

LCBB4002: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT).

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Introduction.

Most communities participate in community engagement projects to address underlying challenges that affect their social and economic lives. However, to achieve effectiveness and sustainable results and impact communities require an experienced community engagement practitioner to facilitate them in implementing most of the activities. The purpose of this paper focuses on explaining the role of community engagement practitioner in supporting communities in addressing various socio-economic challenges. The report will use New Deal for Communities programme as a case study that aimed at addressing the social deprivation of poverty reduction in Bristol area, England, United Kingdom. This report also researches on various approaches that are utilised by local community to conduct successful community engagement projects. This includes principles and standards that guide the stakeholder's participation benefits. Secondly, the report will explore various social media platforms strategies that are used to achieve effective community engagement based on the stakeholder's relationship analysis. Additionally, the report will identify various and relevant approaches to enhance community collaboration, participation, inclusion and diversity to promote multiculturalism and socio-cultural integration. Finally, the report will explain why the community engagement practitioner needs to adopt a forward-looking approach when educating community members on various external and internal factors that influence community development.

Programme summary case study description.

The New Deal for Communities is a regeneration programme that is led by the government of United Kingdom focusing on England most vulnerable areas including Bristol, Liverpool, Norwich among other 39 countries (Halliday et al., 2020) However, this report will focus on

Bristol area in analysing principles and standards of community engagement. According to Sullivan and Skelcher, (2017), argued that the programme is one of the best Area Based Initiative programme that aimed in reducing the gaps between some of the poorest communities and the rest of the country with a budget of £50M per region running for a period of 10 years since 2001 and 2010. The programme was supervised by neighborhood renewal unit with the department for local government and local communities. However, the programme was designed to comprise various stakeholders within the communities being the hearts of the programme to ensure that change was community led in addressing social deprivation in poverty reduction and in achieving social inclusion (Poppo, 2015). Additionally, NDC programme focused in addressing major challenges such unemployment and lack of education accessibility. Main programme stakeholders being community, local government and the national government.

Principles, standards guiding community engagement at Bristol area.

Based on research the following are the principles and standards that are utilized by the New Deal Community programme stakeholders and the benefit they acquire through participating in the community projects.

Comprehensive preparation and planning. MacQueen et al., (2015), argued that community programme leaders ensures that the programme that is being implemented is clearly and defined to serve the purpose and the needs of the community. Bristol area is greatly affected with high rate of unemployment an, poor housing and lack of education access. Therefore, the project has been designed as an all-inclusive to all participants within the community (Hollebeek, Juric and Tang, 2017). This includes the residence, community-based organisation, the local government and leaders of various institution to participate in planning on how to implement various activities that will contribute to poverty reduction.

Shared purpose and cooperation. This principle helps all stakeholders in having a shared goal and objective as well as a clear vision working towards a common good. The New Deal Communities programme ensures that all the stakeholders have an agreed purpose and they collaboratively work as a team (Tallon, 2020). They have identified challenges that affect them and are collaboratively working together in ensuring education accessibility of young people as well as creation of employment within the community.

Demographic diversity and inclusion. The research showed that the community embraces an all-inclusive strategy in programme implementation. This is achieved through incorporation of diverse people ideas, opinion and views to enhance quality outcomes and support people's democracy and legitimacy in decision making (Milliken et al., 2015). Leaders, youths, women, people with disability and local government work as a team.

Transparency and Learning. The community ensured openness by providing a clear process on how activities are implemented to the general community beneficiaries. According to Gann et al., (2019) participants promote teamwork in sharing of ideas and learning from each other which enhance exploring of new ideas that facilitate community engagement effectiveness.

Participatory culture and sustained engagement. Milliken et al., (2015) argued that participatory and sustained engagement principles help stakeholders in ensuring collaborative participation which promotes sustainability during and after the programme. With this principle the community is able to achieve a quality ongoing community engagement process. The figure below shows the partnership and stakeholders engagement relationship.

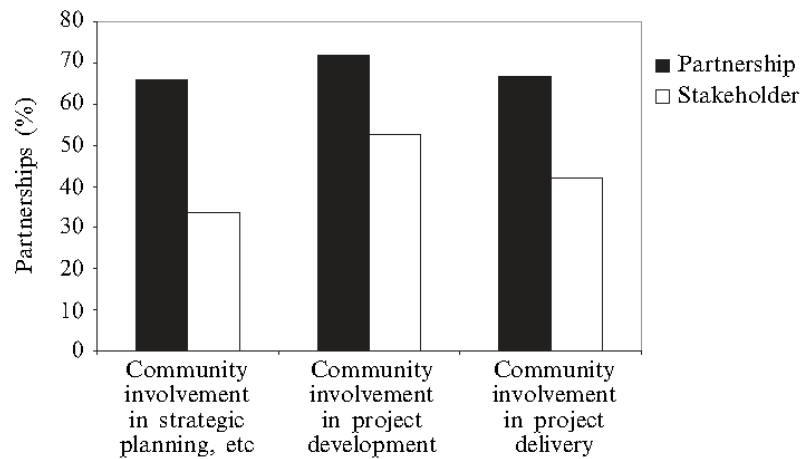


Figure 1: Semantic scholar, Area Based Urban Initiative stakeholders' partnership.

Benefits of Stakeholders' participation in NDC programme.

Community participation targets to benefit the community in solving the identified problem as well as building sustainable impact (Gann et al., 2019). The following are the demonstration of the stakeholder's participation benefits in Bristol community engagement in reducing community poverty. Based on New Deal Communities 2001-2005 interim evaluation report it was clear to point the benefits that had been acquired by the stakeholders (Jacobs, S., 2016). According to Sigalla, Tumbo and Joseph, (2021), NDC 2006 report shows that 32 out of 36 main indicators had moved positively with 24% of the population agreeing that the NDC programme had improved the area in terms of education, health facilities, reduction in crime and solving unemployment challenges.

However, between 2002 and 2006 report the shows that 16 indicators had gained more positive change which was marked by more positive changes in Bristol area. This included the fear of crime attitude reduced by 27%, more jobs creation was witnessed as well as reduced in health inequalities which was indicated by the reduced rate of mortality and morbidity (Ma et al.,

2020). All this positive change was identified using the national benchmark against the 39 countries that were the main participants in the project.

Strategies suitable for stakeholders' engagement using various social media platforms.

Castelló, Etter and Årup Nielsen, (2016) argued that it is important to understand stakeholders' composition to support in identifying effective communication platforms for engagement. Community engagement require day to day sharing of information to ensure that all stakeholders are working as a team and are up to date on the programme progress. Based on NDC programme stakeholders mapping, it indicates that the project covers a wider area and the proximity is large and partners comes from different demographic areas hence the need for different communication platform (Cho, Furey and Mohr, 2017). However, they have a good working relationship that is characterized by teamwork, collaboration shared purpose. Therefore, some of the social media platforms that can be used to enhance engagement include

WhatsApp. This social media platform is used to group all members in a single group where information can be shared effectively. Stohl et al., (2017) argued that WhatsApp helps to connect people from different regions, countries and continents by providing real time text messages to individual or a group of people. It is the most efficient mode of communication with less cost that requires only internet connection. The stakeholders can share photos of the project progress to the whole group team as well as video call to share on the urgent issues that require attention. The advantages of WhatsApp are that it can support video and audio call both for individuals and as a group and it is easy to operate. NDC project stakeholders includes of rural people who are less literate and therefore, WhatsApp facilitate them with the flexible media to communicate and follow the programme progress.

LinkedIn platform. The times that stakeholders used to hold physical meetings are currently reducing due to enhanced social media technologies that promote remote meeting and

stakeholders' engagement. However, many organisations are struggling to maintain their outreach efforts strong. According to Cho, Furey and Mohr, (2017), organisations have utilised platforms such as LinkedIn to keep the stakeholders informed on the project progress. This is through posting of the achievements and milestones. Based on NDC programme the stakeholders include both the locals and the government agencies and therefore, using professional platform like LinkedIn help in ensuring effective communication and sharing of information among the stakeholders.

Facebook platform. Facebook is the most modified platform for people interaction. Facebook supports unanimous way of stakeholder's engagement promoting both individual and business engagement. Facebook enable sharing of large content efficiently and rapidly with large stakeholders worldwide. It facilitates stakeholders to modify their connections to receive content from selected companies (Castelló, Etter and Årup Nielsen, 2016). NDC programme can utilise Facebook in information sharing because of the ability for the stakeholders to express their feedback through liking the post or sharing the post to other people. Even with those who can not access the information from the company sites can easily access it through friends sharing posts.

Twitter. This platform facilitates the trending of the information through hashtags that can promote the company in sharing the information to many people in a single post.

Social media platforms facilitate both audio, video and messages which can be utilised by projects stakeholders in sharing of the information, activities and other significant information in a timely manner. Some of the advantages include the ability to reach out to many audiences at once, ability to create a connection with the partners hence supporting multiculturalist and social cultural integration. Additionally, Castelló, Etter and Årup Nielsen, (2016) argues that these platforms help in creation of traffic to the company website hence promoting information

availability and accessibility as well as ability to evaluate performance based on feedback. Therefore, such platforms facilitate the level of success being achieved by an organisation.

Internal and external factors that influence community development.

According to Farooq, Rupp and Farooq, (2017), internal factors that influence's community development includes stakeholders' diversities in terms of norms, believes, like, dislikes, values and perceptions which sometimes can strain project implementation. On the other hand, external factors include political, technology, cultural issues, environmental factors which can present both opportunities and threats for project success. However, it is important for the community engagement practitioners forward looking approach to educate community members.

Importance of adopting forward looking approach.

Looking forward approach is the ability to analyse the present status of something to help in identifying the future condition (Quisumbing and McNiven, 2020). Therefore, it is important for the community engagement practitioners to analyse both internal and external factors affecting the company to be able to plan strategically on approaches that will help the project to progress and achieve its goals and objectives. NDC programme focuses on poverty eradication and therefore, it is important to utilize this approach in terms of evaluating the expected results and how it can impact and change the society (Castelnovo, Misuraca and Savoldelli, 2016).

Recommendation and Conclusion.

In conclusion, community engagement is important in providing sustainable solutions to the community socioeconomic challenges. However, it requires a comprehensive planning and complete stakeholders' engagement to facilitate success with the help of community engagement practitioner. Based on New Deal for Communities programme, it is noted that the

programme was too ambitious which was clearly reflected on the weaknesses on Area Based Initiatives. The project also lacked a clear statement in relation to the expected outcomes objectives. Also, the programme was subjected to too many principles which included the community taking the heart of the programme which was not the best mechanism strategy in a long 10 years project. The community representatives were more interested in immediate outcomes that solve their poverty challenges and unemployment issues. Therefore, it is recommended that the programme should ensure that it is addressing community needs as well as providing a clear expected outcome to the stakeholders. Secondly, it is important to consider a more precise project that covers a small scope to ensures that the expected objectives are met. Finally, projects should be designed to solve immediate community challenges with immediate tangible results within a significant period of time.

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