

ASSESSMENT 1 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Executive summary

Birmingham City Council is one of the most effective metropolitan city councils that has been operating in the United Kingdom. Among the different types of projects and programmes that has been implemented by the Birmingham City Council, the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is considered to be one of the most recognised projects. The programme focuses on improving the capabilities and competencies of the communities in the country. It has been observed that the programme has been operating efficiently but there are still opportunities to improve in contemporary society. The report has focused on developing an effective understanding of the programme and how the Birmingham City Council has been engaging the stakeholders to achieve the strategic objectives of its programme. The study has also focused on analysing the different types of strategies that can be further implemented by the Birmingham City Council in order to obtain a better level of growth in terms of stakeholder relationships and engagement. Social media has become an important part of the individuals living in the United Kingdom. The study has therefore focused on understanding how social media platforms can be used for increasing the outreach of the programme as well as developing community engagement. Birmingham City Council has provided different types of recommendations to engage the community and understand how a forward-looking approach can enhance community development.

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Introduction

The metropolitan city councils in the United Kingdom have been developing different types of programmes in order to improve the communities and the sustainability of the people. There have been different types of programs developed by different City Councils across the United Kingdom and one of the major programmes that were established by the Birmingham City Council is the National Graduate Development Programme or NGDP. This report will focus on analysing the best practices of the Birmingham City Council and the NGDP. The way in which the relationship among the stakeholders of the programme can be improved will be critically evaluated in the study by critically focusing on the social media platform. The different strategies that can be implemented to improve the approach to the programme will be evaluated in the study

Description of the programme

The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is one of the major programmes that has been developed by the Birmingham City Council which operates under the local government association (LGA). The primary focus of the program is to provide training to the next generation of developing public sector leaders. It offers individuals the opportunity to work on high-profile projects across directorates that can focus on enhancing the lives of the residents (Birmingham City Council, 2021). It improves the life of the people by developing a strong professional network in the United Kingdom.



Figure 1: National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

(Source: Birmingham City Council, 2021)

Best practices of Birmingham City Council

The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) offers numerous practices to individuals but some of the major practices include hybrid and flexible working hours. It offers 2 years fixed-term contract of employment under the Birmingham City Council that can enhance the quality of the employees in the United Kingdom. It helps in developing a proper career for the individuals under the BCC (Plans, 2022). It also offers a 6 monthly rotation across the directorates which includes different types of job opportunities including the frontline services, back office financial areas, and corporate and strategic functions.

Community engagement standards and principles

The standards of community engagement that are observed within the Birmingham City Council critically focus on community cohesion. The community cohesion principle helps in understanding the ways in which individuals can live to work, socialise and learn together. The principles and the standards focus on developing a sense of belongingness and trust across the communities to break down the barriers (Birmingham City Council, 2021). The barriers that can result in the development of discrimination and inequality are the primary aspects that are

shut down by the principles and the standards of community engagement within the Birmingham City Council. Better relationship among the individuals in the community is developed through the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP).

Benefits of stakeholder participation

The stakeholder participation in the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) provides a very significant benefit to the overall programme as well as BCC. It helps in ensuring that the strategic outcomes of the programme can be effectively met. The primary focus of the council in the programme is to develop cohesiveness among the community members and the development of stakeholder participation primarily helps in achieving the objective (BCC, 2023). The focus of the council on the digital inclusion strategy benefits the programme by ensuring that stakeholders present in different areas of the United Kingdom can be brought together to conduct the operations.



Figure 2: Benefits of stakeholder participation

(Source: Lemke et al., 2022)

Relationship between stakeholders and strategies to engage them

Stakeholder relationship in community-based projects is considered to be highly important because it helps in ensuring that the different areas of the program can be effectively conducted in a cohesive manner. While operating with communities in different types of programs such as the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), there can be different types of unexpected factors that might create issues for BCC (BCC-Digital Inclusion, 2021). The development of positive relationships among the stakeholders helps in addressing these types of unexpected issues by developing better teamwork and unity within the operations of the council.

Strategies to engage the stakeholders:

The following are some of the major strategies that can be used to engage the stakeholders of an organization:

Meeting the expectations of the stakeholders:

One of the major ways in which the stakeholders in the programme can be effectively engaged to achieve the objectives of BCC is by meeting the expectations of the stakeholder groups. It has been studied that when the individual leads to stakeholders are effectively addressed by the council, it can enhance their focus to provide better growth to the overall program and engage with each other more efficiently (Lemke et al., 2022). It is therefore recommended to the Birmingham City Council focus on meeting the expectations of individual stakeholders over time to constantly motivate them for engaging in the programme.

Periodically communicating with the stakeholders:

In order to develop better engagement among the stakeholder groups for the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), the strategy that can be used is periodically communicating

with them (McMullen et al., 2020). Communicating and meeting the stakeholders will help in understanding the different needs of the stakeholder groups which can be effectively used by the Birmingham City Council in order to meet individual expectations and develop their motivation.

Use of social media platforms for increasing the outreach of the project

In the modern and contemporary world, there has been a number of social trends influencing people and communities. The development of digital platforms which includes social media is one of the primary factors that is influencing people and the way in which they behave in societies (Sutton et al., 2022). The use of social media platforms can be considered by the Birmingham City Council for increasing the reach of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). The following are the ways in which the use of social media platforms can increase the outreach of the programme:

Increase awareness:

The primary aspect that needs to be considered by the Birmingham City Council in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is by increasing its awareness in society. It is important to make the people of Birmingham and the United Kingdom aware of the facilities that are provided by the Birmingham City Council under this programme. According to statistics, around 77.9% of the population in the United Kingdom uses different types of social media platforms (CyberCrew, 2023). This means the opportunities for the Birmingham City Council to reach a greater number of potential community members across the United Kingdom with the help of social media platforms will be critically high.



Figure: Use of social media for increasing project outreach

(Source: Lewis, 2021)

Better insight:

Almost every social media platform includes different types of social media analytics that can be used by the Birmingham City Council for obtaining better insights into the engagement of community members. The level of participation of the stakeholders and the community members can be one of the major indicators of measuring the success of the program (Lewis, 2021). To understand the level of participation among the community members under the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) can be effectively and accurately calculated with the help of social media analytics. These insights can be used by the Birmingham City Council in order to improve the approaches and strategies used to engage the stakeholders and the community members.

Platform to engage:

Social media platforms are considered to be highly effective and significant to help in developing engagement among people. It can develop a bridge between the Birmingham City Council, the local government of the United Kingdom and the community members in the

country (Vleminck et al., 2022). The individuals who are related to the community project will be able to put forward their opinions and queries through the social media platform which would be effective in making the council engage with the people. Addressing the queries is one of the major ways in which the understanding related to the programme can be improved among the people to make it a better success in the UK.

Recommendations to engage the community

In order to improve the effectiveness of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), there are different ways of engaging the community. Developing engagement among the community members can help in ensuring that the individual objectives of the programme can be met in the minimum amount of time which will provide the Birmingham City Council with an opportunity to obtain success in the United Kingdom (Asikin-Garmager et al., 2022). The following are the recommendations that can be provided to the Birmingham British Council in order to engage the community in the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP):

Developing a strong shared vision:

It has been studied that in the majority of the projects the community members try to engage more when there is a strong shared vision. This shared vision is supposed to be related to the needs and requirements of the community members in the society of the United Kingdom that can enhance the development of the people (Viola, 2022). Developing a strong shared vision will make the community understand the way in which the local government of the United Kingdom and the metropolitan City Council are working together to improve the lifestyle of the people. Hence, it can be one of the major ways in which the Birmingham City Council will be able to achieve a better opportunity of engaging team community members.

Communicating the mission and vision of the programme:

The development of the shared vision and mission is not enough to engage the community members with maximum efficiency. It is important to effectively communicate the message of the council to the community members which can eventually help in making the people understand how the program can enhance their opportunities for growth (Vleminck et al., 2022). Social media platforms can be one of the major ways in which the shared mission and vision of the programme can be communicated to the people across the United Kingdom and engage them efficiently.

Critically implementing social media approaches:

It is recommended to Birmingham City Council focus on implementing the social media approaches for improving the operations of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). The council will be able to understand the responsiveness of the community in the UK through the practices implemented by the Birmingham City Council. It will also provide a platform for the community members to engage with each other and communicate effectively in relation to the programme (BCC-Digital Inclusion, 2021). This will not only help in making the community members understand their roles and responsibilities in the programme but it will also help in developing a better understanding regarding how the programme can improve their lifestyle.

Importance of a forward-looking approach to community development

The forward-looking approach can be critical in developing community development in different types of projects or programmes like the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). The following are the reasons behind the increasing importance of forward-looking approaches for community development:

Enhancing innovation and imagination:

The forward-looking approach to community development can be critically important to enhance the imagination and innovation among the community members as well as the council (Sutton et al., 2022). The forward-looking approach will focus on understanding the future opportunities that can be used by the council for developing the communities and this will improve the innovation concepts within the operations.

Develops the governance perspectives:

There is a very significant opportunity that can be used by the Birmingham City Council in order to improve the governance practices in the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) with the help of a forward-looking approach (Lewis, 2021). The approach can promote the way in which the engagement of the local government is present in the development programme which can be one of the most effective ways to critically improve its efficiency.

Conclusion

The Birmingham City Council has been focusing on the development of the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) in order to improve the community of the United Kingdom. There have been different ways in which the community is being improved through the programme but the efficiency of the community programme can be improved with the help of digital innovations and the implementation of social media platforms. The outreach of the programme can be improved with the help of social media platforms and it is important for BCC to engage the community. The implementation of a forward-looking approach can also be effective for achieving better community development in the United Kingdom which can critically improve the efficiency with which BCC is operating.

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