

Playbook for Equity and Inclusion in Civic Tech Organizations

A compilation of enabling concepts for improving equity and inclusion at civic tech organizations.



Code
for All
GLOBAL NETWORK

Hack this playbook!

This is our beta-version of the **Equity and Inclusion Playbook** based on the research report that can be found [here](#).

It's a first attempt by the Code for All to bring together in house grown tools to improve equity and inclusion practices and policies for the network. We know there's probably a lot that we have missed considering and others not factored in but hope that you will help us through your feedback. It has come this far through collaborative effort - please help us make it better for future versions.

Help us create version 2.0! Please send us:

1. Notes on clarity, application and relevance for your organization, whether great or less.
2. Your filled in worksheets for the different exercises and any accompanying notes.
3. Any corrections and edits of errors that you pick up
4. Your thoughts on the frameworks that have informed each of the tools.
5. Other tools suggestions that can be added to this playbook
6. Your overall experience working with the tools.

Diversity, equity and inclusion is a dynamic subject and one that organizations have to constantly adapt for. We hope that you will share your feedback and experience with these tools and if there are other tools that you have developed or used, kindly share, so that we can continue to update this playbook. If you want to read the report before you get started, it can be found [here](#).

This version of the playbook is aimed at civic tech organizations but might find the most relevance to medium sized teams with more than 5 members. However, regardless of the size of your organization, you might still find it applicable, particularly for thinking critically about aspects of the organization that might fly under the radar. The Equity Programming is outward facing, organizations of all sizes can use them effectively. Please leave your suggestions in the Google Doc [here](#) or if you prefer, send them over as an email to nonso@codeforall.org.

Please send suggestions for additional tools, or your versions of hacked tools and completed worksheets to nonso@codeforall.org with E&I Playbook Hacks as the subject line. Tell us what you've done or what you'd suggest, and you'll get a credit in our updated version (as well as our gratitude).



Playbook Overview

The following tools¹ were designed and piloted during the equity and inclusion research project commissioned by Code for All in 2020. They respond to the gaps indicating that civic tech organizations lack processes and accountability to be more equitable and inclusive. The tools are informed by insights collected through desk research; key informant interviews conducted as part of the research methodology. They were tested and refined through a participatory process that involved eight (8) civic tech organizations, including the team at Code for All.

They are valuable for examining equity and inclusion practices for civic tech organizations and surfacing areas where improvements might be needed. It consists of 3 tools that guide users (teams) in assessing the state of equity and inclusion, estimating the team's capacity to make changes, and strategizing on plausible improvements and improbable steps. Ideally, the tools are used sequentially in the following order: 1.) Equity DNA; 2.) Equity Triangle, and 3.) Equity Programming. However, teams are free to start with any tool of choice.

The tools are open to further iteration and improvement based on the experience and lessons learned by users as they engage with them. They will be hosted on an open platform that will allow users to make suggestions and inputs for improvement. Designated management will iterate intermittently and to keep them up to date with the information generated by users. Although created by civic tech organizations for civic tech organizations, they can be useful for organizations outside civic tech.

The remainder of this playbook introduces the 3 concepts and closes with a section on how to use the playbook.

Summary of Tools

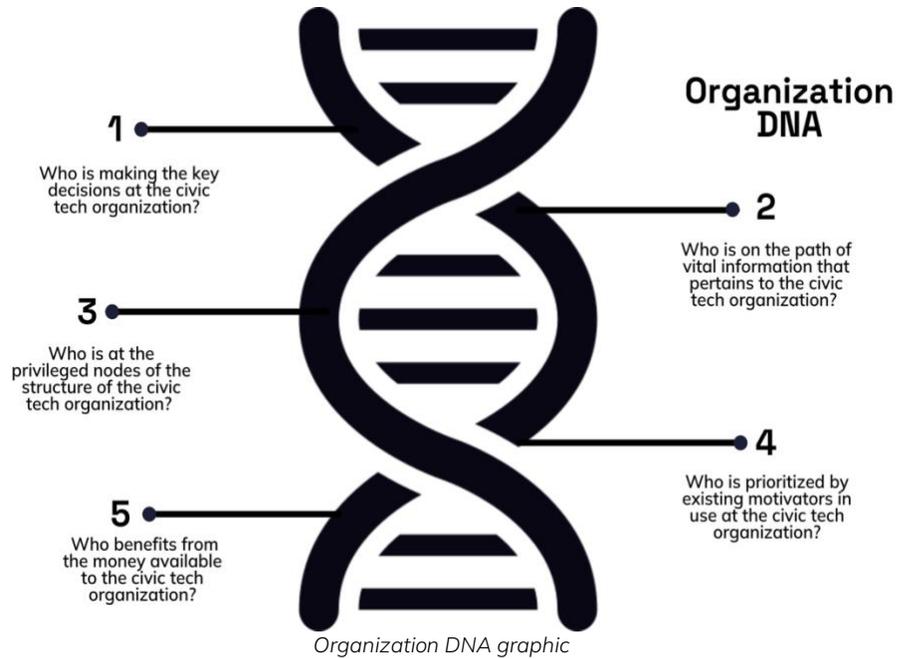
Equity DNA

Organization DNA are frameworks traditionally used in business to diagnose problems, discover hidden strengths, and modify company behavior. It allows organizations to examine all aspects of their company's architecture, resources, and relationships (Gary Nielson, et al, 2004). It helps sift through the highly complex nature of organizations to expose what is working and what is not, understand how it got that way, and determine how to change it. The framework was adapted to aid the examination of civic tech organizations' commitment to equity. It zooms into an organization's equity standing using five key questions stated below:

1. Who makes the key decisions at the civic tech organization?
2. Who is on the path of vital information that pertains to the civic tech organization?

¹ Tools refers to the concepts - equity DNA, Triangle and programming. The intention is to iterate them with lessons surfaced as civic tech organizations pilot and use them. The resources will be hosted on a platform that allows users to make suggestions for improvement.

3. Who is at the privileged nodes of the structure of the civic tech organization?
4. Who is prioritized by existing motivators in use at the civic tech organization?
5. Who benefits from the money available to the civic tech organization?



Teams are to ask and score these questions using a scoring sheet shown below. Each individual on the team should fill out a score sheet and provide a rationale for why they assigned that score. After completing the scoring sheets, the team should reconvene to discuss their scores and rationales. The discussion opens space for team members to share their scores and rationale with the rest of the team. It is also an opportunity to lead an intersectionality² conversation, that brings into perspective considerations that team members might have overlooked in their initial scoring and rationale. Following the outcomes of the team discussions, individuals can go back and review and vet their original scores.

Equity Triangle

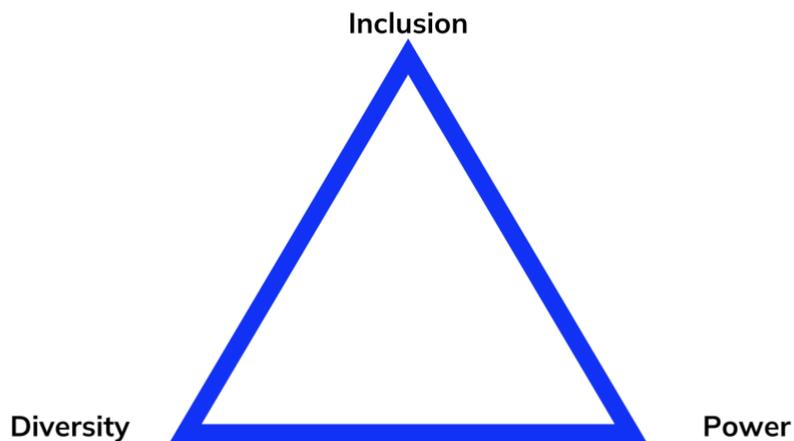
Triangle frameworks are used to show interdependence, interconnectedness, and tensions between factors. The equity triangle features diversity, inclusion, and power on the vertices of the triangle. The idea is that if an equitable organization is the goal and equity should be replaced by another variable. The decision to replace equity with power is in response to concerns surfaced during the research about “power” being critical but often left out of the discourse for more just organizations. The framework is meant to help conceptualize an equitable organization as a function of the interrelationship between the degree to which the organization is diverse, the amount of work it is capable of doing to be inclusive, and the extent to which power is distributed within the

² Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Examples of these aspects are gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, tribe, disability, physical appearance, and height.

organization. To go beyond the concept, the equity triangle is broken down into two parts: first, a conversation spark to allow teams to discuss the state of play and second, a journey map to examine the experience of individual team members.

Having a diverse organization is attractive, but if you increase the diversity within an organization, it has implications for inclusion and, in turn, on the way power is distributed within the organization. Imagining the interaction between diversity, inclusion, and power as three factors whose relationship helps determine how equitable an organization ultimately is, surface the following.

- There is more inclusion work to be done as a team or organization becomes more diverse.
- There is a need to pay more attention to the distribution of power as a marker for inclusion.
- Balancing power distribution with purpose and competence tends to make attempts at diversity appear as futile exercises.
- The ideal outcome is finding a balance between all three variables by thinking about them together.



Equity triangle graphic

Equity Programming

This framework takes a leave from visioning practice and exercises and encourages teams to document the current and desired future state of programme areas of their work. They prompt participants to articulate present-day situations and use scenarios to guide them into the areas of future success. The Equity DNA and Triangle were designed to help civic tech organizations look inward and make improvements. Equity Programming provides a framework for civic tech organizations to examine their works and roles in the communities they serve and ensure that their ways of working are not promoting further inequities. The framework identifies five areas of programming that may promote inequities if they are not approached with intentionality, and these include program beneficiary, design, implementation, measurement, and communication.



Equity programming graphic

- **Beneficiary:** Who will be impacted by our programming and how are they determined?
- **Design:** Who is creating the programmes and how do they go about doing that?
- **Implementation:** Who will execute the programmes and why are they executing?
- **Measurement:** Who will measure the success of the implementation and what are they interested in?
- **Communication:** Who will narrate the programming experience and why is a certain message passed along over others?

Through a facilitated session, team members will reflect on the state of these areas of their programmatic work as an organization, regroup to share perspectives and then work in small groups to start building the more desirable future and more equitable state of programming. This framework offers civic tech organizations a basic tool to articulate their current situations in these areas of programming and describe where they would like to be in the future.

Programme Areas	Status	Goal
Beneficiary		

Design		
Implementation		
Measurement		
Communication		

A. Using the Equity DNA

The Equity DNA consists of 5 questions designed to quickly examine how responsibility and benefits are distributed within an organization and in relation to the team. The questions provide a structure that guides teams to reflect on core aspects of equity and inclusion within their organization that are otherwise difficult to broach and walk through. For each question, individuals on the team are expected to think through an answer and subsequently give their response as a score between 1 to 5 depending on how equitable and inclusive they think their answer is (1 being for low and 5 for high).

For example, if the answer to the question, "who is making the key decisions at the civic tech organization?" is two people (Vianney and Nneka), the score assigned should be about the extent to which the individual thinks that Vianney and Nneka making the key decisions is equitable and inclusive. They will also provide a rationale for their score to reduce the subjectivity that might arise from arbitrarily assigning quantitative values to questions.

The first step is to discuss the questions and ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of what they mean and clarity on how to score them. It is also important to note that responses to these questions will vary depending on how long an individual has been at the organization. The operational constraints and rationale for an organization will be obscure to a newbie compared to a team member who has the benefit of cumulative knowledge of being at the organization longer.

The derivation from these questions is not for the answers to be "everyone" in the organization but to see how people who fit into the responses compare with the rest of the organization.

Who makes the key decisions at the civic tech organization?

This is a question of both the identity and profile of key decision-makers at the organization. It is also the consideration that decision-making in an organization is stratified, and key decisions can happen at all strata. The strata surfaced within this research project are a) organization-wide, b) department-wide (this can also be specific projects), and lastly, c) individual-focused decisions. Responding to this question means thinking about who decides what happens on these strata. How many people are involved in the process versus how many people can be reasonably involved, and how aspects of decision-making feel like some persons tend to encroach into other people's

decision-making space.

In practice, this is more complicated because it is a balancing act between decentralizing decision-making and ensuring that the different decision paths are always aligned with the organization's mission. Ultimately, there are exceptions and grey areas; for example, hierarchy to decision making will remain as someone needs to take responsibility for the organization. There will also be sensitive decisions, for example, those pertaining to human resources. There will be situations when decision-making is time-sensitive or deadlines are reached, and there is a need to call it.

Who decides what? How many people are involved in a decision process? Where does one person's decision-making authority end and another begins?

Who is on the path of vital information that pertains to the civic tech organization?

This is a question about availability and accessibility to the various kinds of vital information in an organization. It is also asking about who is creating the vital information in the organization. When members of the organization are invited to contribute to the creation of vital information, how are their inputs requested? Is it comfortable and convenient, factoring in the differences in capacity and personal preferences on how best to engage? Are contributors given credit for their inputs? Is vital information accessible in terms of language and readability? Are the processes for creating and accessing vital information clear or muddled in obscure language? There may be instances where information is made available, but certain information gatekeepers in the organization subtly discourage access by commenting on their irrelevance or overload with other irrelevant information to the impression of complexity.

In this case, vital information is information that can enhance the members' sense of belonging and commitment. The research surfaced the following types of organization information:

1. Work information (related to projects and processes).
2. Political information (may not necessarily exist in documents).
3. Strategic information (pertaining to an organization's priorities and opportunities).

Most civic tech organizations create and store their organization files and documents in cloud storages (e.g., Google Drive or OneDrive), collaboration platforms (Slack or Basecamp), and emails. Depending on roles, tenure, and hierarchy, access levels can vary, and some organizations can also choose to keep all resources entirely open to all team members. It makes sense for certain types of organization information such as private and confidential passwords to be restricted.

Access to documents and files can be taken a step further to be intentional about how members receive their information. This is sadly an aspect where we get misled by technology as an equalizer or assume that most people in civic tech organizations have technical skills. The distinction between making information available and ensuring it reaches everyone in the best way possible needs to be made. Announcements are being

made on organization platforms, but did everyone notice? Irrespective, everyone in the organization needs to take responsibility.

What metrics are used to measure performance? How are activities coordinated, and how is knowledge transferred? How are expectations and progress communicated? Who knows what? Who needs to know what? How is information transferred from the people who have it to the people who require it?

Who is at the privileged nodes of the structure of the civic tech organization?

This question examines the privilege, opportunities, and benefits that accrue to job roles and functions in the organization structure. In some cases, this can be about who occupies supervisory roles and functions, and other times it is about certain subgroups within the organization. It attempts to compare if, unintentionally, a particular group of people sits at these nodes and other groups find themselves at less privileged nodes. All parts of the organization structure are critical, but not all aspects are created equal.

The differences can be justified based on input and reward, but it has to be explained to everyone in the organization and understood. The organization's members should see a clear path for growth or progress within the organization's structure if it is of interest.

Suppose the organization is using a hierarchical structure. In that case, it necessitates ensuring that members on the same level have shared experience and are clear about the opportunities to move up the hierarchy and if those opportunities do not exist. Part of this is considering the significance of upskilling team members versus a preference for hiring new team members when there are openings in the organization. In organizations that take on a flat structure, there can be a tendency for members to be made to do more work than necessary and also be made more responsible than their benefits.

When people have not been given the necessary training and support for their role, it should be acknowledged, and the organization's limitations are discussed rather than dismissed or glossed over.

What does the organizational hierarchy look like? How are the lines and boxes in the organization chart connected? How many layers are in the hierarchy, and how many direct reports does each layer have?

Who is prioritized by existing motivators in use at the civic tech organization?

This question examines the organization's formal and informal incentives and their suitability for everyone in the organization.

In some cases, the motivators exist, but the organization lacks dedicated resources for processes and coordination, often making access to the motivations a case of team members' capacity to come forward and utilize the motivations. This can mean that the team members who are better communicators and enforcers might get those motivations. It gives privilege to those who have better technical, communication, and managerial skills.

On the account that people are recruited into the organization based on their unique inputs and different skill sets, motivations should accommodate different people, situations, and lifestyles. Motivative provisions should account for both welfare and team building and should not be limited to or explicitly favoring the person, project, or team preferred by leadership. Certain people receive acknowledgment for their work and not others. Management could get biased towards roles or teams closest to the organization's critical path of results and identity.

Sure, civic tech organizations have priorities that influence their direction of work, and it makes sense to allocate most, if not all, motivations to these priorities. However, the minutest roles or aspects of the organization matter in the chain of operations and should be duly awarded motivations. The incentives may be standard, but they are often better if tailored or adaptive, such as maternity leave, bereavement, etc. However, the most significant motivators (pay raises and promotions) are almost entirely out of reach in most civic tech organizations as they do not have the kind of structure that supports it.

What objectives, incentives, and career alternatives do people have? How are people rewarded, financially and non-financially, for what they achieve? What are they encouraged to care about, by whatever means, explicit or implicit?

Who benefits from the money available to the civic tech organization?

This is a question that probes the availability and distribution of money within civic tech organizations. It looks into the organization's binding financial decisions and processes, such as salaries and budget allocations for projects. The question analyzes the criteria and measures to ensure that the means and determinants for the distribution are as equitable as possible. In this session, it will also be helpful if the discussion also goes beyond the organization's internal affairs to assess its financial relationship with partners (if any). When it comes to partnerships, is your organization often the benefactor or the beneficiary? In instances where your organization and a partner organization are both beneficiaries of a sponsor, how does the money distribution affect you?

To a large extent, this session is about transparency. It may demand a few clarifications from the top management, especially on budgeting, salary structures, and financial incentives for team members. Some civic tech organizations do not have a defined salary scale, and team members' salaries differ based on their negotiating powers at the point of recruitment. For some organizations, salaries, wages, and financial benefits are determined by the evaluation of team members' inputs. Also, contract-based civic tech organizations often have a financial structure that fluctuates with the cash injections attached to the contracts. The participating team members should understand that this session aims to examine the organization's financial processes from an inclusive lens, with hopes of providing clarifications that dissipate tensions that may exist.

Who makes the financial decisions? Who handles the financial processes? What is the basis for budget allocations? How is money distributed across teams? Are there teams or individuals that benefit the most from the organization's finance? If yes, which/who?

What are the merits that define higher allocations for some teams or individuals? In comparison to partners, is the organization earning reasonably?

Organization DNA	Equity Score	Why that Score?	What does it mean?	Equity Score
Decisions				
Information				
Structure				
Motivators				
Money				

B. Using the Equity Triangle

The Equity Triangle exercise has two parts: a) sparking a conversation using four triangle models of varying degrees of diversity, inclusion and power distribution in an organization and; b) mapping the user journey of team members' experience of diversity, inclusion and power through their time in an organization.

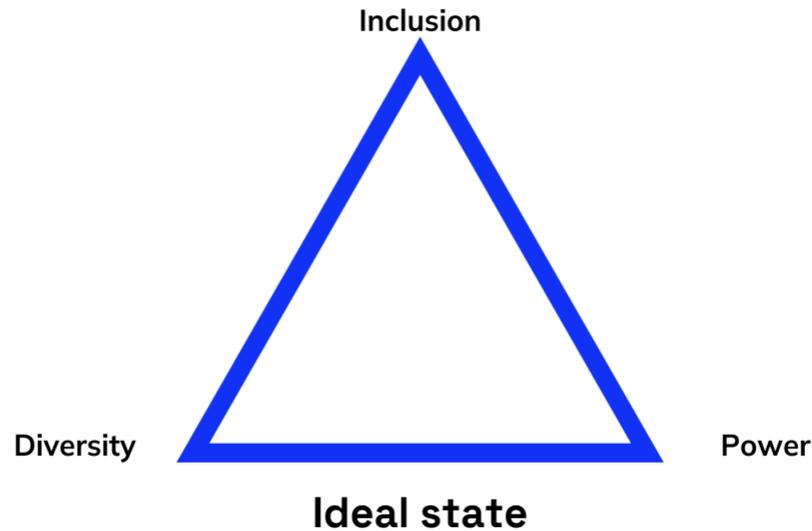
[Equity] Conversation Spark

Conversation Spark is an illustrative tool to be used in facilitating discussion on the dynamics between diversity, inclusion, power, and equity. The triangle models the state of equity in organizations and guides organizations through meaning and flaws as they imagine the state of diversity, inclusion, and power in their organization. They are also about raising the question of what needs to be done or not. Here are some questions that can be considered to get the conversation going:

- Given the state the organization is currently in, should it seek more diversity?
- Are the resources available to build the inclusivity that follows being more diverse?
- Should there be more power distribution?
- What are the implications for genuinely distributing power?
- What would that look like in the organization?

The angles of the triangle can have varying sizes, depending on where the team agrees needs more work. The changes in the size of the angles of the triangles indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When the angles are even, it indicates as close to satisfied as possible and when an angle is bigger than the other two, it indicates where there is work to be done. Participants can be asked to draw a triangle they think best represents their organization and describe why they think so. This is mostly a preamble to the

journey map, especially if it helps get a conversation going among the team members.



[Equity] Journey Map

The Journey Map helps a team examine an individual's time at an organization for areas of improvement by inquiring into what diversity, inclusion, and power look like and how they are being experienced throughout an individual's time at the organization. If each team member is considered a "user," and the organization is regarded as a "service provider" offering diversity, inclusion, and power as services. Mapping each team member's experiences with diversity, inclusion, and power through their time at the organization would represent their "journey map." The goal in mapping the journey is to unpack underlying assumptions about the experience of team members' time at organizations and determine what kind of work needs to be done or not to change the odds.

A team member's journey in an organization is assumed to have four linear stages: Enter, Thrive, Rise and Lead — Enter is when an individual joins an organization and requires guidance with their responsibilities and the organization's process; Thrive is when they have a full grasp of their responsibilities and organization's operations; Rise is when they are able to guide others through their responsibilities, organization's processes, and as well, devise new responsibilities and strategies; Lead is when they are responsible for others in the organization.

The mapping is done on a table with the four stages of the journey map (Enter, Thrive, Rise, and Lead) placed on the topmost row, and diversity, inclusion, and power are placed on the leftmost column. For each stage of the journey, questions are asked about diversity, inclusion, and power and filled in the appropriate cells of the table. Having the conversation spark before the journey map — stimulating the team to think actively about the relationship between diversity, inclusion, and power — can help prepare them for the mapping as they would have thought about them critically.

The section below provides an overview of the four stages of the journey map and questions to consider in each stage. There are two entries for diversity: diversity today and diversity tomorrow. The diversity variables allow the team to take a baseline — what does diversity look like in the organization today? Should the organization aspire for more diversity or not? The other variables — inclusion and power have a single entry.

Enter

When an organization decides to hire new members, consideration should address all three equity variables, diversity, inclusion, and power.

Hiring presents an opportunity to bring more diversity into the team, but the team needs to pause and determine if more diversity is needed and why. This stage looks at the current state of diversity before hiring and the aspirations for diversity in the organization's future. It prompts an assessment of the merits and demerits in the current state of diversity as the basis on which the organization decides whether the hiring should expressly consider diversity or not.

Regarding inclusion at the Enter Stage, the questions address the organization's health and seek to resolve how a new hire might impact the organization's health (see section 1 for notes on organization health). In other words, how healthy is the organization at the moment, how might introducing a new hire impact the health status, and what actions can the team take in any case.

With power, the questions at the Enter Stage inquire into who are the people that are designing and deciding on the selection of new hires and what qualifies them or gives them the authority to be able to do so. It acknowledges that through the hiring process, existing structures can be changed or reinforced.

Thrive

After an individual joins a team, the existing diversity, inclusion, and power practices will influence their sense of belonging and how they settle into the organization and their roles.

Diversity at this stage is about ensuring that growth and development at the organization are not exclusive to some people in the organization. It asks questions about who is growing, succeeding, and developing at the organization and who we want to see develop at the organization. Again, approaching diversity from two perspectives, what it is today and if there is a more desirable future state.

With inclusion, the focus is to examine the measures, processes, and tools used to determine who grows and develops in the organization. It is the quest to understand the measures, processes, and tools used at the organization and if these tools give privilege to some members over others. If so, what are the actions to be taken towards a positive change?

Power, at this stage, highlights that not everyone can effect changes. In other words, if there was a need to make changes in who thrives in the organization and how the thrive

occurs, who has that authority to effect such changes?

Rise

As with earlier stages, it is important to ask the appropriate diversity, inclusion, and power questions regarding who is getting promoted or who enjoys visibility through the organization.

Diversity at the Rise Stage inquires about who is getting promoted and gaining visibility and whether there are others who should be promoted and visible but are not. It might require looking beyond the obvious answer, such as competence and performance. If the answers return as obvious, go a step further to inquire if there are underlying causes.

One way to think about inclusion at this stage is to broaden the criteria that enable people to rise in an organization. The fact is that organizations, to some extent, have established behaviors that get rewarded and invariably thrive. The point here is to inquire if there are other criteria that might be left out because they are not mainstream.

Power in this instance asks whose perception of the established criteria for Rise determines how members rise in the organization. It also inquires about their ability to think outside the established criteria when necessary.

Lead

This is the ideal endpoint of the user journey. However, the reality is that, taken literally, many people do not get to this point on the journey. This reality heightens the importance of thinking through this stage, not necessarily to get more people to that point in the journey but to ensure that leadership is diverse and not tokenistic.

The diversity question here asks about who is joining the leadership of the organization. It is also about who else should be joining the leadership of the organization.

With inclusion, it is about determining what needs to change to increase the odds that more people are included in leadership.

Effecting any changes in power at this point will involve figuring out the concrete steps required to make power less centralized or creating required competencies in more places throughout the organization.

The enter, thrive, rise, and lead indicators depict the ideal journey that individuals ought to go through when they join an organization as part of its strategies to be more equitable. The following are valid questions to approach the framework: a) Do individual team members always go through this journey? b) Should individual team members always go through this journey? c) Can the organization be upfront that everyone might not go through this journey?

Stages	Enter (<i>getting more diversity into our organizations</i>)	Thrive (<i>ensuring that growth and development at the organization is not exclusive</i>)	Rise (<i>ensuring that promotion and visibility is not exclusive</i>)	Lead (<i>ensuring that leadership is diverse and not tokenistic</i>)
Diversity Today!	Who are we attracting? Are we privileging those we attract?	Who is growing and developing well? Who is succeeding?	Who is getting noticed? Who is getting promoted?	Who is joining leadership?
Diversity Tomorrow!	Who do we want to attract? Why is it important that we do so?	Who do we want to see grow and develop?	Who else should be getting noticed?	Who else should be leading?
Inclusion	How healthy is the organization at the moment? How might this impact on the health of the organization?	Do the growth and development metrics privilege others over them? What change to the metrics would be helpful	What is getting noticed? What else is noteworthy but not in the stereotype?	What considerations will make it possible for them to join leadership?
Power	Who designs how people enter? Who chooses who enters? What qualifies them to do this?	Who can redesign the metrics for growth and development? How aware are they about how the team thrives?	Who is in the position to notice? How diverse is their gaze?	How can the current considerations be made commonplace or changed?

Worksheet showing the questions on the table

Stages	Enter (<i>getting more diversity into our organizations</i>)	Thrive (<i>ensuring that growth and development at the organization is not exclusive</i>)	Rise (<i>ensuring that promotion and visibility is not exclusive</i>)	Lead (<i>ensuring that leadership is diverse and not tokenistic</i>)
Diversity Today!				
Diversity Tomorrow!				
Inclusion				
Power				

Worksheet that can be filled out

C. Using the Equity Programming

The sections below provide further clarity that can be discussed among teams prior to individual reflection on what each of the programme areas mean. Thinking through these programming areas should be approached sequentially in the order listed, as the preceding areas have implications for the next.



Beneficiary

It is crucial to start with affirming who the current program beneficiaries are because, ideally, programs are tailored to meet beneficiaries. Clarifying the program beneficiaries is the basis for asking who else could and should be benefiting from the program. Several times, programs can target the obvious, easily reached, usual suspects and pragmatic assessment of “results” without adequate consideration for where the impact may be most needed and felt. The goal is to determine if there is a need to change who the beneficiaries are going forward. The change does not have to be instantaneous but identifying new beneficiaries means that the organization can work towards it.



Design

After clarifying the program beneficiaries, the ideal step would be to design the programs with them. Programs designed without the beneficiaries are likely to be based on assumptions that might be harmful to beneficiaries or perpetuate existing systemic inequities. The goal is to refrain from carrying on with business as usual and identify and question assumptions that are easily embedded in program design—for example, taking the time to figure out who is impacted, what is needed, and how best to deliver a design. Designing with beneficiaries means a willingness to revise programs to align with new evidence.



Implementation

Involving beneficiaries in program implementation helps make them more equitable. Perhaps to have them take full ownership of such initiatives to make the programs more sustainable. This can be challenging to address because it raises questions about the resources and competencies needed for implementing the programs. Are there organization involvements that guarantee that the beneficiaries cannot lead the program in the future? Is there a willingness to channel resources and build competencies to make beneficiaries better at leading implementation?



Measurement

At the end of program implementation, it is typical for evaluation to occur to establish impact. This should also involve beneficiaries as feedback providers but, more importantly, as arbiters of what impact looks like. This involvement

goes back to designing with the beneficiaries. However, even when that is done, excluding beneficiaries from the measurement nullifies their role in the design process. The goal is to ensure that the metrics for assessing impact do not entirely exclude the perspectives and inputs of the beneficiaries.



Communication

Equally important is ensuring that the beneficiaries are involved and, when necessary, shaping the program communication. It is less about who does the communicating and more about whose perspectives and stories are being communicated. Sometimes the work done to make program communication suitable to certain audiences strips it of the voice and perspective of beneficiaries. In a sense, communication aims to prioritize audiences, but it is also about not losing the original message.

After getting on the same page on the meaning of these programme areas, each participant should take some time alone to reflect and document the current status of each programme area. The team can regroup and have a quick discussion, allowing time for people to share their thoughts on the state of affairs and why they think so. In moving forward, small groups of 2 to 3 can be formed to work together in developing descriptions for future scenarios on each programme area. Each group could work across all programme areas, or the groups can be divided and asked to work on the areas they are most involved or relevant to their job function.

Programme Areas	Status	Goal
Beneficiary	Identify communities to benefit from programmes.	Identify specific community members to benefit most from programmes to foster a community where everyone feels like they are a part.
Design	Program teams are designing and working with our funders to optimize.	Co-design with beneficiaries to end up with programmes that reflect their needs as determined with them.
Implementation	Program teams and because they are experts and trained in the program execution methodologies.	Foster a sense of ownership in programme beneficiaries through participatory process.
Measurement	Program and monitoring and evaluation teams and funders because they have outlined clear objectives prior to inception.	Beneficiary led assessment of impact, considering in depth their unassimilated appreciation of impact.
Communication	Everyone involved in the programme takes part in an honest conversation, talking about achievements and shortcomings.	Perspectives shared by beneficiaries very often get interpreted to fit preset agendas, the goal will be to no longer do that - the job is not done until beneficiaries - can freely qualify and quantify programme results.

How to use the playbook

Team Discussion Guide

The playbook and the resources within are structured to enable civic tech organizations to surface underlying issues that are often left unattended when discussing organization policies and operations as a basis for improvement. As already established, communication is an essential part of any organizational or group process, and for this exercise, communication is the most crucial component. The pattern of communication approach would determine the likelihood of realizing relevant and practicable DIE outcomes, as intended by the playbook.

This discussion guide could help ensure that the perspectives of more individuals on the team are captured and reflected in consequent organization policies and operations. Typically, when these conversations happen, we tend to defer to popular public opinions and less on personalized insights. Hopefully, this exercise will guide the team to think of your organization's unique position and operations and what various organization aspects mean for the members.

During this process, the conversation you have is internal to your organization and does not need to be documented for any other purpose. Make it a safe space for your team to freely speak in detail on simple, difficult, and sensitive topics that affect them and their work. It is also important to be mindful to speak gracefully and kindly to not afflict others under the guise of speaking freely, thus defeating the goal of the safe space.

Who should lead the team discussion?

There can be one or two facilitators depending on the size of your organization. We suggest that you choose the facilitators from mid to high-level management. If you can only have one facilitator, consider having someone from mid-management. In any case, it is best to get people who are familiar with the organization and team to lead the process.

Who should participate in the team discussion?

This should be open to everyone in the organization to attend. If it is not feasible for everyone to join due to some constraints, aim towards getting as many people as possible to join. Aim more to have everyone in leadership participate (if you have an active board and scheduling with them is easily achievable, you should consider involving them).

How should you participate in the team discussion?

While it is important for everyone to speak during the reflection, it might not be feasible. Everyone might not get the chance to have fully articulated their thoughts or be completely comfortable expressing them when conceived in the session. Let the team know that writing down their opinions is a valid means of participating in the session, and they can pass it on to the facilitator or note taker. Assign at least one person to be

the official note-taker for the session (this could also be the facilitators). This session might take up to 90mins depending on the team.

How long do you need for the team discussion?

If discussing only the priority questions and depending on the team, the session might take up to 90 minutes. We recommend starting with the priority questions and adding to the list from the additional questions as you please or as time permits. You could also share the questions with your team before the discussion to give them time to think about their responses, or you can give out the unattempted questions as homework at the end of the session.

