

# Target Experiences Analysis

*The target experiences' analysis reminds us of the user experience.*

Target group members have experiences when interacting with public systems that are often obscured for implementers who are used to seeing and thinking from an operations or systems' centered viewpoint.

The Target Experiences' Analysis helps create a series of tools that capture relevant information important to understanding frontline implementation from the perspective of the target groups. As such, it can provide valuable insight into current implementation conditions.

**What is needed?** Pen, printed copies of this worksheet for all, information

**Who is needed?** Yourself, staff of your organization

**How long will this take?** Step 1: Planning and collecting information will take some time. Read/plan ahead for this analysis.

## Activity

### Step 1

Collect information about the groups targeted for change by the policy or program. Spend most of your time and resources on this step.

This step can be as informal or formal as necessary, involve harvesting from published sources of information or collecting original data; often, the approach is dictated by time and resource constraints. It should focus on getting background information that influences how the target group experiences the public service interaction. So if you are working with students, what do you know about their experiences in school? If you are working with parents, what are their needs and expectations when they receive services from your program?

There is a range of structured information options that could be pursued during this stage:

- Literature review of qualitative studies that rely upon data from interviews, observation, or focus groups with the target groups.
- Observation and informal discussion with target group members at the point of interaction.
- Posing as a client (or multiple types of people posing as clients) experiencing the service interaction.
- Develop a sampling framework and gather original data through interviews, focus groups, or surveys.
- A combination of the above.

Describe the physical, economic, or social context within which the target group members experience the policy or program. Uncover what happens before, during and after the interaction. Focus on identifying salient moments that contribute to positive experiences or detract from them.

### Step 2

Create personas to represent key experiences from the information gathered. These composite characters should bring together important demographic and social realities that are significant for your population. In most projects, only three to five personas should be developed; these representative profiles help to humanize frontline implementation conditions and highlight important distinctions among the target group members.

The table in the next page provides a template for a persona. Note that these are examples of fields to include, and not exhaustive. You should tailor this to your program/organization's needs.

Supplemental visuals, such as graphs or diagrams, also can be included in the persona profiles. Communicate the essential elements of the persona so as to create empathy among the readers /users with the daily reality of their situation.

Tips:

- Use an actor's photo from royalty-free stock image websites. Always be mindful of whose image you use, and the attributions required to be respectful of its ownership.
- While personas are fictional, they are meant to be aggregate representations of the target audience you serve.

### Step 3

Use the personas in considering how implementation system operations interact with them. Think of the interactions that they will experience (e.g. via the Process Flow, or the Frontline Interactions Audit (other tools provided in this book). Consider the following questions:

- What would be the actions, feelings, perceptions and frame of mind brought to the interaction by the personas?
- What are the salient moments in which strong emotions or experiences might be possible?

As the host of this conversation, remember the following:

- This final step requires some abductive logic, **applying what is represented in the personas and considering how that might affect worldview and experiences with the policy or program**. It is necessary to move from the perspective of the system, into the larger context of the larger world in which the public policy or program interacts with a large array of other social, economic, and environmental factors.
- Answering the questions above can be a way to capture and map an array of significant experiences – the results can be represented in a timeline, flow chart, with sequences of photos or sketches, whatever might most evocatively represent how these people experience with the system.
- Sometimes, it is useful to actually think through and write out scenarios. A scenario is a narrative account used to explore experiences from the target group members' point of view. One can be created for each persona or a number can reflect, for example, how a changed economic environment might influence different personae's experience of the program.



Quote me here!  
What is something memorable that I would have said to you?

Name

Age

Gender

Location

Race/Ethnicity

What I do

Occupation, daily purpose, etc.

My personality

Behaviors, actions, who I am, etc.

I like

I dislike

My hopes and dreams

This is the story of my life

This is why I am using your product/services

This is my current experience with your product / services / staff/  
organization

This is the relationship between my experiences with you and  
why it matters to my life