

What is community engagement vs. stakeholder engagement?

Section 1.1 of GPP discusses stakeholders and other related terms.

GPP defines stakeholders quite broadly as any group or individual who could have an impact on or be affected by a trial or research. Community stakeholders are one subset of that broad definition, specifically those stakeholders that are in the geographic locale around a trial site or research center. Examples include the research center CAB, local religious leaders, and local clinics or VCT* centers.

According to the technical definitions of GPP then, one may say that community engagement would be outreach activity around the trial site, with people and groups who may more likely be affected by a trial or results, and to participate in a trial. The more collective stakeholder engagement would then refer to a research institution's outreach with groups at broader, national, and global levels, for instance, national media groups, regional civil society organizations, normative agencies, and policymakers at all levels. Typically these are those stakeholders who may be more likely to have an impact on a trial or the research agenda. Objectives of working with each of these different 'layers' of stakeholder groups will of course vary greatly, and thus so will engagement strategies and activities.

It is important to note that while GPP defines community engagement as a specific subset of all stakeholder engagement (and these definitions will apply throughout this course), often in the "real world" of clinical trials, these terms are used interchangeably and without the technical distinctions.

* Voluntary Counselling and Testing