



Engaging Stakeholders in Developing Evidence-Informed Approaches to Tackling Pressing (Health/Policy) Challenges

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Stakeholders

- A broad range of stakeholders are involved in or affected by policy decisions
 - Citizens and civil society representatives
 - Business and professional leaders and their employees
 - Government officials
 - (Researchers)



Engaging Stakeholders

- Deliberative (stakeholder) dialogues provide a powerful way for stakeholders to work through
 - A pressing (health/policy) challenge and its causes
 - Policy options to address the challenge
 - Key implementation considerations
- Stakeholder dialogues
 - Give voice to (the tacit knowledge, views and experiences of) those who will be involved in, or affected by, future decisions about a high-priority issue
 - Air the political factors (institutional constraints, interest group pressure, ideas – both values and other types of information, and external events) that will influence decision-making



Engaging Stakeholders Informed by Research Evidence

- A pre-circulated evidence brief can ensure that the best available data and evidence inform the deliberations
- Evidence briefs take a high-priority policy issue as the starting point, identify the full range of research evidence relevant to the various features of the issue (problem, options and implementation considerations), draw on both systematic reviews and local data and studies, and level the playing field for stakeholder dialogues



Debate versus Dialogue

Oppositional	Collaborative
Winning	Common ground
Affirms perspectives	Enlarges perspectives
Searches for differences	Searches for agreement
Causes critique	Causes introspection
Looks for weaknesses	Looks for strengths
Defends assumptions	Re-evaluates assumptions
Listening for countering	Listening for meaning
Implies a conclusion	Remains open-ended



Stakeholder Dialogues – Features

Features	
Address a priority issue	Informed by discussion of all factors
Discuss problem features	Convene involved and affected
Discuss options	Aim for fair representation
Discuss implementation	Engage a facilitator
Discuss who could do what	Follow Chatham House rule
Informed by evidence brief	Do not aim for consensus



Stakeholder Dialogues – Evaluation Results

Ratings (n = 17 dialogues; n = 530 respondent; response rate = 57%)
Overall rating of dialogues = 6.4, all but one feature rated ≥ 6.2 , and only one feature had much variation ($SD > 1.1$)

Address a priority issue	Informed by discussion of all factors
Discuss problem features	Convene involved and affected
Discuss options	Aim for fair representation
Discuss implementation	Engage a facilitator
Discuss who could do what (5.9 [1.4])	Follow Chatham House rule
Informed by evidence brief	Do not aim for consensus



Stakeholder Dialogues – Evaluation Results (2)

Ratings

Strong behavioural intention to act and positive attitudes to the use of evidence, but greater variability in subjective norms and behavioural control

Behavioural intentions	
• I expect to use research evidence	6.3 [0.6]
• I want to use research evidence	6.4 [0.6]
• I intend to use research evidence	6.3 [0.8]
Positive attitudes to use of evidence	6.6 [0.7]
Subjective norms	6.2 [1.4]
Perceived behavioural control	6.2 [1.8]



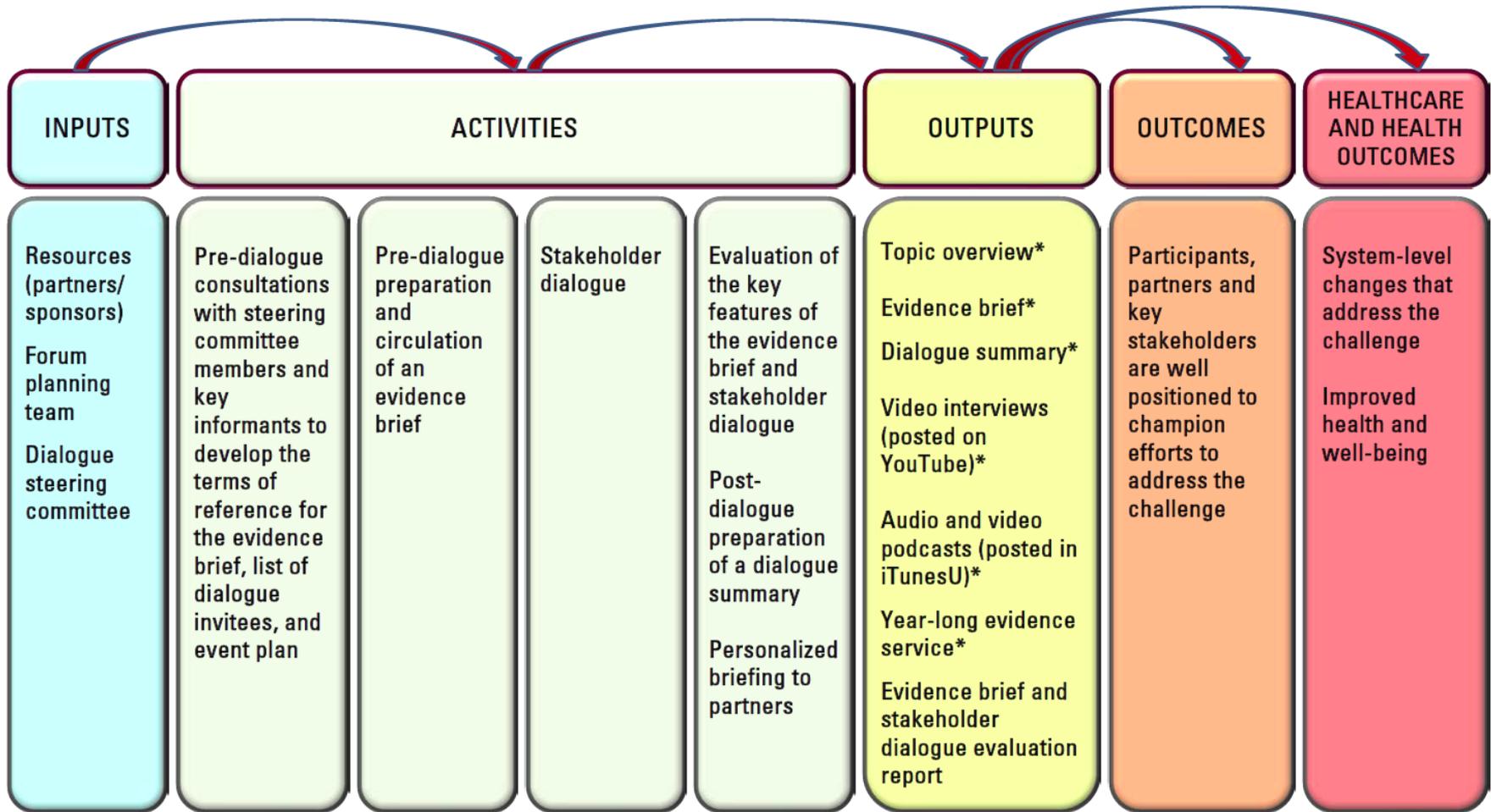
Stakeholder Dialogues - Impacts

e.g., Directly informed a provincial cabinet submission about creating community-based specialty clinics



EVIDENCE >> INSIGHT >> ACTION

EVIDENCE >> INSIGHT >> ACTION



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A Similar Process Can Be Followed for Citizens

- Key differences
 - ‘Sampling’ of participants emphasizes diversity (gender, ethnocultural, socioeconomic, ‘lived experience’ with issue)
 - Citizen brief provides a plain-language summary about what citizens need to know
 - Citizen panel elicits the values that underpin citizens’ choices
- Evaluation results are even more positive
- Key findings are increasingly included in the evidence briefs that inform stakeholder dialogues



What Are the Options When 6-16 Weeks Is Too Long to Wait?

- Stakeholders need ‘quick and clean enough’ ways to engage with research evidence
 - Sources of pre-appraised research evidence (e.g., Health Systems Evidence, evidence map for human settlements)
 - Rapid-response evidence services



What Are the Options When 6-18 Weeks Is Too Long to Wait? (2)

- Stakeholders also need ‘quick and clean enough’ ways to engage with stakeholders
 - Less rigour in sampling
 - Less rigour in preparing briefing material
 - Less rigour in eliciting and documenting areas of agreement and disagreement and the underlying reasons (or values)



Capacity and Relationships Matter

- Capacity
 - Most stakeholders need support to build their capacity to make the best use of even ‘quick and clean enough’ mechanisms
- Relationships
 - Long-term partnerships with well-positioned stakeholders can make any of these mechanisms work more smoothly and are likely key for those working on defined health challenges over long periods of time
 - However, ‘weak ties’ with a very diverse array of stakeholders is also critically important for those who tackle whichever challenges are most pressing at any given time



Conclusion

- Stakeholder engagement is key to developing evidence-informed approaches to tackling pressing (health/policy) challenges
 - Stakeholders need to frame the issues for discussion
 - Stakeholders need to be able to talk through what the evidence means for their issues in their context
 - Stakeholders needs to consider the research evidence alongside all of the other factors that influence policymaking
- Designing meaningful stakeholder-engagement processes means thinking carefully about design features and which features can be made less rigorous when you have to be 'quick and clean enough'



Resources

- McMaster Health Forum
 - www.mcmasterhealthforum.org
 - Click on Products on the left task bar
 - Then select either 'Evidence briefs' or 'Dialogue summaries'
 - Or select a topic to view the full suite of related products
 - Moat KA, Lavis JN, Clancy SJ et al. Assessing views about and intentions to act on evidence briefs and deliberative dialogues across a range of countries, issues and groups. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2014; 92:20–28. [PMID: 24391297]
- Health Systems Evidence
 - www.healthsystemsevidence.org
- Health Systems Learning
 - <http://www.healthsystemslearning.org>