Community Engagement

{ How to make the most of your Coalition

Defining Community

Community = Those most affected by the issue(s)

What is Community Engagement?

Working to engage those most affected by the problem as equal partners at the table and they willingly and actively participating in the group

Why is community Engagement important?

- To learn about the issues we are trying to address
- To learn about the community most affected
- To build community ownership
- To share power and resources
- To do "with" versus doing "for"
- To align with community organizations
- To identify community leaders and key partners
- To honor community residents' knowledge and experience

Six Principles for Successful Coalitions:

1. Engage a broad spectrum of the community
2. Encourage true collaboration as the form of exchange
3. Practice democracy
4. Employ and ecological approach that emphasizes individual in the setting
5. Take action
6. Engage your spirituality as you compass for social change

1. Engage a broad spectrum of the community

- Especially those most directly affected

- Celebrate racial and cultural diversity

2. Encourage true collaboration as the form of exchange.

The Continuum of Collaboration

- **Networking:** exchanging *information* for mutual benefit
- **Coordination**: exchanging information and *modifying activities* for mutual benefit
- **Cooperation**: exchanging information, modifying activities, and *sharing resources* for mutual benefit to achieve a *common purpose*
- **Collaboration:** exchanging information, modifying activities, sharing resources, and *enhancing the capacity of another* for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose by *sharing risks, resources, responsibilities and rewards.*

Adapted from the HWLI's Sustainability Toolkit 2017 and Tom Wolff, PhD, Tom Wolff & Associates, November 2016

Assessing the Coalition

Assessment:

1. Is your coalition Agency or Community Based?

2. Reaching those most affected:
   - Who are people most affected by the issues you are addressing?

3. Who is in your coalition and who might be missing?

4. Who else in your community cares about the issues and how will you engage them?

	Agency-based	Community-based
Approach	Weakness/Deficit	Strength/Asset
Definition of Problem	By agencies	By local community
Role of Professionals	Central to Decision Making	A resource to community problem-solving
Role of Agencies	Central mechanism for service delivery	One of many systems activated
Primary Decision Makers	Agencies	The community
Community Ownership	**Low**	**High**

Tool 1: Coalition Assessment
Instructions: think about your coalition and indicate whether you are practicing agency-based or community-based collaboration in the table.

Adapted from the HWLI's Sustainability Toolkit 2017 and Tom Wolff, PhD, Tom Wolff & Associates, November 2016
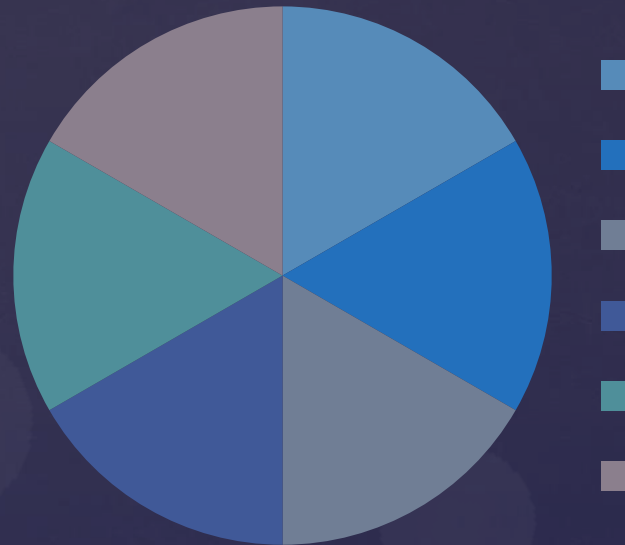
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Tool #2: Reaching those most affected
Instructions: Consider who are the people most affected by the issue you are addressing? List the top five groups of people who are most affected in order of importance.

Informal Sector
Formal Sector

Tool #3: Stakeholder Analysis

Instructions: Think about who is currently in your coalition and who might be missing. Consider members of the: informal sector: neighborhood associations, PTOs, youth, fraternal, or religious groups; and formal sector: for example state, local or tribal government, media, education, law enforcement, business and health organizations. Use a flipchart to draw two pie charts, and for each, list key sectors. Then put a check mark by those that you have and circle those you are missing. Add slices to the pie as needed.

Organization or Individual
What are their capacities, skills and resources? (e.g., power, time, talent, funding)
What is their potential role on the collaboration?
What is their self-interest; why should they join? (organizational and/or personal gains)
What strategy will you use to recruit them?
What barriers might exist to recruiting them?
Who will approach them?
By when?

Tool 4: Community Engagement Plan
Instructions: After completing the formal and informal sector analysis, working as a large group, brainstorm a list of people or organizations within each sector who are not currently members and use this grid to further develop your plan for engaging them.

Key Questions?

- Who do you have at the table and who is missing?
- What are the strengths and gaps in your membership?
- Who else do we need to have in the room?
- Who else in the community cares about your issue?

Your Approach?

 The approach you take to your work with communities matters!

 What will your approach be?

& Door knocking means going door-to-door and asking people for information or feedback related to community health improvement. You can provide them with information about your partnership and how they can get involved.

Door Knocking

- This is a simple technique to gather information from the community.
- Tabling is exactly what it sounds like: Set up a table outside of a grocery store, library, or other business and ask people to answer a few brief questions as they come or go.
- Develop a list of a few key questions about your issue area or areas where community feedback and perspective would be particularly helpful.
- You will also want to have some information about your group available – what it is and how people can get involved.

Tabling

- A petition drive is a method to collect signatures from people in your community that support a particular action on your issue.
- This can be a useful way to influence decision makers to implement, change or cancel a regulation or action.
- This tool is often also used to build a database of supporters on an issue that can be helpful to further engage residents in efforts that align with their self-interest.

Petition drives

- Surveys (which can be delivered in a variety of ways including in-person at events, via email or through organizational channels) can be used to ask residents about issues they see as important in their community.
- They can also be used to get resident input on a particular issue.
- Survey results are helpful in understanding what strategies might be most effective in addressing a community problem or in building on existing community assets.
- Results can also be used to further engage and rally your community or building greater consensus.

Surveys

- Public meetings such as town hall meetings can offer a great forum for providing information and getting feedback from multiple sectors in your community.
- This can include community members, policymakers, other stakeholders, and sometimes the media.

Public Meetings

- Other groups that might have similar interests, or a vested interest in a particular area that would make it more likely that they'd partner with you or members who might be able to provide insight and perspective on your issue.
- After coming up with your list of other community groups, contact them and ask if you can come to their meeting (again, thinking about getting away from the model of trying to get people to always come to your meetings).
- Be prepared to do a lot of listening but plan to ask some questions such as:
- What are they doing?
- What are their strengths?
- What are their interests/needs/priorities?

Community Meetings

A one-to-one is a personal conversation between an individual community member and an activist or organizer. The goal is to share concerns, level of interest and commitment for an issue, as well as the resources each person has to offer.

One-to-one meetings

What can happen if the community isn't brought to the table?

- We might create a program that no one wants

- We trap ourselves into always doing *"for"* and can never get to doing *"with"*

- The community may never own the issue

- We fail to respond to the diversity and culture of our communities

The main reason that someone volunteers is that someone they know asks them.