AEA Annual Conference

Stakeholder Mapping Activity

November 2017

Some tips and guidelines for facilitating this activity

Skills: experience facilitating groups in a sensitive/ challenging conversation using interactive methods

Prerequisites: facilitator should complete their own identity map; and assess whether group has foundational knowledge of topic to effectively engage (e.g., are they ready?)

Content: knowledgeable in diversity, equity, and inclusion-oriented literature (including social justice, structural and historical racism, oppression, etc.)

Materials to lead session: copy of this guide, sticky notes, a flip chart, markers, and pens

Preparation time: up to 2 hours

Facilitation time: 2 hours

Resources:

- Harder+Company Community Research
- Interaction Institute for Social Change
- Technology of Participation (ToP)
- Racial Equity Tools
- Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation

Introduction

Our work allows us to engage and support a wide range stakeholders. This mapping activity will allow you to understand the landscape of stakeholders and articulate the interests and priorities of each stakeholder. Most importantly, this activity facilitates an assessment of how stakeholders' diverse interests, power, and privilege impact the relationships within and between the consulting project team, the client, and other stakeholders.

We shared this tool at the 2017 conference of the American Evaluation Association, and we hope others use it to strengthen their own practice. If you have questions or feedback on this tool, please contact Cristina Magaña, Director, at cmagana@harderco.com.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who have a stake/vested interest in the work – they will be affected directly or indirectly by the outcome of the work we are conducting. Common stakeholders include clients, funders, community members, recipients of services, board members, evaluation partners, and evaluators. Other stakeholders may include policy makers, elected officials and advocacy/interest groups. The term **key stakeholder** is often used when referring to any stakeholder who is significantly affected by or has considerable influence on a program, service, or intervention.

Stakeholders have varying levels of what is "at stake" for them

For example, a grantee might have their funding at stake, while community members may have access to needed services at stake. Each stakeholder may have different and competing priorities and interests. Understanding and accounting for the priorities and interests of different stakeholders should inform and guide all phases of our work (e.g., planning, design, data collection, analysis, reporting, communication, etc.).

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Step 1: Review the Case Study

Independently, take a few minutes to read the following case study, keeping in mind that this activity will focus on identifying stakeholders and their role on the project.

- Your evaluation team group (Master Evaluators) has just been awarded a new project, congratulations! The contract is through a repeat client, Urban Supportive Housing (USH), a statewide nonprofit organization that advances affordable housing and services using training and education, consulting and assistance, and policy collaboration and advocacy.
- The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) has hired USH to assist them with a variety of tasks related to their housing programs, and USH has chosen to sub-contract to Master Evaluators in order to conduct their first ever assessment of the city's housing programs for formerly homeless, transitional aged youth (TAY) (ages 16-24), many of whom have been involved in one or more public systems (e.g., foster care, justice system, etc.).
- MOHCD provides housing programs by contracting with local community-based organizations that then create and manage the housing programs. MOHCD is very interested in assessing what is working and what could be improved in their housing programs in order to improve existing programs and inform new housing developments.
- The scope of work for this project includes interviews with service providers who work in the housing programs or who work at community-based organizations that refer clients to the housing programs. The scope of work also includes focus groups with current residents of the city's TAY housing programs.
- Your scope of work specifies that the focus groups will be co-facilitated by evaluation staff and young people who are part of the Citywide TAY Advisory Board (CTAB). CTAB is a collaborative network of young people aimed at assisting city departments and community agencies to include the voices of young adults in their policy and decision-making. CTAB plays a strong advocacy role for young people within city government.
- Finally, the scope of work specifies that your team will check in with an advisory board at three key points in the evaluation: (1) finalizing the evaluation design, (2) to review preliminary data and findings, and (3) to present the final report. At each check in, your team is to solicit feedback and incorporate this feedback as is appropriate. The advisory board includes staff from USH, staff from MOHCD, representatives from CTAB, and service providers and executive directors of a number of the community-based organizations that implement the city's TAY Housing programs.

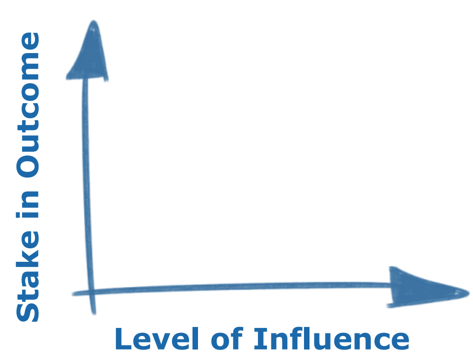
Step 2: Identifying the Stakeholders

Using the case study above, identify all project stakeholders. Fill out a sticky note for each stakeholder, noting:

1. stakeholder name,
2. stakeholder interests (e.g., what do they have "at stake"?, expectations, benefits they seek)
3. stakeholder engagement in the evaluation (e.g., what is their role, how often will they be engaged, how much control do they have?)

Step 3: Power Analysis

Tape the stakeholder sticky notes onto a flip chart paper, according to the following axes – level of influence within the evaluation and stake in the outcome of the evaluation. If any new important details or questions emerge during this process, please make note of them.



Step 4: Identifying Opportunities and Anticipating Challenges

Using flip chart paper, respond to the following questions as a group. Select a representative to report responses back to the larger group.

1. What do you see as opportunities to strengthen evaluation and stakeholder engagement within the project in order to produce data/information that is meaningful for all stakeholders involved (e.g., data collection methods, process tools, engagement strategies, etc.)? Are there any opportunities to mitigate discrepancies in influence and stake?
2. What are some potential challenges or conflicts that may arise among or between stakeholders through the life course of this project? Do any stakeholders have interests that conflict with the project?

Step 5: Large Group Report Back of Questions discussed in Step 4

1. What did each group identify as opportunities to strengthen evaluation and stakeholder engagement within the project?
2. What were some of the potential challenges or conflicts that may arise among or between stakeholders through the course of the project?
3. How does this activity influence/inform your work?

[Additional discussion questions. Ask if time permitting OR include in larger group discussion following the case study activity]

1. If you were to do a similar activity with your current projects, what would you add or change?
2. Can folks envision doing a stakeholder analysis like this at project team meetings in the coming weeks?

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