

# Ileana Lupu- Individual Report- Reflection

*by Ileana Lupu*

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# **Individual Written Report**

## **Reflection**

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**Bachelor of Arts in Business Management**

**Academic Year:** 2022/2023

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**LCBB4002\_BIRM**

**Community Engagement**

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## 1. Introduction of the project

The rising concern for a sustainable environment is due to the dismal ecological condition of societies leading to deteriorating conditions for social and economic development (Farley and Smith, 2020). This need could be satisfied by conducting community engagement programmes in communities such as Burton-On-Trent or Burton.

<sup>13</sup> The aim of the current project is to be sustainable by enhancing recycling, use of renewable energy, waste management, protection of waterways and energy usage. There are several participants of the project including individuals living in Burton town who will be considered for community engagement.

The collaborators and stakeholders for this particular project include various businesses and organisations, suppliers, households, community workers and other people. This project will focus on implementing several activities required to engage with the community members actively and discuss the project's advancement. Success will be ensured by implementing various strategies as identified in a detailed project management plan.

The resources required for the community engagement project include an Internet connection, support from the people in Burton who would participate in various activities and financial help for conducting the programme. This project would require a significant amount of funds to be raised from community members, business owners, stakeholders and other collaborators.

## 2. Reflection

The **Gibbs model of reflection**<sup>9</sup> is utilised by individuals to reflect on their experiences in a particular situation. There are six stages in the model including describing the experience, reflecting on feelings, evaluating it, analysing, concluding the occurrence and finally, creating an action plan (Adeani, Febriani and Syafryadin, 2020).<sup>12</sup>

The first stage of description requires the individual to explain the event upon which the reflection will be conducted. In the next step, individual feelings are shared regarding the event which is followed by the evaluation of the occurrence. This stage discusses the reaction of the individual to the experience and how others might have perceived it. In the analysis step, theoretical implications and professional experiences are utilised to assess the event. The conclusion provides insight into the learnings of the individual and the things which could have been approached differently (Smith, 2021).

Finally, the action plan offers improvement areas for the individual which could help them mitigate similar challenges in the future.

Through reflection on their learning experiences, learners can improve their performance in the current situation and for future success. Students can utilise this reflective cycle to understand their own capabilities and weaknesses.

With that in mind, I will be applying Gibb's reflective model, to reflect on my previous experience and assess how it helped me with my future collaborative project. First and foremost, looking at my experience in community engagement, it can only be **described** as informative and enlightening. The module focused on concepts and methods related to social sciences and their applications, as well as the challenges of community life in contemporary times. The module materials covered best practices, techniques, models, principles, approaches, and standards of community engagement. Additionally, it offered guidance on the value and use of stakeholder participation and inclusion in community engagement, effective communication, and active consultation. The module courses also covered techniques like community mapping, research, and social engagement through social media platforms.

While the module contained theoretical lessons to allow the development of knowledge and understanding, it was mainly focused on practical experiences aimed at nurturing skills and expertise in the use of relevant community engagement tools. This included workshops, assignments, group projects, and so on, which served to act as a channel to test the student's progress and skill acquirement. These allowed me to have first-hand experiences of community-action initiatives. In this context, I have to mention a particular workshop in which a team from the **Canal & River Trust** visit us and give a lecture regarding their goals, values, work practices, current activities, and achievements. In my opinion, it was one of the most notable experiences throughout my time in the module course, primarily because I *felt* that it allowed me to apply my knowledge and understanding of community engagement concepts to the real world.

Through this workshop, I got to know what the **Canal Trust** did and how it worked, and how all of this was related to serving the community. The Trust's work towards protecting and managing the waterways across England and Wales informed us about practices like recycling, the use of renewable energies, waste management, and so on. I also learned about the importance of partnerships, multi-agency working, operations and asset management, and community feedback towards ensuring a successful community engagement project (Resetar *et al.*, 2020). As I understood, community involvement and feedback played a huge role in the Trust's activities and projects, as it allowed effective identification of the needs and issues of

the people in the community. The experience also me to appreciate the significance of collaboration with local stakeholders and agencies, as projects such as these usually require technical, construction, and legal expertise to ensure the efficient delivery of outcomes (Reed *et al.*, 2018). The Trust's vision to enable these waterways to be centres of the community and enrich the lives of the people in those communities presented me with an understanding of community engagement which was more grounded in reality. The understanding that I took from this was that communities can be affected by changes in the environment that they inhabit.

**Evaluating** the experiences and feelings described above, I must say that the module experience has contributed a lot towards the development of my future collaborative project. As mentioned previously, the project that I am planning is aimed at creating a sustainable community environment in my hometown of Burton. In fact, the project goals and my town being the central focus of the project could be said to be derived from my observation of the approach undertaken by the Canal Trust, which I picked up from the workshop experience. First of all, looking at the project's aim, its main purpose is to create a sustainable community environment by introducing recycling programmes, renewable energy agendas, waste management practices, as well as protection of waterways. As is evident, the project aims have been extensively inspired by the approach taken by the Canal Trust.

Moreover, my realisation regarding the importance of local stakeholders and agencies has guided me in my selection of participants in my current project. Given that the activities of local businesses and organisations make up a large proportion of the reason behind environmental and community issues, my project also draws in these entities alongside the individuals and families affected by them (Hillary, 2017). This will allow for effective and efficient identification of issues, negotiating course of action, and developing solutions. Furthermore, the practices and initiatives that I have selected for this project are also largely inspired by the activities of the Canal Trust. The use of recycling, renewable energies, and waste management practices are a large part of what the Trust engages in daily, which also led to including these activities in my project. Also, the skills I acquired from the module assignments and the workshop experience have served to inspire my approaches. All in all, I can undoubtedly state that the module experience, assignments, and the Canal Trust workshop were dominant factors that moulded my collaborative project.

**Analysing** everything, the module materials covering practices, techniques, approaches, and so on helped my understanding of community engagement principles and standards as well as informed me about effectively engaging with stakeholders. This knowledge as well as skills, like communication, consultation, and stakeholder management which I gained from the

module; played a substantial role in my plans to bring together local businesses and organisations and engage them in negotiations with the representatives from the Burton community. As the above evaluation has established, these skills alongside the experience with the Canal Trust team stimulated my creative and logical thinking, allowing me to correspond theoretical knowledge with practical real-world situations. Furthermore, the expertise in research, use of social media, and community mapping are sure to come in handy towards allowing me effectively gather and manage assets including human resources, facilities, knowledge, and so on, which will be necessary to execute the project (Green and Haines, 2015). Overall, I can say that these module materials were useful sources of information which stimulated my understanding of the concept of community engagement.

The module materials covered best practices, techniques, models, principles, approaches, and standards of community engagement. Furthermore, it offered guidance on the value and use of stakeholder participation and inclusion in community engagement, effective communication, and active consultation. Also, the module courses covered techniques like community mapping, research, and social engagement through social media platforms. The module resources on community engagement have helped me widely in planning the live project. By using the materials, I was able to understand the theories related to community engagement. This was helpful for identifying how a community could be engaged in ensuring a sustainable environment. Furthermore, there are numerous principles and standards in community engagement which have to be used while developing a project. By using the concepts of inclusion, support, collaboration, planning, methods, impact and communication, it would be likely to engage with the public and build strong relations with them (SCDC, 2023). Moreover, I have been able to obtain an in-depth understanding of the different concepts of community engagement which has been beneficial for the live programme.

There are various practices, techniques, models and methods which could be **applied** while planning for a community engagement project. Through the module materials, I have been able to identify the most important and relevant models and approaches which could be applied in the current sustainable environment project.

Additionally, there are several theories on community engagement which have helped me justify the use of different techniques and practices for the **future project**. Active consultation, good communication, stakeholder participation, and inclusion are some of the most significant practices I have acquired from this programme. These could increase the amount of community involvement and help the project for a sustainable environment succeed. Community mapping is an essential tool which portrays the condition of the local area, provides insight into new opportunities and helps identify the skills offered by people (Thera

Trust, 2023). Other concepts such as social engagement through social media platforms, impact analysis and evaluation have helped understand which practices would be the most relevant for the current project.

### **3. Conclusion**

The essay has discussed the implementation of a community project in Burton town with the aim of developing a sustainable environment. This will be with regard to the enhancement of energy use, waterways protection, recycling processes, waste management and the utilisation of renewable energy. Burton Town being the target location for the project, there will be several collaborators and stakeholders including business owners, households, community workers and other individuals. The main activities of the project would include ensuring that Burton has active community members who would be willing to discuss the progress of the sustainability project. Engagement with the community at Burton would be an essential activity of the project to ensure success. Various resources would be required to make the project successful in terms of human resources, facilities and knowledge. Gibbs' reflective model has been applied in the essay to analyse the important strategies and best practices applied in the Canal & River Trust project. Through this, it has been possible to determine which practices need to be modified or implemented in the current project for additional success.

The existing knowledge from the first project has helped identify the important approaches which could be utilised to engage with the community and can thus, help in developing the future project. An important factor which was useful in the Canal & River Trust's programme was community involvement and feedback. This could be incorporated into the project in Burton Town to understand the issues faced by the local community and their needs specific to environmental sustainability. Based on current acumen, it would be wise to select the best strategies for the project in terms of planning and implementation along with monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme. Therefore, the action plan involves creating an effective project management plan incorporating various elements such as project charters, budgets, project roadmap and collaboration tools.

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