



The Australian Prevention
Partnership Centre
Systems and solutions for better health

Social network analysis

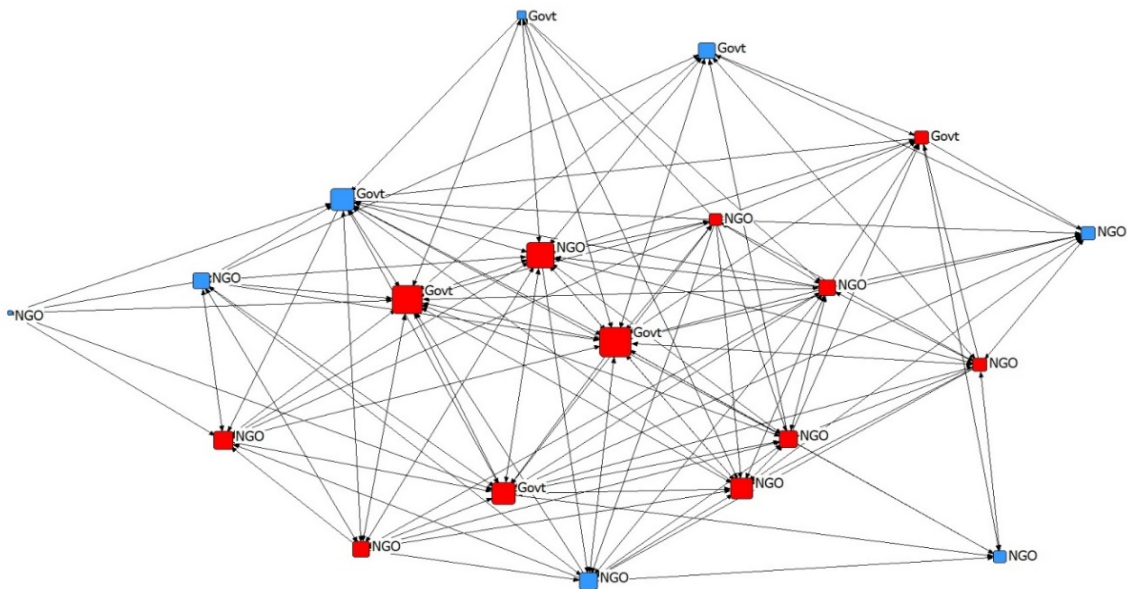
What it is

Social network analysis is a way of measuring and mapping various aspects of relationships between people, organisations and groups. The social network analysis graphic representation is made up of nodes (for example, individuals or organisations) and links between nodes (the types of relationships). Data can be collected from organisations about the different kinds of relationships they have with other organisations, and this data can then be analysed to produce network maps that illustrate different kinds of network connections.

How we applied it

Prevention Tracker used an Organisational Network Survey to gather information about the relationships between organisations in the community. We then used this data to conduct a social network analysis and produce several network maps for each community.

The survey and social network analysis were piloted in one community and we adapted data collection and recruitment along the way. We mapped networks such as information sharing and joint planning.



What we learnt about how to use this method

Collecting organisational data for a social network analysis requires close attention to sampling, question design and response rates. For network data to be meaningful, a high response rate is required. Recruitment strategies that engage local partners directly in the recruitment process may prove worthwhile in future studies.

What we learnt about the system from using this method

Social network analysis was a useful tool to understand how organisations in prevention are linked, and the patterns that exist within and between communities. In most cases, the social network analysis data provided a useful point of comparison with some of the key informant interview findings, reinforcing specific views about the way things work locally. In particular, it helped us to understand the nature and differences between less formal relationships and between organisations when compared with more formalised relationships such as partnerships, contractual arrangements and resource dependencies.

Where to go if you need more information

MELNET Available at: www.melnet.org.au/

Visit our website to access a series of factsheets on the Prevention Tracker project covering topics such as group model building, key informant interviews, social network analysis, system action learning. Click on the Resources tab at: <https://preventioncentre.org.au/our-work/research-projects/learning-from-local-communities-prevention-tracker-expands/>

Reference

PARTNER Tool. Retrieved from program to analyze, record, and track networks to enhance relationships: 2012. Available from: www.partnertool.net



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