

Community Engagement Reflective Evaluation Report

Assessment 2

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to evaluate and reflect on the community engagement in The British Red Cross organization. We are going to find more about this non-profitable organization, about its stakeholders and how they engage the community with different projects.

In assignment 1, I introduced the community engagement to the reader. We got familiar with its benefits and its challenges. In this report I am going to show to the reader the community engagement projects that are connected to the Red Cross, like volunteering.

The Red Cross is international humanitarian organization, which helps the people in need all around the world. It is established in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland. It is operating more than 150 years now. In the UK, the British Red Cross helps million of people so they can get the support they need in a time of crisis. The organization is part of a bigger movement internationally. The Red Cross and The Red Crescent work together to achieve a common goal, which is to help people in need. This is the largest humanitarian network around the world and involves our community in large amount of projects on a daily basis.¹

Evaluation

The principles of the Red Cross

The Red Cross and The Red Crescent are guided by seven fundamental principles. They are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. The fundamental principles mean that people in need of help can trust that the organization is neutral, independent and impartial. Their supporters know that they help those most in need both in the UK and internationally, and their staff and volunteers can see they're a part of something unique.²

The Red Cross acts without discrimination and bring assistance to the wounded in the battlefield. It is a movement, which promotes understanding, friendship and co-operation. The organization always gives priority to the most urgent cases. As I mentioned earlier, it is a non-profitable organization. That means there is no desire for gain. The Red Cross is operating as an independent organization and the donations are the main income that keeps them running.

Community Engagement in the organization

The Red Cross helps anywhere in UK and all around the world. It is involved in many different projects, like: supporting victims of modern slavery and trafficking, supporting refugees, protecting people in armed conflicts etc. It also provides many services like: emotional support, mobility aid services, helping at home, financial support, providing a help to find a missing family and many others.

The organization has many challenges in front of them. One of the biggest challenges is educating people and involving them in the movement.

It is well-known that the Red Cross provides first-aid courses, trainings and educating volunteers how to provide mental health support or how to act in a time of crisis. This is all very good and helpful, however it is not widespread. The British Red Cross as of the moment has 21 500 volunteers. All of these people work together to help individuals and communities prepare for, cope with and recover from emergencies. This includes everything from disasters and conflicts to individual injuries and personal challenges.³

The organization needs more volunteers, especially in the last couple of years with all that's happened in the world - the Covid-19, the war in Ukraine, the floods etc.

So many people need help in UK and only if we work together can help everyone. Therefore, there are some things that could bring more hands in the organization, to make it grow and expand to more places. Involving more students from schools and universities is one of them. But how can they do that?

The British Red Cross has a rule that you can be a volunteer if you are over 15 years old. Statistically that includes the secondary schools and the universities. In the UK there are more than 160 universities and more than 4000 secondary schools. This is potentially a huge amount of volunteers, right? But not everyone is willing to sacrifice from his own time to join such an organization. This is why we have to explain them how important is to provide help to people in need and how can we impact their lives.

One of the things that the Red Cross can change is to invest in open days in all of this schools and universities to educate and inform the young generation with the principles of the organization. To be interesting for the teenagers, the Red Cross

can organize games, tournaments and provide variety of sources of information for them to learn and get involved in this movement. There should be a week or two in the year, dedicated to schools and universities all over the country, or why not the whole world? In my opinion this could be very helpful not just for the organization, but for the young people as well. This could be an engagement to a very large part of our community. They can learn how to provide first-aid if needed, how to interact with the people in crisis and they will learn that to be volunteer is a very important role in the society, which can sometimes save lives.

In 21st century, in the electronic world, the humanity is more connected than ever. There is one more way for the organization to gain more volunteers. The Red Cross has to interact more with people online. The internet showed us countless times how everything is possible. People are joining forces together to protest against injustice, making group events, gathering donations, even working from home. With this opportunity of easier communication, The Red Cross can get to wider sector of people and achieve much more.

Every day people are checking their phones during work, at the bus, in school, even in the cinema. Almost all the time our phone is in our hands. This makes it even easier for The Red Cross to invite and keep new participants in the movement. They can use the social platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, Snapchat and all the other big platforms. They can engage the community in their passion.

There are several innovative tools that comprehend in community engagement, nevertheless, social media is became the most popular, fastest and effective.

The Red Cross can gain not just volunteers with the social networks mentioned earlier, but they can increase the donations as well. They can run ads in the biggest platforms, like YouTube and gather large sums of money. Another thing that the organization can do is develop an app for donations and community engagement. This way the donors can make a weekly, monthly or yearly subscription and track where all of their donations are going. The Red Cross can connect community projects that are currently working on, so the users can choose to help a charity or a project that they like the most.

In The Red Cross it is important to have a collaboration and diversion. There are so many interesting project that the organization is participating in. People of all age, race and nationality are getting the help they need. The volunteers are open-minded people and they understand the principles of the organization.

Some of the community projects in London are: running errands for elderly people or people with low mobility, helping them with prescriptions, refugee support, borrowing a wheelchair, loneliness services etc. It is a wide range of projects and services that The Red Cross provides.

The latest and the most intense community project at the moment is the Ukrainian refugee support. The British Red Cross is one of the charities that help refugees from Ukraine who are in the UK. Currently they are providing shelters, food and more services to the people in need. They can help with the family migrant visa process. This is very unfortunate situation for the Ukrainian people and in the crisis like this The Red Cross is here to assist and reassure immigrants that the help will be provided.

The Red Cross has many projects around the world. One of them is Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Project in China – Hong Kong.

In China there are some villages that get urbanized. These are some shantytowns, old towns, and urban villages. Due to the rapid urbanization, these towns shared common challenges such as low potential to mitigate disasters, low self-help capacity, inadequate infrastructure and ineffective urban governance systems. The project activities included building community warehouses, clinics and provision of equipment, as well as trainings and community awareness activities. As a result, communities were able to manage the clinics and warehouses, felt stronger feelings of cohesiveness and connection. We can say that the challenges during the project were difficulties in mobilizing the community, building trust and coordination between different stakeholders.⁴

The Red Cross and The Red Crescent have been helping people for more than 150 years. In our days, the days with Corona virus and war, that help means more than ever. Thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers, the Red Cross is able to provide services specifically designed to help people most in need all over the world.

Conclusion

Community engagement is a common way of people working together that recognizes and values community members as equal partners. It is essential in this kind of communication and engaging to participants to build trust between each other.

Community engagement is essential to help us build the acceptance and trust we need to deliver lifesaving work. Making sure that the people have the ability and the option to engage with each other is one of the most effective ways to gain this trust. When communities working together to achieve a certain goal the outcomes are more effective and more sustainable. One example is The Red Cross.

The Red Cross and The Red Crescent is a non-profitable worldwide organization, which operates more than 150 years. Throughout this time, the organization helped so many people and left a powerful trace in the human history. Everything they did is to protect the vulnerable, providing shelter, providing first-aid in a war zones, helping people in need, in a time of crisis always be the first one on the front, providing their services. The heart of The Red Cross is their volunteers. Without them nothing is possible. They are the main active element in this community.

The Red Cross faces number of obstacles and challenges through its way. One of them is reaching more people by engaging more volunteers in the movement and the other one is its sustainability. Since it is a non-profitable organization, most of the income is coming from donations. There should be a way to involve more community members in their projects, so they can gather more donations and gain more volunteers.

With all the community engagement projects in a combination with the social networks, I believe that this humanitarian organization can expand even further and change many more peoples' lives.

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