Five Problem Frames

🕐 60 minutes

Are you building a window, when what people need is a door?
Up the impact of your project by getting to the root of the problem.

1 **Brainstorm**

Not all problems are created equal.
Answer each prompt provided, to list out problems in each problem frame.
Then, move to the next frame.

★ **Knowledge**

What information is unknown, not well understood, hard to access and/or not provided?

Knowledge-based problems can be solved through targeted education, enhanced understanding, counseling, and/or betteraccess to correct information.

Example: "People don't know they are eligible for benefits."

★★ **Service**

What ongoing care or services are unavailable or inaccessible?

Service-based problems can be solved if people can access ongoing care, support, or services.

Example: "People need help managing their diabetes."

★★★ **Protection**

What services might protect people before issues arise, but are unavailable or inaccessible?

Protection-based problems can be solved if people can access one-time, long-lasting protective services before issues ever arise.

Example: "People need protection against the flu before flu season starts."

★★★★ **Standard**

How do the current context, defaults, rules and norms make good choices hard? Bad choices easy?

Standard-based problems can be solved if better, easier, or healthier options are made the default by changing the context or environment.

Example: "People are getting into car accidents due to poor safety standards."

★★★★★ **Conditions**

How do the conditions in which people live, grow and work, get in the way of positive outcomes.

Conditions-based problems can be solved by addressing socioeconomic factors, including access to basic needs, wealth, and improved living standards.

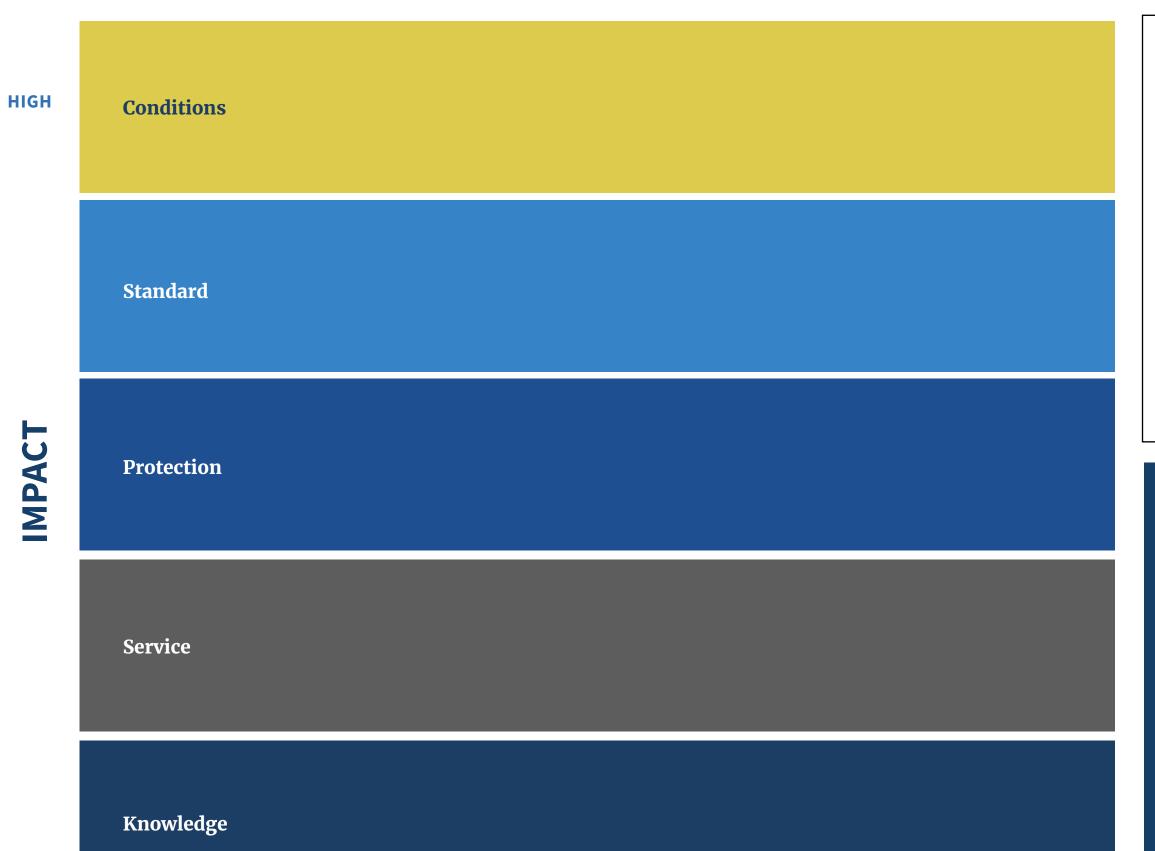Example: "People in poverty are unable to recover from a financial shock."

2 **Prioritize**

Plot. Place each sticky from Step 1 on the matrix below based on how feasible it is to solve.
Discuss. Discuss as a team and adjust the placement of stickies as needed.
Vote. As a group, vote on on the specific problems your team wants to focus on most.
Then, write your team's overall problem statement on the right-hand side, using the template provided.

IMPACT

HIGH

| Conditions |
| Standard |
| Protection |
| Service |
| Knowledge |

LOW

FEASIBILITY HIGH

How could you frame the overall problem your team is solving, so that it encompasses the problems in those most impactful problem frames? Write the problem statement using the template below.

[People who are impacted] need [goal they are currently unable to achieve] but are prevented by [biggest problems they are facing].

⚡ What makes a good problem statement?

• Is a complete sentence and focuses on the outcomes of the impacted members of the public

• Does not make assumptions about the solution

• Does not make any untested or unreasonable assumptions about what members of the public think, feel, want, or find most important

3 **Plan**

Plan. To deliver equitably, we have to plan. Use the Now-Next-Later Framework to help you determine how you move forward.
Consider your priority problems. Use them to develop your team's problem statement for NOW.
Add notes for how you can start planning for what's NEXT and what's LATER.

NOW

What resources do we need to pursue more high impact problems?

NEXT

LATER