COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

tool description & worksheet

Version 1.0

WHAT?

Enables you to identify and build relationships with local stakeholders who directly or indirectly can benefit your business. Creates greater understanding of local culture and provides access to new skills, ideas and resources.

WHY?

Engagement of local people can make your business more successful. Among other things, you can adapt your product or service better to customers, improve communication, build your reputation, and last but not least: ensure that your business benefits the surrounding community.
STEP 1: DISCOVER
Which strengths, resources and assets are available in the community?

For example, think of:
- Skills
- Technical facilities
- Traditions
- Institutions
- Natural resources
- Financial resources
- Markets

STEP 2: DREAM
How would the community and your enterprise look in the short (2 - 3 years) and medium term (3 – 5 years) if both made full use of strengths, resources and assets described above? Describe the end results for your enterprise and the community:

- What products and services would be offered?
- How would your enterprise interact with traditional suppliers?
- What benefits would your enterprise deliver to the community, environment and local economy?

Think of concrete examples. These might include:
- Employment opportunities to local citizens
- Competitive prices of your product or service
- Support of thriving ecosystems (e.g. better water quality and healthy wildlife)
- A friendly and tolerant attitude among local people and businesses
- Pro-active support of your business
- Participatory learning and knowledge-sharing
- A framework of ethical standards and multi-stakeholder agreements
STEP 3: DESIGN
How can you begin turning the above short and medium-term dream into reality?

1. Select the ideas that most meet the objectives of your enterprise.

2. Prioritize
Rank the top 3 ideas, based on both their feasibility and desirability. Do not forget to consider the risks associated with each idea.

3. List the main activities needed to realize these ideas, and the objectives of these activities.
Imagine how you could realize the ambition expressed in the idea. What activity would be needed for this? And what would be the anticipated outcomes of them?

STEP 4: DELIVERY
Create an action plan to begin realizing your top 3 ideas for community engagement. Include:

- Time frames
- Resources needed (e.g. people, materials, locations, funding)
- Responsibilities and commitments (allocated to specific parties)
- Immediate and future actions and tasks
- Measurement criteria based on existing KPIs
You can begin engaging in activities that bring mutual benefit to your enterprise and the local community and contribute to your business success.

This tool is based on the ‘Scalability toolkit’ by SNV

And

Management Systems International (MSI) – Scaling up: from vision to large scale change
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
guidelines for consultants
Version 1.0

WHEN?

Use when too little is known or understood about how an enterprise is perceived by members of the community in which it operates. When starting, expanding or transforming a business, in order to uncover the potential risks and opportunities the community represents.
CLARIFY RESPONSIBILITIES, COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS
In the final action plan, place emphasis on concrete agreements and pay special attention to managing everyone’s expectations: checking to see if they are aligned. Establish these in a clearly worded agreement covering all the planned actions, including personal commitments.

PLAN FOR REFLECTION AND EVALUATION
After implementation has begun, evaluations should be carried out with the participation of all stakeholders, especially the beneficiaries. This can be achieved through evaluation reports, surveys and questionnaires or regular (Re)discovery, Dream and Design sessions. Make sure to update the action plans where new ideas and insights require it.

INCLUDE LOCAL LANGUAGES
Find people to help you translate to and from local languages where necessary. Cultural understanding and levels of education can differ widely between stakeholders. Translators can act as guides to bridge these gaps. Where literacy is limited, enable non-written information gathering.

LISTEN
A key strength of this exercise is that it allows communities to voice their opinions and interests and exert control rather than relying solely on top-down procedures.

DON’T BE DISCOURAGED BY AN INITIAL LACK OF INTEREST
As many communities cannot even meet the basic needs of their members or are not formally organized, their interest in community engagement may initially be low.

GATHER DATA SOURCES IN ADVANCE
You can use tools such as trend lines, seasonal calendars, articles, statistics and other input to help with the process of discovery and idea creation. Gathering information in advance also shows your interest in the community, which in turn motivates them to work with your business.
TIME
2 - 3 hours
For each section of the worksheet you can take around 45 minutes, with a break to consolidate and discuss results. Leave at least 60 minutes for the first version of the final action plan.

MATERIALS
Large print, drawing or slide of the worksheet; pin board or whiteboard; workshop materials (markers, cards, lots of Post-its, etc.)
Keep a document with a concise summary of the relevant information you’ve collected in advance.

TEAM
You will need one facilitator and one or more people representing a diverse cross-section of the community. Plan for at least 6 and up to 30 participants.

DOCUMENTATION
Work with Post-its so you can add and remove elements easily.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOVER</th>
<th>DREAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available strengths and resources:</td>
<td>Short-term changes:</td>
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<td>Mid-term changes:</td>
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<tr>
<th>DESIGN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activity &amp; Objective1:</td>
<td>Time Frame &amp; Resources:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity &amp; Objective12:</td>
<td>Time Frame &amp; Resources:</td>
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<td>Activity &amp; Objective13:</td>
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