IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

How to use this tool

This Tool is for use in identifying the full range of people and agencies who should be invited to participate in Co-Design depending on the scope and nature of what is being designed.

The primary stakeholders in the design of programs and services are: first of all, the people who will access and use those services (and in some cases their carers and families); then the people who provide the services; and finally the agencies who fund the provision of services (usually in this context, the Government).

In engaging consumers or service users, it is important to remember that they are people first and subsequently services users. As such there can be great diversity within any group of service users. It is not enough to identify one or two and expect their experience or needs to be the same as all other consumers. Identifying consumers who come from different locations; different social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds; different age groups; etc. is important.

Respecting that fact that all people have more than one 'identity' in this context is also important. The term for this is 'intersectionality'.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is the idea that multiple identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities. These intersecting identities include gender, race, social class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental disability, physical disability, mental ill health, and physical illness as well as other forms of identity.

These aspects of identity are not 'unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather...reciprocally constructing phenomena.' The theory proposes that each element or trait of a person is inextricably linked with all of the other elements that go to make up who they are.

The practical implication for Co-Design is that having one representative for each 'identity' is not likely to be sufficient. For example, designing services to meet the needs of people with disabilities should involve people who can speak to the different circumstances of people across the range and combination of identities of people with disabilities.

Clearly it is not possible to cover every conceivable combination but it is important that more prevalent combinations, and combinations with significantly different needs or circumstances, should be engaged where possible.

The same is true in engaging Aboriginal consumers. There is great diversity with the Aboriginal community including city, regional and remote community differences; language differences; differences in educational and socio-economic status; differences in health profile and so on.

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In addition to funders, providers and consumers, there can also be a much larger constituency of stakeholders who are affected.

For example, if the services are crime prevention or prisoner rehabilitation, then the broader community or victims of crime may be relevant stakeholders.

The first task therefore is to conduct an environmental scan of potential stakeholders. For purposes of effective Co-Design, this does not need to be overly complicated or even scientific. Start with the stakeholders you know – existing service user representative bodies, existing service providers, Peak Bodies and funders – and ask them.

Start by asking: Who are the people whose needs we are seeking to meet? Are there particular individuals among them who would be willing and able to provide their input into improving services? Who is currently working with them? Who has expert knowledge or extensive experience in this work? Who else will be affected? Who else has an interest in this issue or these services? Which agencies will be affected if this new program or service model is successful or if it is unsuccessful?

The extent of the answers to these questions will give an indication of the scope of engagement required.

For example, if the aim is to meet the needs of the whole community, then the scope will be very different from engagement to meet the needs of a small group of people with a particular disability. Even so, a variation on the Co-Design model can be applied in either case and in the many different variations in between.

If the services are targeted to a predominately Aboriginal group of service users then the stakeholders may include Aboriginal elders and community leaders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations, native title bodies, Indigenous researchers and other community sector agencies.

In engaging diverse stakeholders it is important to remember that some styles of engagement will work better with some and not with others. Issues such as location of Co-Design activities, who makes the invitation, who else is attending, what time of day or day of the week, and many more practical considerations may come into play.

A key issue is to ensure that all participants experience the Co-Design as a 'safe space', both in the sense of actual physical and emotional safety and in the sense of being a space where participants can safely share their experience, insights and ideas.

For more detail on different approaches to engaging stakeholders in different circumstance see the following Tools in the Co-Design Toolkit:

▶ Engagement in System, Strategy or Large Scale Whole of Community Co-Design

▶ Engagement in Place-Based Co-Design

▶ Engagement in Program or Service Level Co-Design

▶ Engagement in the Delivery of Services (Co-Production)

Final Note on Engaging Stakeholders

While it is never possible to involve everyone, if you use these Tools as a guide and make real efforts to engage then the people you have in the room will be the right people – whoever they are!