

REFLECTIVE EVALUATION

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Introduction

Reflective writing is one of the best ways to strengthen the learning ability through logical thinking. It allows learners to deepen their understanding through analysis of a given concept. Critical thinking skills are utilised by reflecting and analysing experience to develop an in-depth understanding of their abilities, including strengths and weaknesses (Shibani, Knight, and Buckingham Shum, 2019). Also, areas of improvement are identified through self-awareness achieved through this process. This discussion reflects a selected A1 project on Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub Project. This project provides initiatives that promote and maximise social value within communities by fostering positive economic, environmental and social outcomes. This paper reflects on the entire project by focusing on the adopted community engagement approaches, utilising theoretical stance and reflective writing models.

Project Description

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham introduced Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub Project, intending to promote social value within the community. The justification of this project is to build strong communities, which is achieved by supporting local organisations and other community initiatives (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023). Through the Social Value Hub, the communities access resources and fundings that help them address their needs and enhance social cohesion. This promotes a sense of belonging for the communities as they access quality life and improve their living standards. Another justification is the promotion of sustainable business practices (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023). This project encourages businesses to enhance environmental protection through their practices.

These practices are vital in environmental conservation, resulting in reduced carbon emission, diversity inclusion at the workplace, and ethical sourcing. Another objective of the project is skill development and the creation of employment opportunities. This is justified by improved employability in the local communities. Individuals from disadvantaged communities benefit by securing employment and improving their living conditions.

Analysis of the Community Engagement Approaches

How the Research was conducted and Community Mapping

How this research was conducted can be explained using several concepts. One of the concepts to consider is planning and development. This was carried out by identifying the need for a social value hub strategy within the selected community. This process involves having a clear objective and locating the target groups. The second concept is stakeholder engagement. The stakeholders in this project include local business owners, community organisations, and residents (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, 2023). Resource allocation was also considered to ensure funds and other resources necessary for the project were identified. Through this stage, an operational framework was developed to guide the daily operations, such as the timeline and responsibilities of the participants. Collaboration with partnerships was also done to ensure that local businesses and community organisations were involved. Lastly, the initiatives and programs that help achieve the objective were implemented.

Community mapping identifies and assesses the resources, needs and assets within the community. Several methods are utilised to map communities, such as focus group interviews, surveys, community consultations and workshops, and literature reviews (Fernandez et al., 2019). This project utilised community consultations and workshops to interact directly with the

stakeholders. The community members shared their concerns directly with the project organisers through this method.

Social Engagement through Social Media

Social media engagement through social media platforms played a critical role throughout the project. This can be explained using the Gibbs reflective cycle. Graham Gibbs developed this model to help individuals analyse their experiences through its six stages. The stages include description, feeling evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan (Sekarwinahyu et al., 2019). Looking at this Social Value Hub project, the engagement process critically relies on digital platforms, including social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This method is discussed in the project and compared to the traditional methods involving face-to-face communication. The second stage of the model is the feeling. The application of social media platforms excites me since more people can engage in the project. However, relying completely on social media platforms is also frustrating because it leaves out certain populations, primarily older people, who are inactive on these platforms. Step three is evaluation, which involves judging the actions and choices made (Sekarwinahyu et al., 2019). Using social media resulted in increased reach and visibility. Social media platforms such as Facebook allow project organisers to reach out to more people where information is shared, and they engage directly with the audience, Community organisations and community members. Also, the platform enables active community participation through two-way communication. The community members could communicate directly and engage more with the project via social media platforms. However, one negative impact is that some individuals who could not access the social media platforms were left out.

Step three is the analysis of the experience. When I look at the identified impacts of social media platforms, they have more positive outcomes compared to the negatives. Thus, social media platforms are among the best initiatives to consider when conducting community projects. The platforms ensure that all the stakeholders can participate and monitor the project's progress (Boulianne, 2019). In conclusion, I have learnt from this project that social media platforms allow collaboration and networking, which was essential for the project organisers. This provided a platform for them to collaborate with other organisations and community groups. The action plan to be considered to improve community participation through social media is education and awareness on the importance of using social media platforms for community projects.

Justification of the Best Practices

According to the project, the best practice of the adopted community engagement approach was storytelling. This can be explained using the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) model. This is a framework used to identify and assess the social impacts of a given project or program (Vanclay, 2020). Through this model, project organisers and the communities can understand the potential positive and negative social impacts on the stakeholders or the community members. For the storytelling engagement approach to be identified as the best practice, several factors of the SIA model need to be considered. One is the involvement of stakeholders. The stakeholders for this project include the community members, local business owners, and community organisations which were included in the project. This implies that there was an inclusion of diversity. Another factor to consider is having an improved project design, which helps in risk identification and provides opportunities to adjust the design (Vanclay, 2020). Through this concept, the storytelling approach was well analysed to identify and mitigate

any risks that may impact the project's success. SIA ensures that sustainability is enhanced, which is evident through storytelling. The communities can easily understand the project's impact when engaging in a storytelling approach that results in sustainability (Kang, Hong, and Hubbard, 2020). SIA promotes transparency and accountability. The framework ensures transparency in the assessment and management of social impacts, resulting in accountability among the stakeholders. Thus, for the storytelling approach to be the best practice, it must ensure transparency and accountability.

What Could Have Been Done Differently

Looking at this project, several things could have been done differently. This can be understood using the theory of change (TOC). This theory provides an approach that helps individuals understand the initiative and its impacts (Smith, Li, and Rafferty, 2020). One element of this theory is the desired outcomes, which was significantly achieved by the project. The outcomes of this project were explained through its objectives, which include environmental sustainability, opportunities for local businesses, and access to job and skills support. However, this could have been done differently by selecting a single primary objective or outcome that is to be achieved by the project. Another element of the theory that was also achieved by the project is the interventions and activities necessary to support the desired outcome. These are the actions to be taken or resources available to implement the project initiatives (Smith, Li, and Rafferty, 2020). The project talks about community engagement through storytelling as one of the initiatives to help achieve the desired outcomes. I feel this could have been done differently by discussing all the other engagement initiatives in detail so that readers could compare as they identify the best approach.

The Impacts of Communication, Consultant, Stakeholders Participation, Inclusion and Multi-Agency Collaboration

Active consultation incorporates ideas from stakeholders such as employees, community members or clients in decision-making. This process impacted the project through enhanced decision-making (Pieterse, Stiggelbout, and Montori, 2019). Consulting with other partners resulted in critical decision-making, primarily when selecting community engagement practices. Also, consultation resulted in enhanced relationships. Where there is consultation, the involved parties trust each other, strengthening their relationship. They significantly depend on each other for financial, physical and moral support throughout the project. The communication is open and transparent since they consult each other before making decisions (Swart, Bond-Barnard, and Chugh, 2022). The success of Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub Project was significantly influenced by open communications that fostered commitment, trust and mutual respect.

Communication results in the sharing of information and knowledge through the exchange of critical information. Stakeholders learn more about the progress of the project through communication. Selecting the right communication platforms, such as social media or community meetings, ensures a sense of belonging as each individual is involved and allowed to give ideas (Swart, Bond-Barnard, and Chugh, 2022). Access to information empowers the community members as they get updated and gain knowledge utilised in the decision-making process. Stakeholder participation results in project understanding. The stakeholders in the project included the local communities and organisations, and their participation allowed them to understand the community's needs, available resources, and expectations. Participation also increases their ownership. The stakeholders develop a sense of belonging and become more

responsible through active involvement in the project's progress. This ownership increased motivation and commitment for Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub Project.

Diversity and inclusion are where stakeholders from different backgrounds, nationalities, genders, ages, and social classes are involved in project development. Inclusion positively impacts the project by enhancing the process of decision-making. Bringing together stakeholders from different backgrounds and experiences enriches decision-making through a wide range of thoughts and ideas (Bernstein et al., 2020). This is a culture where multiple ideas are valued and shared, resulting in better decisions. The Hub project utilised inclusion and diversity by involving a diverse team of stakeholders. This is the cooperation between several organisations with a common goal. Multi-agency cooperation is primarily applied to address complex societal needs and achieve sustainable solutions. One impact of this coordination is an efficient use of resources such as expertise, funding and infrastructure (Swart, Bond-Barnard, and Chugh, 2022). The Social Value Hub project coordinated with the local organisations, which helped allocate expertise. The process resulted in improved service delivery that met the needs of the diverse communities.

Conclusion

This paper reflects on Hammersmith and Fulham's Social Value Hub project by focusing on the adopted community engagement approaches, and utilising theoretical stance and reflective writing models. The discussion provides a detailed justification of the project objectives and a detailed analysis of the engagement approaches. The Gibbs reflective model is utilised to give a detailed reflection on the social media application in the project. Other theories and models have also been included to give a detailed analysis and compare concepts. One recommendation from

this reflection is for community projects to invest in traditional and digital communication platforms to enhance inclusion.

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