5.2 Discussion: INSTRUCTIONS Identifying the Contributions of Stakeholders in Planning

**Getting Started**

In this activity, you will consider potential barriers and obstacles to identifying community or organizational stakeholders. Finding stakeholders who can contribute to your community or organizational change effort can be challenging, especially when stakeholders have historically occupied positions of lesser power by virtue of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, or familial status. However, all people living or working within the community or organization have potential influence on macro-level change efforts.

**Upon successful completion of this discussion, you will be able to:**

* Develop reflection and self-regulation to effectively manage the intersection of personal and professional values. (PO 1, 2)



**Resources**

* Video: What Is Stakeholder Engagement?



**Background Information**

Part of the dilemma in engaging stakeholders who have been marginalized is a lack of consensus about who holds that responsibility. Some would argue that engagement is the responsibility of the government, while others say that communities, organizations, and individuals have a shared responsibility to find out what is important to the people who have historically been ignored.

Regardless of where you stand on the issue of governmental responsibility for community welfare, how you engage individuals who are relevant stakeholders will impact the success of your proposed social action project. In the video; “What Is Stakeholder Engagement?” the speaker argues that stakeholders are any individuals who are affected by the community or organizational change effort. To effectively solicit feedback about our community or organizational changes, social workers must actively listen to the perspectives of stakeholders to build trust and communicate humility.



**Instructions**

1. Review the rubric to make sure you understand the criteria for earning your grade.
2. Review the following video and/or read the associated transcript file:
	1. **“What Is Stakeholder Engagement?”** YouTube and/or the [**What Is Stakeholder Engagement Transcript.pdf**](https://brightspace.indwes.edu/content/enforced/10438-MASTERSWK-557%28P%29/Workshop_3/3.4%20What%20is%20Stakeholder%20Engagement%20Transcript.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=lsStLBKZX99N2BXcvYjybApb3&ou=10438&_&d2lSessionVal=gpIDhB7L4mb7fB5ptYyw9Bzzv&ou=143839) file
3. Navigate to the threaded discussion and respond to the following prompts. Your initial post should be between 200 and 300 words long. Discuss your experiences and struggles with identifying community stakeholders.
	1. How did you identify your community or organizational stakeholders?
	2. Whose responsibility is it to engage people who have been historically marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, or familial status?
	3. As you develop your social action proposal, what do you envision you will need from your stakeholders?
	4. What skills for the social action project do stakeholders possess?
4. Your initial post is due by the fourth day of the workshop.

**What Is Stakeholder Engagement Transcript**

Speaker 1: Stakeholder engagement, it's one of the business world's most popular buzz words but what does it really mean? No, it's not that. Huh? It's not that either. Clever, but no. Let's back up a bit. Say your company makes widgets and business is booming. Naturally, people start to notice you. One day, you drive to work to find protestors at the company gates, claiming your widgets use a toxin that is bad for the planet.

Speaker 2: No more widgets, no more widgets.

Speaker 1: Soon more stakeholders hear about the protest and decide to join the campaign. Suddenly, you're in the news for all the wrong reasons. Yikes. What do you do? You're the bad guy. Maybe you call the authorities

Speaker 2: No more widgets, no more widgets.

Speaker 1: Arrest the activists, and tell your story, explaining the many great things your company does and how ridiculous those crazy hippies are. Problem solved, right? Not so fast. In the end, it doesn't matter who's right and who's wrong. The cycle of demonization and finger pointing rarely leads to solutions, and almost always to gridlock and a tarnished brand. To overcome this cycle, we at Future 500 advocate for stakeholder engagement. Technically, it's the systematic and pro-active integration of feedback from those impacted by your organization's operations. In practice, it's all about humanization.

When we acknowledge our shared humanity and admit that none of us is perfect, we can begin removing our masks and working together to find common ground. Stakeholder engagement means building trust even between those with very different views, from right to left, corporate to NGO. It means knocking on doors before problems arise rather than after. It means listening more than talking. It means communicating with humility rather than boasting, and it means engaging over and over again to continue raising the bar in a way that's better for your stakeholders, your planet, and your bottom line.

Now, it doesn't always have to be formal. After all, most friendships aren't built in the boardroom. Having a little fun never hurt either. When we stop building walls and start building bridges, we create a space for solutions that are systemic, innovative, and lasting. The next time you find protesters at your gate, consider this. Maybe you shouldn't have a gate in the first place.

Future 500 is a San Francisco based nonprofit specializing in stakeholder engagement. We align the power of the private sector with the purpose of its most critical stakeholders to address imminent environmental and social issues. Learn more at future500.org.