



‘Meaningful stakeholder engagement’: Taking human rights into account when dealing with people around a TV production

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Background

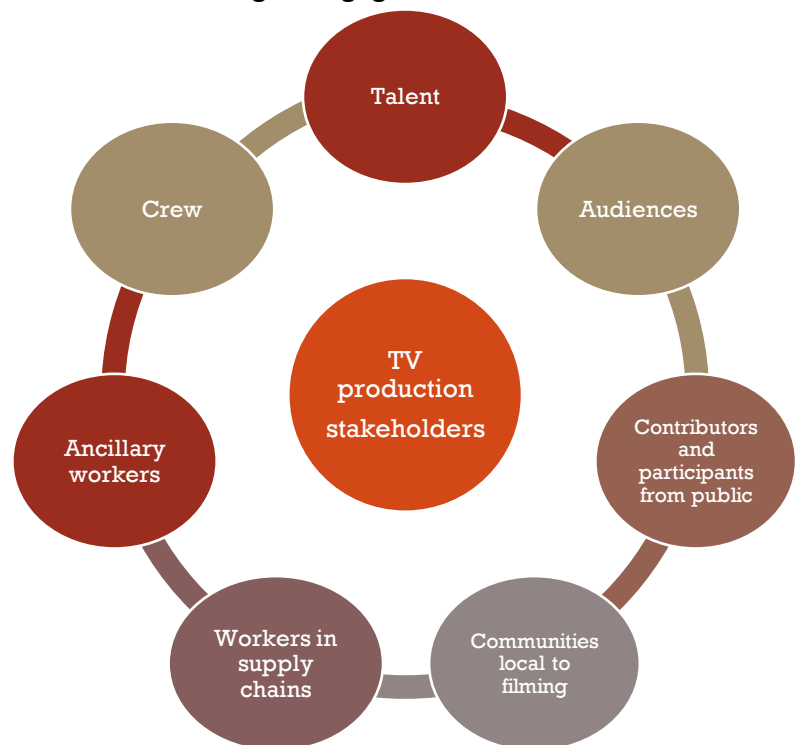
The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) stipulate that there can be no effective human rights due diligence without ‘meaningful stakeholder engagement’. This means that policy development, risk and impact assessment, implementation of effective actions, tracking and monitoring, communicating and reporting, the establishment of effective grievance mechanisms and decisions on remedy should all involve meaningful engagement.

The UNGPs define stakeholders as “any individual who may affect or be affected by an organization’s activities.” The TV Industry Human Rights Forum has identified seven categories of stakeholder that could fit this description, within which there will be particularly vulnerable individuals and groups. The groups are: talent, audiences, contributors & participants from the public, communities local to filming, crew, ancillary workers and workers in supply chains.

TV productions already engage many of these groups as part of standard or good practice. However, is this engagement ‘meaningful’ and, if it is not always meaningful, when should it be?

There are many different ways to engage.

This paper provides some suggestions and insights from participants at our March 2023 Forum meeting on conducting meaningful stakeholder engagement.

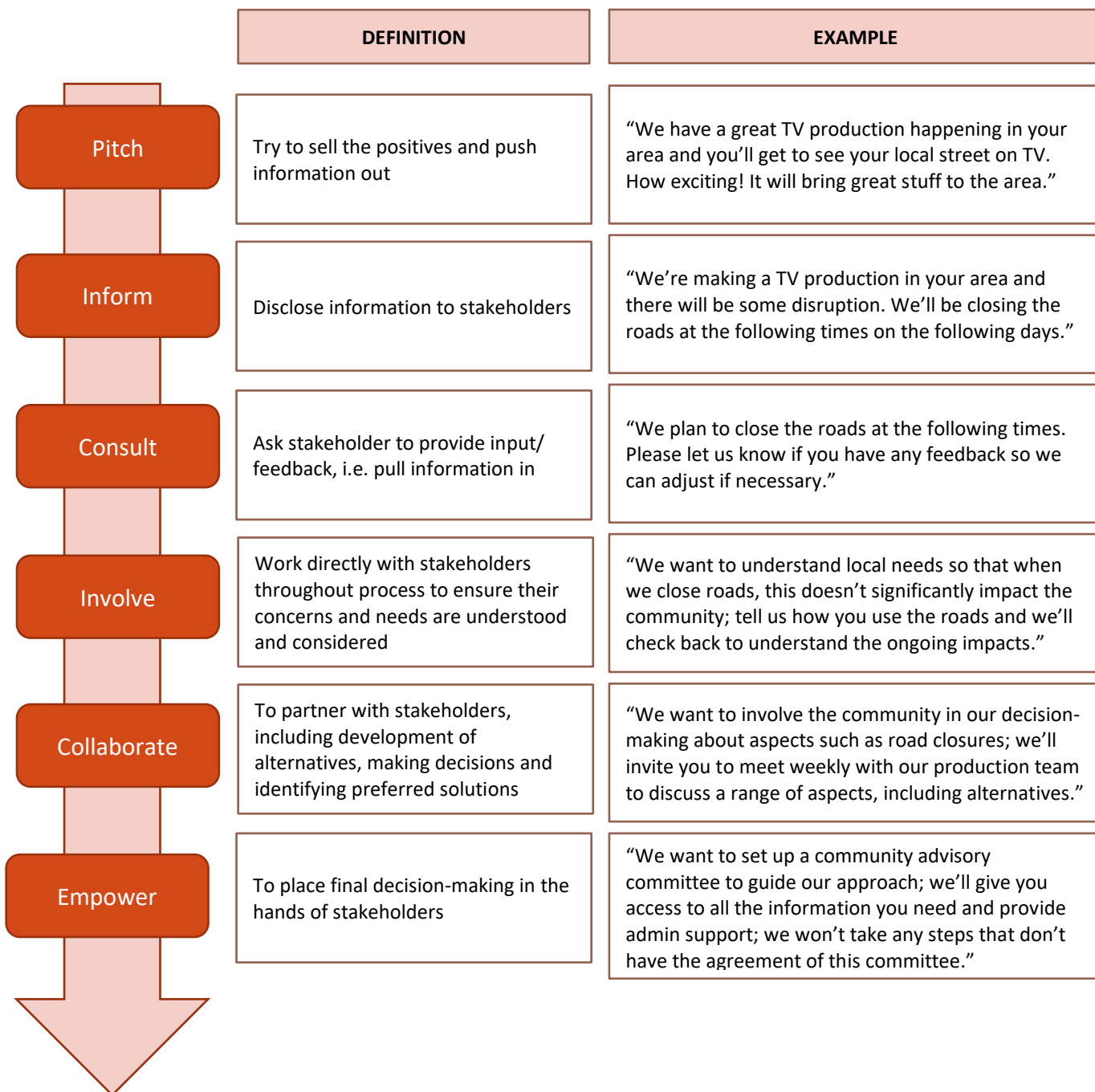


Benefits of meaningful stakeholder engagement for TV production

- Detect potentially negative impacts early
- Understand complex and interconnected nature of any risks and mitigate them effectively
- Manage unintended consequences
- Increase the efficacy of collaborative responses to impact mitigation
- Manage crises more effectively – fewer resources needed for firefighting
- Prevent disputes by avoiding or resolving conflict
- Prioritise actions
- Identify creative solutions to issues, opening new avenues for problem solving
- Access a sounding board
- Help stakeholders understand specific challenges and manage expectations
- Generate support from stakeholders in times of crisis

What does it mean for stakeholder engagement to be 'meaningful'?

Stakeholder engagement can take a range of forms. The below diagram suggests increasingly 'meaningful' forms of engagement.



The Global Compact Network Germany identified 5 insights into what makes stakeholder engagement 'meaningful'¹:

It should be designed in a way that is

1. based on trust
2. fit for purpose
3. rights-based

It should be informed by a mindset that is

4. characterised by co-ownership
5. sensitive to context

¹https://www.globalcompact.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente_PDFs/UN_GCD_Insights_Series_HR_Due_Diligence_Stakeholderengagement_english.pdf

Types of stakeholders and considerations for engagement

Objectives	Some considerations and recommendations	Will depend on
Crew (including freelancers)		
Engage early and throughout in order to build a supportive culture, give everyone a voice, understand issues and avoid conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure both editorial and production take responsibility for meaningful engagement • Prior to their arrival on location, prepare a plan for all crew, including freelancers, that details available facilities and ways to engage • Induction on location will be key to setting the right tone for engagement • Ensure senior leaders are visible and regularly visit productions to get a better understanding of what is actually going on and to be accessible to those on set • Find ways to give everyone a voice, no matter how junior • Ensure confidential routes are available to raise issues • Give time and credit to those who build and maintain relationships which could help in the event of a crisis • Where teams are separated, ensure that there are people who can bridge gaps between them and appreciate the situations at each location • Check on individual wellbeing regularly and particularly during a crisis, as well as afterwards • There should be follow up after production 	Locations and whether teams are together or separate
Ancillary workers (e.g. security, drivers, cleaners)		
Engage early and throughout in order to enable workers to raise concerns and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and share a detailed plan, including available facilities for ancillary workers, prior to arrival • Balance of power needs to be addressed – there may be a fear or unwillingness to flag issues • Aim to build relationships early and include ancillary workers in general crew communications 	Available communication channels
Contributors and participants from the public		
Engage early and throughout, including at final edit, to ensure the process is not exploitative of people's stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to empower contributors in how they tell their story, ie placing final decision-making in their hands as far as practicable • Provide ability to respond within the production, e.g. if they disagree with final edit, include that within the programme 	Nature of the contribution and vulnerability of the participants
Communities local to filming (e.g. residents, schools, community groups)		
Engage early in order to manage expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all productions will need extensive engagement – some can inform/consult without the requirement to involve, collaborate or empower • Impacts on communities post-transmission, e.g. rise in visitors 	Length of filming and expected levels of disruption
Workers in supply chains		
Engage where there are potentially severe risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit supplier if possible and talk directly with workers in a safe space where they cannot be overheard by management • Deploy technology if appropriate and location is remote, e.g. tools provided by Ulula such as a one-time survey on wellbeing and working conditions sent by phone 	Lead in time and length of relationship with supplier

Common pitfalls

Wrong people

- Engaging those who shout the loudest, rather than those most at risk
- Engaging those who can affect a company's activities, rather than those affected by them
- Focusing on those with which there are commercial relationships, rather than those with no power or leverage

Wrong approach

- Presenting a fait accompli, rather than being prepared to adapt in response to stakeholders
- Information asymmetry, so that stakeholders are not able to participate in an equitable way
- Mutual lack of trust, including disrespect for stakeholders who want to engage

Having no strategy

- Misaligned expectations about the purpose of the engagement
- Purposeless chats that do not lead to concrete outcomes
- No schedule, tracking or documentation systems
- Ignoring the internal engagement required to take on board the outcomes of external engagement

Opportunities for meaningful engagement

Engaging people with lived experience or who are expert by experience

People with lived experience are experts in their own issues. Their wisdom and insight are unique. When engaging them, it's vital to remember that it's not your story, it's theirs.

Examples of when to engage people with lived experience	Key aspects to consider	
	DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research for a drama, documentary or news piece (e.g. modern slavery, refugee journeys, homelessness) • Prior to using their story for a documentary or news piece • Understanding potential risks and how to mitigate or address them effectively in unscripted entertainment (e.g. mental health issues) • Understanding issues that may be encountered when filming any genre (e.g. discrimination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Clarify roles and expectations ☑ Address barriers to participation and any related issues, such as the need for childcare or support to use IT ☑ Undertake a needs assessment to ensure equal standing ☑ Conduct a wellbeing assessment each time you engage – the wellbeing of potentially vulnerable people can change over time ☑ Ensure trust is built up and maintained ☑ Recognise that people with lived experience could be vulnerable ☑ Make a group agreement together to establish ground rules ☑ Ensure a balance of power and continuously assess this ☑ Constantly reassure on what you can/ can't do in terms of outcomes/support ☑ Ensure sensitivity in how you tell their stories ☑ Include them in the editing process. ☑ Embrace inclusivity and promote anti-discriminatory practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Only engage those people who are easiest for you to ☒ Engage in order to get 'sign off' for something already decided

Tools for engaging crew and ancillary workers on set

Call it! App - <https://www.callitapp.org/>

- Engagement tool via an app – requires all those on set to check in once a day
- Measures culture and collective experiences rather than individual cases
- Empowers workers to look after themselves

Whole Picture toolkit for mentally healthy productions - <https://wholepicturetoolkit.org.uk/>

- Set of mini guides to assess, manage and monitor mental health and wellbeing pre-production, during production and post-production
- Establishes a supportive culture that facilitates meaningful engagement