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Introduction

Our community project, which was the making of a local football club, serves as a good example of how community engagement can help drive positive change. This reflection which uses the Gibbs Reflective Cycle, and aims to look at the project's journey, looking on its objectives, execution and outcomes. The Gibbs model has its stages of description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan is great because it offers a structured way to reflection, making a comprehensive understanding of the project's impacts and lessons learned. (University of Cumbria (2020)

The project was created because there is a growing need to fix the rising levels of knife crime and street dangers affecting the youth in our community. The primary objective was to create a safe and welcoming environment where local children and teenagers could take part in football training sessions. This initiative was not just about sports it was a project to move to provide the youth with a better outlet, away from the dangers of street life. The article that I have referenced here shows how more than 1 in 3 have been deliberately hit or kicked or experienced some other form of violence whilst living on the streets, this is really horrible and it was one of the reasons that this project was first created it is very important for there to be an alternative for people to do and not just sit on the streets this is a way for them to be part of a team, make friends and feel welcome. Crisis. (n.d.)

In terms of stakeholders the project had lots of different types including the community, including the youth, their parents, local schools and the wider community. (enddrowning.org. (n.d). Each group played an important role in the project's success, highlighting the importance of collaborative effort in community projects. This approach is similar to the approach that the Eden Project Communities take which stress the value of inclusivity and stakeholder involvement in community engagement. (Eden Project Communities. (n.d.)

The project also used social media platforms, to get more outreach and engagement. This digital approach was important in spreading awareness and attracting participation, showcasing the power of modern communication tools in the community. (www.linkedin.com. (2020)

In this report, we will look deeper into the various factors of the project, reflecting on the strategies used, the challenges faced and the overall impact of the project on the community. We aim to provide a clear, simple and insightful reflection on our journey This introduction helps introduce a detailed exploration of our project, guided by the principles of critical and logical reflection.

Body

Our project started on a journey to create a football club for the youth in our community. The reason behind this initiative was because of the rise of knife crime and the dangers of street life. The club was more than a sporting activity, it was a easy way to engage the youth in a positive and structured environment, diverting them from the dangerous streets.

The community engagement strategy we employed had different layers. We started with conversations and surveys, using methods like X to understand the preferences of the youth. This approach not only made sure the the project would be used but also created a sense of ownership among the young participants.

Furthermore, we also spoke with parents, schools, and community leaders (inclusive approach to community project). This helped our understanding and made sure that the project was tailored to a wider base of people. Transparency and open communication, as principles, were at the centre we also aimed to build trust and increase participation.

Stakeholder involvement was also important in the project's success. The primary stakeholders being the youth, their parents, local schools and the wider community, each of them had a unique role. The youth were at the heart of the project. Their participation and feedback were the most important in shaping the club's activities, making sure the concepts of youth leadership were included in the project.

Parents played a supportive role, offering volunteer services and actively participating in the project. This involvement created a shared responsibility atmosphere, they helped a lot in the running of the club and making sure the timings were met.

Local schools were key in promoting the football club and facilitating recruitment, serving as vital conduits to reach more young people. The wider community, through their encouragement and resources, such as field access, provided the necessary infrastructure for the project's success.

The use of social media was a game-changer in our outreach efforts. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were key in spreading awareness about the football club (Eckstein, M. (2021). We shared updates, success stories, and invitations which not only attracted more people but also got the community support. The rapid and broad reach of social media was very important in building a community network around the project.

While the project was successful, reflection reveals areas for improvement. For example, a more targeted approach in social media outreach could have been employed to engage specific demographics more effectively. Also, while stakeholder involvement was high, a structured feedback mechanism for constant improvement could have been established early when the product was launched.

Regular consultation and communication were central to the project. Regular meetings and updates ensured that all stakeholders were informed, and their views were considered. This created a sense of belonging and commitment among the participants, crucial for the project's longevity. The impact

of these practices was evident in the smooth execution of the project and the positive response from the community.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion was also feature of the project. (Workplace from Meta. (n.d.). We ensured that the football club was open to all regardless of gender, background, or ethnicity, so that everyone felt welcome to come and attend the sessions. This approach not only make the experience better, but it meant the participants could see diverse perspectives but also fostered a culture of acceptance and respect within the community.

The collaboration with multiple agencies, including local authorities and community organisations, was central to our project. Their support in providing resources like field access and permits was valuable. This multi-agency collaboration made sure that there was smooth operation of the football club and reinforced the community's commitment to youth welfare. These collaborations helped it feel like the whole community was involved.

Our research approach involved mapping the community to identify the key areas and groups most affected by the issues we aimed to address. We done surveys and held focus group discussions to understand the community's dynamics, needs, and interests. This research was crucial in designing a project that was not only relevant but also responsive to the specific needs of our community.

Social media played a big part in our project, and it did more than just tell people about what we were doing. We used it to really connect with people in our community as things were happening. When we posted on sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter we could talk to people right away. This was great because we got to hear what people thought and felt about our project quickly, which helped us know if we needed to change anything.

We used social media to share news about our football club's games, practice and special events. We also posted pictures and stories about what was happening. This was a fun way for everyone to see what we were up to and to feel like they were a part of it, even if they couldn't be there in person.

People in the community could comment on our posts, ask questions, or give us ideas. This feedback was helpful. It told us what we were doing right and what we could do better. Sometimes people even shared our posts with their friends, which helped us reach even more people.

Overall social media was a super useful tool for our project. It wasn't just about telling people things it was about talking with them, listening to them and making them feel involved in what we were doing.

The best practices we adopted, including inclusive stakeholder involvement, transparent communication and the use of digital platforms for engagement were justified by their outcomes. These practices led to a high level of community engagement, great participation, and the project's overall success. (Burton, C. (2022).

Reflecting on the project, we see that while our methods worked well, there were several areas where we could have done better. Reflection is important because it helps highlight for the next project we do (Brush, K. (2020). One key area was the involvement of local businesses. If we had included more local businesses in our project, they could have offered extra help and resources, like funding, equipment, or even spaces to hold events. This would have not only supported the football club but also strengthened the bond between the club and the local community.

Another area for improvement was the potential for a mentorship program within the football club. Having a mentorship program could have greatly benefited the young participants. Mentors could provide guidance, support, and advice helping the youth develop not just in sports but also in their personal lives. (www.identecolutions.com. (n.d.).

Also, the program could have opened opportunities for the youth to learn valuable life skills, like leadership, teamwork and communication. Mentors from various professional backgrounds could have offered insights into different career paths, helping the youngsters make more informed decisions about their futures.

The active consultation process, which involved regular feedback from stakeholders, was crucial in making the project adaptive and responsive. This approach not only helped in improving our activities but also ensured that the community felt heard and valued.

The project's success is because of the power of community engagement in addressing social issues. It shows the importance of understanding community needs, involving stakeholders at all levels and using modern communication tools for effective engagement. The lessons learned from this project can serve as a valuable guide for future community initiatives.

Conclusion

Looking back at our project of starting a football club for local kids, we learned a lot about how to work well with the community. This project, which we began to help with problems like knife crime and street dangers, really showed how much good can come from organized community efforts.

In this project, it was important to include everyone, get different people involved, talk openly, and use social media in new ways. These things helped us make the project work well and keep the

community interested and involved. We worked with lots of different people the kids, their parents, schools, and others in the community. Everyone helped, whether by joining in or giving us things, we needed. This teamwork was key to making the project successful.

Using social media to reach out and keep people interested was also important. It showed us how we need to use new ways to talk to and involve different groups in the community. This made sure that more people could join in. But, when we think about it, we see that we could have done some things better, like working more with local businesses and starting programs to mentor the kids. These ideas are important for us to think about for future projects.

In the end, this look back at our project shows how important it is to work with the community to solve problems. By using the best ways of doing things and learning from what we did, we can plan better projects in the future. The football club was a great example of how projects led by the community can make our neighbourhoods safer and more welcoming for everyone.

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