are XPs in the correct order?
 - Does the playlist begin with engaging content that will draw in the learner?
 - Does the playlist invite learners to build the world or follow their passions?
 - Does it result in a serious learning outcome and a worthwhile end-product?

BADGES

OVERVIEW

In 2012, Mozilla and The MacArthur Foundation invested in the use of digital badges for learning by building the foundational Open Badges Infrastructure. Since the inception of Open Badges, they have been used by programs across universities, organizations, companies and schools. The technology allowed the community to test ideas and defined a universal standard to make badges interoperable.

Every badge is linked to examples of how the learner earned the badge, including the evidence produced from the learning experience. Beyond the early work of Mozilla, several other badge issuing platforms have been built. In 2014, the Badge Alliance formed to organize all the platforms around the common Open Badges standard. While Mozilla is no longer leading the development of new technologies to support Open Badges, they are a strong partner of the Badge Alliance and are working to provide exemplary use-cases of Open Badges within their learning programs. LRNG is excited to build on this foundational work and is dedicated to realizing the full potential of Open Badges.

CONCEPT

On the LRNG platform, a badge is a publicly shareable digital credential that provides evidence of a substantive learning outcome and unlocks opportunities. Badges are used for wayfinding and archiving to keep track of the learner's journey. Badges are not another gold star, they are digital learning artifacts that signify achievement and populate a lifelong portfolio.

When educators come together to create a framework of badges for their programs, it helps them be intentional about their learning outcomes and highlights available opportunities to learners. On LRNG, all badges should represent significant accomplishments and can be earned from a single XP or as the result of a playlist.

THE TWO SIDES OF A BADGE

To understand how badges are created and used once they are earned, it's important to know that badges have two sides. First, there is the **Badge Class** that represents the *idea* of the Badge that is available to be earned. The Badge Class contains things like *name*, *description*, and the *criteria* required to earn the badge. Second, there is the **Badge Assertion**. This is the badge as it is *earned by the learner*. The Assertion *asserts* that a specific person has completed the criteria required for the badge and contains all of the evidence provided as proof of the accomplishment.

- Think of the “Badge Class” as a badge you can earn
- Think of the “Badge Assertion” as a badge you have earned
- A Badge Class is similar to most available academic achievements, like graduating with honors from college. A Badge Assertion would be the certificate of your earned “Honors”, with your name listed on it, and accompanied by the full details of your honors project.

DESIGN

Now that you have designed some great learning XPs and playlists, it's time to design badges that mark related achievements. Before you design your badge, take some time to note the learning outcomes from the XP(s) or playlist for which you want to offer a badge. Then, make sure you prioritize your learning outcomes — you aren't going to badge everything.

Which outcomes are the most significant and worth recognizing with a badge?

To help you sketch your ideas, use the process below for each learning outcome you want to recognize. Use the template on the next page to input your badge details.

1. CHOOSE WHAT TO RECOGNIZE

- Describe the achievement
- Name of badge
- Define competencies: What knowledge, skills or attributes are being formed?
- Standards: Does this badge map to any existing learning standards?
- Badge issuer: What organization will issue the badge?
- Image: What image best represents this achievement?
- Tags: What keywords best define this achievement?
- Age: Roughly what age-range is this badge suitable for?

2. DEFINE THE PROOF

- List each piece of required proof that must be submitted in order to earn the badge. The proof should align with the criteria.
- Choose a type of evaluation:

FORMATIVE SUMMATIVE

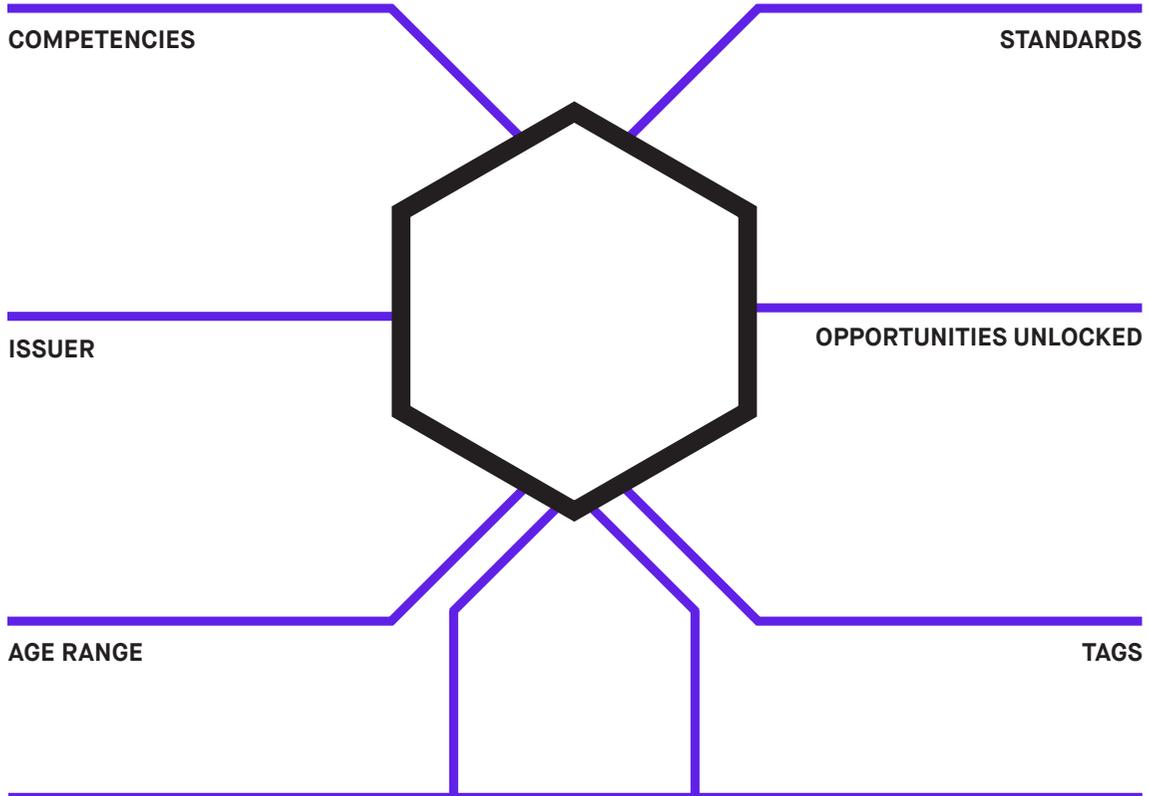
- Choose who will assess the proof:

SELF PEER EDUCATOR EXPERT SYSTEM

3. POINT TO FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- What future connections exist? What kinds of career or education opportunities might this badge unlock for the learner?
- What's next for learners earning this badge?
- Who is going to be the consumer of this badge? (i.e. employers, college admissions, etc.)

SKETCH YOUR BADGE



CRITERIA	PROOF
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

REFERENCES

XPS

- 1) **What is Backward Design? Chapter One of “Understanding by Design”**: Provides a detailed overview of backward design and guidelines for how to move through the process.
- 2) **Create a Hub of Connected Learning**: Provides a clear explanation of different elements of Connected Learning, including spheres of learning, core properties, and design principles.
- 3) **Articulate Your Learning Outcomes**: Strategies for writing and implementing effective learning outcomes from Carnegie Mellon University’s Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation.

PLAYLISTS

- 1) **Discovering Pathways Through Connected Learning**: Different perspectives on what pathways are and how they connect informal and formal learning.
- 2) **Learning Pathways: Descriptive or Prescriptive**: Discusses the different types of learning pathways and the pros and cons of each.
- 3) **What is a Learning Pathway?**: Details what makes up a learning pathway and provides an example.
- 4) **Learning Pathways**: Conversation on the opportunities provided to all learners by designing flexible pathways.

BADGES

- 1) **Mozilla Wiki Badges FAQ**: Concise answers to a comprehensive list of questions related to badges. Part of the larger wiki of original thinking on the use of Open Badges.
- 2) **Open Badges for Lifelong Learning**: White paper that includes the different components of badge ecosystem contextualized using different user scenarios.
- 3) **Digital Badge Design Principles for Recognizing Learning**: Details a set of nine design principles to consider when designing badges.
- 4) **Design Principles for Assessing Learning with Digital Badges**: Details ten principles for designing assessment linked to badges.

For examples of competencies that map to badges, check out:
remakelearning.org/competencies

See all references at:
remakelearning.org/lrng-references

KEEP GOING

We will be providing a lot more resources over the coming months to support our partners in this work. Building a vibrant community of practice around LRNG is a top priority. Here are some opportunities for you to engage further with the community and access additional resources.

Write us at partners@lrng.org

PROGRAM MATERIALS:

- **Join an online event:** Find the archive and upcoming schedule at crowdcast.io/wearelrng
- **Engage with the partner community:** Find out about upcoming events and new resources at partners.lrng.org
- **Run your own local trainings:** Stay tuned for additional resources that will support you to run trainings in your city. We will provide event kits and trainings for facilitators to run local XP, badge and playlist design sessions.
- **Use the LRNG Fundraising Toolkit:** A comprehensive guide and set of templates to support partners in pursuing local funding or collaborative grant applications related to LRNG. Find out more at bigthought.org/fundraisingtoolkit

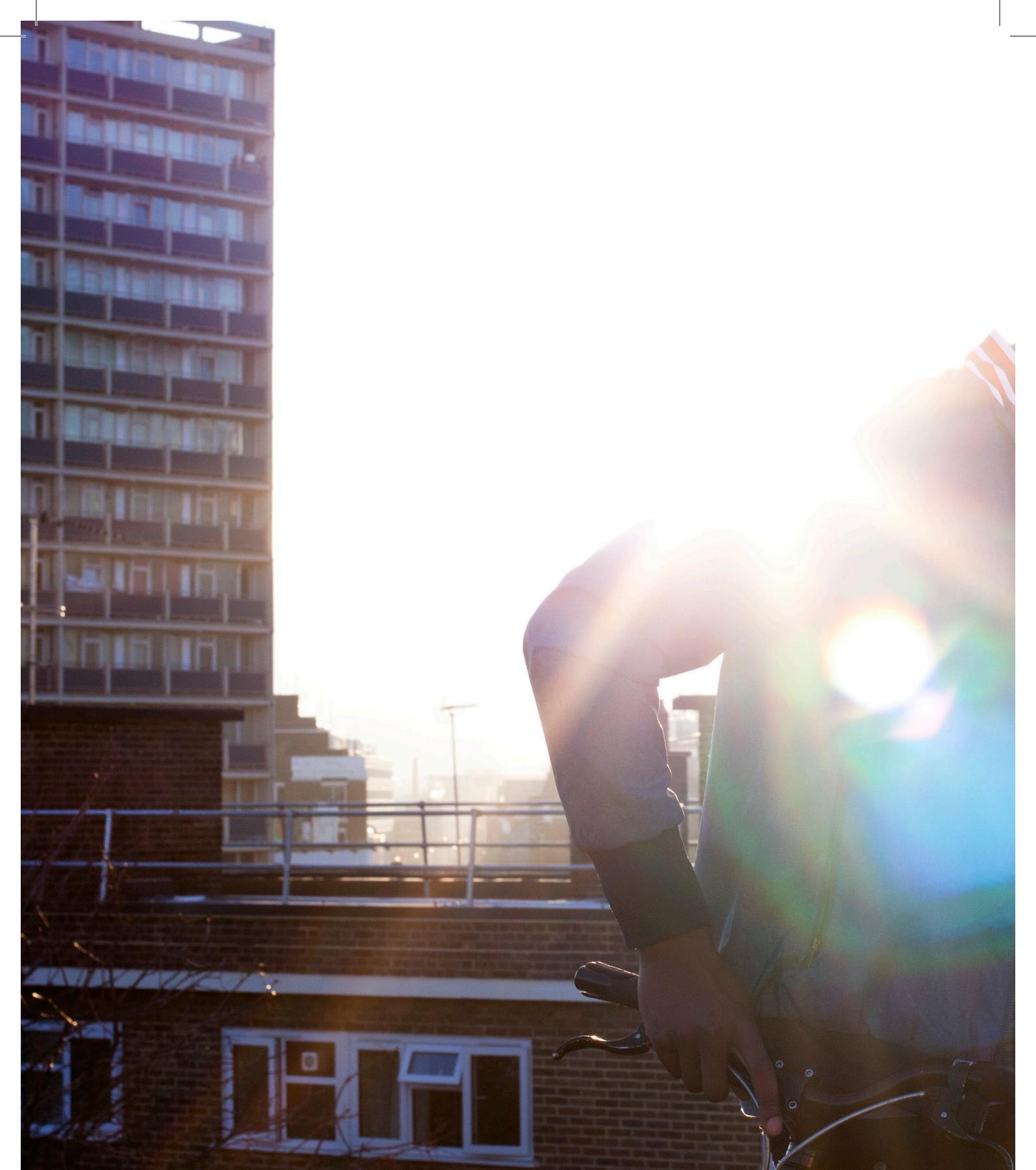
PROGRAM SUPPORT:

- **DML Playlist Competition 2016:** The MacArthur Foundation is funding organizations to build playlists for the LRNG platform.
- **LRNG Innovator:** Funding for educators developing innovative connected learning curricula and projects.
- **Cities of LRNG — Fossil Challenge:** Process to select the 2016 cohort of launch cities. Apply at about.lrng.org/apply
- **The LRNG Platform:** Use it at no-cost for Spring/Summer of 2016 and gain access to support services including training events, summits, design materials, implementation and technical support, etc.



Thanks to a new digital platform powered by LRNG, we can connect youth to in-person and online educational experiences provided by hundreds of partners both nationally and locally.

Gigi Antoni, President & CEO, Big Thought in Dallas, TX

A photograph of a person riding a bicycle, silhouetted against a bright sunset. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background shows a brick building with a window and a balcony. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare effect.

Supported by:

**MacArthur
Foundation**

LRNG is built by Collective Shift, collectiveshift.org

This work by LRNG is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



LRNG