

Community Engagement

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Abstract: In South Sudan, community engagement has become a vital tool for promoting social cohesiveness and tackling urgent local issues. Initiatives like the Sudanese Community Development Project have shown the value of participatory approaches in a country with a history of conflict and a varied population. By focussing on local perspectives in decision-making, these initiatives enable communities to address problems like access to healthcare and education. Furthermore, grassroots movements have demonstrated the possibility of group action by uniting residents around shared objectives, such as youth-led projects in urban areas. Despite obstacles like political unrest and economic instability, South Sudanese communities are still innovating and using social media and technology to improve their outreach and engagement initiatives. The dynamic terrain of community participation in Sudan is highlighted in this abstract, along with its significance in fostering sustainable development and resilience.

Keywords: Community, Engagement

Session Overview

- The Session provides an overview about community engagement, its importance, principles, engagement goals , community engagement models and how they can use it in projects and research designs

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand community engagement and its importance
- Discuss the principles and goals of community engagement
- Practice community engagement during the course of developing and implementing their projects

Session Structure

- Introduction
- What is community engagement?
- Core Values of Community engagement
- Why community engagement Matters?
- Guiding principles of effective community engagement
- Examples of Community engagement/Community Engagement models
- Establishing community engagement goals

Introduction

- The word “community” aims to recognize that different people identify themselves in different ways and that we should be sensitive to this when carrying out any type of engagement-a community may be a geographic location(community of place), a community of similar interest(community of practice) or a community of affiliation or identity such as industry or sporting club.

• The word “engagement” may be describe by many words-participation, involvement, consultation and research just to mention few

- Community engagement according to Brighton & Hoves incorporate the following range of activity/words including informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering(**2020 community partnership**)

What is Community Engagement?

- The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioural changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involve partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change and relationships among partners, and serve as catalyst for changing policies, programs and practices(**CDC,1997, p.9**).

Core Values of Community Engagement

- Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have the right to be involved in decision making process
- Community engagement includes the promise that public's contribution will influence decision
- Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating needs and interest of all participants
- Community engagement seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- Community engagement provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Community engagement communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

Why Community Engagement Matters?

- Traditional service approaches are not succeeding
- Increase the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted/identify ethical pitfalls
- Agenda-Engagement changes the choice and focus of projects/how they are initiated and their potential funding
- Create more effective solutions, by drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group
- Improve citizen's knowledge and skills in problem solving
- Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds
- Create several opportunities for discussing concerns
- Create local networks of community members
- Increase trust in community organizations and governance
- The general public- is likely to be more receptive to the research and reap greater benefits from it.
- Community engagement as a human right- is a fundamental civic right(rights based argument)

Guiding Principles for Effective Community Engagement

- Increase citizens' knowledge about a community and /or the issue you are seeking to address
- Encourage citizens to co-create additional knowledge, understanding and applying
- Use that knowledge to improve the community or address the identified problem
- Create future opportunities for citizens to engage each other
- Ensure that these opportunities becomes a regular and on-going components of the process

Examples of Community Engagement: Community Engagement Models

- Community building-projects that intentionally bring people together to know one another
- Community education-projects that serves to educate the public about social issue
- Community organizing-Projects that have a goal of solving a community issue
- Deliberate Dialogue-project that build understanding across differences
- Direct service-projects that provide service to community as a whole

- Engaged research-research that directly benefits the community by clarifying the causes of a community
- Institutional Engagement:

Establishing Your Engagement Goals

- **Inform**-informing is the most elementary and simplest goal of an engagement process
- **Consult**-Stakeholder consultation in essence provide some mechanism to greater to greater inputs on the issue, problem or process you are concerned about
- **Involve**: Involve stakeholders to the degree, appropriate in decision making

Engagement Goals

- Collaborate- Engage stakeholders in order to create an environment conducive for solving complex issues
- Empower-empowerment is seen as penultimate goal of an engagement effort

Steps of a Community Needs Assessments

1. Define your community
2. Decide the scope
3. Identify Assets
4. Make connections
5. Collect data

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