EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

By

Sam O. Smah, PhD.
Lighthouse Study Helps Concepts
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, NG

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1. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

Effective stakeholder management and community relations have become critical components of contemporary organisational governance, project implementation, security management and sustainable development. Stakeholders include individuals, groups and institutions that can affect, or are affected by, the objectives and activities of an organisation or project (Freeman, 1984). Effective stakeholder management therefore involves systematically identifying relevant actors, understanding their interests, influence and expectations, and developing appropriate strategies for consultation, participation, communication and collaboration. Research demonstrates that inadequate understanding of stakeholder interests and relationships can undermine project performance and generate conflict, resistance and implementation difficulties (Achterkamp & Vos, 2008; Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014).

Community relations constitute an important dimension of stakeholder management because communities are not merely beneficiaries of organisational or governmental interventions; they are legitimate stakeholders possessing knowledge, interests, resources and capacities that can influence outcomes. Effective community relations consequently require continuous dialogue, transparency, cultural sensitivity, trust-building and meaningful participation in decisions affecting local populations. Teo & Loosemore (2017) demonstrate that early trust-building and understanding of community concerns and social structures are essential to effective engagement. Contemporary scholarship accordingly emphasises a transition from simply *managing* stakeholders toward inclusive stakeholder *engagement*, collaboration and shared value creation (Aaltonen et al., 2024). Thus, effective stakeholder management and community relations strengthen legitimacy, reduce conflict, enhance social acceptance and promote sustainable organisational and development outcomes.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS TRAINING

The justification for this training is based on the need to:

- Strengthen institutional capacity by establishing robust organisational structures, policies, systems, procedures and mechanisms that enable the Trust to perform its statutory responsibilities efficiently.
- Improve governance and accountability through transparent decision-making, effective oversight, stakeholder participation, ethical leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance financial capacity by strengthening budgeting, financial planning, resource mobilisation, expenditure control, auditing and transparent financial reporting.
- Improve administrative efficiency through effective human-resource management, record keeping, procurement, coordination and internal communication.

- Strengthen operational capacity for effective programme planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Promote stakeholder and community engagement to ensure interventions reflect identified community priorities.
- Enhance sustainable development outcomes by improving the Trust's ability to deliver inclusive, responsive, measurable and sustainable interventions that improve livelihoods and wellbeing across host communities.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this presentation are, to:

- Share practical knowledge and tools for Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis,
- Develop Effective Communication Strategies, Community Engagement Frameworks, and
- Managing Expectations and Relationships

4. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF EMHCDT

Concept and meaning

Stakeholder mapping and analysis is a systematic process for identifying individuals, communities, institutions and organisations that affect, are affected by, or have an interest in a programme, policy or intervention, and for assessing their interests, influence, relationships, expectations and potential contributions. Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory provides the foundational proposition that organisations and programmes should recognise the interests of all parties capable of affecting or being affected by their activities.

In the context of EMHCDT, stakeholder mapping should go beyond producing a list of participating institutions. It should establish who matters, why they matter, what interests they represent, how much influence they possess, what resources they control, how they relate to other actors, and how they should be engaged. Reed et al. (2009) consequently conceptualise stakeholder analysis around three broad tasks: stakeholder identification, categorisation or differentiation, and investigation of relationships among stakeholders.

Stakeholder mapping is therefore both an analytical and governance instrument. Properly undertaken, it enables EMHCDT to develop an inclusive institutional architecture in which government institutions, communities, security actors, traditional institutions, civil society, private-sector organisations and vulnerable populations have appropriately defined roles.

Why stakeholder mapping is important to EMHCDT

The complexity of EMHCDT requires the participation of actors possessing different forms of authority, knowledge, resources and legitimacy. No single institution is likely to possess sufficient information, capacity or public legitimacy to address complex community, security and

development problems independently. Stakeholder mapping helps to identify these complementary capacities. More importantly, mapping prevents stakeholder engagement from becoming elite-driven or institution-centred. Stakeholder identification undertaken informally can exclude less visible groups and reproduce existing inequalities. Reed et al. (2009) warn that ad hoc stakeholder selection may marginalise important groups, introduce bias and weaken the long-term legitimacy of participatory processes.

For EMHCDT, stakeholder analysis should therefore perform several functions: identify stakeholders who influence or experience EMHCDT activities; determine their interests, expectations, resources and responsibilities; assess their relative power, influence, legitimacy and urgency; identify vulnerable, marginalised or under-represented groups; establish relationships, alliances, conflicts and dependencies among stakeholders; determine appropriate levels and methods of engagement; identify potential supporters, blockers, mediators and institutional champions; anticipate conflicts and grievances before they escalate; and provide the foundation for participation, communication, accountability and collaborative decision-making.

Identification of EMHCDT stakeholders

A first-stage stakeholder mapping exercise should identify both **primary and secondary stakeholders**, as well as formal and informal actors. Freeman (1984) argues that stakeholder status arises from the capacity to affect or be affected by organisational action. Reed et al. (2009) similarly emphasise that stakeholder analysis should not simply identify actors but determine why particular individuals or groups should participate. Depending on the precise institutional scope of EMHCDT, the stakeholder universe may include as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Identification for EMHCDT

Stakeholder category	Examples	Potential role in EMHCDT
Government/political actors	Federal, state and local government institutions	Policy, regulation, funding and coordination
Security institutions	Police, civil defence and other relevant security agencies	Security, intelligence, prevention and response
Traditional institutions	Traditional rulers, chiefs and community leaders	Legitimacy, mediation and community mobilisation
Community institutions	Community associations, youth and women's organisations	Local knowledge, participation and monitoring
Civil society	NGOs, advocacy organisations, professional bodies	Accountability, mobilisation, research and advocacy
Private sector	Businesses, contractors and service providers	Investment, employment, technology and resources

Stakeholder category	Examples	Potential role in EMHCDT
Academic/research institutions	Universities, research centres and experts	Evidence, evaluation, training and policy advice
Media	Traditional and digital media organisations	Information, public awareness and accountability
Development partners	International organisations and donor agencies	Funding, technical assistance and capacity building
Vulnerable groups	Women, youth, displaced persons, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities	Lived experience, needs identification and inclusion

A central principle should be that stakeholder visibility is not equivalent to stakeholder importance. Some highly affected populations may possess little institutional power. Conversely, some actors with considerable political or financial influence may experience relatively little direct impact from EMHCDT interventions.

Power–Interest Analysis

One useful instrument for EMHCDT is the Power–Interest Matrix, associated with strategic stakeholder-management approaches (Bryson, 2004; Ackermann & Eden, 2011). Stakeholders can be assessed according to their ability to influence EMHCDT and the extent to which they have an interest in its activities. However, EMHCDT should avoid treating low-power stakeholders as unimportant. From a social-justice and restorative perspective, those with high vulnerability but low institutional power may require greater rather than lesser engagement. This modification is important because conventional stakeholder matrices can unintentionally reproduce existing power inequalities.

Stakeholder Salience Analysis

Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) provide another useful framework by identifying three attributes determining stakeholder salience: Power refers to the stakeholder's ability to influence decisions or outcomes. Legitimacy concerns the recognised appropriateness of the stakeholder's claims, role or relationship with the intervention. Urgency concerns the degree to which stakeholder claims require immediate attention.

Applied to EMHCDT, the model means that stakeholder importance should not be assessed purely according to political authority or financial resources. A community facing immediate insecurity, displacement, environmental harm or livelihood disruption, for example, may have relatively limited formal power but possess both legitimate and urgent claims. Such communities should consequently occupy a prominent position within EMHCDT engagement arrangements.

Mapping stakeholder relationships

Stakeholder analysis should also investigate relationships between stakeholders, rather than examining each actor independently. Reed et al. (2009) explicitly identify investigation of stakeholder interrelationships as one of the major components of stakeholder analysis. For EMHCDT, relationship mapping should therefore examine: Cooperation, Competition, Dependency, Conflict, Mediation and Collaboration. This analysis can reveal, for example, where government institutions overlap in mandate; where communities distrust state institutions; where traditional authorities possess greater legitimacy than formal agencies; where civil society can act as intermediaries; and where private-sector interests may conflict with community expectations. Social network analysis can complement stakeholder mapping by examining relationships, information flows and structural positions among participating actors (Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009). This is particularly useful because institutional effectiveness may depend not merely upon the number of participating organisations but upon the quality, density and reliability of relationships among them.

Participation and stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder mapping should ultimately determine how each category of stakeholder should participate. Arnstein's (1969) classic ladder of citizen participation distinguishes between tokenistic participation and meaningful forms of citizen power. Similarly, collaborative-governance scholarship emphasises dialogue, trust-building, shared understanding and commitment to collective processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). For EMHCDT, engagement may therefore follow a graduated pathway: Identify, Analyse, Prioritise, Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower, Monitor, and Reassess. Stakeholders should not automatically be placed permanently within one category. Their interests, influence and relationships may change as projects progress, political leadership changes, conflicts emerge or communities become more organised. Stakeholder mapping should therefore be treated as a dynamic and periodically updated process rather than a one-off exercise.

Restorative dimension of stakeholder analysis

In the EMHCDT context, stakeholder mapping can also support restorative and relationship-centred governance. Rather than asking only *"Who has the power to influence the programme?"*, restorative stakeholder analysis should additionally ask: *Who is affected? Who has been marginalised? Who has experienced harm? Whose voice is absent? Who bears responsibility? Who possesses resources for repairing harm? Who can facilitate dialogue?* This approach is consistent with restorative justice's emphasis on identifying affected parties, harms, obligations and mechanisms for repairing damaged relationships (Zehr, 2015). It also strengthens procedural justice because people are more likely to perceive institutions as legitimate when they experience meaningful voice, respectful treatment, neutrality and trustworthy decision-making (Tyler, 2006). Accordingly, an EMHCDT stakeholder model could be expressed as: Stakeholder Identification, Interest/Needs Assessment, Power and Vulnerability Analysis, Relationship Mapping,

Prioritisation, Inclusive Engagement, Joint Decision-Making, Implementation, Accountability, Relationship Repair and Monitoring and Remapping.

Recommended EMHCDT Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

A stakeholder analysis matrix can make management much easier. For example, a practical EMHCDT stakeholder register could contain the following variables as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholder Register Variables.

Stakeholder	Interest/ Need	Influence	Vulnerability	Legitimacy	Current Relationship	Potential Conflict	Expected Role	Engagement Strategy
Government agencies	High	High	Low	High	Institutional	Mandate overlap	Policy/coordination	Manage closely
Security agencies	High	High	Low	High	Operational	Jurisdictional tension	Safety/security	Continuous coordination
Traditional leaders	High	Medium–High	Medium	High locally	Community-based	Representation issues	Mediation/mobilisation	Collaborate
Community organisations	High	Medium	High	High	Grassroots	Trust deficit	Participation/monitoring	Empower
Women/youth groups	High	Low–Medium	High	High	Community-based	Exclusion	Representation	Empower
CSOs/NGOs	High	Medium	Medium	High	Advocacy	Policy disagreement	Oversight/advocacy	Collaborate
Private sector	Medium–High	High	Low	Medium–High	Economic	Commercial/community interests	Resources/investment	Engage strategically
Academia	Medium–High	Medium	Low	High	Knowledge-based	Limited	Research/evaluation	Consult/collaborate

The inclusion of vulnerability alongside power and interest is particularly important for EMHCDT because a conventional power-interest matrix can systematically underestimate communities that have significant stakes but weak bargaining power.

Stakeholder mapping and analysis should constitute a foundational component of EMHCDT's governance architecture. It enables the initiative to move from an institution-centred approach toward a participatory, inclusive and relationship-based system of governance. Effective mapping requires identifying stakeholders, analysing their interests and influence, recognising vulnerability and legitimacy, examining interrelationships, anticipating conflicts and designing differentiated engagement strategies. As Reed et al. (2009) demonstrate, stakeholder analysis is strongest when

identification, categorisation and analysis of stakeholder relationships are combined rather than undertaken separately.

For EMHCDT, however, stakeholder analysis should extend further by integrating power, interest, legitimacy, vulnerability, trust, conflict and restorative capacity. Such an approach can ensure that powerful institutions are effectively coordinated while less powerful but highly affected communities are not excluded from decision-making. The ultimate objective should therefore be not merely to map stakeholders, but to transform stakeholder relationships into sustainable structures of participation, accountability, trust, co-production and institutional learning.

5. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF EMHCDT

Effective communication and community engagement are central to the success, legitimacy and sustainability of EMHCDT. Programmes that involve multiple stakeholders, public institutions, host communities, traditional authorities, civil society, private actors and vulnerable populations require more than the dissemination of information. They require systems through which information can be shared, understood, questioned, negotiated and translated into collective action. Communication therefore needs to be conceived as a two-way and relationship-building process, rather than a top-down mechanism for announcing decisions. Community engagement similarly involves sustained interaction through which communities participate in identifying problems, establishing priorities, designing interventions, implementing programmes, monitoring outcomes and evaluating results. Arnstein (1969) famously demonstrated that participation varies from manipulation and tokenism to partnership, delegated power and citizen control. This distinction remains important for EMHCDT because meaningful engagement requires communities to possess genuine voice and influence over decisions that affect them.

A. Effective Communication Strategies in the Context of EMHCDT

Establishing a clear communication architecture

EMHCDT should develop a structured communication system specifying what information is communicated, by whom, to whom, through which channels, at what frequency and with what feedback mechanisms. Communication becomes ineffective when responsibilities are unclear or when different institutions provide contradictory information. A communication architecture should therefore establish: Message → Sender → Channel → Audience → Feedback → Response → Documentation → Learning. Communication planning should be integrated into programme governance from the beginning rather than introduced only when problems or controversies arise. Effective strategic communication also requires consistency between institutional messages and actual organisational behaviour because discrepancies between words and practices can undermine trust (Cornelissen, 2020).

Stakeholder-specific communication

Different stakeholders require different types and levels of communication. EMHCDT should therefore avoid a uniform communication strategy. Government agencies may require technical reports, coordination meetings and policy briefs; communities may respond better to town-hall meetings, community forums, radio programmes and interpersonal communication; traditional institutions may require culturally appropriate consultations; while development partners may require evidence-based progress reports and monitoring indicators. Stakeholder communication should consequently be based on earlier stakeholder analysis examining interest, influence, vulnerability, information needs and preferred communication channels (Bryson, 2004).

Two-way and dialogic communication

Communication in EMHCDT should shift from information transmission to dialogue. Dialogue permits stakeholders to ask questions, challenge assumptions, express grievances and contribute local knowledge. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way communication model emphasises reciprocal communication in which organisations both transmit and receive information. Similarly, Habermas (1984) stresses communicative processes based on dialogue and mutual understanding. For EMHCDT, effective communication should therefore follow: Inform, Listen, Clarify, Dialogue, Respond, Agree, Act, Report Back. The final component—reporting back—is especially important. Communities may become frustrated when institutions repeatedly consult them without explaining how their contributions influenced subsequent decisions.

Simplicity, clarity and accessibility

Communication should be understandable to stakeholders with different educational, linguistic and professional backgrounds. Excessive technical language can create informational inequalities and reinforce institutional distance. EMHCDT communication should therefore use: clear and straightforward language; local languages where necessary; visual communication for complex information; translated materials; radio and audiovisual messages; community meetings; and accessible formats for persons with disabilities. Communication accessibility is closely connected to procedural fairness because citizens cannot participate meaningfully in decisions they do not understand.

Cultural sensitivity

Effective communication must recognise local culture, language, customs and systems of authority. Community messages that disregard cultural norms can produce misunderstanding, distrust or resistance. Communication strategies should therefore involve community leaders, women, youth leaders, religious institutions and locally trusted intermediaries. Cultural competence becomes particularly important in communities with historical grievances or distrust of government institutions.

Transparency and timely information

Transparency strengthens accountability and can reduce misinformation. EMHCDT should communicate important information concerning programme objectives, eligibility criteria, timelines, responsibilities, risks, budgets where appropriate, complaints procedures and implementation progress. Ansell and Gash (2008) emphasise that trust-building is fundamental to collaborative governance. Trust is more likely to develop where institutions communicate openly and stakeholders can verify whether commitments have been implemented. Delayed communication can create uncertainty and allow rumours to fill information gaps. Timeliness should therefore be treated as a core communication principle.

Feedback and grievance-responsive communication

Communication systems should include channels through which stakeholders can raise concerns and receive responses. These may include: Community Helpdesks, Telephone/Hotlines, Suggestion Channels, Community Liaison Officers, Digital Platforms, Grievance Committees, and Mediation Mechanisms. Feedback should be acknowledged, documented, assessed and responded to within defined timelines. This connects communication directly with grievance management. Effective grievance mechanisms contribute to organisational learning because recurring complaints can reveal deeper institutional weaknesses.

Combating misinformation and rumours

Large-scale programmes frequently face misinformation, rumours and distorted narratives. EMHCDT should establish mechanisms for early detection and rapid correction of false information. Recommended approaches include community liaison networks, periodic information briefings, local radio engagement, trusted community spokespersons and dedicated digital channels. Risk communication research shows that trust is a critical determinant of whether communities accept information from authorities, particularly in uncertain or crisis situations (Covello & Sandman, 2001).

Crisis communication

EMHCDT should maintain a crisis communication protocol covering emergencies, conflicts, security incidents, environmental events and programme disruptions. Crisis communication should emphasise: Speed, Accuracy, Consistency, Empathy, Transparency, Actionable Information and Continuous Updates. Coombs (2015) argues that crisis communication should address both informational needs and stakeholder perceptions of organisational responsibility. Institutions should therefore provide not merely technical updates but also acknowledgement of stakeholder concerns.

B. Community Engagement Frameworks in the Context of EMHCDT

Meaning of community engagement

Community engagement refers to structured processes through which institutions and communities develop relationships and collaboratively address issues affecting community wellbeing. It goes beyond consultation. Genuine engagement requires sustained interaction, shared responsibility and opportunities for communities to influence decisions. The International Association for Public Participation framework similarly conceptualises participation along a continuum: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. For EMHCDT, engagement should progressively move toward collaboration and empowerment wherever feasible.

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Arnstein's (1969) model remains an important framework for assessing the quality of participation. Her ladder progresses from: Manipulation, Therapy, Informing, Consultation, Placation, Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control. The major lesson for EMHCDT is that merely holding community meetings does not automatically amount to meaningful participation. Communities should have opportunities to influence decisions and hold institutions accountable. An EMHCDT-oriented objective should therefore be movement from: Token Participation to Meaningful Consultation, Partnership, Co-Production and Shared Accountability.

Collaborative Governance Framework

Ansell & Gash (2008) conceptualise collaborative governance as a structured process involving public agencies and non-state stakeholders in collective decision-making. Their model emphasises: Starting Conditions, Institutional Design, Facilitative Leadership, Face-to-Face Dialogue, Trust Building, Shared Understanding, Commitment and Collaborative Outcomes. This framework is particularly suitable for EMHCDT because it recognises that stakeholders frequently enter collaborative processes with unequal power, conflicting interests and histories of mistrust. EMHCDT should therefore establish neutral facilitation, transparent procedures and mechanisms to reduce power inequalities.

Community Co-Production Framework

Co-production refers to arrangements in which citizens and public institutions jointly contribute to the production of public services and public value. Ostrom (1996) demonstrates that public outcomes can improve where citizens are treated as active partners rather than passive recipients. Within EMHCDT, co-production may involve communities participating in: security intelligence and early warning; environmental monitoring; programme planning; conflict prevention; community surveillance; infrastructure maintenance; needs assessment; and monitoring project implementation. The co-production pathway may be represented as: Community Knowledge + Institutional Capacity + Shared Responsibility = Sustainable Outcomes.

Asset-Based Community Development

Rather than viewing communities exclusively in terms of deficiencies, Asset-Based Community Development emphasises existing community capabilities, institutions, knowledge and social networks (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). For EMHCDT, engagement should therefore ask not simply: "What does this community lack?" but also: "What capacities, knowledge, institutions, networks and resources already exist within this community?" Such an approach may identify traditional dispute-resolution institutions, women's associations, youth organisations, religious institutions, professional groups and informal support networks that can support EMHCDT programmes.

Social Capital and Community Engagement

Community engagement depends heavily upon social capital—the networks, relationships, trust and norms that enable collective action. Putnam (2000) distinguishes between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital connects members of similar groups, while bridging social capital connects different social groups. EMHCDT should encourage both forms. Strong community cohesion can facilitate mobilisation, but excessive bonding without bridging can deepen social divisions. Engagement mechanisms should therefore create relationships between communities, government institutions, security agencies and other stakeholders.

Participatory Rural/Appraisal Approaches

Participatory approaches associated with Chambers (1994) emphasise the ability of local people to analyse their own conditions and participate in decision-making. Relevant EMHCDT methods may include: Community Mapping, Focus-Group Discussions, Transect Walks, Problem Ranking, Seasonal Calendars, Participatory Risk Assessment, and Community Action Planning. These approaches can generate local knowledge that conventional administrative data may overlook.

Restorative Community Engagement Framework

Given EMHCDT's emphasis on stakeholder relations, conflict resolution and grievance mechanisms, community engagement should also incorporate restorative principles. Restorative engagement emphasises: Voice, Recognition, Accountability, Dialogue, Repair, Reintegration and Relationship Building. Zehr (2015) argues that restorative approaches focus on harms, needs and obligations rather than simply rules and violations. In communities affected by conflict, exclusion, displacement or perceived institutional injustice, engagement should therefore establish safe spaces where affected groups can explain their experiences and participate in developing remedies.

Inclusive engagement of vulnerable groups

Community engagement can reproduce existing inequalities if participation is dominated by political elites, traditional authorities, wealthy residents or highly organised groups. EMHCDT should intentionally create opportunities for participation by: Women, Youth, Persons with

Disabilities, Minority Groups, Displaced Persons, Economically Vulnerable Households and Other Marginalised Populations. Cornwall (2008) cautions that participatory spaces can differ substantially in who is permitted to participate and whose voices actually influence decisions. Representation should therefore be assessed qualitatively, not merely numerically.

Monitoring engagement effectiveness

Community engagement should be monitored through measurable indicators.

Table 3: Possible EMHCDT Indicators

Dimension	**Example indicators**
Participation	Number and diversity of community participants
Inclusion	Representation of women, youth and vulnerable populations
Communication	Frequency and accessibility of programme information
Responsiveness	Percentage of enquiries/grievances addressed
Trust	Community confidence in EMHCDT institutions
Influence	Evidence that community input affects decisions
Conflict management	Number of disputes successfully mediated
Collaboration	Number of joint community-institution initiatives
Accountability	Public reporting and feedback mechanisms
Sustainability	Continued community participation after interventions

Monitoring should therefore consider not simply how many meetings were conducted, but whether engagement affected decisions, improved trust and strengthened relationships.

Proposed Integrated EMHCDT Communication and Community Engagement Framework

A comprehensive EMHCDT framework can be represented as:

Stakeholder Mapping
↓
Communication Needs Assessment
↓
Community Entry and Relationship Building
↓
Accessible Information Sharing
↓
Consultation and Listening
↓
Participatory Problem Identification

↓
Joint Priority Setting
↓
Co-Design and Co-Production
↓
Implementation
↓
Feedback and Grievance Resolution
↓
Monitoring and Accountability
↓
Relationship Repair
↓
Evaluation and Institutional Learning
↓
Re-engagement

Three principles should operate across every stage: Inclusiveness, Transparency and Responsiveness. The framework should also be supported by trust, cultural sensitivity, accountability, restorative dialogue and shared ownership. Effective communication and community engagement should be treated as fundamental components of EMHCDT rather than secondary public-relations activities. Communication should be two-way, timely, inclusive, transparent, culturally appropriate and feedback-responsive. Community engagement should similarly progress beyond information and consultation toward meaningful participation, collaboration, co-production and empowerment.

Drawing on Arnstein (1969), Ostrom (1996), Putnam (2000), Ansell & Gash (2008), Cornwall (2008) and Zehr (2015), an effective EMHCDT approach should recognise that sustainable outcomes emerge when communities are regarded not merely as beneficiaries but as knowledge holders, decision-making partners and co-producers of institutional and community outcomes. Effective engagement should therefore produce a virtuous cycle of: Communication → Participation → Trust → Collaboration → Co-Production → Accountability → Conflict Resolution → Relationship Repair → Institutional Learning → Sustainable Community Ownership.

6. MANAGING EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF EMHCDT

Managing expectations and relationships is critical to the effectiveness, legitimacy and sustainability of EMHCDT because multi-stakeholder interventions often bring together actors with different interests, levels of power, priorities and understandings of what a programme should deliver. Poorly managed expectations can generate frustration, distrust, conflict and resistance, while well-managed relationships can strengthen cooperation, ownership and institutional legitimacy (Bryson, 2004; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Effective expectation management begins with clarity of purpose, roles and achievable outcomes. Stakeholders should understand what EMHCDT can realistically deliver, within what timeframe, and what responsibilities fall on government agencies, communities, private-sector actors and other participating institutions. Unrealistic promises should be avoided because unmet commitments can undermine trust and damage long-term relationships. Project-management scholarship emphasises that stakeholder satisfaction is shaped not only by actual outcomes but also by the extent to which expectations are accurately established and managed throughout implementation (Bourne, 2016).

A second principle is continuous two-way communication. Stakeholders should receive timely information about programme progress, limitations, risks, delays and changing circumstances, while institutions should actively listen to concerns and feedback. Communication should therefore follow a continuous cycle: Dialogue is particularly important where stakeholders enter EMHCDT with competing interests or historical distrust. Ansell and Gash (2008) argue that collaborative governance depends on sustained dialogue, trust-building, shared understanding and commitment to collective processes. Relationship management should also recognise power inequalities among stakeholders. Some communities may be highly affected by EMHCDT activities but possess limited institutional influence. Stakeholder management should therefore combine power-interest analysis with attention to legitimacy, urgency and vulnerability (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Marginalised groups should not be excluded simply because they possess less political or economic power.

Another important strategy is the creation of clear commitments and accountability mechanisms. Agreements reached with stakeholders should be documented, responsibilities assigned and progress periodically reviewed. Where commitments cannot be fulfilled, reasons should be communicated promptly. Transparency reduces ambiguity and prevents rumours, blame and unrealistic expectations.

Trust should be treated as a strategic resource. Trust develops through consistency, fairness, transparency, competence and respectful treatment. Procedural justice research demonstrates that people are more likely to regard institutions as legitimate when they are given voice, treated respectfully and perceive decision-making processes as fair and impartial (Tyler, 2006). EMHCDT should therefore ensure that stakeholder interaction demonstrates dignity, neutrality and responsiveness.

Conflict and disappointment are nevertheless inevitable in complex stakeholder environments. EMHCDT should consequently integrate grievance management, mediation and restorative dialogue into relationship management. Restorative approaches focus on harms, needs, obligations and repairing damaged relationships rather than merely identifying fault (Zehr, 2015). Emerging tensions should therefore be addressed early through dialogue and mediation before they become entrenched disputes.

Finally, expectations and relationships should be continually monitored and reassessed. Stakeholder interests may change because of political transitions, resource constraints, security conditions or programme outcomes. Regular stakeholder meetings, satisfaction assessments, community feedback and relationship audits can identify emerging problems and allow corrective action.

An appropriate EMHCDT relationship-management cycle is therefore: Stakeholder Identification, Expectation Clarification, Mutual Agreement, Continuous Communication, Joint Implementation, Feedback, Conflict Resolution, Relationship Repair, Review and Institutional Learning. Ultimately, managing expectations and relationships within EMHCDT requires realism, transparency, inclusiveness, responsiveness, accountability and sustained dialogue. Stakeholders should be regarded not simply as beneficiaries or institutional actors, but as partners whose trust, cooperation and continued engagement are essential to sustainable outcomes.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ON EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN EMHCDT

1. Inclusive Stakeholder Identification and Mapping: Effective EMHCDT implementation should begin with systematic identification and mapping of government institutions, communities, traditional authorities, security agencies, civil society, private-sector actors, development partners and vulnerable groups. Mapping should consider stakeholders' power, interests, legitimacy, vulnerability and potential contributions (Bryson, 2004; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

2. Participation and Community Ownership: Communities should be treated as partners and co-producers rather than passive beneficiaries. Moving from information and consultation toward collaboration, shared decision-making and empowerment strengthens local ownership and sustainability (Arnstein, 1969; Ostrom, 1996).

3. Transparent and Two-Way Communication: Effective stakeholder relations depend upon timely, accurate, accessible and culturally appropriate communication. EMHCDT should institutionalise a continuous cycle of Inform → Listen → Dialogue → Respond → Feedback, thereby reducing misinformation, uncertainty and distrust.

4. Trust, Legitimacy and Relationship Building: Sustainable community relations depend upon trust. Fair procedures, respectful treatment, transparency, responsiveness and fulfilment of commitments strengthen institutional legitimacy and stakeholders' willingness to cooperate (Tyler, 2006; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

5. Realistic Management of Expectations: EMHCDT should clearly communicate programme objectives, responsibilities, limitations, timelines and anticipated outcomes. Expectations should be continuously reviewed and negotiated because unrealistic promises and unfulfilled commitments can generate grievances, resistance and reputational damage.

6. Conflict Resolution, Grievance Management and Relationship Repair: Disagreement is inevitable in multi-stakeholder programmes. EMHCDT should therefore maintain accessible grievance mechanisms, mediation, dialogue and restorative processes. The objective should extend beyond resolving individual disputes toward repairing relationships, restoring trust and preventing recurrence (Zehr, 2015).
7. Institutionalisation, Monitoring and Continuous Learning: Stakeholder management and community relations should not be treated as one-off activities. They should be embedded within EMHCDT's institutional structure through designated responsibilities, stakeholder forums, community liaison mechanisms, monitoring indicators and periodic evaluations. The overall framework should therefore operate as a continuous cycle:

Stakeholder mapping, engagement, communication, participation, co-production, accountability, grievance resolution, relationship repair, evaluation, institutional learning, and stronger stakeholder relations.

In conclusion, effective stakeholder management provides the social and institutional foundation for EMHCDT sustainability. Its success ultimately depends not simply on delivering projects or achieving technical targets, but on building durable relationships characterised by inclusion, trust, participation, transparency, shared responsibility, accountability and continuous learning.

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