Concerted Engagement for Mentors and Communities

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This is a summary of the findings of a review which identified over 100 factors which have been shown to impact sustainability positively in communities. These factors aim to realise synergies and engage with stakeholders and improve communication supporting practitioners and grass roots campaigns to engage others in sustainability. This review identified over 100 factors and these include 17 important stakeholders that will be referred to below. (Further reading on the factors is here: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/econ/Research_Report_238.pdf).

A short summary of these factors, that are alive in communities achieving sustainability, are the presence of a vision, the presence of unique group identity, strong leadership, social capital, environmental champions, establishment of norms, use of measurement, use of commitment strategy, strong engagement of the community by external stakeholders, capacity building and effective communication. This resource includes a visioning tool which supports community groups to seed and create local conversations and activities about sustainability issues. This visioning and sustainability exploration resource is here https://www.sustainabletoolkit.ie/.

The following paragraphs identify the 17 stakeholders, 'The Who' and we also include a short description on 'The How' they operate below.

The Who

The 17 stakeholders usually involved in improving community sustainability can be based in government or international bodies and organisations and also in local organisations, groups or people and are presented in Table 1. To maximize your chances of achieving sustainability as many of these as possible should be engaged.

Table 1: Stakeholders driving sustainable transition

	Stakeholders	No	Stakeholders
1	Human actors	10	Exemplar/model communities
2	Religious groups	11	Business actors
3	Community/local groups	12	Networks (business, etc.)
4	Energy/Environmental Champion	13	Bridging Organisations (NGOetc)
5	Project manager	14	Government agencies

6	Local Authorities	15	European/Global actors
7	First and Second level educators	16	Social Media
8	Higher Education Institutes	17	Skilled facilitators
9	Further Education Providers		

Your Sustainability Stakeholder Map

A community's Sustainability Stakeholder Map can be described as the unique set of stakeholders that improve the sustainability of that community. It also includes those stakeholders which the community are not engaging and indicates where action is needed. In this resource we provide a tutorial which takes you through the main steps of creating your own local Stakeholder Map. An example is that of Ballymun below in Figure 1.

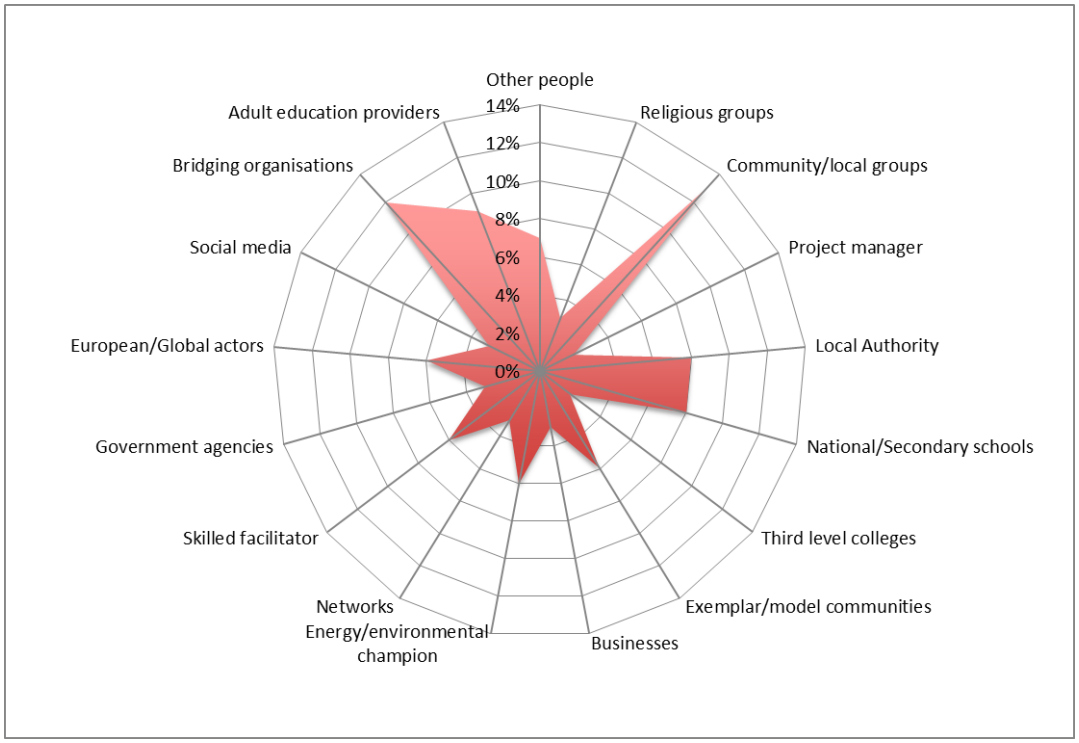


Figure 1: Stakeholder Map of Ballymun (N=176)

In Ballymun, Bridging Organisations score the highest and adult education providers also score well; these two actors can be and are linked in Ballymun as Bridging Organisations like Global Action Plan support adult education. Community and local groups are also significantly engaged. The local authority and school action are also active. Exemplar communities, skilled facilitators and European actors also featured, but less so. A unique profile emerges from the Stakeholder Map, and the inaction of

government agencies, colleges, project managers, religious groups and social media as sustainability actors is also evident. The findings suggest that collaboration between the active Bridging Organisations and the inactive colleges, leveraged by the inactive government or relatively active local authority, could enhance sustainability further through amongst other things - learning activities. The leverage of the active adult education providers could also improve sustainability here. The Ballymun Stakeholder Map clearly shows where there is activity which could be leveraged for short term gains and it also shows where there has been poor engagement and where future work and mid to long term gains could be achieved. Its apparent that there has been poor engagement of local faith groups and this is something which could if actioned improve sustainability locally.

A tutorial is developed on creating your own Stakeholder Map and this includes a document and a video explaining what to do. You can contact the author and ECI if you need consultancy support in this. This support can go further than the Stakeholder Map and 'The Who' and develop a comprehensive map of all the activities and stakeholders locally which are driving sustainability. This then provides 'The Who' and 'The How' and has been used by a number of leading sustainable communities in Ireland.

The How

While the previous paragraphs discuss the stakeholders impacting sustainability and their mapping, 'The How' looks briefly at some of the important activities that the stakeholders are often doing to enhance sustainability.

Profiling is an important activity carried out by a number of the 17 organisations including some community groups. In profiling, communities are assessed in order to establish community attributes such as demographics, capacities and deficiencies and this allows customization of activities or campaigns. The SEAI competencies assessment is a good example of a type of profiling (included in this resource) and is a very useful exercise for communities to carry out. The SEC scheme provides funding to build capacities where deficiencies exist.

A survey in Ireland found that community development workers are spending less

time in the communities and more time in the office fulfilling administrative duties set by funders (Forde *et al*, 2015). These administrative duties report on what activities the community development workers have been involved in but can take from the time actually spent with community. In short Government-led accountability and monitoring schedules are reducing local advocacy support and trust (Lee in Forde *et al*, 2015).

The Figure 2 below shows weak and strong methods of engagement and participation.

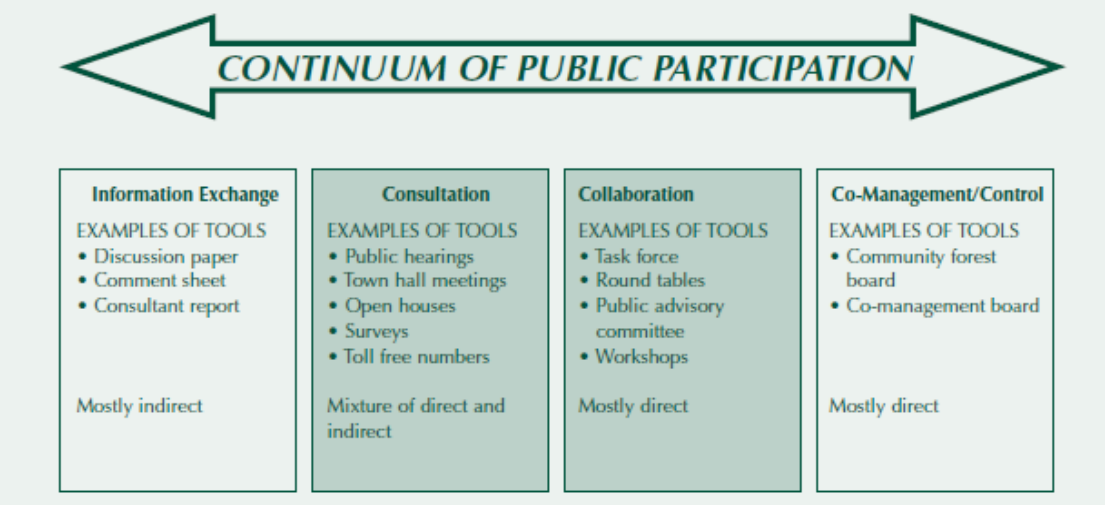


Figure 2: Continuum of Participation (Beckley *et al*, 2006)

Social participation is beneficial and where a high degree of ownership and engagement can be achieved, this can help strengthen communities, encourage self-regulation and build a sense of personal responsibility and self-reliance. Active citizenship is based in the participation in decision-making and delivery processes of local services (Milesecure, 2014 and Forde *et al*, 2015). As we move towards the right in Figure 2 we see more participation until we see far right that the community is involved in co-management of the initiative. As we move to right more trust and partnership is built. The integration and participation of the wider community including strong partnership between citizen groups, government agencies, and education providers is essential to drive sustainable communities forward.

Faith can offer an alternative driver for social and sustainable action where significant energy savings can be achieved. Moral obligation can cause individuals to act pro-

environmentally. Empathy with those most vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as residents of developing countries or future generations, also motivates sustainability. Some examples of faith networks active in sustainability are Noah's Alliance, The Regeneration Project, Greening Sacred Spaces, Faith and the Common Good, Catholic Earthcare, and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

The EU commission point the need for legislation and its effective implementation (EU, 2015b) in this area. They aim that the passive state of citizen control as consumers is increased through strong levels of demand side management and they use a new term for this - prosumers. (EU, 2015a). The European Social and Economic Committee state that the market must be opened up to citizens moving to a decentralized model controlled by prosumers (EESC, 2017) and this should lead to sustainable opportunities in the future for the Sustainable Energy Communities who are establishing themselves throughout Ireland.

EU (2015b) champion the collective schemes and community initiatives which are adding to consumer choice and prosumer development. Direct and active citizen involvement has been achieved through the development of new forms of decision-making and the exercise of power (Milesecure, 2014). This has been demonstrated by a number of community-based projects in Ireland, examples of which are the Sliabh Beag Community Hotel in Monaghan, the Eco-congregation in Westport, the Templederry Community Windfarm in Tipperary, the landfill community fund set up in Ballynagran (Wicklow), Clare Accessible Transport and An Meitheal Rothar in Galway. The value offered by such projects can be felt at many levels such as environmental, economic, social, psychological, moral, participatory, compassionate and cooperative. Critical for sustainability is that government and international action meets, complements, supports and enhances local action. Where this happens the activities on the right hand side of Figure 3 take place.

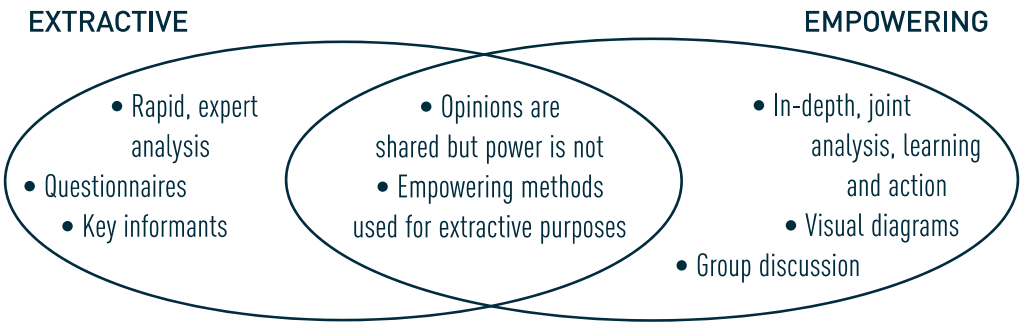


Figure 3: A scale of participatory processes (VSO, 2004)

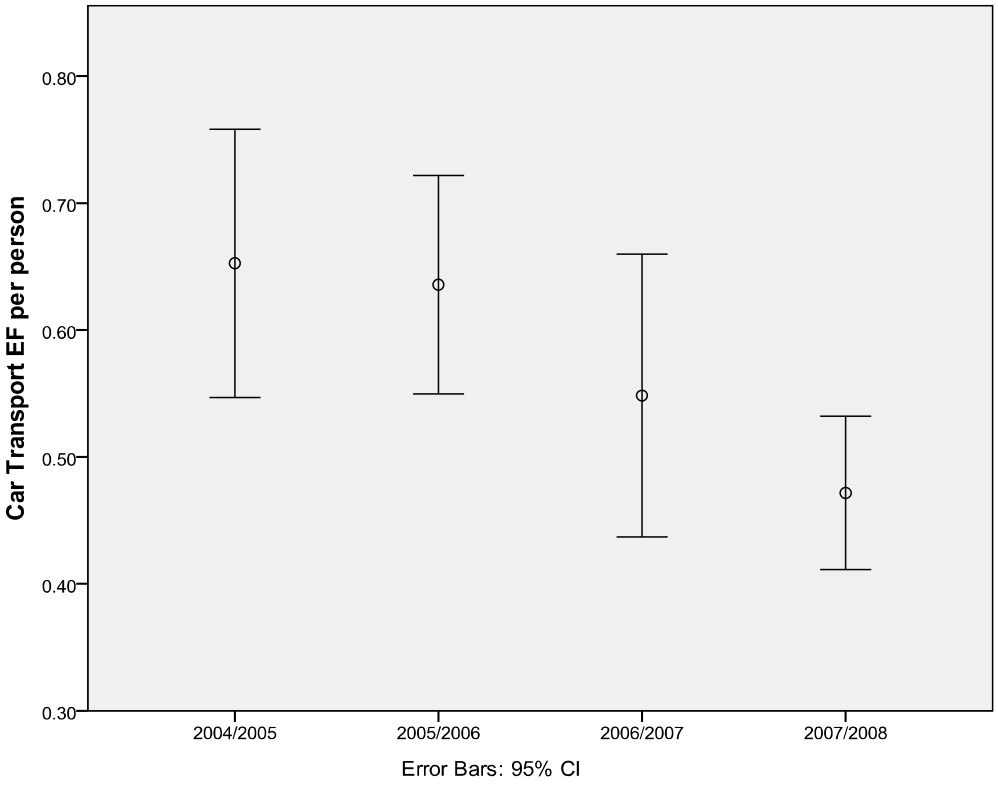
Through the use of skilled facilitation and participatory processes a more deliberative democracy can emerge driving sustainability. Processes move away from simple extractive exercises aimed at collecting information for Government or other organisations. These facilitated methods aim to empower the participants (Figure 3) and support a two-way flow of information together with decision making. For a discussion to be called deliberative it is essential that it relies on mutual exchange of arguments and reflections, builds trust and is co-determined. Where joint analysis is included with deliberation and interpretation participation is deepened, building trust in the evaluation, increasing understanding through social learning, and promoting ownership of the decision-making process (Hajjar & Kozak, 2015). Important elements of such facilitation are: (i) active listening, (ii) thoughtful discussion, reflection and argument, (iii) group action towards shared and agreed goals and values, and (iv) citizens are active participants and not just observers. Engaging people as members of a community, not just as consumers of resources, is an important part of driving sustainability.

The current contexts, agendas, ideas, concerns and aspirations of a community are potential drivers of sustainability. One such example is that local desire to increase social capital can be a driver for sustainability in communities as demonstrated by a residents initial motivations as to what he could do to increase the number of players for his local sports team (Harrington, 2012). This initial driver has resulted in extensive retrofit programmes for the residents of his community Drombane-Upperchurch in Tipperary. The economic crisis in Ireland and the resultant emigration of citizens from rural areas has led to sustainable initiatives in order to stimulate the economy and attract citizens to move back. Citizens have taken a more constructive approach by seeking to develop technological and social solutions to their local

circumstances and the problems that concern them.

Funding is a major issue and the SEC scheme provides avenues for funding which can increase project reach and local engagement. A traditional form of funding many community project have used is the LA21 Partnership Fund available from Local Authorities. The Rio Summit and guidance provided by Chapter 28 of its Agenda 21 has clearly had impacts at a local scale defining LA action and acting as a driver in Ireland. Finding possibilities for communities are reviewed in the Funding Guide of the Wheel and links are provided for this in this resource. Wheel members are entitled to reduced and no cost training in this area.

Information aimed at supporting the sustainable change of others should use familiar language and not be overly theoretical or scientific. Personalised information, testimonies and stories have been shown to be extremely effective. The use of the motor car for many is a necessity – so it is difficult to reduce the use of the motor car. But an example where distances travelled by car were reduced by 28% in a commuter town in Tipperary using meaningful measurement (through an ecological footprint) and storytelling is shown in Figure 4. We include a story database in this resource so others can learn from your stories and vice versa.



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. **Figure 4: Reductions in resident's car transport EF (Carragher, 2011).**

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. Strong emphasis is placed on the need to utilise trusted sources of information which include friends, neighbours and independent experts (Whitmarsh *et al*, 2013). Facilitating local narrative provides capacity for engaging participants and renders technical information understandable. Moving rightwards across Beckley's continuum of participation increases ownership and empowerment and this is enhanced by communities being informed as opposed to instructed enabling them to participate in considered decision-making. In this way citizens are engaged in improving their local sustainability, establishing new knowledge based on an appropriation and re-interpretation of information. An important element of such empowerment is the generation of a positive vision which helps to drive a community.

It is intuitive that without a strong trust in the fact that one is capable of pursuing an intended action, and without a realisable end point, that taking action is unlikely (Grabs *et al*, 2016). Agency or one's belief in one's ability or the collective ability to bring about change acts as a substantial driver. It has been found that the more experiential the learning during for example community meetings or events, the greater the engagement, interest and impact. Individual as well as collective agency is greatly enhanced by having successful mastery experiences that reinforce the feeling that change is possible (McAlister *et al*, 2008 in Grabs *et al*, 2016).

The reasons for taking up sustainable behaviours such as walking and cycling are connected to related improvements in health and such potential health impacts are a driver for change (Leiserowitz in Moser and Dilling, 2007 and Whitmarsh *et al*, 2013). Interventions such as the Energy Plus Community project in Ballynagran utilise such logic encourage residents to improve their health, reduce fossil fuel use, walk, cycle and buy local. The International Energy Agency estimate cost benefit with a 5 fold increase in such health benefits such that for every euro spent on technology and retrofit there are 5 euros of health benefits created (Mourik and Rotmann, 2015). Though retrofits and technology provide improvement but poor understanding of and interaction with technology can hinder these. This points up the need for technological support or assistance.

Policy instruments generally take the form of one of the following 4 measures:

1. Regulatory – bans or limits
2. Economic –incentives and disincentives
3. Information – such as product labels
4. Behavioural – tools or nudges

McKenzie-Mohr (1999) and Inauen *et al* (2013) argue that increases in commitment strength can increase sustainability and SEAI's charter is very important in gaining the support of your community. The charter is included in this resource. Commitment techniques have been shown to be effective in promoting a diverse variety of sustainable behaviours and practices and this includes charters, pledges and petitions.

The development of organizational structures and their management is essential to sustainable progress. Successful projects have utilised mutual structures such as Industrial & Provident Societies, Community Energy Companies, Community Interest Companies and Social Enterprises. Functions of such structures are (i) guiding objectives, (ii) a holding company into which income generated could be deposited and (iii) involvement in other income generation practices (DECC, 2012). The Wheels governance guide is a very useful step in the right direction here and it is included in this resource. We hope it can support your governance needs and improve your sustainability. Wheel members are entitled to reduced and no cost training in this area. Critically where community's need support, a balance is required between assistance and direction and therefore the facilitator and manager roles should be kept separate (Renn, 2006).

Co-management is a knowledge partnership between multiple stakeholders at the community scale. It provides a hospitable environment where diverse stakeholders can interact and learn together (Buck *et al*, 2001) and where they participate in collective self-reflection (Fernandez-Gimenez *et al*, 2008) in a context open to critical examination which is unimpeded by power and knowledge differentials (MacKenzie *et al*, 2012). The resulting growth in understanding and skills, from co-management, is often referred to as social learning. Social learning is essential both for the cooperation of partners and an outcome of the co-operation of partners. Community

Bridging Organisations provide a forum for the interaction of different kinds of knowledge and the coordination of other tasks that enable cooperation. Such a role can include accessing resources, networking, bringing together different actors, building trust and resolving conflict.

Significantly, interventions which extend to co-creation produce visions by consensus. One example is an Irish project which was recognised as a blueprint for community sustainability across the globe in New York this year at the High Level Political Forum. In this project the householders in each community are facilitated to measure their ecological footprint and then to reflect on their learning and share their stories of how and where their ecological footprints are low (Carragher, 2018). Stakeholders interact, craft new knowledge and advance the development of their understanding within a co-learning experience. This enhances the appreciation of the nature and quality of the relationships and interactions and the combined knowledge (Baldwin *et al*, 2012).

In figure 5 you can see cycling infrastructure impeding cycling activity. The problem is that a cyclist has to dismount 5 times in order to navigate less than 100 metres of pathway. Where we are trying to bring others with us on a sustainable journey – its very important to put yourself in their shoes and see what they need to do to make these changes. In this way we remove barriers creating real opportunities for change.

Figure 5: Identification and removal of barriers is essential

When we are engaging others communication is critical and we include a communication tutorial in this resource. It essentially underlines the importance of understanding your stakeholders and community residents (figure 6), internalising the message, stimulating local conversation and establishing norms. We are hosting a story database, as part of this, to help you learn from the stories of others and of course for others to learn from your story(s). This resource is included in the pack. The tutorial includes 35 communication channels which are useful for communicating within communities.

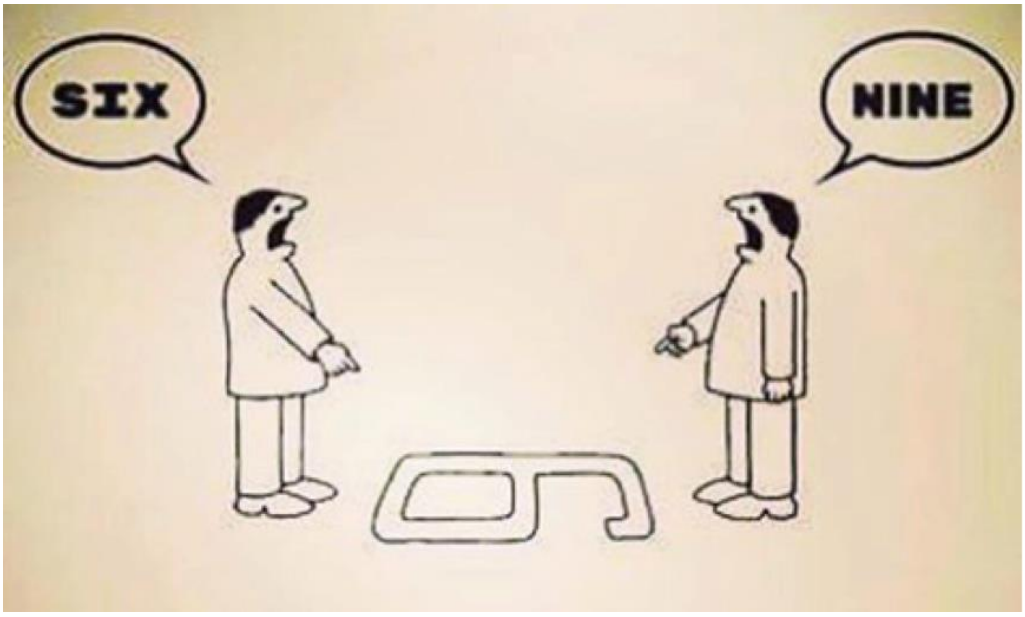

Figure 6: Why can't you see it's a 9

Summary

A review produced a list of over 100 factors which are important in improving the sustainability of communities. In this list there are 17 stakeholders (Table 1) who represent 'The Who' or those we should look to for support in our local sustainability projects. We also briefly review 'The How' these stakeholders impact the sustainability of communities. An important driver mentioned is communication and this is covered more fully within a communication tutorial in our resource pack. Improving the sustainability of our communities is a challenge and engaging others in that work is complex. Each community needs to take its own path optimizing the engagement of appropriate stakeholders who will enhance sustainability. Those engaged will depend upon the aims, stakeholders, community, individuals, time, context and place. The stakeholder map resource that we provide is useful for

communities to identify those who have been involved in improving sustainability locally. But is also important in identifying those who have not been engaged and provides clear indication of who communities should be working with to maximize their sustainability endeavor.

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