# Module: Identifying a Target Audience

## Key concepts and terms

**Marginalization:** Marginalization is when a group, a demographic, or selection of people are treated as inferior, insignificant or lesser because of their association or identification with that group. Marginalization results from persistent inequality and adversity resulting from discrimination, social stigma, and stereotypes.

**Do No Harm:** Do No Harm (DNH) is an analytical and practical approach that helps minimize risk and avoid unintended consequences. DNH does not remove risk, but rather helps identify any potential adverse effects of a program or intervention. DNH enables the ability to identify alternative programming options if necessary. DNH requires a strong and nuanced understanding of context and relationships and is an analysis that should be routinely revisited and updated.

## When to use this module

This module should be used to define the group of individuals who are the intended recipients of your product, service or campaign. An effective product, service or campaign will cater to a particular segment of society, but keep in mind, there will be many different kinds of users. For a product, service, or campaign to be successful it should be understandable and accessible for a variety of different individuals, with different backgrounds, and experiences. Marginalization is especially important to keep in mind with this module to better understand how a group, because of its race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability or other kind of identity can experience specific harm or generally be left out, from any kind of product, campaign or activist movement.

# How to use it

In the last module, Ecosystem Mapping, you created a map of all the individuals and groups that interacted with the topic you had selected. Take five minutes to review the map and add any additional actors (one per post-it) you may have missed. Remember to document (i.e. take a picture of) your ecosystem map as we will use your actor post-its in this module.

The actors you have identified in your ecosystem map are or represent potential users you can work with to affect change. A successful product, service, or campaign will cater to a specific audience, so in this exercise, you will identify which audience is the right audience for your overall goal.

- Exercise:
  - Time: ~1 hour
  - Needs: sticky notes, sharpies, wall space to create the sample template
  - Facilitator: Not required
  - Using the sample template, map out each user/user group.
    - Using post-its, capture as many potential user groups as you can.
    - Using the sample template, map out each user/user group.
      - Y-axis is the scale that embodies your theory of change. For example, if your intended long-term social change is increased civic participation, you may define the y-axis scale as:
        - 1. People are informed
        - 2. People give feedback
        - 3. People are involved in decision-making process
        - 4. People collaborate with government on solutions
        - 5. People are empowered to validate/veto government decisions
      - X-axis is based on how reachable, engaged they are in your organization's work

Using the guidelines below, discuss which group(s) would be the ideal consumers of your product, service, or campaign. Vote or come to a consensus on your target audience.

I.   Individuals in the first quadrant (reachable and very engaged) may be good supporters and targets for your work. These individuals can help amplify your work.
II.  Individuals in the second quadrant (reachable and not as engaged) would be individuals who are potentially new audiences and reasonable to target.
III. Individuals in the third quadrant (not reachable and not engaged) would be often hard to move; however, you would have the most impact moving them along your axes.
IV.  Individuals in the fourth quadrant (not reachable and engaged) could be moved out of the quadrant with strategies that help your organization better engage with them (such as coalitions).

# I'm stuck...

1. If you can't come to a consensus, think about prioritizing—which group would be most interested in this issue? Most important to get involved in this issue? Is otherwise missing from the discussion on this issue?
2. When thinking about your target audience, remember that they are not uniform. Embrace this diversity within and among your target audience and remember that your campaign, product, or service will cater to different individuals that come from different access to resources, information, networks, etc. As you discuss in your group, it can be helpful to think about this diversity (i.e. students include students with disabilities studying science).

## Don't Forget!

**Inclusion Tip:** What are the groups that are historically underrepresented within your issue area? And of those groups, are there those the face additional forms or marginalization (e.g. women with disabilities, young people from ethnic minority groups, transgender communities, etc.). Make sure to include those communities on your map and consider how your product would look different or be used differently by the diverse members that make up marginalized communities.

As you are doing this activity, note down your assumptions. What guesses are you making about the actors in your ecosystem? Does that affect the selection of the target audience? Think about how you can validate your assumptions.

Deciding which group to work with depends on program objectives, funding, and other factors. Think through those factors when defining your target audience. It can help to put this into a sentence or a story.

# What's next?

Once you have identified your target audience, use the findings from this module to move on to the "user personas" module.