

REDWOODS



WORK COLLABORATIVE

Navigating Politics and Evidence Based Decision Making

Workbook

The community and social sector has a resilience and strength for adapting to change and there are excellent projects and programs happening. However, our work is not always understood nor valued.

So, how do we navigate politics and make informed decisions on behalf of our communities?

Solution: collect and embed data; know who you are working with and their priorities; and test risks and assumptions.

In essence,

- Be clear on what the 'Why' and 'What'.
- Understand the project purpose and mission.
- Plot out the information in any order.
- Consider risks and assumptions – Is this wanted? What can go wrong? Who can block the process, when or where? How will it facilitate change? And might be unintended consequences?
- Include a range of evidence to back up your plan and purpose.
- Align each stakeholder priorities with the project objectives.

Success indicators, consider:

- What are the current metrics? What is your starting point – what do you want to change?
- What are our aspirations? Expectations of outcomes?
- What do you need to count and record to demonstrate each element above?

Once you know your scope, then you can actively seek out people, programs and collaborations. Aligning stakeholder priorities helps you to navigate politics, stakeholder priorities and agendas. It offers a clear picture of approach, success indicators and stakeholder communication.



Logical Framework (adapted for Navigating Politics and Evidence-based Decision Making)

Theory of change: if we do this, then this will happen and change will occur . . .						
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES (SHORT TERM)	OUTCOMES (MEDIUM TERM)	OUTCOMES (LONG TERM)
What do I have to work with? E.g. people, funds, resources, experience, skills, qualifications	What do we need to do to get closer to the goal? E.g. meetings, planning, collaborations, stakeholder analysis, funding activities.	What do I think or assume will happen? What might go wrong? Who might block or challenge the project? And how can it change?	Tangibles - what can I count or convert into data? e.g activities & events – count of people, feedback; reports; photos; media.	What change is expected during and/or following the project? What and how is it measured?	What change is expected down the track? What/how measured?	What big picture change is expected? E.g. community, policy, other?
People - stakeholders						
People – who will be affected						
Funds						
Resources						
Constraints / challenges						
Evidence / articles						

THE REDWOODS STORY

After 8 years in local government and previously 15 years in health, small business, training and IT, the founder, Tania Krasinski, observed the gradual change in funding, priorities, and resourcing for community services. In some communities, the gap between policy and the consequences of those decisions in the community was widening. Many of the resources required to support vulnerable people in the community were used to seek out funding. Most often this funding would not exactly address the service mission, as a result many services evolved to suit the funding.

Recognising the dedicated, professional people in both policy and community workers, Redwoods was created to:

- a) address knowledge, skills and resourcing gaps to establish sustainable business practices for community services and policy makers; and
- b) promote the knowledge and skills in the community so that they have a seat at the decision-making table.

Redwoods Work Collaborative is made up of a diverse range of professionals who are skilled and experienced in business, research, community and governance. We work with local government and community services across greater Sydney.

Redwoods upskills, resources and connects community organisations, businesses and government agencies so that they can get on with what they do best.

Our services include:

- Consultancy: research, problem solving, optimisation and measurable outcomes.
- Value creation: grants workshops, policy and alignment, and value chain.
- Staff development: evidence-based and decision-making best practices.
- Creativity and Innovation services: helping you to identify and test ideas and new ways of working.
- Project and Event Management: we will help you at any stage of a project or event.

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<https://redwoodswc.com.au>

Workbook and slidepack can be downloaded from:

<https://redwoodswc.com.au/interagencies>