Tips for Conducting Stakeholder Interviews

Insist on getting copies of documents and texts. Whenever a respondent refers to a study, policy, law, or other document, ask for a copy, or at least a citation for the document. Having your own copy will allow you to independently evaluate the contents of the document and confirm the informant's interpretation of the contents.

Use consistent questions with flexible follow-up across all the sources interviewed. While the line of questioning may vary according to the specific stakeholder, certain questions can and should be asked consistently of all respondents. One example question: "What role do you see for the private sector in providing health services and products, particularly for underserved population groups?"

Seek information from multiple perspectives. Different parties may perceive the same situation differently, and an individual informant may not perceive it accurately, for many reasons. For example, some informants may not be privy to what is actually happening, or may only feel comfortable speaking about the ideal, or the way things should be. For this reason, it is important to verify–or triangulate–the same "facts" through multiple interviews.

Document interview notes promptly. Document your interview notes every night. If your team splits up to interview different informants, you can share your experiences through the notes. The notes become an important resource as the team begins to analyze the information and formulate key findings and recommendations.

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