

EXERCISE Analyzing stakeholder interests and concerns

PURPOSE

This exercise helps a group of people or organizations that have come together to pursue a common goal to identify key stakeholders (individuals and groups), understand their interests and concerns, and strategize on how to get their support.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- ❑ flipchart and markers (or an overhead projector to use in Step 4)
- ❑ copies of Handout: Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet

PROCESS

Preparation

- Make enough copies of the Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet (Handout) for all participants.

Step 1. Reflect on the role of stakeholders when pursuing a new initiative

- Explain that “having a stake” means being affected by the outcome of an activity and/or being able to influence the outcome positively or negatively.
- Suggest that sometimes we approach stakeholders as if we know what their concerns and interests are. If our assumptions turn out to be wrong we may distance them, rather than align or mobilize them. Find out if people in the room have had this experience (for example, when dealing with groups with which they ordinarily have little contact).
- Explore people’s experiences with ignoring stakeholders’ concerns by asking, “What happened when we don’t pay attention to a particular group that has a stake in the outcome of an initiative we pursue?”
- Ask for ways in which they can find out about stakeholders’ concerns and interests.

Step 2. Identify stakeholders

- Referring to the common goal, ask participants: “Who are the people (groups or individuals) who have a stake in the success of our initiative?”
- Brainstorm and record answers. If the list gets very long, create categories to group the answers (for example, private for-profit, NGOs, international donors, government agencies, community groups, professional and educational institutions, religious or political entities).
- Identify the most critical people or groups with an asterisk, or circle them.

Step 3. Identify stakeholder interests and concerns

- Divide the participants into small groups of four to six people per group.
- Divide up the stakeholders that were marked as most critical among the small groups.

- Ask each small group to fill in the Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet (Handout) for the stakeholder group(s) assigned to them.
- Remind the group that there may be representatives from some of the stakeholder groups in the room, making it easy to verify assumptions.
- Have them make a note if there is a stakeholder group they know very little about. This is a reminder to do more scanning later.

Step 4. Verify conclusions and assumptions

- In plenary, ask each small group to present its filled-in worksheet (on a flipchart or using an overhead projector).
- Ask the large group to add missing information, complement the analysis, and correct any errors. If there are representatives from stakeholder groups in the room, ask them to comment. This is a great opportunity to check assumptions.
- If specific actions need to be taken to get stakeholders on board or engaged, decide who will do what. Record the decisions made so that they can be revisited at a future meeting.

Wrap up and next steps

- Compile all the information from the worksheets produced by each small group into one master worksheet including all stakeholders.
- If specific resources are needed from particular groups, use the exercise “Mobilizing Stakeholders to Commit Resources” to create a detailed plan for making requests to stakeholders to commit resources.

HANDOUT Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet

Stakeholder group or individual	What are they most interested in?	What is their biggest concern?	What do we need to do to get their support?

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