who is this service for?

a tool by **QUAKE LAB** & **OLIP** OTTAWA LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

introduction

The service planning and delivery cycle comprises the following phases:

Phase 1: Identify the problem
Phase 2: Needs articulated
Phase 3: Program + service + offering developed
Phase 4: Program + service + offering made available
Phase 5: Feedback collected + success measured
Phase 6: Iteration + go back to Phase 1

This tool is geared primarily towards **Phase 1: Identifying the Problem**. Part of this phase is building an understanding of who exactly the problem affects and who is part of the community. Asking the right questions to develop an understanding of the environment and the people being served leads to more robust service planning which leads to long-term and sustainable interventions. The questions can be further explored in each of the other phases with more concrete answers but to begin the process of service planning and delivery, your organization must explicitly articulate the nuances regarding the service and the challenge(s) it is addressing.

One of Equity Ottawa's organizational change domains is focused on ensuring equity in service planning and delivery. This change domain contains action items such as using community input to re-design services to be more culturally and linguistically appropriate and safe, equitable procurement practices, as well as gathering disaggregated feedback from clients and service users. Importantly, implementation of equity into services can only be achieved through careful and nuanced consideration of the issue(s) at hand, after which each of these action items can be iterated upon. This tool aims to ensure that intentional equity practices are embedded right from the start of the service planning process. Asking the right questions to ensure that the problem is thoroughly understood can help avoid a lot of mishaps in the subsequent phases of the project.

why is this important?

By understanding who the service is addressing, the service can be tailored to specific needs and be built through an equity and justice-centered approach. For example, if the problem is poverty reduction and the people being served are people with small children, a service that takes place with daycare provision would be one way to ensure effective delivery to those the service is designed for.

If a community is not considered while planning a service, then there can be dire consequences, including irreversible harm being inflicted upon the community. In one notable example that shook the development sector, water wells were built across Africa and Asia however they ended up being unsuccessful due to a failure to plan for how communities can consistently maintain and monitor the wells and the water extracted. In one such instance, several non-governmental organizations working in Bangladesh pushed for water well construction which led to major structural issues within the area's ecosystem. Ultimately, these actions, committed without intentional service planning and delivery, led to poisoned water systems in the area and with little other choice of where to find water, the community was left to bear the consequences.[1]
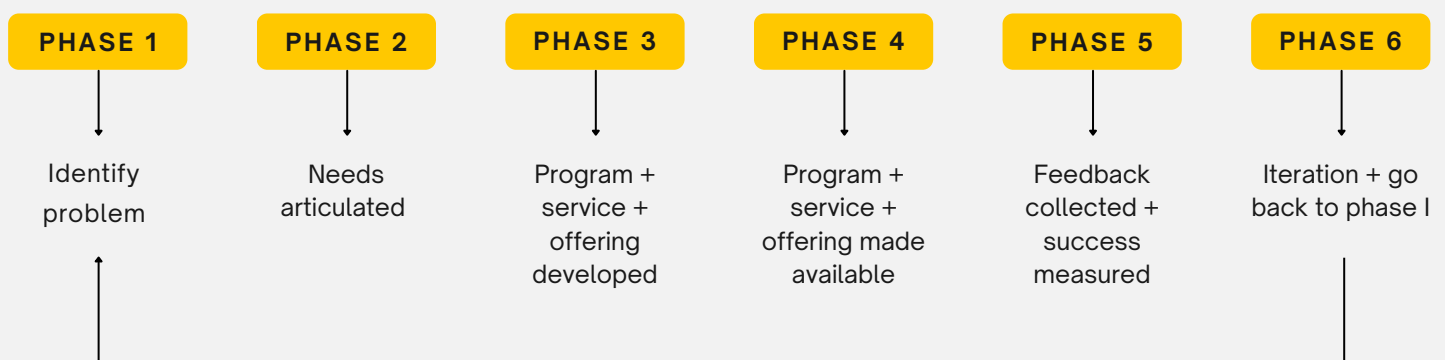
[1] 2015. "Why are Africa's wells failing?" World Economic Forum. Link: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/why-are-africas-wells-failing/.

how to use this tool?

This tool should be used to map out the answers to crucial questions your organization should ask when identifying the problem to ensure intentionality throughout the entire service planning and delivery process. Consistently iterating is an integral part of equitable service planning and delivery. We recommend recording answers for each subset of questions at the beginning (Phase 1) and the end (Phase 6) of the service planning and delivery cycle to ensure that there is a continuous revisiting of how equitable your service is.

If you are interested in taking things a step further, it is also recommended that this tool can be used as a starting point or foundational element in building guidelines for your organization. Guidelines can be documented steps required to be adhered to when designing new services or planning existing ones.

service planning and delivery lifecycle

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5	PHASE 6
Identify problem	Needs articulated	Program + service + offering developed	Program + service + offering made available	Feedback collected + success measured	Iteration + go back to phase I

what questions should you ask?

The answers to these questions can help formulate a robust baseline for service planning. The goal is to ensure that when you are developing and offering a service, program, or offering, you have carefully considered the following questions and so you have thoroughly identified the problem and have decided that your organization is equipped to address it effectively at this time. Try to best answer the following questions when starting or revisiting the service planning process.

Ask yourselves:	Consider the following:
What is the problem? *Start by breaking down the challenge into smaller and more understandable parts to better understand its impacts in various ways. This can help make equity and justice-informed decisions about which offerings should be made and how they should be developed.* *Being explicit about what the problem is gives you an opportunity to intentionally investigate whether you are building programming based on assumption, and identifies gaps in collaboration.*	• Is it a new problem? • Who identified this problem and who was not in the room? • How has this problem been described in the communities it affects vs in your organization? • When was this problem identified and what important context was at play? • What are the different elements of this problem
Why is it a problem? *Explore the nuances of the problem and your organization's intentions. Additionally, prompts you to continuously adhere to existing and emerging knowledge, research and data especially from stakeholders with lived experience.*	• What is the impact of the issue on the community? • Why is now the time to act? • How have those most affected described its impact? • What will solving this problem change for those most affected? • Do you have any supporting material that validates this is a problem (direct lived experience from those affected, research, data, etc.)

Ask yourselves:	Consider the following:
***Where* is it a problem?** *Delve into how this issue has been addressed previously in your area through partner organizations as well as the mechanics of how the problem operates. This investigation will ensure you are creating the best possible intervention that is focused and robust.*	• Does it take place in other catchment areas? • Is there information you can find from partner organizations? • Within those most affected, what are the sub communities eg. if immigrant communities are identified as a whole, does the problem emerge differently for Black visibly muslim immigrants? What about Francophone and Anglophone immigrants? • Geographically, does this problem happen in public spaces or private spaces? Is there an element of inaccessibility for disabled persons? Is it rural or urban?
***When* is it a problem?** *Explore what this problem looks like at different times.*	• Are there certain times of the year where the problem ramps up? • Are there patterns that help us understand the life cycle and intensity of the problem in time?

The table above presents some big questions! It's okay not to have all the answers right away, some of these questions require time and research. For any questions that do not have yet answers, brainstorm ways in which they can be acquired – some might present quicker interventions than others. For instance, some questions may prompt you to contact partner organizations, while others may prompt you to launch a survey to better understand how identity impacts experience in the implementation process.

who is this service for?

Importantly, if you don't know who your service is for, you are not working in service to the community. This means that you are not ready to plan and deliver this service. Ensuring that it is clear who the service is for makes it easier to build equity into the following planning and delivery phases. Carefully consider the following series of questions:

Ask yourselves	Consider the following:
Who is it a problem for? *Build a better understanding of what exactly this problem looks like and how it impacts different population groups so that you can plan and deliver offerings equitably.*	• Do you have information about who in your catchment area is impacted? • Is there disaggregated data that can be used for service planning? • Is there research on who this problem impacts on a local level? • Is there information from partner organizations that might be applicable? • Do you have information from other services that address similar issues? • Are there groups within the whole for who the problem is exacerbated and/or looks different (ie. the way we see poverty is exacerbated for trans people of colour)? • Where have their voices, direct feedback been captured and used in the identification of the problem and building of the intervention? • Have the demographics or 'the who' changed over time?

now what?

This tool is meant to be an iterative device – used in Phase 1 as you start exploring the service planning and delivery lifecycle and Phase 6, as you revise the service delivered and implement feedback. Ultimately, the goal is to have each question answered to ensure an equitable and justice-centered approach to service planning and delivery which requires careful consideration and intentionality built into the roots of the service lifecycle.

For the first set of questions, building that exploratory understanding of what, where, how, and when the problem you want to address crops up helps to ensure the right methodologies will be used in subsequent phases of the lifecycle. For the second table, these questions should ideally be answered before moving forward to ensure that your organization is indeed working in service of the community. If these questions are difficult to answer or understand, then it is important to think about how they can be answered and revisit any programming at a later stage.