



# VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS

**What:** Improve your understanding of how your proposed solution will address your target group(s)'s needs and desires and hence the value of your solution.

**Why:** The value proposition canvas is a visual tool that helps you understand what value your solution will bring to your pre-defined target group(s). The tool is composed of two parts: a profile of your target group and a value map. Completing this will help your decision-making process when it comes to specific project design elements and will improve the relevance, and hence the impact, of the solution.

**When:** This tool is best applied following a needs specification and good understanding on what your target group(s) desires, explored through for instance a well-defined [persona](#) of your target group. However, if your participants already have a significant level of insight into your target community, for example from current/previous projects, you may already have the required information to complete the target community profile.

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## Step 1

### PREPARE THE EXERCISE

Collect the findings and insights about your chosen target group(s) – for example, from your completed Jobs-to-be-done and/or persona exercises – that you will need to fill out your target group profile. Ideally, you should only have one target group per value proposition canvas. If you have several different target groups, complete more canvases if time allows,

Print out the value proposition canvas template. If running the exercise in groups, use one A3 template (or A4 if A3 printing is not possible) per group and one A3 template or flip chart to consolidate all the findings at the end.

Consider the composition of exercise participants and who is well-positioned to provide relevant input, for example, project staff and/or volunteers who know the target group well. If feasible and appropriate, the canvas can be filled in with people part of/close to the chosen target group. Always consider ethical and do-no-harm aspects when engaging directly with the target groups, and be mindful to manage expectations and provide adequate information. Consult your community engagement and accountability advisor for further advice.

If more than eight participants, split the group into smaller groups.

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## Step 2

### TARGET GROUP PROFILE

## INFORMATION

**PHASE**  
DESIGN

**TIMEFRAME**  
60-120 MINS.

**MODE**  
FACE-TO-FACE

**PARTICIPANTS**  
4 - 10

**FACILITATION LEVEL**  
MEDIUM

**MATERIALS**  
A3 TEMPLATE PRINTOUT OR  
FLIP CHART, MARKERS IN  
DIFFERENT COLOURS, SMALL  
STICKY NOTES, A TIMER

Start by introducing the participants to the timeframe and the purpose of the exercise by going through the following:

- What are we going to do today?
- Why are they invited?
- What are their roles (if participants do not know each other well)?
- What is the timeframe?

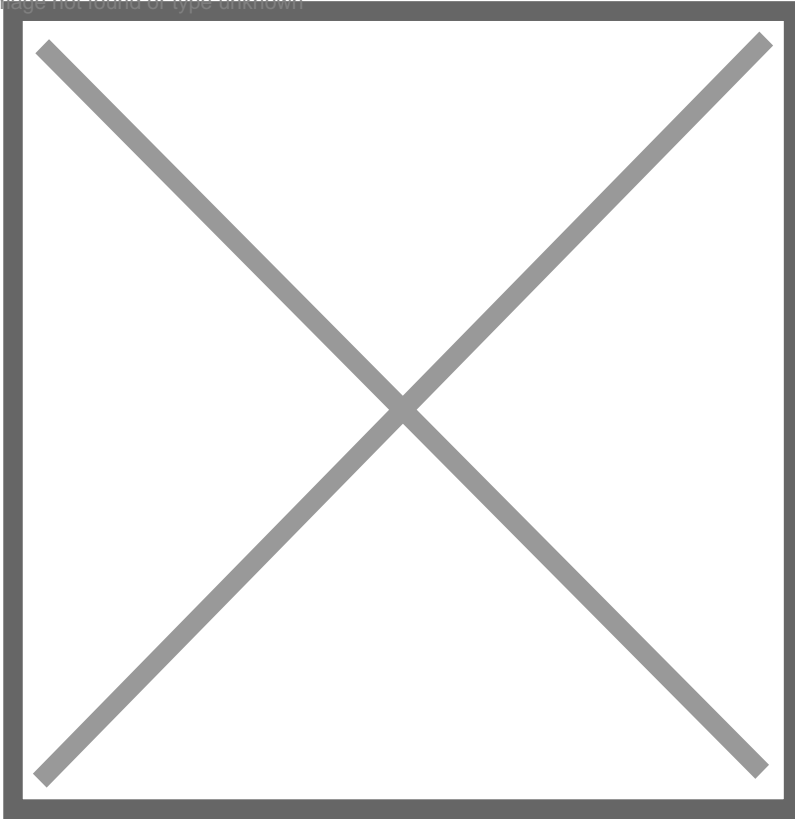
Start the exercise by filling in the target group profile circle. Do so by writing inputs on sticky notes and place in the circle – this way you can easily make changes to the circle during the exercise.

Identify as many of the following elements of your target group as you can:

- **Jobs:** These are the tasks your target community is trying to solve to achieve a certain goal. Jobs can be: functional, such as a household member's task to provide their family with safe water; it can be social, like living up to certain social expectations; or emotional, like feeling safe when sending their children to school. Prioritise the tasks according to how important they are to your target group and the problem your solution aims to address.
- **Pains:** These are all the factors stopping your target group from completing the identified jobs/tasks. For example, recurring droughts leading to consistently low water levels, or security issues hampering the journey to/from school. This helps you identify the problems from the target group's perspective. Prioritise the pains according to how important they are to your target group and the problem your solution aims to address.
- **Gains:** Gains are the positive experiences or improvements that the community wishes to achieve. These could be being able to keep their family healthy with access to safe water or ensuring a better future for their children by ensuring attendance to school. Prioritise the gains according to how important they are to your target group and the problem your solution aims to address.
- Finally, pick the 3–5 most important pains and gains that relate to the most important jobs.

If you have already identified the above information in previous exercises, use the information collected then.

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*Target group profile illustration*

If conducting the exercise in smaller groups, gather all participants at the end of this step to discuss, agree, and fill in the three parts of the community profile circle on the printed A3 template/flip chart.

Allow 10–20 mins for this step (if using insights from previous exercises) or 30–40 mins if creating the profile now.

#### **Facilitator tips**

Remember, each target group profile is distinct in its jobs, pains, and gains, so don't squeeze them all together into one community profile. A community will consist of different segments. If your discussions in this step reveal several different segments of the community, it's better to fill out separate canvasses for each segment.

Make sure to apply a protection, gender, and inclusion lens when building your target group profile.

Keep reminding participants to 'think like a community member' to capture points as relevant as possible – asking participants to give real life examples will help them empathise with the target group(s).

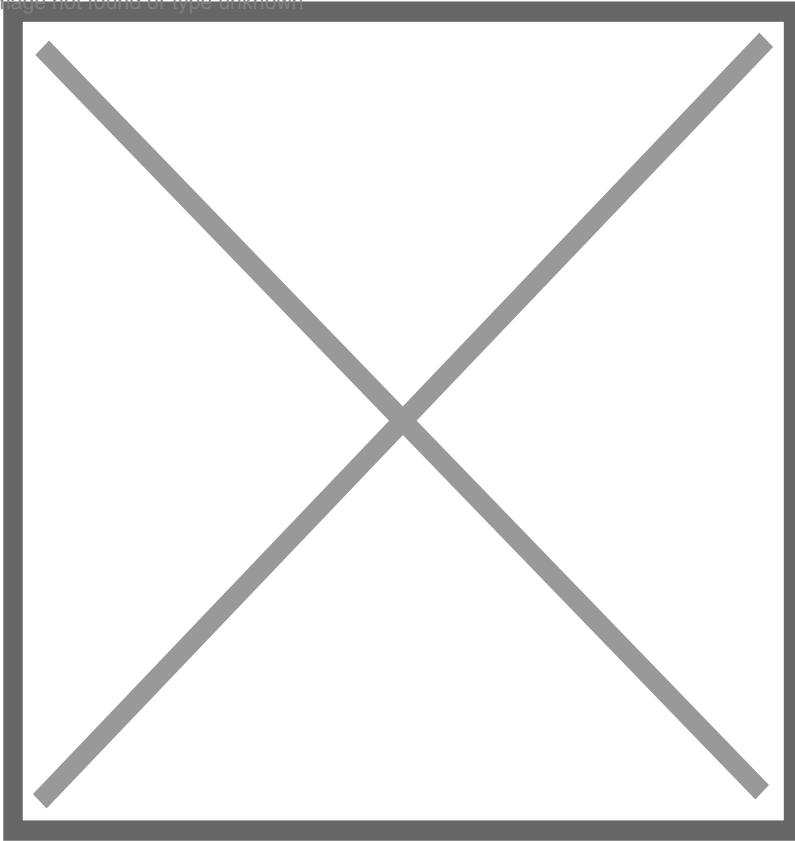
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## **Step 3**

### **FILL THE VALUE PROPOSITION MAP**

With your target group clearly defined, now move on to filling out the value proposition map – the square part of the canvas, which is divided into three parts.

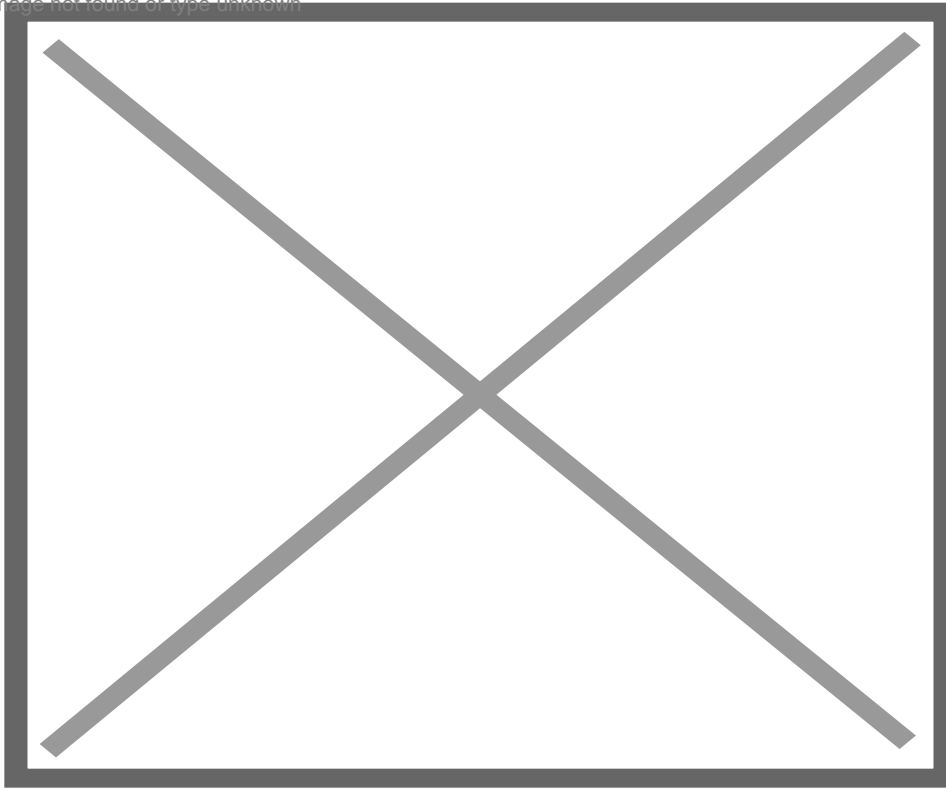
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*Solution value map illustration*

Each part is relevant to the target group profile section that you have just completed and to how your solution will fulfil the needs/tasks identified in the profile:

- **Your solution:** List all the planned solution elements, like services, activities, etc., and focus on how they each will help the community get their jobs/tasks done. For example, distributing water purification tablets is one way of providing safe water, or running school buses would increase the feeling of safety when sending children to school.
- **Pain relievers:** Using simple statements, note down ways of how your solution elements will help ease the target group's identified pains and needs. For example, access to water purification tablet solves the immediate household level need for safe drinking water, or project-run school buses would relieve the anxiety children and parents feel about their journey to school. Also ask yourselves whether your pain relievers are sustainable.
- **Gain creators:** Now, define all the ways in which your solution will add value to the target group. Does it help them to achieve their goals now and in the longer term? For example, safe drinking water could mean a healthier household and lower healthcare spending, and safe and anxiety-free transport to and from school could mean higher attendance rate and better education, thus improved possibilities for a better future.
- Pick the 3–5 gain creators and pain relievers that make the biggest difference to your target group and link them to how they solve the pains, gains, and tasks identified in your target group profile. You can do this by drawing lines using different colour markers across the value proposition canvas.



*Value proposition map connecting proposed solution value and target group needs*

Examples: Questions to ask to help define pain relievers could be: Does the solution provide time savings (money, time, efforts); fix the existing problem; improve the emotional and physical state of community members. For gain creators, they could be: Do the savings make the everyday life of the target group easier; help them achieve other things previously not possible; will the increased peace of mind make them feel happier.

If you have divided participants into smaller groups, gather them all now to discuss and agree on your shortlist of gain creators and pain relievers. Once there is general agreement, create 3–5 value propositions that clearly outline what you want to do, and how to do it to bring the most value to your community.

**Next step:** With the value propositions clearly defined, discuss and agree on the next steps and who will do what when. These could be exploring what other stakeholders are doing by using the [ecosystem map tool](#) or testing the desirability, viability, and feasibility of your upcoming project with the [mapping assumptions tool](#).

Discuss and decide who will do what and when in the next steps.

Allow 50–60 minutes for this step.

#### **Facilitator tip**

Keep reminding participants to 'put themselves in the shoes of the target group' to capture points as relevant as possible – asking them to give real life examples will help them frame their thinking. Remind the participants to apply a protection, gender, and inclusion lens as well as a conflict-sensitivity lens when filling out the canvas.

Keep in mind that not all community pains and gains can be addressed in one project – the best approach here is to focus in on the key priorities in the identified context and solution. If you end up with insights not suitable for this project, make a note of them for other projects that could benefit from the insights.

When picking the 3–5 gain creators and pain relievers, encourage free discussion and for everyone to have their say. The more quiet participants may sit on highly relevant insights that could be overshadowed by more vocal participants, so keep nudging everyone to speak up, reminding them there are no 'wrong' points of view

here.

