

Community Engagement

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." – Margaret J. Wheatley

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibres connect us with our fellow men." – Herman Melville

"In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it. – Marianne Williamson

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." – Mother Teresa

"One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals." – Jean Vanier

"It's so important to have a genuine human regard for the people who work for you. To be a person of integrity, fight for people when they aren't in the room, and do what you say you're going to do." – Ara Tucker

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." – Coretta Scott King

"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much" – Helen Keller

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live." – George Bernard Shaw (Ellevest Network, 2017).

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“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” – African Proverb

Hi, my name is Filip Ionescu, I live in Ipswich, Suffolk, and i am an active member of a small community, working as driver for Smeets Ferry UK since April 2021.

Starting October 2023 I became also a member student for the University of Wales, where my initial interest for knowledge started to gain shape, finding the right definitions and real intellectual challenges.



I remember myself always involved in different types of community engagement, long before I knew this activity does have a name.

Here I will focus on my last period as active member of my community and confront it with the material studied at UWTSD.

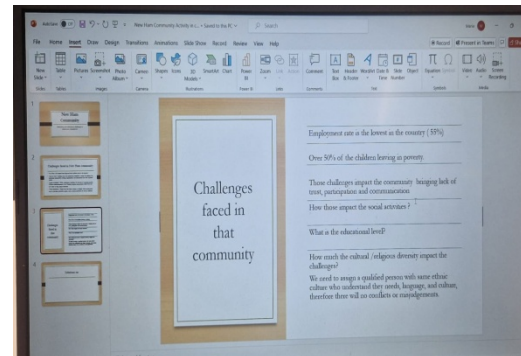
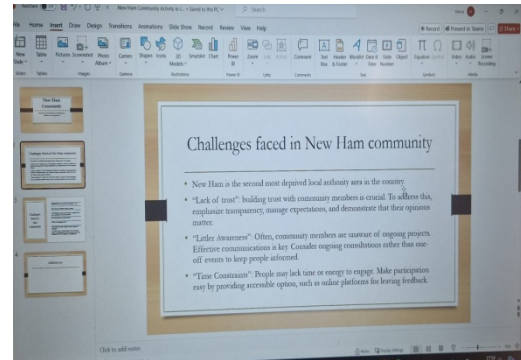
I do consider the complexity of making a change in the community according to certain definitions, plan and structure [...], but nevertheless, I do appreciate the advantages of a strategic and accurate plan while doing it.

Every day is spiced with ready to harvest opportunities; growing in knowledge, the life experience makes you take action more quickly every time an opportunity rises.

The next section will illustrate my journey in the community engagement territory, from the first lessons and findings, stepping towards my personal community engagement plan.

Element 2- Group exercise

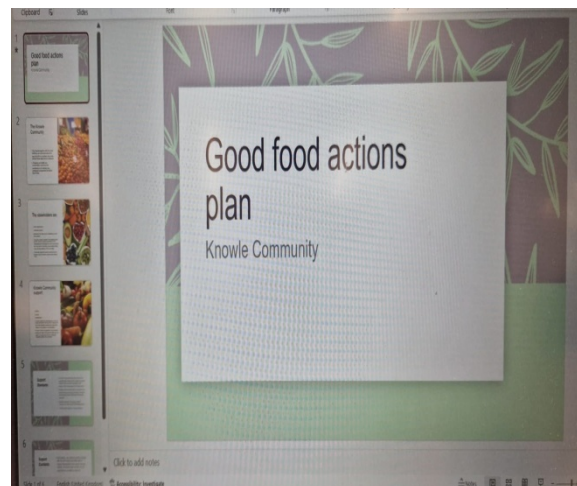
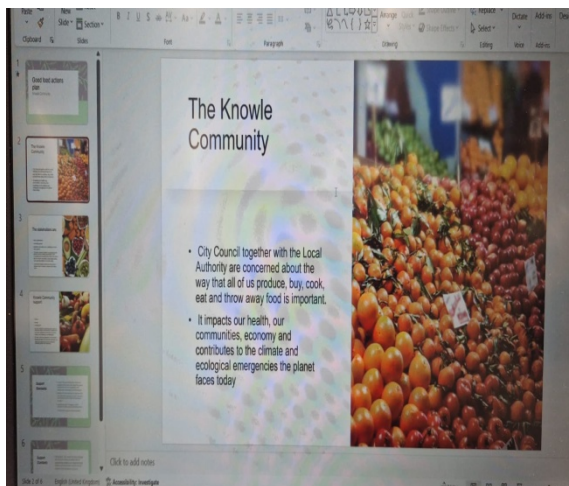
The first group exercise was to present the challenges that Newham community is facing.

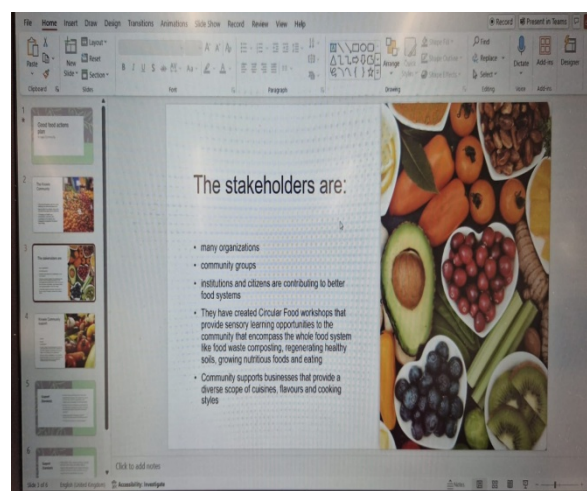
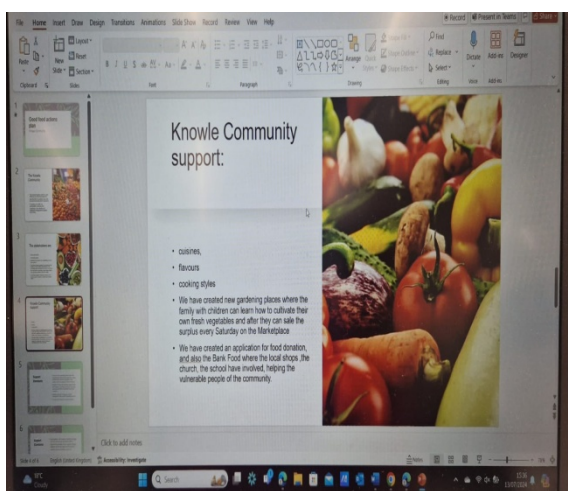
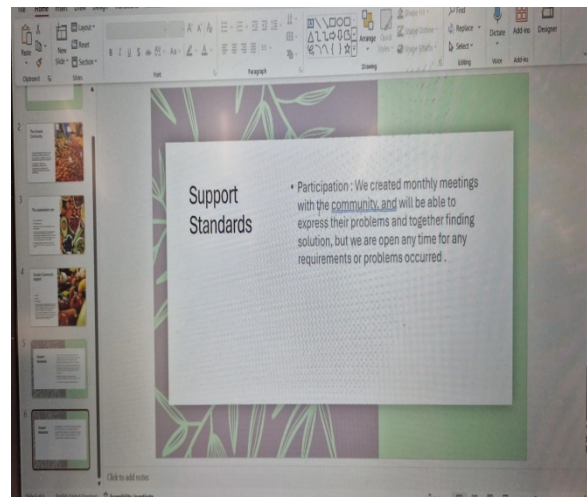
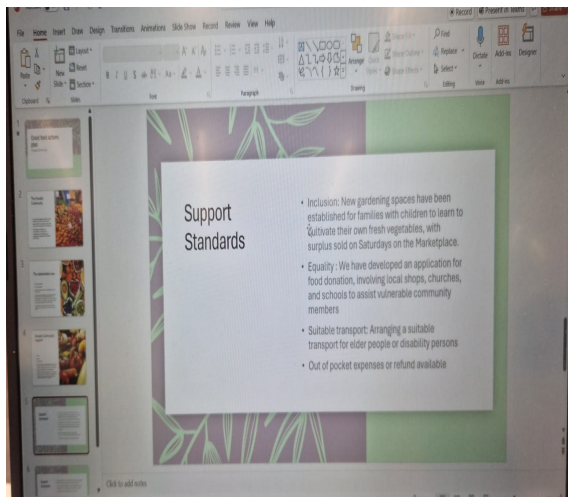


We acknowledged their struggle with homelessness, unemployment, safety on homes and streets, crime rate, children conditions and ethnic diversity that create a lot of complex social issues (Community Resilience in Newham, n.d.).

Learning about their challenges we started to build a clearer image about what real communities experience today.

Focusing more on the Healthy Food thematic, as group we analysed the Knowles Community and their Good Food Actions Plan.





The research gave us more details about how this community regards the importance of food from economic, environmental, health and social perspective, calling out for other communities to follow their example. A second lesson was about how to individuate the stakeholders present in a community. Their influence and sensibility level can change the output of any initiative (Andrews, 2023).

The next research focused on the principles we need to follow during the community engagement, like purpose analysis, personal learning, relations development, respect for people's individuality and diversity, collaboration, use of assets and planning a long term flexible intervention (CTSA Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force, 2011).

HOW CAN DESIGN MAKE LEISURE CENTRES MORE INCLUSIVE?

- Sport England estimates that **INACTIVITY** causes **one-in-six deaths** and costs the NHS approximately **£1bn per year**.
- With UK sport and leisure facilities now reopening their doors, we need to consider who is using these facilities and what barriers they face.

• At present, leisure centres only cater for 16% of the population, so these issues need to be addressed if we are to get more people active.

- psbj (2021). *How Can Design Make Leisure Centres More Inclusive?* [online] Public Sector Build Journal. Available at: <https://psbjmagazine.com/features/leisure/9815/how-can-design-make-leisure-centres-more-inclusive/> [Accessed 21 Jul. 2024].
- In-text citation: (psbj, 2021)

By including a few simple additions - such as SAFE PARKING and ACCESS to the facility, a waiting area in reception, clear wayfinding, BUGGY STORES near the changing rooms and considered FAMILY CHANGING rooms - it can have a massive impact on how caregivers use the space and ultimately create an improved experience.

31/08/2024

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NINE PRINCIPLES DRIVE THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (ATSDR, 2020):

Principle 1: Be clear about the purpose, goal and the community you want to engage. Define the GOAL. Principle 2: LEARN about the community. Principle 3: Go to the community and establish RELATIONSHIPS. Principle 4: Respect and Promote the INDIVIDUALITY of people in the community. Principle 5: PARTNERING with the Community. Principle 6: Recognise and Respect the DIVERSITY of the community. Principle 7: Identify and mobilise community ASSETS. Principle 8: FLEXIBLE intervention to create change. Principle 9: Community Collaboration and LongTerm COMMITMENT.

Element 1 - the community outreach

The Community



(Photo by Smeets.nl, 2024)

My community, currently working for Smeets Ferry in Ipswich, is made by 32 skilled drivers, permanently engaged in the delivery service.

Managed by a fully equipped team of enthusiastic planners on top of an automated office, looking for the smartest way every day, this team is a

multinational team, 85% European (Romania, UK, Portugal, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia), and 15% South American (Brazil, Peru).

The main activity is the heavy haulage on road, connecting United Kingdom with Europe, more precisely the Port of Felixstowe with the Port of Rotterdam, collecting and delivering an unlimited variety of products from and to customers all across the island.

The vast majority of them, work continuously for four months and then take one month of holiday. After the holiday, some decide to change team and work for other transport company, based on the conditions this company provide.

I usually relate with all of them, meeting one by one during the week and almost all together Saturdays and Sundays morning, when we are involved in truck inspection activity, planning, reporting to the office, and also (that's where I introduce my strategic community engagement plan) cooking, talking, debating, repairing stuff, learning and other related activities.

Every weekend, the drivers prepare the food for the next week. That's how I saw and got alarmed by an evident need of my community: the need for healthy diet, the need to distinguish and use the proper products and methods when cooking.

My food culture is Mediterranean and the first reaction while seeing what and how they cook was terrible. Then, the lessons learnt at UWTSD, during Community Engagement presentations and seminars, made me want to do something about it.

Based on the community engagement planning strategy we need to asses first:

1. Where we're at: community profile and needs

Personally, I think that my community can be and do better and that's why I am committed to engage in a first community project, designed to provide an immediate result and also considering that continuity and resilience could bring more results on long-term.

The first step was to individuate the issue, to focus on the problem and I am calling it poor diet.

The poor diet is the leading cause for early death, in this modern society.

In my community, the poor diet means they cook way too much meat, using a lot of spices, and the few vegetables used, lose their essential properties during the cooking process. They also use too many ready-made products: the ultra-processed food. Fact is too much ultra-processed food invaded the market today, clearly causing increased risk of heart attack, strokes, inflammatory and metabolic diseases, diabetes, mental health diseases, anxiety, depression and dementia.

Those kinds of food industry products are surrounded by a thick cloud of misinformation and the vast majority of people do not distinguish between a carcinogenic and a natural ingredient. Almost no one reads the ingredients list on the products they buy. Notions like "taste" and "calories" lead the principles of choosing the desired food.

The intensive use of additives, humectants, emulsifiers, stabilisers, gums, concentrate flavours and spices, indicates the food production follows a profit-intended science, driving the consumer to unfortunate health conditions. It seems like the tobacco industry bought the food industry piece by piece and transformed the products in order to create addiction, increase consumption and bring more profit.

It is critical to understand that the processed protein and so many other added ingredients, specifically developed to last more, to taste better, to bring less energy, give false signals to the human body. They might taste better, but they lack of nutrient fundamental molecules we bought it for, creating only a sensation of satiety, while our body is starving and filtering so many artificial substances.

This is why, in the interest of everyone involved in my community, there must be an initiative of information, a cooking workshop organised at least once a month, intended to practically show how simple is to cook a healthy meal, which are the ingredients bringing essential substances in our alimentation, which products we should avoid and what benefits will we obtain by doing so.

The next step is rather visionary and focuses on keeping this activity linear, centred on objective:

2. Where we're going: community vision and outcomes:

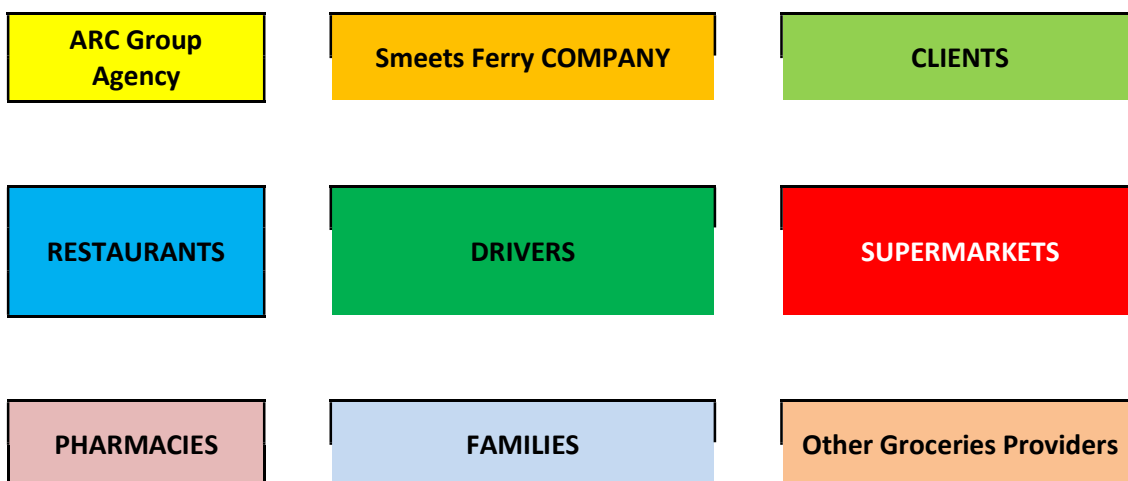
As mentioned before, the poor diet is the leading cause for early death, which can be identified as long term effect.

On the short term instead, the effects we can easily mention are the lack of concentration, the risk of heart attack, the general state of tiredness, difficulties in having a good rest, lesser necessary energy for the daily tasks, visible struggle for ordinary activities.

The initiative intends to influence the way the community consider food and alimentation habits, giving the right place and importance to ingredients, changing suppliers for better, learning how to conserve and take advantage of the essential substances as vitamins, minerals, fats and sugars to boost the level of health, the level of good disposition, moral and energy needed for everyday's success.

Implementing a healthy food culture in this community will also influence the communities in direct contact with it.

The bigger picture of all interested forces is centred primarily on the *drivers*, caught here in a special mission, working far away from *family* and *friends*, doing a very risky job day and night, living on the dark side of the health and safety institutions planet.



Their health status triggers the quality of their service, influencing the overall output of the *company* they work for, the degree of success of every delivery, the *client* satisfaction, the on-road transportation safety, which include *all other participants* in traffic, like *you* and *me* for example, the road traffic *police* activity, the climate and future safety in their own

families, the amount of healthy or unhealthy food the *supermarket* sell, influencing the contracts they make with their *suppliers* and those suppliers development based on sales, the *pharmaceutical* sales and products diversity they buy, vast majority using medicines to overcome the situation, the *restaurants* they choose and the frequency they do it, to mention only the direct stakeholders involved, considering also there are more indirect actors present on this map, like the *government*, the international *trade industry* and others.

It's time to put theory into practice and focus on:

3. How will we get there: community action plan

Everything starts from the quality and quantity of the material is used.

People usually ask why when something new is presented. The weekend gathering is a very good occasion to start shifting the situation. With small amount of time spent and a modest budget it is possible to provide natural products and make them available for everyone.

Taking in consideration the coffee, for example, the intention is to gradually substitute the instant coffee with the natural roasted coffee, bringing in the coffee machine that uses coffee beans.



The next product on the list is the sweetener and the plan is to eliminate the white sugar with brown sugar and real honey, together with the instruction to never heat up the last one.

(Photo by Tkach, 2013)

Going further, the cheap industrial white bread, used intensively every day, will be substituted by the pasta, starting the cooking workshop by presenting the real pasta and the simplest and most common recipes to cook and store it, inviting everyone to learn how to do and taste good pasta. The intention is to make everyone realise that not every product

labelled as “pasta”, is pasta. For the ones who don’t accept pasta as valid substitute for the white bread, the next valuable alternative is the handmade bread, made and served right there, while talking about the methods to make the bread become easily digestible and so, useful for the body.



(Photo by Amanda McCabe Basile, 2020)

A special attention will be given to the spices products big family, using the ones that boost taste and are not threats for our digestion.

All the vegetables have their own cooking rule. Knowing which vegetable contains water or fat soluble vitamins change the way those should be cooked, choosing for some the boiling process, or the stir frying. Very important is the reintroduction of the traditional salad, made from fresh green leaves adding cheese and seeds, olive oil, lemon and pepper.

Talking about oils and fats, the main objective is to eliminate the consumption of al industrial obtained/emulsified fats by presenting them as they are: fuel and lubricants. And then start using the butter, the cold method obtained oils as the olive oil, and the animal fat.

As I am passionate about food, the accuracy of the information and skills presented to my community are based on personal experience and also



(Image by Egami Group, n.d.)

by research on the dedicated literature and media updates, presentations and discoveries. I intend to implement those changes gradually, with small interventions, testing my audience attention and readiness, gathering their verbal feedback every time I bring something new on the table.

The cooking workshop touches also another aspect of my community: the relation between members. The real example of someone who’s interested about the wellbeing of others activates the same reaction between them. This will contribute to the strength of my community.

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Issues identified in my community

- ❑ Lack of nutrition fundamentals;
- ❑ Confusion and misinformation about what's healthy and what's not;
- ❑ Wrong food preparation techniques.

(Kay, 2022)

- ❑ Public meeting during the usual weekend gathering
- ❑ Cooking workshop
- ❑ Roundtable discussions
- ❑ Collaboration



Objective and Strategy

Who, Where, What, How, When, and Why

Who:

The driver's community
working for Smeets Ferry
Transport Company

Where:

Smeets yard, in Claydon
Business Park



Who, Where, What, How, When, and Why

□ What:

□ Interactive Cooking
Workshop

□ How:

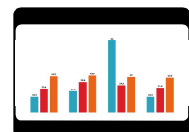
□ Ingredients
presentation, meals
preparation and
serving



Who, Where, What, How, When, and Why

□ Why:

- To learn about healthy food culture;
- To strengthen the relations between members;
- To prove some tasty recipes.



The importance of a healthy diet

Following a healthy, balanced diet helps make sure that our bodies get all the nutrients needed to work well and feel good. There's plenty of evidence that shows eating healthily can also reduce the risk of diseases like heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

Around the world, governments provide guidance on the balance of foods and drinks that make up a healthy diet. The guidelines vary in how they are presented but the message is similar; a healthy diet is about getting a balance and variety of foods from the main food groups (British Nutrition Foundation, 2024).

Standards and Principles

- Clear purpose
- Learning about community
- Develop good relationships
- Respect individuality
- Collaboration
- Recognise and respect diversity
- Use community assets
- Apply flexible intervention
- Long term commitment

(CTSA Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force, 2011).

Am I consuming a Healthy Food ?



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