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The complete suite of 18 Public Health Nutrition Workforce Development units developed by the JobNut Project and the related Educator’s Guide are available for downloading at the following website:

http://www.medicine.tcd.ie/nutrition-dietetics/jobnut/

DISCLAIMER

This workforce development unit has been produced as part of the JobNut Project, supported by the Leonardo Da Vinci Program, Education & Culture, European Commission. The opinions and conclusions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and no official endorsement by the funder is intended or should be inferred.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding to support the JobNut Project was provided by the Leonardo Da Vinci Program, Education & Culture, European Commission.

This Unit has been developed by Professor Roger Hughes, Christina Black and Dr Nick Kennedy of the Unit of Nutrition and Dietetic Studies, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin.
Learning Objectives

On completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Explain why stakeholder analysis and engagement is important in public health nutrition intervention management
2. Identify stakeholders relevant to public health nutrition issues and problems
3. Apply stakeholder analysis techniques to understand the agendas of stakeholder
4. Demonstrate how stakeholder analysis assists with public health nutrition problem resolution and successful intervention management

Intelligence

Unit Readings


• Vavasovskya, Z. and Brugha, R. How to do (or not to do).....a stakeholder analysis. Health Policy and Planning. 2000. 15: 338-345
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Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement

Preamble

Stakeholder analysis is a critical formative step in intervention management because it helps identify existing capacity (interest, influence, support, resources etc), identifies opposition to change (those who have a vested interest in resisting intervention strategies) and it focuses partnership development efforts - so important in building capacity to effectively deliver effective and sustainable interventions. A failure to identify, analyse and engage stakeholders risks compromising intervention success.

Why Engage Stakeholders?

One of the important questions that needs to be asked when considering how to and who will assist to develop solutions to address the identified public health nutrition (PHN) issue is ‘who are the main stakeholders involved in this issue’? There is increasing recognition of the central role of stakeholders - individuals, groups and organisations - who have an interest (or stake) and the potential to influence the actions and aims of a project or policy direction (1). By collecting and analysing data on stakeholders, an understanding of who will be affected or concerned by the identified PHN issue, as well as their level of interest and influence in developing solutions to the issue. Stakeholder analysis and engagement builds upon the work already achieved from community engagement and uses these relationships with community stakeholders to identify additional internal and external stakeholders of relevance to the identified PHN issue.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is the process of identifying and generating knowledge about the key stakeholders around an intervention (1). Understanding the behaviour, interests, inter-relations and intentions can be used to assess the influence, resources and affect these stakeholders can have on the viability of the intervention. Stakeholder analysis includes both the winners and losers, and those involved or excluded from the decision-making processes. It even involves identifying stakeholders who may be barriers to change, so that they can be managed or neutralised.

A stakeholder analysis can be used to inform intervention planning, implementation and evaluation. Once the key PHN issues have been identified, stakeholder analysis is used to recognize who is or will be affected by these issues, their level of interest and influence. Identifying stakeholders and their interests in the issues can assist with managing current or potential conflict of interest, or assist with the development of stakeholder ‘coalitions’ of intervention sponsorship, ownership or cooperation.

A stakeholder analysis is best undertaken during the intelligence phase of intervention management as stakeholder participation throughout the process can greatly increase capacity to achieve intervention success.
The process of stakeholder engagement and participation assists the development of a clearer understanding of the situation surrounding the PHN issue including the political, economic, environmental and social factors. Stakeholders of relevance may come from government sector, private sector, health-related sector, non-health services sector and of the community sector.

**Exercise 1.**

Thinking about the key public health nutrition issue of high fat sugar salt (HFSS) foods at upper school (children aged 13-18 years) brainstorm and list the key stakeholders against each of the following groups:

- Government sector
- Private sector
- Health-related sector
- Non-health related sector
- Community sector

**Workshop/tutorial option:**
Complete in small groups and discuss findings as a large group

*Brainstorming - defined by Wikipedia, is a group creativity technique designed to generate a large number of ideas to find solutions to a problem. Brainstorming is a fun way of generating ideas and discussing topics.*

**Considerations for Stakeholder Analysis**

As stakeholder analysis is the third stage in the PHN intervention management bi-cycle many of the contextual considerations for the analysis may have been addressed. However, to ensure a successful stakeholder analysis is achieved the key preparatory considerations are outlined below:

- **Understanding the culture and context** - to successfully interact with stakeholders and collect information it is important to understand the culture and context of the various stakeholders, and how best to approach and interact with them. For example, fruit and vegetable retailers can work long hours with very early morning starts, and may not be well-educated or competently literate. Failure to explore the cultural and communication constraints can affect the success of analysis and consultation. Liaison with key informants is recommended when dealing with new stakeholders.

- **Knowing the level of analysis** - The level of analysis (local, regional, national or international) influences how data is collected and who to consider as key stakeholders. The level of analysis should be determined from the problem analysis and issue identification.

- **Being practical about the extent of analysis** - The timeline and scope of the intervention including resource limitations frequently determines the scope of analysis. It is important to be inclusive yet pragmatic when identifying the number of stakeholders and interests.
• Identifying the analysis team - Analysis can be conducted by an individual or a team. A team can provide a more objective perspective of stakeholders while an individual ensure consistent, more reliable approach. An individual should be supported by a group who can assist by revealing unjustified assumptions. Analysers may be insiders - directly involved with the project, or outsiders - outside the intervention. Insiders may hold vested interests or strong opinions about stakeholders that can conflict with the objective process, while familiarity with cultural modes can add strength. A mixed team of insiders and outsiders provides the most valuable analysis (2).

Practice Note

Stakeholder analysis is usually done by the intervention team behind the scenes, as it involves analysis (sizing up) of key players in order to identify partners who will act to enable intervention development and implementation or to identify opponents who will act as barriers to action and change. It’s worth the effort to think clearly through this process so that you identify the right stakeholders to work with and those to manage out.

Conducting the Stakeholder Analysis

The process and duration of identifying and engaging stakeholders can vary depending on the level and complexity of the issue.

Identification

Identification of stakeholders can involve:
1. Considering different components of an intervention to identify relevant organisations and individuals
2. A review of secondary sources of data such as published and unpublished reports, literature, policy statements or positions on the issue etc (more common in national or international issues)
3. Awareness of visible relevant stakeholders (more common in clearly defined or local issues)
4. Asking key stakeholders to identify other important players (“snowballing”) who have or could have considerable influence in this issue

Engagement

Approaching stakeholders can depend on how their interest in the issue or perception of the individual/organization approaching. Stakeholders need to be assured of the value of their participation and how it will assist their organizational or individual goals.

Engagement of stakeholders may involve:
1. Direct communication from the intervention team
2. Referral from a powerful stakeholder: An introductory letter/phone call/email from a powerful stakeholder with follow-up from the analysis team (may facilitate acceptance however may influence and bias responses)
3. Third party: An approach by an independent researcher/organisation (may be viewed as neutral however may not be considered as sufficiently important).
Data collection

Several forms of data collection may be used in stakeholder analysis. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods is best to understand the degree of consensus on issues while allowing for additional aspects of the issue to be raised and explored.

Possible data collection methods include:
1. Face-to-face interviews using checklists, semi-structured interviews and structured self-administered questionnaires can all be used to collect data from individuals or organizational representatives.
2. Focus groups, group interviews or Delphi style consultation may be used to collect data from groups.
3. Access to additional secondary sources of data such as internal or unpublished reports or positions as a result of stakeholder consultation.
4. Providing feedback summaries of discussions with stakeholders may build trust and correct inaccurate reporting or qualify earlier responses (2).

Tools

A stakeholder analysis should consider the following questions:

1. Who does the problem affect most?
2. What section of this problem-affected group is most likely to be able to change?
3. Which ones will be resistant to change or difficult to engage?
4. Who is in a position to help bring about change to address the problem?
5. Who has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (no change)?
6. Who wants to see the problem addressed (what community support for change is there and who are these supporters?)
7. What government or organisational jurisdictions or responsibilities are involved or should be involved?

Exercise 2.

(a) Thinking about one of the four scenarios provided, construct a list of stakeholders against each of the questions below.

(b) Based on this analysis draft a brief description of stakeholders relevant to your scenario.

Workshop/tutorial option:
Complete in small groups and discuss findings as a large group.

CPD option:
Conduct the above exercise in the context of your current work using an issue or problem from the community/population you are working with.
## Exercise 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who does the problem affect most?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What section of this problem-affected group is most likely to be able to change?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which ones will be resistant to change or difficult to engage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is in a position to help bring about change to address the problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (no change)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who wants to see the problem addressed (what community support for change is there and who are these supporters?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What government or organisational jurisdictions or responsibilities are involved or should be involved?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organising and Presenting Stakeholder Analysis Data

There are a number of methods of categorising and describing stakeholders in a way that clearly communicates the key points in stakeholder analysis.

Stakeholders can be categorised as one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Usually part of the intervention management team (i.e. Intervention leads/partners)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involved</td>
<td>Frequently consulted or part of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Provide some form of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral</td>
<td>Need to be kept informed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories of stakeholder can be plotted against the different sectors involved/relevant to your particular issue or problem, as detailed in the following stakeholder analysis wheel.
Figure 1: Stakeholder Analysis Wheel

Adapted from: (3)
Another useful tool is the **stakeholder grid** (see Figure 2) (4), in which stakeholders are categorised according to the interests (low vs. high) and to their power related to the issue at hand (low vs. high).

The matrix identifies 4 types of stakeholders:

- **Actors** - have little interest but high power, sometimes seen as ‘unguided missiles’ because they can unintentionally cause considerable damage
- **Bystanders** - have low interest and low power, hold little influence but are not really involved
- **Players** - have high interests and high power, are the ‘movers and shakers’ of things to happen
- **Subjects** - have high interests but low power, depend on the influence and support from key players.

**Figure 2:** Stakeholder analysis grid

![Stakeholder Analysis Grid](source)

The use of explicit criteria for calculating scores and making assessments can reduce biases. Results from quantitative data with stakeholders (Lickert scales or preferential ranking) is a more reliable way of obtaining and making stakeholder assessments.

When reviewing and applying the stakeholder findings it is useful to focus on the ultimate aim of successful implementation of the intervention and consider strategies to manage stakeholders with conflicts of interest or those with strong opposition, but high influence to the intervention. Stakeholders with substantial resources but neutral positions are important and strategies of how to mobilise those resources should be considered.

Developing clear strategic alliances between stakeholders with both high interest and high influence should also be targeted (2).
Stakeholder Analysis - An Example

The following extract by Tim Lobstein in an article on childhood obesity in SCN News, the Newsletter of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition. Figure 2 illustrates the various stakeholders in the context of obesity, using the stakeholder analysis grid.

Case Study

Stakeholder involvement

(Extract from Lobstein T. In “Can we prevent Childhood obesity?” SCN #29 http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/html/scnnews.html)

Analysis of the production of the obesogenic environment inevitably focuses attention on the practices of the various agents—often commercial—involving in the production process. The differing views of the interested parties, or stakeholders, may lead to challenges to the scientific basis and strength of evidence underlying any suggested policy proposals. The absence of strong evidence for obesity and overweight prevention will undermine the political will to make changes in local or national policy to alter a child’s environment. Policy-makers may find it hard to support policies which limit, for example, commercial freedom or personal choice, without having compelling evidence of the benefit of these policies.

Until such evidence becomes available, it is usual to urge that precautionary activities need to be undertaken based on the best available evidence supported by a consensus of scientific opinion. In this respect, professional practitioners with expertise in child obesity and related health problems have a significant role to play. Every opportunity should be taken by those with direct experience of child obesity to express their opinions on the need for appropriate action. However it is valuable to look at the role of the other stakeholders in the policy arena and to identify their characteristics. It is, for example, possible to list several of the interested parties (such as parents, school staff, environmental planners, food companies, advertising agencies, government ministries) and to place them on a multidimensional map which helps identify their relative position, and the scope for change. Such research is being undertaken at present in various universities, using a range of techniques. At a very crude level, a notional example can be given, in which a range of stakeholders can be placed on a two-dimensional graph, showing their relative influence on policy-making and their relative interest in seeing children consume healthier diets or less healthy diets.

When such a mapping exercise is undertaken it can reveal useful information for those trying to influence policy. For example, in Figure 2, the general trend of the scatter of data points is from top left to bottom right, ie, the data indicates that those with the greatest influence are either neutral with regard to diet or interested in making it unhealthy. Conversely, those with the greatest interest in improving children’s diets appear to have the least influence on policy.

In order to influence policy, and to restructure the graph in favour of healthier children, it might be valuable to look at trying to move the various components on the graph—for example by strengthening the influence of those who are currently in the top left corner of the graph and encouraging them to be noticed and their views considered. Equally it could be valuable to reduce the influence or alter the relatively negative influence of those who are currently in the lower right hand part of the graph, by finding incentives for them to change their interests so that they support healthier diets. Finally, those with the most influence on policy (suggested in this graph as being national presidents, treasury secretaries) need to become more interested in the promotion of healthier diets—through showing the economic damage that obesity may cause and by increasing the political pressure for action.

Source: (5)
Figure 2. Stakeholder analysis - obesity

Source: (5)

Intelligence

Reading


Exercise 3.

After reading the above articles, consider your scenario and results from Exercise 1, and use a simple scoring criteria (e.g. 1 = very low, 10 = very high) -to make an assessment of your stakeholders. Using this assessment complete the stakeholder analysis grid below.

Workshop/tutorial option:  
Complete in small groups and discuss findings as a large group

CPD option:  
Conduct the above exercise in the context of your current work using an issue or problem from the community/ population you are working with.
Stakeholder Engagement

Once stakeholders have been identified, categorised and described, the next step is to consider strategies for engaging with those stakeholders your analysis identifies as being most useful and relevant to your intervention. Usually the most effective and practical approach is to directly contact stakeholders and invite them to partner in managing the intervention either as a core, involved, supportive or peripheral stakeholder (depending on how involved you want stakeholders to be or how involved they want to be).

**Exercise 3.**

Discuss and make notes on the strategies or mechanisms you could use to engage stakeholders in your selected scenario.

**Workshop/tutorial option:**
Complete in small groups and discuss findings as a large group

**CPD option:**
Conduct the above exercise in the context of your current work using an issue or problem from the community/population you are working with.

Engaging Stakeholders in Decision Making

If we are serious about engaging stakeholders and building capacity for effective PHN action, it is vital that the management or governance structure of the intervention is identified and agreed to. The objective of intervention governance is essentially about shared decision making, to manage the project throughout its life including the realisation of intervention deliverables, high productivity and quality output and appropriate risk management (6).

**Key components to effective governance:**

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities – agreed to and signed off by the intervention management committee
- A representative intervention management committee of appropriate stakeholders that steer rather than drive the intervention
- Well defined risks and issues for the intervention, including documented monitoring
- Reporting of intervention progress against the milestones as outlined in the implementation plan

Source: (3)
Intervention management structures can cause some conflict with regard to accountability and reporting, particularly when the governance structure does not reflect operational line-management structures. It is therefore very important to all players know how and agree with how the intervention governance structure will operate. Intervention activities should be managed through the intervention management structure while operational activities should be managed through existing line management structures. The distinction between these two types of activities, intervention and normal business, should be clearly conveyed to assist with defining accountability and reporting arrangements (6).

**Intervention Management/Steering Committee**

An intervention management committee or steering committee is crucial for intervention success, particularly for larger interventions. Steering committee members play an important role in the intervention both individually and collectively. The primary function of a steering committee is to take responsibility for the business associated with an intervention, ultimately ensuring delivery of intervention activities and appropriate risk management (ensuring issues are adequately addressed and kept under control).

For management committees to work effectively the right people must be involved. Management committee appointment should be based on individual skills and attributes rather than on their formal roles, and members should maintain membership even if their role within an organisation changes. It is also vital to have representatives from key stakeholder groups as members of a management committee. It may be necessary to develop Terms of Reference to which the steering committee agree to ensure all members are aware of their roles and responsibilities of being part of the steering committee for the intervention.

In practice the intervention management committee responsibilities involve five main functions:

1. **Approval of changes to the intervention and its supporting documentation** - including intervention priorities and objectives, budget, deliverables, schedule amendments and risk management strategies.

2. **Monitoring and review of the intervention** - including reviewing the status of the intervention at the end of each phase to determine whether the team should progress.

3. **Providing assistance to the intervention when required** - including being active advocates of the intervention and help facilitate broad support for it, facilitating communication with stakeholder groups and illustrate intervention benefits, and contributing individual knowledge or experience.

4. **Resolving intervention conflicts** - conflicts in resource allocation, output quality or level of stakeholder commitment, while the project manager should be able to deal with most conflicts there may be occasions when the management committee are required to help resolve disputes.

5. **Formal acceptance of intervention deliverables** - the management committee should formally review and accept project outputs and are therefore required to have a broad understanding of the intervention and approach employed by the intervention team (6).
A steering/management committee should meet regularly throughout the course of the intervention to keep track of the progress of the intervention and address any issues that may arise. The project manager should attend these meetings to be a source of information for the committee and to be informed about the committee decisions.

Steering/management committee agenda - example

- Introductory items:
  - Apologies
  - Acceptance of minutes from last meeting
  - Matters arising from the minutes addressed
- Implementation plan business – amendments, revisions or arising issues
- Intervention management issues – progress reports, consultant reports/findings
- Important issues at the time of the meeting
- Review of actions arising from last committee meeting – any further follow-ups required
- Plans for the next meeting

Source: (6)

The management committee has responsibility for the intervention until the deliverables and outcomes have been achieved, which may not occur until after the project team have completed their involvement.

Assessment

Considering your scenario and using your responses to Exercises 2-4, draft a 300-400 word summary of who the key stakeholders are and how you would engage them in planning and implementing your intervention. Use this summary to complete the stakeholder analysis section of the intervention management template.

CPD option:
Conduct the assessment in the context of your current work role and the community or population you are working with.
Key Points

• Stakeholders are individuals, groups and organisations who have an interest in the issue under consideration, are affected by the issue or have an influence on intervention implementation.

• Stakeholder analysis is the process of identifying and generating knowledge about the key stakeholders of an intervention. Collecting and analysing data on stakeholders can create an understanding of who will be affected or concerned by the identified PHN issue, who is interested and will influence the development of solutions to the issue.

• A stakeholder analysis can be used to inform intervention planning, implementation and evaluation. Once the key PHN issues have been identified, stakeholder analysis is used to recognize who is or will be affected by these issues, their level of interest and influence.

• Once identified, categorized and described, stakeholders need to be strategically engaged in the intervention management process.
References


