

Identify Priority Groups - Canvas

Time needed: 1 ½ hours

Participants: 1 - 10 people

The **Identify Priority Groups Canvas** helps city teams move beyond broad demographics and focus on the specific communities that are most impacted, overlooked, or critical to involve in a citizen engagement process. By guiding teams through targeted questions, this canvas helps you identify the priority groups that should be at the center of your engagement efforts.

You can either use our printable canvas, or our [Miro template](#) to run this activity.

Key Outcomes

- A focused shortlist of 2–3 priority groups for engagement.
- Shared reasoning for why these groups matter (impact, voice, equity, influence).
- Clear direction for future engagement efforts.
- Greater awareness of team representation and potential blind spots.

Step 0: Context Analysis

Before starting this exercise, gather available data on your population, demographics, and existing inequalities. A clear understanding of context ensures your team asks the right questions and engages the groups that matter. Ideally, someone prepares a context overview before the session. You can use our resource [Context Questions for Citizen Engagement Processes](#) to guide this step.

Step 1: Brainstorm

Use the four guiding questions on the canvas (or create your own) to generate a broad list of potential citizen or stakeholder groups. Think inclusively: who is most impacted, and who is often overlooked? Be specific - consider your demographic, existing associations and organizations or informal networks in your context. The more concrete your ideas, the clearer it will be who you actually want to reach.

Step 2: Cluster and Categorize

Cluster the citizen and stakeholder groups based on common themes or patterns. Give each cluster a clear, descriptive name (e.g., Youth Voices, Frontline Workers, Community Connectors). These labels help visualize connections and potential focus areas. Don't worry about getting them perfect - the goal is clarity for discussion and prioritization.

Step 3: Discuss and Prioritize

As a team, review the clusters and discuss:

- Which groups are most critical to your challenge or opportunity?
- Why?

Select **2–3 priority groups** based on relevance, impact, or strategic value.

Step 4: Reflect as a Team

Ask yourselves:

- Is our team representative of the groups we're trying to reach?
- Are there perspectives or voices we might be missing?
- Are there barriers that might prevent these groups from participating or being heard?

This reflection strengthens empathy, uncovers blind spots, and ensures that engagement plans are inclusive and equitable. You can also note ideas for adjusting your approach, such as bringing in advisors, scheduling outreach in accessible locations, or using alternative communication channels.

Step 5: Decide on Next Steps

Outline specific actions to take, which may include:

- Conducting deeper research on priority groups
- Planning targeted outreach activities
- Organizing workshops or engagement sessions

Agent of Change Proposed agenda for a 1,5 hour workshop

10' Check-in

10' Understand Context

20' Brainstorm

10' Cluster and Categorise

15' Discuss and Prioritise

10' Team Reflection

10' Decide on Next Steps

5' Check-out

