



University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Business Management

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Assignment one

Essay

“Community engagement – benefits and challenges”

Student: Veronika Sekulova

Student ID: 2125630

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1. Introduction

In this essay we will be talking about community engagement and its diversity. We will be highlighting the positive parts of it, how it benefits the community, the people, the businesses and the individual. We as individuals, as people are part of a society that we come together to create, regardless of marks. Within the society we create communities, smaller and more practical parts of the society. Those communities could hold or bring together people based on religion, area, profession and so on. Those communities are functioning words on its on and they have different needs, some of which are met and helped by community engagements. They are aiming in different problem or area, therefor they are created, managed and have results at the end. There is not one right way to do it, there is no formula as those communities are living and breathing in their own way and rules. We can determine if our goal is reached and our purpose is fulfilled by setting marks and expectations as we are in the beginning of it and define what is our vision of success, what is our goal and what we wish to do, help or change by starting community engagement projects.

2. Main body

We already have started to highlight the different parts that we will talk about in this essay which is community engagement, we define what that is. According to CAS “Community Engagement is...the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.” Furthermore “It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioural changes that will improve the health of the community and its members It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices (CDC, 1997)” (1) As it reads those engagement despite of their varieties are there to better the life or situation of the community. Their focus is the group, what is best for the group of people or in other words how to make a change that will better the majority. In this particular type the individual is going back in the priorities as decisions are made and action taken based on the group. The engagements vary in types it could be – “Community engagement with a focus on community development or community building. Community participation in consultation and decision-making. Community

engagement that helps organizations, businesses etc. Community engagement as part of social change movements or as part of the work of voluntary community organizations (2)

First thing that comes to mind when hearing “community engagement” is the following: group of people that get together and do something within the community or for the community. That could be cleaning the park, painting benches, fixing broken play ground etc. Yes, it is important for the individuals to come together and participate in the area where they live and make it better for themselves and others. The process is important to start with and could be used to build up and find or recruit people who will partake in ones such where more dedication and time is needed. This is the place where you can see who are the strong member, who are the most engaged, enthusiastic and have the passion to continue their work.

Consultation and decision making are arguably the most important part of it. Even though that in community engagement partake are nongovernmental organisations, when there is a problem, or a task institution such as schools and health care systems are consultation one other. Could the school have existed without community, no. Could community exist without a health care, maybe. But for a fully functioning and independent community are needed three institutions – school, hospital and bank. We are them and they are us. In the decision-making process in the community engagement there are seven principles that need to be present, according to Atlee et al (2009) “1. Careful planning and preparation; 2. inclusion and demographic diversity; 3. Collaboration and shared purpose; 4. Openness and learning; 5. Transparency and trust; 6. Impact and action; 7. Sustained engagement.”(3) When it comes to the decision-making, when it comes to institutions and when it comes to future it takes a lot more work, dedication and rules to start a community engagement that will affect areas of our lives that are much different than the one-time getting together engagements. Nevertheless, each and every one of them is important but some of them are taking much more work.

Seeing how much work does take to create is eye opening to the importance of the steps and principals and to follow them so it will be successful.

Improving service delivery and organisational goals. Community engagement is a lot more important to business and projects to be successful. Not all the time we see and realise that charity events rely on community engagement. The successes of with is based on the engagement in that event. For the businesses, especially small business, local ones that are relying on the community to survive, as well they will be successful or not based on the engagement and recognitions.

Shopping locally, in your farmers market, or coffee shop, buying the bread in the local bakery is participation in community engagement. Not only specially organised ones, with date, time and duration. In times of crises we use slogan as “buy local, support the community” We do take part of a lot of local engagement without anticipation or realisation.

For the specially organised event, you need to be informed. How does one get inform about community engagement? Leaflets, social media posts, posters, mouth to mouth. All of those are ways to inform and to be informed. Nowadays the easiest and most used tool is social media in particular the platform of Facebook. There you can become member of a group and get notification; you can see post shared by your friends. This is the way that is most sustainable as well compared to the leaflets and posters. It is much more likely to get the attention of your target. Very important think to note here is that the organisers or manager must be involved in this process, whenever your post/ information is being shared you need to react to you. Therefor you are showing your engagement and setting example by leading, showing you are approachable and visible, easy to contact and to communicate with. Needless to say, that manager and organisers in the event have to be seen in the even and taking part in the different activities, engage with the attendees so they will get the feeling that what you do is important to you, therefor is important to them. Attention to detail and approachable personalities is way to win the trust of people you are living in community.

The different stake holders in the community - Community stakeholders include neighborhoods community development groups; environmental organizations; citizen associations and non-governmental organizations. (4) Those are the people who have interest and could be affected or affect the community.

Social change and volunteering work. If a community engagements goal is to better the life, area situation and life of its member, then volunteering is one of most selfless way to do so. Initiative such as raise awareness for breast cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer and etc. is important for not only the community as whole but for the individuals. By rising awareness for on areas such as health, safety and precautions we can make the community stronger. When one is aware of the “danger” then one can stop it or avoid it. Every community engagement is important, regardless of its success. Maybe the goal wasn’t reached but there were made steps towards it, and that on its own is a success.

The one-time community engagements are for fun, as it might look but they have underlining meaning sometimes, which in to not be overlooked.

The volunteering jobs and social companies are aiming for the vulnerable in the community, the ones who need it the most. It could be giving lunch to homeless people, shelter, meal for Christmas. Financial support or emotional support for those who are struggling.

Community engagement is there in every aspect of our lives and every area in our society. It is the giving back and our humanities that are the base of those projects and campaigns. The need of them is because they are looking in the individuals and making changes for the community. We as social creatures need to be part of group and to associate with it, there for are the community and they are created within our society with our alike. With the ones we have things in common.

To determine if a community engagement is successful, we need to look up few things. Evaluating a community engagement is a critical moment the planning. Questions such as “Who is going to do the evaluation?” “Do we pay for evaluation?” “Do we have the money to do so?” Answering those questions gives you the freedom to decide for your company/ engagement what is best based on you needs.

Evaluation is a systematic collection of information about activities and their outcome. This could be used as feedback and could use for accountability and learning. The different community engagement is evaluated in a different way, for example – If you are volunteering to collect money for sick child, your evaluation of success is – how much money you’ve raised. That kind of evaluation is for the one-time engagements. You will be successful if you goal was reached or met. (5)

If it is for long-term or multiple small project aiming to rise awareness or change in behavior, your evaluation will be based on data that you have collected in the process over different times and engagement to evaluation and to have a conclusion.

If the project that is being evaluated is aiming for change in society or institution, that the evaluation will be the answer to the question “is this change done? And at what stage is the process”

Every community engagement project has to integral the evaluating scale in their planning process, consider and decide on budget for it and should be relevant to the community engagement project.

Recommendations are given on how community engagement should evaluate in order to capture the full range. Communities should be involved in the identifying process of where change is need and where is active problem. Moreover, the problem identification should be expanded to the level of importance, and not to ignore the underlying problems that will affect the community in the future. The process of planning is crucial, what is your goal, what are your resources, timing group and etc. Every detail has to be known. Responsibilities in the team need to be clear, leaders must be known and active in the whole process from beginning to end.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is community engagement because its needed. The process of evaluation has to be clear to the public. All of the projects are done to favors and to benefit those in need and those who are not. The process needs to be transparent to the stakeholders. There's is a lot of steps and principals, different kind of engagement but those are there to guide the ones involved and in charge. When project is unsuccessful is as important to ones which are. Taking the time to evaluate those and to locate the mistakes is important for the future and for the success of the idea. Of course, you cannot expect to be successful in every project you are doing, or to make change in everyone. The effort is what shows the ambitions and the ambition is what make changes.

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