

# From Thinking to Acting *Evaluatively*

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# Why We Are Here...

- CEP *Wake Up Call...*
  - *Toxic Charity*
  - 744 vs. 45
  - Safe Space
- 
- ***It's good to 'think' before we 'do'***

# Program Evaluation: Definition

- The **systematic collection** of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to
- **make judgments** about the program
- **improve program effectiveness** and/or
- **make informed decisions** about future programming
- **Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE)** is evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended use.

M. Q. Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 2008

# *Thinking* Evaluatively $\neq$ Evaluation

**Session will demonstrate a framework for  
“*Thinking Evaluatively*” :**

- ***What is 'Thinking Evaluatively'?***
- ***Who cares?*** ... *applying stakeholder analysis*
- ***Where do you start?*** ... *making a map*
- ***How will we know it's working?*** ... *acting evaluatively*

# *Simply* Thinking Evaluatively

1. **The Problem:** Is this a project worth doing / *problem worth solving?*... *Problem Description / Evidence*
2. Who cares and why? ... *Stakeholder Analysis*
3. Can it be solved in more than one way?... *Options*
4. What resources will it take?... *Action Oriented Strategy Mapping*
5. What is it 'worth' if the problem is solved?  
... *Cost Benefit* ...      ... *Private vs. Public Value* ...
6. How will we know if we are making a difference?  
...*Vision of Success*...      ...*Evaluation: Attribution vs. Contribution* ...

*Simple  $\neq$  Easy*

# Step 1: Problem Description:

## Questions to Consider

- What is the situation?
- What is the problem? → Problem Description
- What **evidence** exists to verify that this as a problem
- Why is it important that this problem be (re)solved?
- Why is it emerging at this time?
- What is the potential to harm / the potential to heal?
- Is this problem solvable?

A lack of evidence may lead you to define a **research question**:

- – we need to better understand ... so we can prevent/preserve/protect/defend...

# Characteristics of a “Good Problem”

**Boundaries** ... what’s in and what’s out?

**Solvable** ... is the problem actionable and in principle (re)solvable?

**Worth solving** ... is there something important to gain by (re)solving the problem?

***Evidence!***

..



# Example Problem: **Childhood Obesity**

- **Situation:** Over ~**17%** of children & youth in the USA are overweight
- **Evidence:**
  - Problem emerged quickly – *tripling in last 30 years*
  - Increased risks include
    - **physical health** (many types of cancer, diabetes, heart disease),
    - **psycho-social health** (depression, isolation), and
    - **lower academic achievement**
- **Importance:**
  - **Security** of the nation
  - **Healthy workforce**
  - **Decrease healthcare costs**, estimated at \$120 to \$190 billion.
- **Solvable:** We believe an important step is to work on a small scale (bounded) using community models that promote prevention for children and youth by increasing *knowledge, exposure, and access* to healthy options that may spill over to also improve adult health.

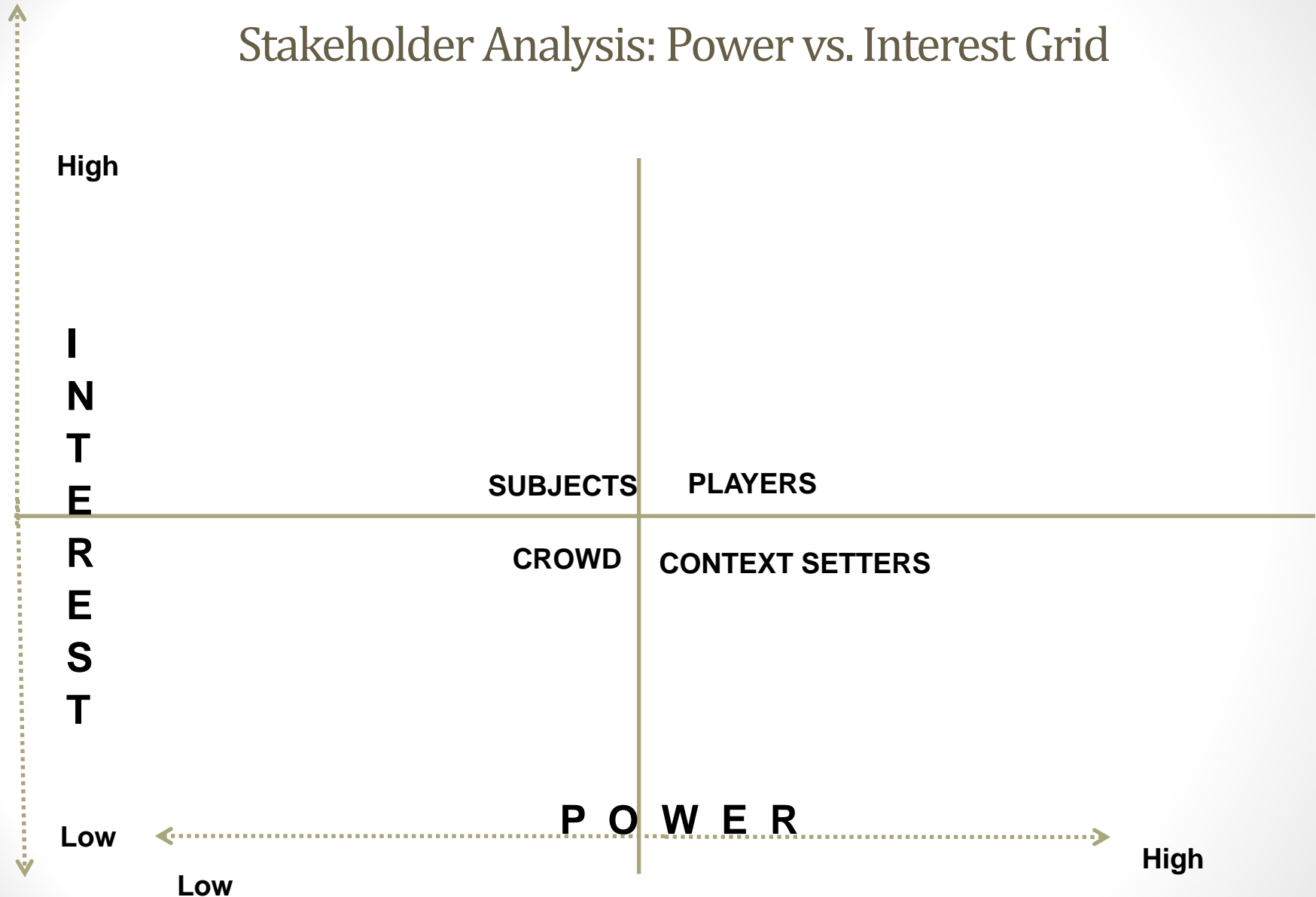
# Step 2: Who Cares?

## Stakeholder Analysis

- **Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations that have a 'stake' in the problem** – they are affected by the problem, have partial responsibility to act, or control key resources.
- *How-To Guide* for constructing a Power vs. Interest Grid:
  - List Stakeholders
  - Place them on the Power vs. Interest Grid
  - Use arrows to identify the direction of influence

# Who Cares?

## Stakeholder Analysis: Power vs. Interest Grid

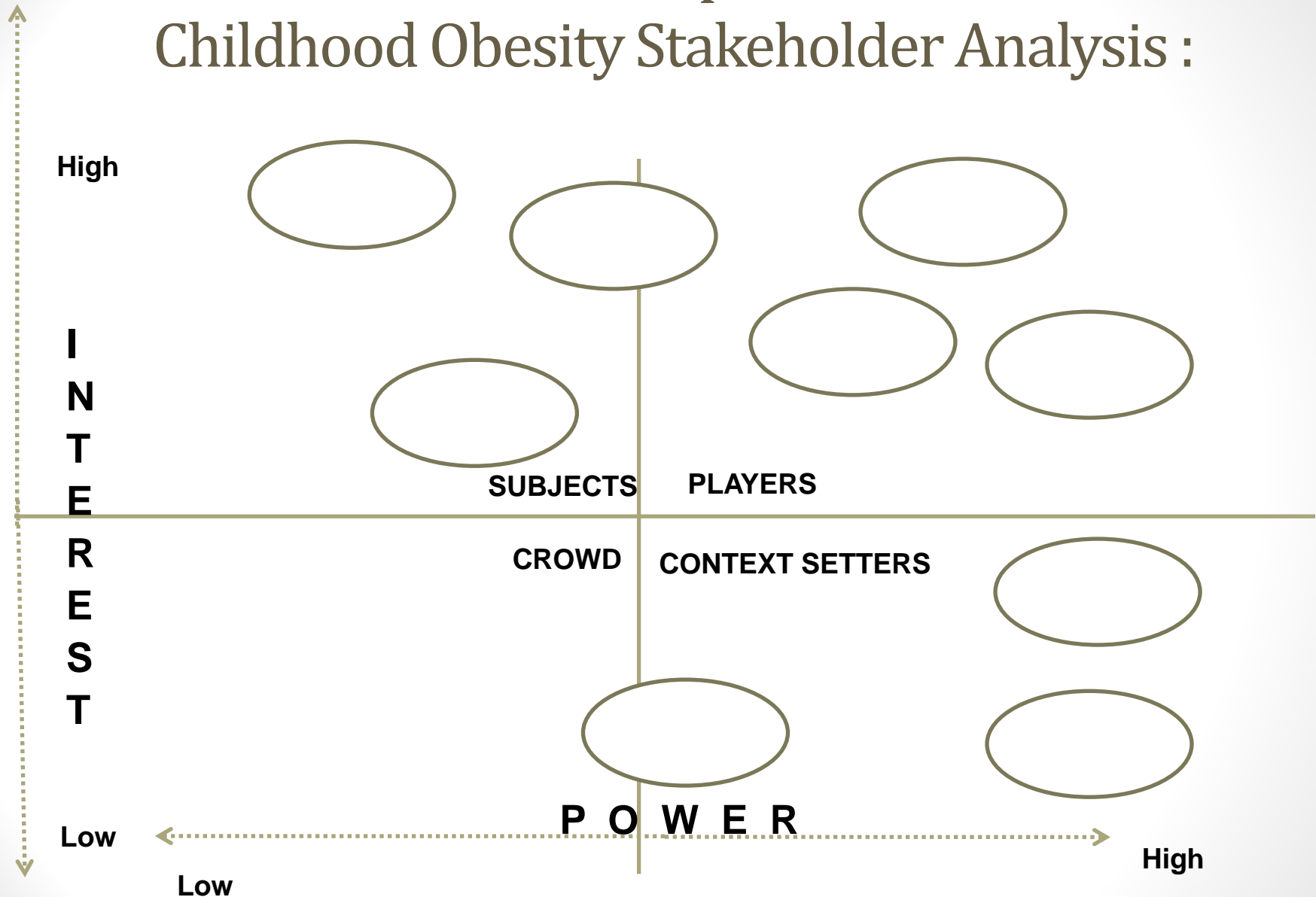


# Base of Power Direction of Interest



Source: Adapted from Bryson (2011)

# Example: Childhood Obesity Stakeholder Analysis :



# Step 3: Generate Alternatives

**Identify criteria that will differentiate alternatives**

- **What approach(s) might lead to resolution or improvement? ...**
  - Options
  - Risks
  - Dependencies
  - Scope of Influence / Reach
  - Recommended Solution ... may be a combination

# Examples: Risks and Uncertainty

- Economic Volatility
- Political Stability
- Safety / Security / Corruption / Health
- Reputation
- Unintended Consequences
- Cultural Norms / Human Rights

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Low

High

# Generate Alternatives

Alternatives →	#1	#2	#3
Criteria ↓			
1.			
2.			
3.			
Total Scores			



# Generate Alternatives

Alternatives →	#1:	#2:	#3:
Criteria ↓			
#1: Family & Youth interaction			
#2: Participants Contribute Time			
#3: Increase Access to Healthy Food			
#4: Priority for Low Income Residents			
Total Scores			

# Generate Alternatives

Alternatives → Criteria ↓	#1: Cooking Class in Schools	#2: Upgrade Fitness Center	#3: Community Garden
#1: Family & Youth interaction			
#2: Participants Contribute Time			
#3: Increase Access to Healthy Food			
#4: Priority for Low Income Residents			
Total Scores			

# Proposed Alternative Solution

- A **community garden** will be built on vacant land in one of our low-income neighborhoods
  - A **master gardener** will oversee the project and a **chef** will demonstrate recipes using garden produce at the community center every week
  - Community members who sign up and work in the garden with their children **3 hours a week will receive a free share** of produce.
  - **Excess produce** will be sold at the farmer's market with proceeds to purchase supplies for the next year
  - Participants will take **BMI measures** at the beginning of planting season and each time produce is distributed.
  - Individual indicators will be confidential. **Aggregate indicators** will be shared for the project.
- This alternative is **dependent on** city zoning and contributions from key partners for building and gardening supplies.

# **Step 4: What Will it Take?**

## **Action Oriented Strategy Mapping**

3. Why would you want to do that?



**1. What do you want to do?**



2. How would you do that?

# Example: Constructing a Map...

Why?

What?

How?

Create Community Gardens

# Constructing a Map...

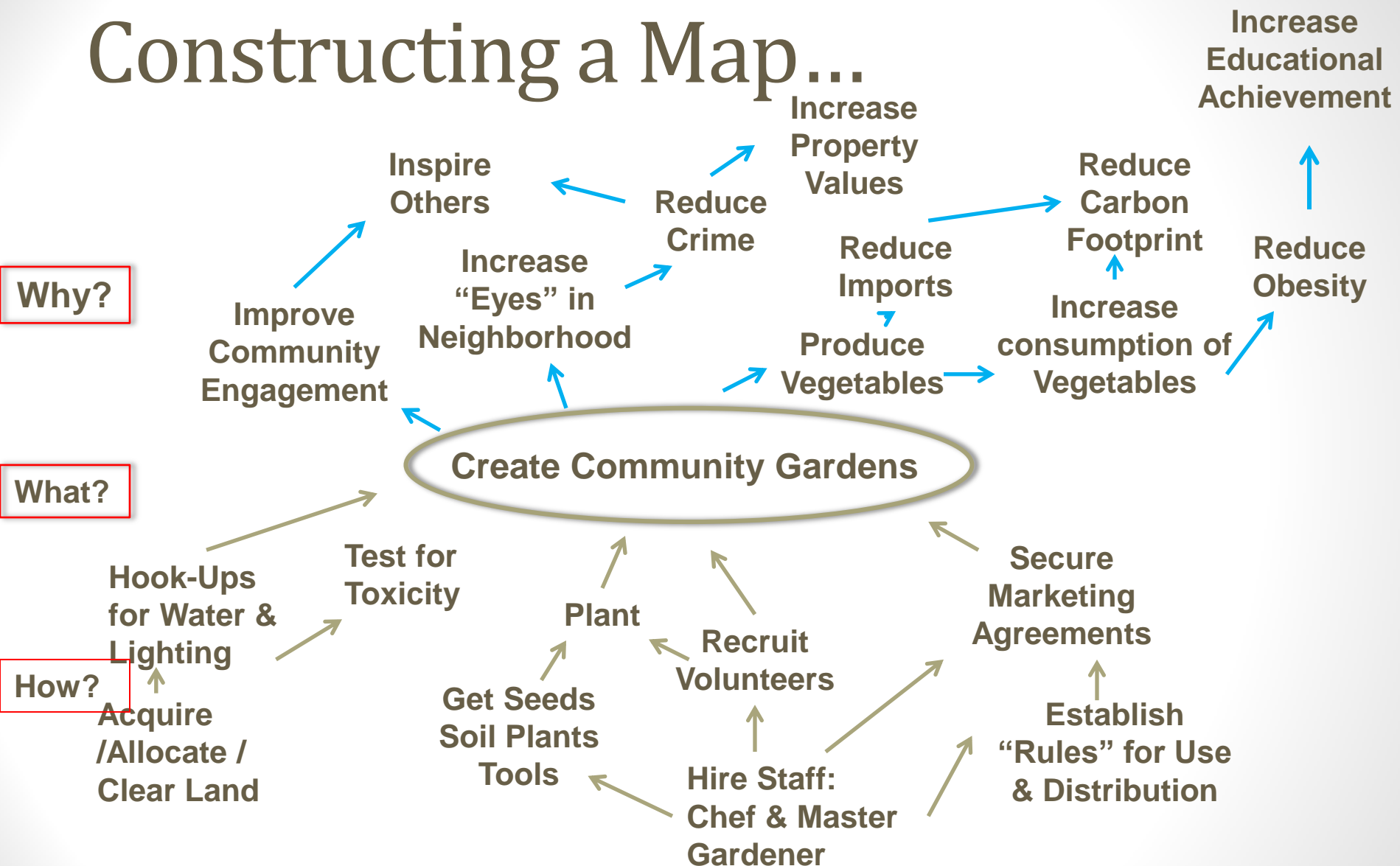
Why?

What?

How?



# Constructing a Map...



# Step 5: What is it Worth?

- Qualitative & Quantitative Measures
- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Private Benefits
- Public Value
  - Public Value is the *value that is created for those that are not direct beneficiaries* of a program. It is the spill over benefit that is available to *the public* as a result of the program\*. In this context, we are looking for the public value of *nonprofit* programs.



# Private Benefit vs. Public Value

- What are *the private benefits* to
  - Funder
  - Grantee
  - Beneficiary
- What is the ***value to the public***
  - Those who are not direct beneficiaries
  - Community

# Public Value Message:

- When you support \_\_\_\_\_ program,
- Participants will \_\_\_\_\_ (change)
- Which leads to \_\_\_\_\_ (outcomes)
- Which will benefit other community members by \_\_\_\_\_ (public value / impact)

Public Value of Public Programs:  
Materials presented by Laura  
Kalambokidis, U of MN Extension

# Private → Public Value Message:

“When communities provide opportunities for people to work side by side for a common good, their attitudes for each other significantly improve” ...

**August Hoffman**, Back To Nature

Star Tribune Section AA Page 4  
September 26, 2012

***and this spirit of cooperation will extend to others for a healthier community.***

# Step 6: How Will We Know ...

- If we are making a difference?
- If the vision of success is being realized
- If the costs provide enough benefit?
- Is the success of the program attributable to our contribution?
- If not, what difference has our contribution made?

# Example: Vision of Success

We do not believe that parents, guardians, educators, or community leaders intentionally put the life long health or future employment of their youth at risk.

***By encouraging health self-assessments, offering incentives, and integrating the activities of a community garden, local communities will become more stable and knowledgeable while accessing the means for children to disinherit an overweight future.***

# Acting Evaluatively ... ***“The Air”***

- What are we learning?
- What are we missing?
- What are the unanticipated outcomes / issues?
- What would we do different in the future?
- What should we change right now?
- Who else is doing something similar / same?
- Who else would benefit from our learning?

*Acting Evaluatively is an Iterative and Reflective Process:  
Budget and Plan Accordingly*

*Who is the “we”?*

# Building a Framework to Assess Impact:

Clarity of the Opportunity / Problem and Contribution of the intended Result / Solution

*Write your impact story!*

- **Situation Analysis:** Describe the issue and why it is emerging at this time.
- **Evidence of the Issue:** Share the evidence and why it is a problem worth solving.
- **Description:** Describe how your **concept or project** will address the situation.
- **Evidence of the Solution:** What evidence do you have that this concept will bring promising results?
- **Organization:** Tell us about your organization, why it is in a good position to do this work - and other organizations are you dependent on to be successful.
- **Risks:** Describe any complicating factors and risks that may cause disruption to the program, your organization, or the beneficiaries.
- **Success:** Describe your vision of success.
- **Story:** Tell us a story about a person or group that characterizes the impact.

# References

- Ackermann, Fran and Colin Eden (2011) **Mapping Out Strategic Success**. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Bryson, John (2011) **Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.** San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bryson, John M. (2004) “What To Do When Stakeholders Matter: A Guide to Stakeholder Identification and Analysis Techniques,” **Public Management Review** 6(1): 21 – 53.
- Bryson, John M., Fran Ackermann, Colin Eden, and Charles B. Finn (2004) **Visible Thinking**. New York: John Wiley.
- Bryson, John M., Michael Q. Patton, and Ruth A. Bowman (2011) “Working with Evaluation Stakeholders,” **Evaluation and Program Planning** 34: 1 – 12.
- Patton, Michael Q. (2008) **Utilization Focused Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.** Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE



# Resources

- Center for Effective Philanthropy
  - <http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/index.php>
- MESI: Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute
  - <http://evaluation.umn.edu/>
  - Spring Conference March 6-8, 2013
- Stakeholder Analysis & Action Oriented Strategy Mapping Classes
  - U of M HHH May Sessions and The Evaluator's Institute
- Transforming Public Policy course
  - HHH School of Public Affairs PA8001

