

Building Block 5: Analysing Groups of Actors

After the history **Building Block 2**, **Building Block 3** and **Building Block 4**, another indispensable set of topics follows. This has already been touched upon in the previous sections, but requires the full attention of Community Development. Here it is about the people, i.e. the actual supporters of the community. Without people who represent the core idea and translate it into action, the idea remains theoretical and without life. Without people, the story remains pure fiction and has no protagonists who can drive an exciting story forward. In this respect, there can be **no community without people**. However, they will only remain in a lasting relationship through an attractive core idea. Therefore, one cannot be thought of and treated without the other. Otherwise, this would only promote a form of pure sociability in the sense of "feelgood management", which would probably not be sustainable. Unless, of course, a community-founding core idea developed out of the undirected sociability.

The task of community development is to gain an overview of the existing community by **taking stock** and looking at it with new eyes. In doing so, it will always be a matter of finding an appropriate and humble way of dealing with the complexity of a social entity with possibly very many participants and of drawing boundaries:

- The borderline can be drawn by asking which groups of actors are necessary to realise the core idea.
- Since it is not always clear from the outset who can play an important role in its realisation, all groups of actors who are in some way affected by the core idea ("stakeholders"), e.g. by benefiting from the implementation of the core idea, should also be included.
- Part of the stocktaking is the question of who is already part of the community, i.e. who already feels a sense of belonging, identifies with the existing context of interaction and values, and is a part of the community recognised by all groups of actors.
- It should also be asked who is not yet a recognised part of the community, but who could play a fruitful or value-creating role in the sense of the core idea. This is also about the growth perspective and reach of the community.

ACCESS

For the ACCESS context, the following questions arise:

- *Which groups of actors are indispensable to realise the ACCESS core idea?*
- *Which groups of actors are in any way affected by the ACCESS core idea?*
- *Who currently already feels part of the ACCESS context, identifies with the core idea and is recognised as part of the context by relevant stakeholder groups?*
- *Which groups of actors are currently not yet recognised as part of the ACCESS context, but could play an important role in terms of the core idea?*

Once the currently and potentially relevant groups of actors have been identified, it is advisable to **explore** them in **more detail and in a differentiated manner**. Only in this way, it is possible to deal successfully with the various groups of actors in the context of community development. Qualitative interviews, questionnaires, surveys, data analyses and tools of "people-centred" customer research such as the "Empathy Map" can be used to find answers to the following questions, among others:

- What are the lifeworlds of the individual groups of actors?
- What needs do the individual groups of actors have that could be met by the future realisation of the core idea?
- What motivations do the individual groups of actors have that feed into the core idea?
- What potentials and limitations do the individual groups of actors have for engagement and participation in the community?
- What communication and interaction behaviour do the individual groups of actors display and which channels, platforms, locations and stages do they prefer?
- How strong is the independent identity and the degree of organisation of the individual groups of actors?
- How much closeness and distance do the individual groups of actors have to the community, how much do they feel they belong and how strong is their commitment to date?
- What connects the different groups of actors beyond the core idea? Where do serious differences between the various groups of actors become apparent?

ACCESS

For the ACCESS context, the following questions arise:

- *What tools and methods have already been used to explore actor groups in the ACCESS context in more detail? Which groups of actors were these?*
- *Which tools and methods should be used in the future to explore all relevant actor groups of the ACCESS context*



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in more detail?

- The guiding questions above can be used for the exploration.

The **way** community development **works** can be as follows: The results obtained through the guiding questions and with the help of the tools can be documented in the form of actor group profiles. Community development can work successively from core groups to actor groups in the periphery and from overview analyses (socio-economic data, group sizes, personas) to the detailed level of individual members. Every activity that leads to a better understanding of the relevant actor groups and also individual actors pays positive dividends for community development. Only in this way can the (potential) role of the actors be perceived and subsequently measures to deepen their identification be designed (**Building Block 8**). The overall aim is to create an awareness of how diverse the community is and what factors influence the state and development of the community.

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It is advisable to record the research findings on the individual actor groups of the ACCESS context in actor group profiles and to find a form for this that can be successively modified and supplemented.

🕒Revision #6

★Created 9 September 2021 07:29:12 by Petra Riedinger

✎Updated 1 August 2022 07:11:24 by Admin



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