



Engagementworks

Community Engagement Basics

Session 5 – Video 1

Understanding Stakeholders

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Introduction

This session focuses on stakeholders or communities and we will be emphasising the importance of knowing who your stakeholders are and how they can impact on decision making.

In this first lesson we define stakeholders and their differences.

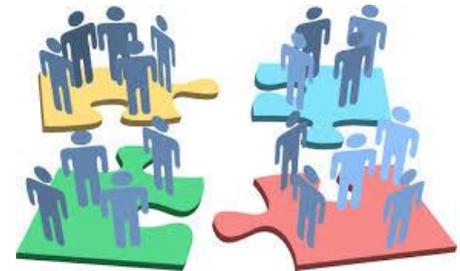
What is a stakeholder?

In an earlier video we defined “**Community**” as being –
...any group of interdependent individuals or groups interacting with each other through relationships

What we have found is that community and stakeholder are terms often used interchangeably.

The public sector tended towards communities of interest while in the private sector the focus was on stakeholders. However, these lines have become blurred with these terms becoming more common in both sectors.

Take a moment to reflect on what you think stakeholder means, write down your definition and then see how it compares with ours.



Here is what we think it means -



STAKEHOLDERS: are persons, groups or institutions with interests in a project or policy or who may be directly or indirectly affected by the process or the outcome.

We have also included key stakeholder as this differentiation is quite common

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: are those who can significantly influence, or are important to the success of the project.

In the context of public participation, a stakeholder can be defined as any person, or group, who has an interest in the project or could be potentially affected by its delivery or outputs.

Stakeholder Differences

It's important to understand that there are differences between stakeholders.

You can see from the definition that stakeholders can either impact on or be impacted by a decision.

Taking that step further, stakeholders may be existing or potential customers or end-users of a product, employees, suppliers, shareholders, or those that define policies.

Those responsible for undertaking public participation often categorise stakeholders into 'groups' based on a number of factors including geographic boundaries or location, recognised bodies or institutions, income groups, land ownership or occupation, legal requirements, and real or perceived views of the issue under consideration.



The nature of this classification means that these stakeholder groups are usually not homogenous entities. It is more likely in fact, that an identified "stakeholder group" will comprise a diverse mix of individuals, who may – or may not – identify themselves with the particular "stakeholder group" into which they have been categorised.

This is an important issue to take into consideration when identifying who your stakeholders are. Stakeholder identification is a critical component of the initial scoping phase and should occur before the engagement plan is formulated and consultations begin.

Stakeholders can be defined by one or more category simultaneously.

Conclusion

In this video we have introduced stakeholders, explained what the term means and its relationship to "community" and also highlighted the differences between differing stakeholder interests.

