

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM'S SOCIAL VALUE HUB PROJECT

By Cristina Acostinoae

Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub Project

Introduction

The concept of social value has occurred as a foundation for crafting inclusive and prosperous communities in the ever-evolving dominion of urban development. At the forefront of the evolution lies the Social Value Hub, a visionary idea born in the vibrant London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Perceived by Agnes Marsden Jeeves, the initiative marks a substantial step towards implanting community voices in the tapestry of urban development. The Social Value Hub binds the influence of digital platforms to transform the relationship between local authorities, workers, and residents. Its main goal is

to guarantee that the community's collective voice steers the course of growth. The report embarks on a journey to expose the origins of the Social Value Hub, articulate its aims, and focus its pioneering style on nurturing meaningful and sustainable change driven by the community. Additionally, the paper offers the stage for an in-depth examination of the project's profound effect on community engagement methods. The Social Value Hub is not just an idea because it is a transformative force poised to redesign urban development, placing societies at the heart of the decision-making process.

Project Overview

The detailed purpose of the Social Value Hub by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is to encourage social value in urban growth. The method, accepted in May 2020, commands all suppliers to accommodate a social value of at least 10 per cent of their contract value (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023). The emphasis areas comprise:

1. Access to Jobs and Skills Support: The borough aims to offer residents increased opportunities for employment, internships, work placement, and training, thus nurturing individual and community development.
2. Opportunities for Local Businesses: The initiative seeks to make a more inclusive economic environment by including local industries in development projects.
3. Environmental Sustainability: The plan is committed to supporting the borough's journey towards achieving carbon net zero, highlighting a focus on sustainable development practices (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023).

These objectives aim to improve urban development projects by contributing to the borough's physical infrastructure and bringing tangible social benefits to the local community.

Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Plan of the Social Value Hub includes numerous digital response mechanisms focusing on inclusive and effective public outreach. As emphasized by coUrbanize, successful digital community engagement plans need thoughtful leadership (Voigts, 2020), combining broad goals with practical strategies and embracing community response to shape plans. Effective community engagement in project management involves numerous vital characteristics. Obtaining buy-in and creating two-way communication are principles. It means recognizing project team members who are accountable for responding to community thoughts and queries creating a dynamic and trusting contact between the project team and the community (Voigts, 2020b). Secondly, it is vital to reach a diverse population. Digital platforms can assist in overcoming traditional barriers to engagement, such as time restrictions and language barriers. Providing selections for multiple languages and using traditional approaches like door hangers can boost online and SMS participation, ensuring a more inclusive and representative community involvement. This approach highlights the importance of accessibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness, showcasing how digital tools can improve community engagement in urban development.

Engagement of Community Members

The platforms in the Social Value Hub use storytelling for community engagement. Digital platforms have changed the traditional academic and community partnership models, allowing a more comprehensive and co-creative style to community engagement. These platforms open avenues for numerous contributors, from civic meeting professionals to local people, to join in storytelling and curation (Schadewald, Heppler and Wingo, 2020). Digital projects can empower communities through collaborative efforts, creating new primary sources, breaking down barriers, and initiating new dialogues (Higgins, Ferri and Donnellan,

2022). It is apparent in numerous digital community engagement initiatives that have successfully used storytelling to discourse social problems and spark movements for social transformation. Integrating these principles, the Social Value Hub leverages digital storytelling as a primary engagement tool, permitting community members to share their understandings, concepts, and responses. The technique improves the inclusivity of the urban development process and advances the dialogue between communities and urban planners.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

The effect of the Social Value Hub in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) has been substantial in several aspects of community development and urban planning. The borough has advanced a comprehensive Social Value Plan to enhance social value through its contracts and policies.

1. **Comprehensive Strategy for Social Value:** The H&F council has employed a strategy requiring all contracts above £100,000 to deliver a minimum of 10% in Social Value. The plan has been joined into the council's broader purposes, such as building shared prosperity and creating a compassionate council (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023b). It is instrumental in meeting the problems of the climate and ecological emergency.
2. **Economic Growth and Local Support:** The strategy proposes to support local businesses, improve skills in the borough, and increase employment and internship opportunities. It is part of the council's style to create a more inclusive and intelligent economy, reversing adverse economic effects and supporting the public, particularly during problems like COVID-19.
3. **Active Resident Participation:** H&F highlights including residents in decision-making. The Social Value mechanisms enable more targeted results through procurement and contract monitoring (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023c), guaranteeing that the residents have a substantial say in how the projects are designed and implemented.

These features highlight the Social Value Hub's role in nurturing a more comprehensive and responsive style to urban development in Hammersmith, Fulham. The Hub has contributed to economic progress and environmental sustainability and allowed residents to actively contribute to shaping their community.

Literature and Personal Experience

Community engagement is vital to community development because it is crucial for achieving high-quality, efficient, and collaborative care. Critical values for successful community engagement (CE) comprise supportive and facilitative leadership, making a safe and trusting environment for citizen input, early participation of citizens (De Weger et al., 2018), shared decision-making, addressing power imbalances, investing in citizens' skills and confidence, and considering the incentives of both citizens and organizations. Power imbalances and the willingness of organizations to address them are central themes in CE literature. Meaningful citizen involvement requires organizational processes to be inclusive, accessible, and supportive. Weiss and Norris (2019) also note that Community Engagement Professionals (CEPs) play a pivotal role in promoting community-engaged practices within social value. Their work is reinforced by a diverse range of inquiry activities that are essential for improving and advancing community engagement. These activities range from researching new information in the field, assessing program quality, and evaluating civic learning to measuring community impact. Such a complex method of inquiry is vital for CE, as they are key knowledge staff tasked with aligning organized policies, processes, and procedures to the public missions of their organizations. The alignment is vital for demonstrating accountability to society and stakeholders. Theorists like Tyler and Campbell Cook highlight the importance of these practices in community engagement. By leveraging several methodologies and methods, CEPs can effectively navigate the tensions in their work, ensuring that their efforts contribute meaningfully to organizational and societal change.

From a personal viewpoint, reflecting on experiences within community engagement can offer a deeper understanding of these scholarly conclusions. For example, participation in community development projects, either as a volunteer or an expert, can reveal the complexities and rewards of working collaboratively with diverse groups. Personal experiences, like perceiving the effect of a local community project or participating in a community-based initiative, can improve the understanding of academic theories and offer a practical viewpoint on their implementation. The literature and personal experience highlight the complex nature of community engagement. It discloses that effective community development needs a nuanced understanding of local contexts, joint efforts, and innovative approaches to address diverse problems and harness opportunities for social development and sustainability.

Analysis of Engagement Strategies

The effectiveness of the Social Value Hub's engagement strategies, particularly its digital platform, can be analyzed compared to traditional community engagement methods. Ryan (2018) explains that the Social Value Hub's engagement strategies will always rely on its digital platform to showcase substantial advantages over traditional community engagement methods. The Hub's method capitalizes on the increasing online presence of persons, allowing it to reach a broader and more diverse audience. The inclusivity boosts participation and brings in varied viewpoints, which is vital for complete community development. The digital platform also demonstrates cost-effectiveness, reducing expenses connected to physical meetings and material distribution. The platform's data-driven nature permits real-time response and analytics, leading to more informed decision-making. Shahbaznezhad, Dolan, and Rashidirad (2022) study comprehensively analyses social media engagement behaviours, highlighting the effect of content types and contexts on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The research can be essential in assessing the effectiveness of

the Social Value Hub's digital engagement strategies compared to traditional community engagement methods. The study's understanding of how different content formats (photos, videos, text) and platforms influence user engagement can guide the Social Value Hub to craft more effective digital strategies. The Hub can modify its online content to echo more deeply with its audience. It is particularly pertinent given the change from traditional face-to-face public engagement to digital interactions, where understanding the subtleties of online engagement becomes crucial.

Therefore, leveraging the results of these studies, the Social Value Hub can improve its digital platforms to foster more robust and meaningful online community engagement, adapting to the developing landscape of digital interaction.

Recommendations

The Social Value Hub, proposed by Agnes Marsden Jeeves in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, signifies an innovative method for integrating community voices into urban development. Several recommendations can be made to enhance its effectiveness.

1. Community Engagement and Participation: Hearten active community involvement in decision-making processes. It aligns with Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation", highlighting the importance of empowering residents in shaping their environment (Joneja, 2021). Engaging local communities through workshops and public forums can promote a sense of ownership and ensure that the development reflects their needs and values.
2. Sustainable Development Practices: Implement sustainable and eco-friendly practices in urban development developments. The Brundtland Report note the significance of sustainable development in meeting the requirements of the present without compromising future generations (Sakalasooriya, 2021). Integrating green spaces, encouraging energy-efficient buildings, and focusing on sustainable transport can enhance the livability and environmental health of the borough.

3. Collaboration with Local Organizations: Encouraging partnerships with local industries, NGOs, and educational institutions. Combined efforts can lead to innovative solutions and shared resources, as described by Ansell and Gash's (2008) work on collaborative governance (Avoyan, 2022). These partnerships can also provide valuable insights into the community's needs and aspirations.

The Social Value Hub can efficiently integrate community voices into urban growth, nurturing a more inclusive, sustainable, and responsive method to shaping the future of Hammersmith Fulham by employing these recommendations.

Conclusion

The Social Value Hub in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, anticipated by Agnes Marsden Jeeves, illustrates a paradigm change in urban development, highlighting the crucial role of community involvement in shaping sustainable and inclusive communities. Incorporating digital platforms with traditional community engagement, this innovative model is a beacon of how local administrations, workers, and residents can collaboratively steer urban development. The Community Engagement Plan of the Social Value Hub, leveraging digital reply mechanisms, has been critical in promoting a more inclusive and effective public outreach, overcoming traditional obstacles like time limitations and language differences. The Hub's use of digital storytelling, permitting community members to share their viewpoints and opinions, has effectively enhanced inclusivity in the urban development process. The technique promotes active participation and ensures that diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making. The results from the Social Value Hub have been significant. Hammersmith & Fulham's comprehensive Social Value Plan has made substantial strides in creating shared prosperity and addressing climate and ecological emergencies. By involving residents directly in the decision-making process, the Hub has ensured more targeted outcomes through procurement and contract monitoring,

fortifying community participation in shaping their environment. In light of the Hub's achievements, recommendations for its continued success include promoting active community participation in decision-making, implementing sustainable development practices, and promoting partnerships with local organizations. These steps will improve the Hub's effectiveness and ensure its alignment with the principles of sustainable urban development. The Social Value Hub in Hammersmith & Fulham illustrates a transformative strategy for urban development, where community voices are heard and necessary in directing growth.

References

- Avoyan, E. (2022). Collaborative Governance for Innovative Environmental Solutions: Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Cases from Around the World. *Environmental Management*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-022-01642-7>.
- De Weger, E., Van Vooren, N., Luijkx, K.G., Baan, C.A. and Drewes, H.W. (2018). Achieving successful community engagement: a rapid realist review. *BMC Health Services Research*, [online] 18(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3090-1>.
- Hammersmith & Fulham Council (2023). *Social value | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham*. [online] www.lbhf.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/jobs-and->

- skills/social-value [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].
- Hammersmith & Fulham Council (2023a). *Social value | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham*. [online] [www.lbhf.gov.uk](https://beta.lbhf.gov.uk/jobs-and-skills/social-value). Available at: <https://beta.lbhf.gov.uk/jobs-and-skills/social-value> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].
- Hammersmith & Fulham Council (2023b). *Social value in H&F | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham*. [online] [www.lbhf.gov.uk](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/business/doing-business-hf-council/social-value-hf). Available at: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/business/doing-business-hf-council/social-value-hf> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].
- Hammersmith & Fulham Council (2023c). *Social value in H&F | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham*. [online] [www.lbhf.gov.uk](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/business/doing-business-hf-council/social-value-hf). Available at: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/business/doing-business-hf-council/social-value-hf>.
- Higgins, N., Ferri, D. and Donnellan, K. (2022). Enhancing Access to Digital Culture for Vulnerable Groups: The Role of Public Authorities in Breaking Down Barriers. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue internationale de Sémiotique juridique*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-022-09959-6>.
- Joneja, N. (2021). *Citizen Participation and ICT for Urban Development in Oslo, Norway*. [online] [oda.oslomet.no](https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/handle/11250/2831710). Available at: <https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/handle/11250/2831710> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].
- Ryan, C. (2018). *6 Major Benefits of Online Community Engagement*. [online] Social Pinpoint. Available at: <https://www.socialpinpoint.com/6-benefits-of-online-community-engagement-digital-tools/>.
- Sakalasooriya, N. (2021). Conceptual Analysis of Sustainability and Sustainable Development. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 09(03), pp.396–414. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.93026>.
- Schadewald, P., Heppler, J. and Wingo, R. (2020). *Digital Community Engagement:*

Partnering Communities with the Academy. [online] *Project MUSE*. University of Cincinnati Press. Available at:

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/75900#:~:text=Wingo%2C%20Heppler%20and%20Schadewald%20bring> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].

Shahbaznezhad, H., Dolan, R. and Rashidirad, M. (2022). The Role of Social Media Content Format and Platform in Users' Engagement Behavior. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, [online] 53(1), pp.47–65. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2020.05.001>.

Voigts, A. (2020a). *The Complete Guide for Digital Community Engagement*. [online] coUrbanize. Available at: <https://www.courbanize.com/blog/the-complete-guide-for-digital-community-engagement>.

Voigts, A. (2020b). *The Complete Guide for Digital Community Engagement*. [online] coUrbanize. Available at: <https://www.courbanize.com/blog/the-complete-guide-for-digital-community-engagement#:~:text=An%20effective%20community%20engagement%20strategy> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2023].

Weiss, H. and Norris, K. (2019). Community Engagement Professionals as Inquiring Practitioners for Organizational Learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, [online] 23(1), p.81. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1212487.pdf>.

