

Guide for community building & engagement in national teams; Organisation X

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Abstract



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<p>Community is very important as it provides a basis for most volunteer-based organisations. This is a product-based thesis with the aim of developing a framework for community building and engagement in national teams of organisation X. The final product will be handed out as a supporting tool for community leaders and coordinators to build local teams after teams are launched.</p> <p>There are three main purposes for this report; to serve as a guide for the HR department of organisation X in monitoring community building in national teams, to guide community coordinators to build local teams in their respective countries and to give examples on how volunteers can be engaged in the communities after they join.</p> <p>In this report, there are two main components. The first component introduces the topic, the theoretical part, the process of obtaining the information, the process of developing the guide and as well as discusses the results and personal evaluation.</p> <p>The second component contains a sample guide. Interviews are conducted with the core members as well as questionnaires to get an understanding of expectations.</p> <p>The thesis process started in autumn 2020 with community building and engagement literature reading, observation, active participation and research. The process was completed during spring of 2021.</p>	
Keywords Ambitious Africa Organisation, community building, engagement, volunteers, leadership	

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1 Introduction

The prevalence of social media platforms like Facebook facilitates cross-country and continental communication. Interactive jobs can be performed virtually from any location using broadband connections (Vance & Paik, 2015, p. 83). This makes virtual community building and communication possible to build global citizens. The relevance of social media is visible in the rise of the Me-too movement which went viral globally in 2017 (Movement, 2019) There are several movements and organisations that were founded virtually and have been providing essential services and impact on societies. This shows how virtual communities can be built and continuously engaged to impact society. Globalization means everyone has an equal chance of competing for resources everywhere. (Vance & Paik, 2015) The expertise in Finland can be shared with the rest of the world through this medium if a community is formed around common goals and objectives. Nevertheless, they have not exported much in past years to other countries.

In the last ten years, more private organisations and young people have been actively involved in entrepreneurship through student groups and others. Finland has been described as the happiest country in the world. (John F, Richard Layard, Jeffrey Sachs, & Helliwell, 2020) This is where the commissioning company for this study comes in, with two main visions; thus, to bridge the gap between the Nordics and Africa and to create youth led projects across the two continents. The Nordic region advanced in technology as compared to other regions around the globe (Bloom, 2020) There has been a steady increase in exports and collaboration, and we believe more can be done. (Economics, 2021) However, the opposite was true for Africa before the pandemic struck, people performed work onsite and truly little was done online or remotely as there was an opportunity to meet face-to-face for discussions and negotiations.

The year 2020 came with a surprise though, people and organisations had to adapt quickly when more remote work was recommended to slow down the spread of infections. Companies invested in equipping workers to work remotely, entertainment moved online when shows, concerts and festivals had to be held virtually (Sobre-Denton, 2021) It has been a year and there is no need to go in sight for the pandemic. Our way of working has changed and there will be a hybrid of onsite and remote work for most companies.

Remote working enabled the operations of company X to be possible across multiple continents. As the internet becomes more of an everyday tool rather than a privilege, more social organisation can build communities remotely. The Global team collaborates with the national teams remotely and arranges meetings using deal rooms, google meets, zoom, teams etc. We are working to motivate personal and community growth.

Good motivators make people leave (Forsyth, 2006) Many non-profit organisations rely on volunteers to perform most of their work and company X is no exception. There are over 200 volunteers working across different continents performing varying and various tasks. Company X has planned to work remotely overall because it continues to work with people spread across multiple continents.

Despite technology advancements in various sectors, employees continue to be essential assets and contribute immensely to achieving company goals. Therefore, proper collaboration and coordination even when working remotely is required to achieve the goals and targets of the organisation.

1.1 Background

Human resources are the most essential resource for any organisation. It can make or break a company. Remote hiring and work are on the rise all around the world. However, remote management procedures are often poorly planned in the first stages for companies new to remote working. Remote working is the most predominant in tech companies but has recently caught on in other sectors. These companies allow more flexibility for employees as work can be performed from anywhere with good connectivity to an internet network. In some instances, methods, measures, procedures, or guidelines for work which would have ensured achievement of targets are missing altogether.

For the above reasons, this study will serve as a guideline for organisation X and other managers. Looking to improve remote leadership, remote management, or remote supervision. Additionally, the findings will assist beginner companies to plan solid procedures in place when they start out. This study will benefit other sectors as current trends suggest other sectors can benefit from remote work to reduce costs. Describing how to manage remote teams, companies will be encouraged to consider remote hiring as it presents a larger pool of highly qualified applicants.

1.2 Objectives and scope

The main objective of the thesis is to develop a framework for community building and engagement in National teams for organisation X.

The main research question for the study is:

What is the best method of community building and engagement for company X?

Sub questions for the research study are as follows:

How has the team been performing? What are some of the successes so far?

What have been some of the significant problems ?

What problems or barriers exist in the structure now and what has been done to address them?

The methods mentioned, content and more specific strategies applicable will be suitable for other organisations with similar models. The commissioning company is a non-profit working to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between Africa and the Nordics. The results contained in this study will be effectively employed to improve the work of the Human Resource department of Ambitious Africa Organization. This scope of the study will focus on community building and engagement for the cross-border Organization. Additionally, functions like ensuring volunteer retention and wellbeing, performance monitoring will be discussed briefly.

Effective communication is key in ensuring that distant employees understand their responsibilities, perform jobs assigned etc. Practices like face-to-face meetings among onsite workers contribute tremendously to their effectiveness and efficiency. Although teams are scattered globally, it is necessary to somehow maintain contact.

1.3 Thesis type and research methods

This thesis is a practice-based as learning from my volunteer period will be used to develop a guide for the company as the result will be a guidebook for community building and engagement. It will outline a framework for community building and engagement. The qualitative research method employed in this report will gather information through interviews and questionnaires. Remote work and leadership practices in Ambitious Africa Organisation will also be evaluated to best understand areas worth improving.

Data in this study was collected between autumn 2020 and winter of 2021 by actively participating in activities of the organisation. In the community of over two hundred people, selected people from ten countries were interviewed to get their input and expectations as part of community building. In addition, interviews were conducted through structured and semi-structured methods. Information was gathered through face-to-face interviews with members of the core team of Ambitious Africa about the use of video conferencing applications. The interview lasted for about one hour to get responses from the core members.

Reports, articles, and research work will be other sources where information and data will be gathered for the study. Evaluating methods used by other organisations like Slush which takes on hundreds of volunteers annually for their events. Furthermore, the findings contained herein will serve as a guideline for national teams for community building. The thesis will only concentrate on methods that is only applicable to company X; Africa-Nordic working for change.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The report consists of three parts. The first part of the thesis is the introduction i.e., the background, objectives and scope which explains why this topic has been chosen? The thesis type and methods are employed to gather information. The structure explains the layout of the topics while the approach clarifies the methods used in gathering information.

The second part begins with the presentation of company X. The organisation will be introduced by describing its organisational structure, explaining the method of hiring volunteers. Furthermore, onboarding and engagement methods will be designed. The national team's dynamics will be analysed as part of this study.

The third section will discuss one of the important aspects of organisation X thus, community building, challenges of community building strategic and virtual communication. Finally, community engagement and the future of organisation X from the perspective of the national teams will be highlighted. Analysis of the survey results will dissect the responses gathered through interviews and surveys plus personal observations.

Finally, the appendix will contain a guide for community building and engagement and the questions.

1.5 Approach

The information contained in this report will be sourced from interviews, observations, learnings and experience. Additionally, research work conducted over the years about cross-border organisations, cross cultural workers, volunteer work and non-profit organisations. There will be interviews conducted with national teams and other stakeholders. With input from people who work in similar organisations or have held positions in other organisations performing similar functions. Lastly, findings from reports, academic articles, publications, and other sources will provide quality content for the topic.

2 Presentation of company

Organisation X is a Finnish based non-profit organisation led by young people. The organisation was founded by three young Nordic students who wanted to impact lives and strengthen collaboration between Africa and the Nordics. (Organisation, 2020) When the pandemic struck in March 2020, work shifted online, and most meetings and collaborations were arranged online as big gatherings were discouraged. This type of NGO has become popular in recent years as they work to “fill in the cracks” to address societal problems left by people in government (Vance & Paik, 2015, p. 22) This presented an opportunity to grow the organisation rapidly which had offices in Hanken Business Lab and Start Up Sauna at Aalto University.



Figure 1. Africa and Nordic maps (source; google images)

It began in March 2020 with goals to create National teams in all 54 African countries, create youth lead programmes and work through volunteers. Its vision and mission are to bridge the gap between the Nordics and Africa – to inspire, connect, and empower young people, to help them make a change through co operations (organisation X website) As of September 2020, the organisation had received over 200 volunteer applications. Additionally, organisation X has established over 70 partnerships and counting.

The organisation has members from over 35 countries with people mostly from countries in the Nordics and Africa. Some of the countries where teams have been launched include Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Liberia just to mention a few. Young people are leading the change to build a better future, supported by the Nordic and African governments. This initiative seeks to empower the transformation of Africa through high quality education and cultivating the entrepreneurial mindset of young people.

The vision of the organisation is to consciously encourage Nordic and African young people to bring about change by working on a triple E-module thus education, entertainment,

and entrepreneurship. These three areas have been a strong pillar in the success of Finland, known worldwide as having the best education system. Finland has also been named for the third time in a row as the happiest country in the world. The annual survey by Sustainability Development Solutions for the United Nations. (Nations, 2019)

Focusing on delivering through Entrepreneurship and working to provide the best education for all and not just a few. Ambitious Africa is one of the worlds’ fastest growing markets with 60% of its population under the age of 25. (Ambitious Africa Organisation, 2020)

2.1 Organisational strategy and structure

Every organisation, either profit making, or non-profit making, needs to have a structure in place that will guide its activities. Some research has identified three main important parts that must work together to ensure effective performance i.e., strategy, organisation, and people. These three areas are especially important and need to be defined in the preliminary stages of an organisation to ensure clarity and effective communication and to create a strategy to maintain success. This involves training others to ensure someone can take over when you move on to other things.

Every position should have two people responsible for that specific department. This will enable continuous activity and accountability in the national teams since people may drop off at any time. There must be effective communication in this regard to get everyone onboard, promote understanding and have a plan people can follow to achieve targets. Guided by the basic strategy management model which is composed of four main blocks; current environment scanning, strategy formation, implementation of strategy and evaluation, different actions and steps can be taken to achieve specific goals (Tervela, 2016)



Figure 2. Basic Strategy Management model (Tervela, 2016)

2.2 Building the basic Strategy model

The current environment analysis helps to provide a better understanding of the current situation and to highlight areas that need special focus. The first points (strengths and weaknesses) which are mostly found internal factors will identify the gives the organisation a competitive advantage and the last two (opportunities and threats) are external factors like problems and challenges that might hinder the work of the organisation. The situation analysis is important because it helps focus on the relevant things.

The strategy formulation is the next step where the objectives of the and other policies are clearly defined. It is also important to set clear guidelines for everyone to understand their role and the direction of the organisation. The questions below and summarized responses were obtained from interviewing global members. The strategy will then stipulate concrete guidelines to follow to achieve the objectives of the organisation. At this stage, the mission, objectives and plan will be drawn up by the organisation to clearly define the roles of the community.

The definition of vision, mission and how to get there in the initial stages will ensure understanding. This structure will define the decision-making process. For example, joining and training procedures for new people, define the level of commitment for working, and delegation of responsibilities. A shared vision encourages people to learn (Stacey, 2003, p. 104) This means the vision should not be imposed on members, but it should be developed by people working together. According to Donald, there are elements to strategy and requires answers to better understand the direction of the organisation. (Donald, 2019, p86.) For Ambitious Africa to operate effectively, the strategy needs to be defined.

In what areas will the organisation be active?

The organisation will have operations in all 54 Africa countries and the 5 Nordic countries. In the above-listed countries, the organisation will have a local presence where they will champion the activities of the main organisation. It will be active in areas of Entertainment, Entrepreneurship and Education. (Global, 2020)

How will the organisation scale and survive?

The teams operate on a similar model with country specific modifications to suit the local environment. There are at least four people in each team. Two people from the Nordics and two people from a specific African country. Exchanging ideas and working on projects (Global, 2020)

How will the organisation win in the operation?

Through the asset of local knowledge from local community members, presence of the country team leads and volunteers. Additionally, the organisation has access to African and Nordic Governments, partners and institutions who will help will achieve the mission and visions of the organisation. (Global, 2020)

What will be your speed and sequence of moves?

Ambitious Africa wants to transform the collaboration between the Nordics the African continent in 5 years through the 3 Es model of Education, Entrepreneurship and Entertainment while bridging the gap between the Nordics and Africa. (Global, 2020)

What type of organisation is in Ambitious Africa? According to the theory of shared organisation, change flows when people in an organisation learn effectively together (Stacey, 2003, p. 103) Based on personal observations, the Ambitious Africa Organisation can be described as a transnational organisation. This organisational type utilizes aspects of a global organisation and a multinational organisation. It has operations that seek to maximize responsiveness to local demands and the global strategy that seeks to maximize scale efficiency at the cost of flexibility. (Global, 2020)

Experts define organisational design as the decision-making process that brings about a coherence between the purpose or goals for which an organisation exists, patterns of division of labour within coordination and the people who will be assigned to do the work. This organisational design is a process that is not completed in a specified period, but it is a continuous process that evolves as an organisation grows. There are interdependences of the various departments of the organisation to ensure coordination

The organisational structure of organisation X works with a functional structure now but with a plan of a divisional structure in the future. For effective transfer of knowledge, there needs to be an effective development of effective communication methods for diverse cultural values and norms. (Vance & Paik, 2015, pp. 115-116) It is also important to note that organisational design determines who receives information first, to whom this information is sent and how the information received is acted upon.

Organisational strategy then follows its structure. Studies suggest the above structure can be described as a centralized structure or mechanistic model because and it is not noticeably clear who leads. The structure and strategy of any organisation involves the determination of long-term goals and objectives and the good alignment of resources needed. In the case of Ambiti, they want to lead change with young people from the



Figure 3. Core of Organisation X 2020

The human resources department manages the human capital of the organisation, but it is supported by the other departments. There are five groups in the current organisation structure with everyone contributing as a volunteer. An effective leader is a kind that maintains a clear focus and definition of primary tasks (Stacey, 2003, p. 148) The global team forms the management and leadership team for the whole organisation X supported by advisors. Responsibilities are usually interconnected as they work to ensure all activities run smoothly across all national teams. It consists of the founders, advisors, marketing department, HR department, partnerships, grants, sustainability, and projects. The national team leads also referred to as Ambitious team leads form the leadership body of the local country team. It consists of a country lead, head of marketing, head of media, head of partnerships, head of operations and projects.

Community – Community in organisation X context refers to a group of people who are affiliated to a specific national team or department. They work at the various levels providing support and assistance where necessary. These people are usually either affiliated to a National team or just a specific department. They work to organise events, undertake tasks, and initiate projects that will benefit the whole community in which they exist.

Ambitious Network - This refers to all people who are affiliated to organisation X. They can be described as supporters of the organisation X. All the above-listed group form part of the network plus all organisations affiliated one way or another.

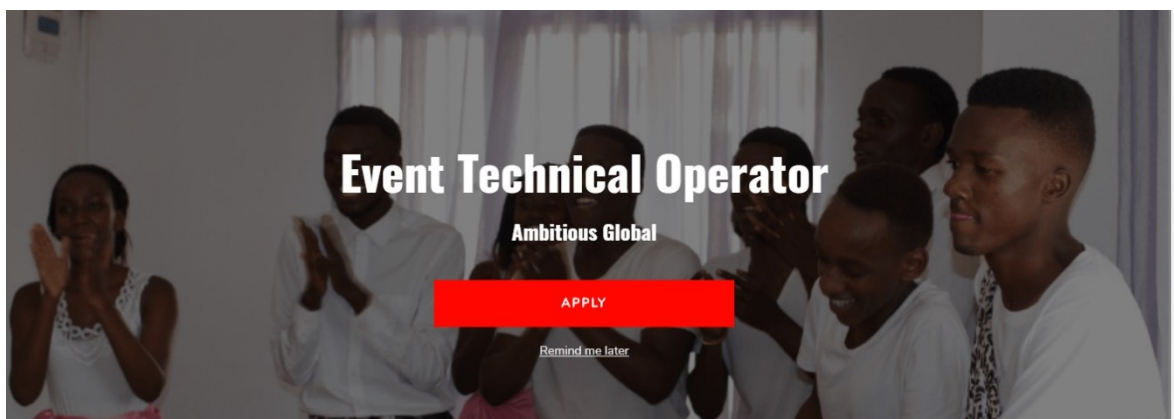
2.3 Volunteering

Two reasons have induced many economists to study why people volunteer. The first is understanding the benefits for volunteers when there is no monetary compensation and the reasons why people choose to volunteer for organisations when there are other means of contributing (Lionel Prouteau, 2008) Common to most NGOs, the Organisation X works with the help of volunteers. Volunteer work refers to all jobs done without salary or pay. Studies done by John Hopkins Comparative Non-profit sector project on volunteering found that the financial value of unpaid contribution is on average twice as much as the financial donations. This means the hours contributed by volunteers have enormous value. Volunteer work is mostly attractive to people because it gives them the opportunity to gain work experience.

It is therefore important to identify the motivational goals of the volunteer when they join as the most effective means of attracting and increasing volunteer retention. At the end of volunteer work, recognition of work by certificate issuing serve as proof of work done.

Following this same pattern, most people may see it as an opportunity to get a job through the networks they create while they volunteer (Schiff, 1990) Recent studies conducted by associations to better understand why people volunteer showed that motivation is more casual among volunteers. It is important for the volunteer management to make the work attractive by making the work meet the motivational goals of the volunteer.

Based on the above reasons, people who express interest in organisation X respond to a questionnaire to describe their motivation and areas of interest. In addition, job posts are made to advertise specific positions as well. The image below shows a sample job post on the recruitment platform, Team tailor.



Picture 1. Sample image showing a job post on team tailor for recruiting to positions

2.4 Ambitious Global

Ambitious global is the management and leadership unit of organisation X. It has 10 core members who perform various tasks to ensure everything proceeds as planned. In the global team there is the head of projects, partnerships, marketing, human resources, partnerships, and events. The responsibilities differ based on the role and department but remain interconnected. An example of responsibilities is listed below. The Head of department creates advertisements or makes requests for a position to be created to Team tailor. Applicants are screened, evaluated and potential ones are interviewed and onboarded to the position. HR department sends follow up emails afterwards and adds unsuitable ones to the Ambitious network or talent pool after they are onboarded by HR or send rejection emails to them. The marketing department is responsible for creating the graphics content of organisation X. It ensures the brand is consistent with all teams, organises training programmes for the country marketing heads and handles social media.

3 Getting people excited about organisation X

Taking on the task of creating a future is a risky business (Magaretta, 2002, p. 172) The world is more connected than ever, information is more accessible now. Getting people interested in activities is the first step in translating plans into actions. It is important for an organisation to be identifiable and easy to recognise. This first encounter sets the basis for their interest when people read posts or stories about projects been undertaken by organisation X in the Nordics and Africa. In the early days of organisation, the global team had to search for potential candidates who could organise country launch. The selected people were then contacted and educated about what the organisation represents. This is usually achieved through the highlight of the goals, visions, and missions.

According to Joan Magratta in her book *What Management Is*; she states that without innovation and risk taking, there will be no economic progress. The process was time consuming, and a lot of effort was needed to make things happen. Nevertheless, this method was used over a period until there was a need for change. Organisation X is very dynamic, and a lot has changed since its commencement. Standing by our statement, “we learn by doing” processes are continuously improved when they are effective and efficient for our needs. Individuals reach out through Team tailor and connect with the organisation for several reasons. The most important aspect and crucial in the initial stages is communicating the values, mission, vision, and goals of the organisation. The individual can then decide if our values speak to them and want to be involved.

Vision

“Ambitious Africa is the bride between the African and Nordic youth who are working together to build a sustainable future together.” The vision of Ambitious Africa can be broken down to highlight some crucial factors when introducing organisation X to a stakeholder. The vision of bridging the gap refers to removing barriers that often hinder collaboration between youths located on different continents closer. Youths on different continents are consciously brought together to work together for a sustainable future through projects, education, and others.

Mission

“We transform the collaboration between Africa and the Nordics by focusing on Education, Entrepreneurship, and Entertainment.” We connect, inspire, and empower young people in all African and Nordic countries, to work together, lead the change and make an impact.” (Ambitious Africa) The mission is to transform the way collaboration is done. It

aspire to inspire, motivate, and empower young people in African and Nordic countries to build a future that suits their needs with support from the older generation. Communicating the mission and vision effectively is especially important to avoid wrong interpretation.

3.1 Ambitious team vs Ambitious community

The ambitious team in this context refers to the leaders in the country team. The leadership maintains direct contact with the Ambitious Global team to work together to get projects, partnerships, and other collaborations. The Ambitious team is usually formed before the launch of a specific country. It usually goes by the name Ambitious Africa + country name e.g.: Ambitious Africa Senegal. Comprised of four people, two Nordics and two Africans. However, this changes after the launching and more roles or positions are required to get the Ambitious team going. In some instances, the initial people step down and a new crowd of people can take over the running of the affairs. The positions in an Ambitious team are country team lead, marketing head, head of partnerships, head of projects and a head of operations. A well-designed job can foster engagement and well-being (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014). These positions are occupied by locals of that country with few teams integrating Nordic people into this group.

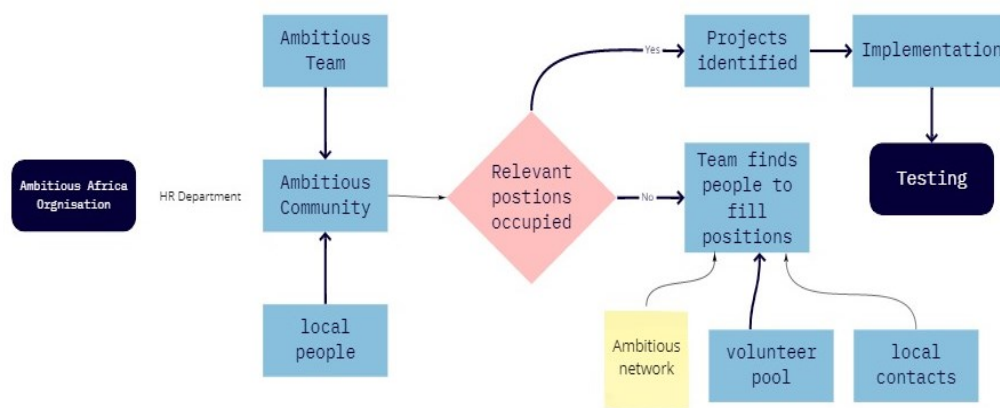


Figure 4. Community structure of organisation X 2020

In some situations, the Nordic people who join as part of the National team can take up a position as well. If this happens, the gap between the African youth and the Nordic counterparts is removed right away.

In each national team, the below listed roles with task descriptions are required before community building begins. After the Ambitious team is formed, they are ready to receive more people from the local community with or without contact with the global team.

An Ambitious Community

An ambitious community in this context refers to all the people who join the country specific team after launching. The community is usually made up of local people located in a specific country with varying backgrounds. This may include students, workers, investors, organisations, start-ups, graduates, unemployed youth etc.

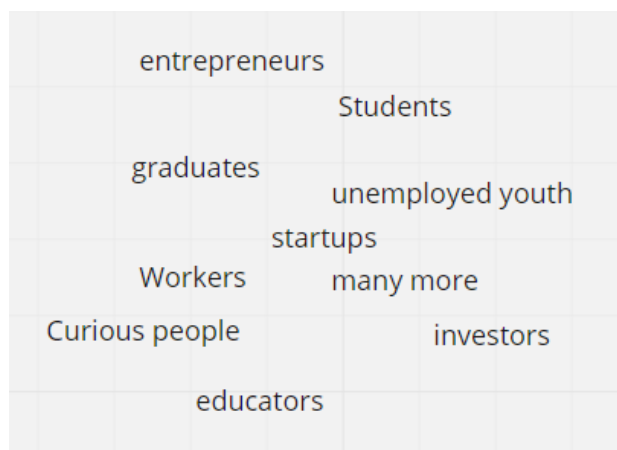


Figure 5. Represents the diverse groups present in the community teams

The community represents the branch of Ambitious Africa in their respective countries. They initiate projects by identifying local challenges and problems. Overall, these people will be project initiators, project leads, future entrepreneurs, project owners etc. Benefits include getting first-hand information about everything happening in the Ambitious Africa Organisation. They come in the form of projects, partnerships, events, training, etc.

3.2 The dynamics of the national teams

Cultural dimension theory by Hofstede characterises five cultural dimensions, namely power distance, uncertainty, masculinity, long term orientation and individualism (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Michael, 2010, 3rd edition)The continent of Africa comprises 54 individual sovereign states on the continent divided into 5 parts. Individualise cultures tend to look at ta social setting where people are supposed to look after their individual interest and collective societies have a more closely-knit society where members are expected to look out for each other in that group. Looking closely at these five cultural dimensions. Cultures grow from fact and from perception (Manion, 2012, s. 51)

Long term orientation deals with virtue which refers to having a sense of shame. Long-term orientation is often a culture that is persistent. This is a characteristic found in Asian countries like China and Japan. Values related to short term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations and protecting people's self-respect is found in African countries like Ghana and Nigeria. Power distance measures how people in a society accept the fact that power is not distributed equally in organisations. In such societies, titles and ranks are particularly important. The success of every team depends on the team composition. (Manion, 2012, s. 58) Comparing the Nordics and Africa, there is a high-power distance in most African countries example Nigeria, Ghana. On the other hand, there is a low power distance in most Nordic countries like Denmark and Finland. Rank and titles are especially important to leaders and people in most African countries.

Organisation X is working in a low power distance will need a lot of education to foster greater collaboration among people of all levels because subordinates are often fearful of their superiors. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how a society or group of people accept other opinions and behaviours which differ from their own because they do not feel threatened views and are also comfortable to undertake risks. A society with high uncertainty avoidance is often societies where people feel threatened by uncertainty. An example is events and happenings in Nigeria where citizens feel nervous continuously from fear of an attack from militants (BBC.) Some countries also emphasize masculinity, thus the acquisition of money and material wealth. Nordic cultures tend to stress more femininity which emphasizes quality of life and concern for welfare.

Diversity refers to the multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist among people another (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014) The differences make cultures and people unique to one another. Working with a group with diverse backgrounds presents a lot of advantages but also disadvantages as well.

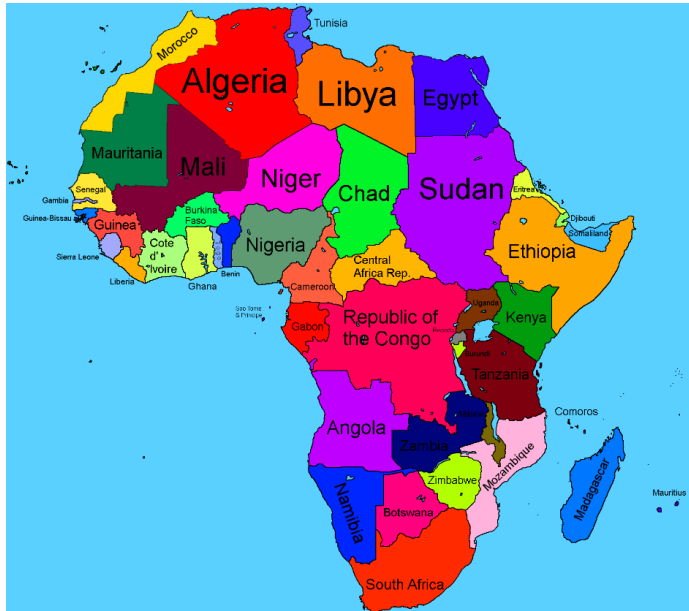


Figure 6. Wikipedia image of the African Continent

Despite these differences, the groups are bonded by cooperative goals, concrete measures, and common purposes. There is a need to manage and coordinate collaboration to achieve the visions of Ambitious Africa. Some team members might need time deliberately considering all the viable options available to them before they decide. In most cases a hierarchy delays decision making as they are used to in their work. Other teams may be used to deciding right away because they are empowered to do that in their work (Zakaria, 2017, p. 23)

In exploring the different regions in Africa, it is important to ensure that the global team manages interdependent relationships as they work on common tasks which will contribute to achieving the overall goal of the organisation. Teams differ in culture backgrounds as several cultures may exist in one team (Zakaria, 2017, p. 13) What is meaningful to a person is based on how the person views the world through his or her personal lens and the cultural environment in which they live.

As stated earlier, the continent is divided into five parts. There is the north, comprised of Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan, and the disputed nation of Western Sahara (Nation Online.) Most of the countries in this group are located along the Mediterranean Sea. They have a remarkably diverse population with majority been Muslims or followers of Islam. (Maischi, 2018) The common languages in the region are Arabic, English and French. Arabic is recognised as the official language for North Africa but countries like Sudan, Algeria and Morocco also recognise English as an official language.



Figure 7. The Map of Northern Africa

The southern part of Africa has a different culture from the North. It is bound by the South Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east. It is comprised of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland. South Africa alone as a country boasts eleven official languages, which shows the diversity of the region. Most of the population are Christians and there are several languages spoken in the region most common are English, Swahili etc. (Project)



Figure 8. The Map of Southern Africa (Academy, 2012)

The Eastern part of Africa comprises Comoros, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia and Somaliland, Seychelles, South Sudan, Somaliland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Madagascar, and Zambia.



Figure 9. Map of Eastern Africa from Wikipedia

Another big and populated part of the continent is Western Africa. It is made up of eighteen countries. It has the most countries per head count compared to other parts of the continent. These countries are Benin, Togo, Cote D'ivoir, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Gambia, Senegal, Saint Helena etc. (Academy, 2012)



Figure 10. Map of Western Africa from Encyclopædia Britannica

There are nine countries in Central Africa Republic. The continent comprises Cameroon, Angola, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Paola, and Principe. Lastly, Central Africa have most of the inhabitants been Christians or believers in African traditional religion. Some languages spoken are English, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Spanish.

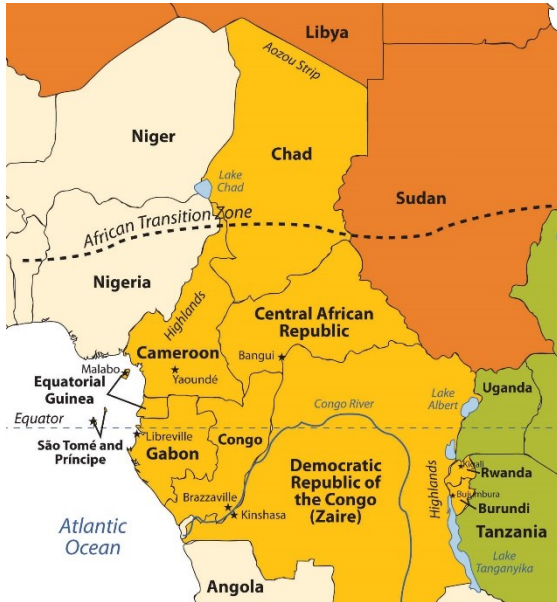


Figure 11. Map of Central Africa from Wikipedia

4 Structure of the community

Team leaders serve as the head of the leadership body of the country specific communities. Community or teams refer to the people who come together to work to achieve organisational goals. Community building in this context refers to bringing people together to collaborate to accomplish the visions of the organisation X. Leaders are going somewhere and if there is no motion then there is no need for a person to lead (Manion, 2012). Community building from my experience during my work involves communication, clear goal setting, teamwork, team bonding, engagement, motivation, cooperation, and volunteer's well-being programmes. People committed to the right things foster targets to be achieved.

The group will have a strategy and its target is to work on achieving the vision of the overall organisation. The effective combination of the elements listed above will ensure that the goals and the visions of the global team are achieved. In diverse groups, loyalty is needed and in return gratitude is expected from the leaders. Subordinates must take their responsibilities seriously and perform diligently. With each group focusing on a different target, the overall objective can be achieved. Most important aspect of team building is trust which will ensure team effectiveness (Zakaria & Yusof 2015, p 339 - 351; Klitmoller & Lauring 2013 p 398 - 406.)

Teamwork ensures and makes sure that projects can be initiated on the grounds in these countries. They are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities of the national teams. One of the significant things about organisation X is that; all major events, workshops are virtual because members are not located in a principal place. The whole organisation begun when the corona virus hit, and a person meeting was not recommended. To organisation X, it is important to lead than to manage. One of the major problems any team may face is disengaged leadership. It is for this reason that there are at least 2 major community meetings per month.

4.1 Interview Plan

There will be two groups interviewed as part of this study. The Global team for Ambitious Africa (referred to as Ambitious Global) made up of eight people and some members of the community.

4.2 Interview questions for Global leads

Organisation X is a new organisation and has only been operating for about nine months. This means there is a lot to learn, develop and decide when it comes to their operations. It

is therefore necessary to understand what the leadership expects to achieve over the coming years and how they want operations to be run in the various communities.

Interview questions.

- What is the leadership structure of your organisation?
- How many people form the basis for the community and what will be their responsibilities
- What do you expect from various communities to ensure you achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation?
- What are some of the challenges you are facing now and what has been done to address them?
- What are the expectations of the various communities?
- What are the long-term goals of the organisations?
- How do you understand community building and engagement?
- If you were a member of a community, how would you want to keep team members engaged?

4.2.1 Interview questions for Community members.

- Why did you join the organisation X community?
- What do you expect from the community as a member?
- What kind of activities or events would you like to see organised in the community?
- Do you have suggestions on how we can improve our interaction with? community?
- Which platform/ platforms will you like events to take place?
- What are some of the challenges you are facing in building your community and what has been done to address them?
- What is your overall feedback this far regarding our activities?

4.2.2 Summary of interview responses

Based on the responses from interviewees, problems, points and strengths are identified. The interview helped me understand the motivation of volunteers and get a better understanding from the founders and leaders on what they hope to achieve as an organisation. a summary compiled identified tasks and roles needed to be clearly defined for effective work to be done. These include tasks expected from the team leaders, their key perfor-

mance indicators and the level of accountability. On the other hand, responses from community members highlighted that most people did not understand the structure and mission of the organisation and did not have a lot of free time to spare.

4.3 Challenges to community building

Community building is the process of motivating volunteers and workers to give their best in their work (Mitchell, 2017, p. 57) “None of us is as smart as all of us.” According to Kenneth Blanchard in his book *The One Minute Manager*. Building a multicultural team is a challenge and relying solely on computer media channels presents its own set of challenges as well. These channels, however, also enable people to collaborate without been restricted by time, location, and space. The success of a team in achieving the change initiative depends on the people in the team, how they interact and how they collaborate to solve problems and challenges (Manion, 2012).

4.4 SWOT analysis for organisation X

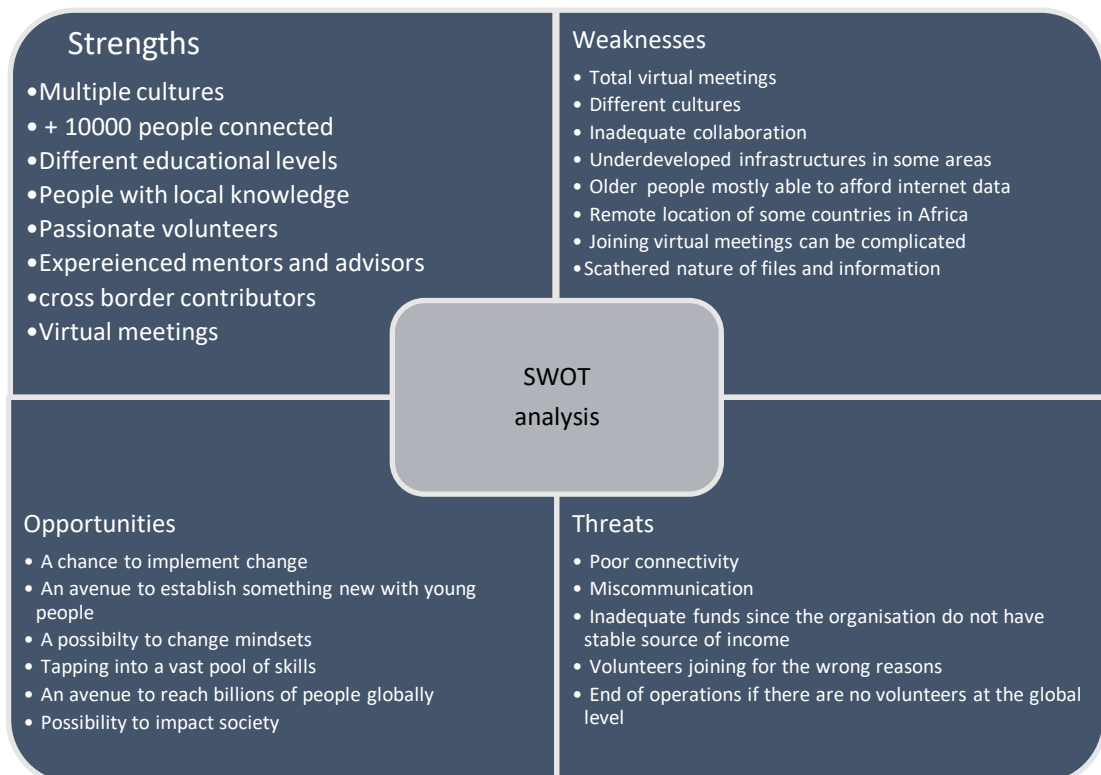


Figure 12. SWOT analysis for organisation X (Global, 2020; Organisation, 2020)

Communication is particularly important in teamwork or community building. The key factor in community building is facilitation. This helps to understand the members of the community and what they want. There are a lot of challenges in remote team building when in

- person contact is impossible. These may include misunderstandings, cultural differences and inadequate knowledge and understanding.

Communication is only effective when the intended meaning is understood by the recipient. Ambitious Africa uses multiple means of communication and channels to send messages across all Ambitious teams. The core team of ambitious Africa stated that a success factor in communication is the consistency and quality, the strategy used and the intent of the message. Teams are defined as members who strive to achieve mutual goals; they need to communicate to achieve the stated and agreed goals.

Distinct cultures view the decision-making process differently. In an African context, decision making is very hieratical and mostly older people's opinions are prioritized because they are more experienced. On the other hand, the Nordic approach tends to be less hieratical, and everyone's opinion is welcome and considered. This is one of the main reasons why Ambitious Africa aspires to give a chance to younger people. Mostly, the wishes of the young are considered in decision making even when it affects them.

What is the value? According to a Webster dictionary, value is worth or usefulness of importance when compared to something else. There exist links between creating meaningful work, engagement, and communication (value is commonly understood in monetary terms and not much attention is paid to non-monetary value). Ambitious Africa offers the opportunity for members to learn by doing and creating an extensive network. Major cooperation and collaboration are mostly done remotely since teams are spread across multiple countries. Potential culture related management areas include overcoming high anxiety and the uncertainty of feelings (Germain & McGuire, 2014). Cultural differences are one of the challenges of virtual teams. What is meaningful to a person is how the person perceives whatever is been discussed through their cultural lens. Diversity is, however, an advantage that can bring a lot of value to any organisation or business.

4.5 Steps for community building

There are three terms used in organisation X to describe two major groups and a process. These groups are ambitious teams, community, and community buildings. The definitions of the terms will be defined in the context of organisation X. The image below depicts and summarises what the community is about in organisation X. Community building is a process where people are brought together to work, initiate and implement projects.



Figure 13. Sketchplanations drawings summarising our Ambitious Community

In communities, members are expected to give their experiences and community knowledge to identify and find solutions. It is also an avenue for continuous learning, networking, and active participation. Interview questions for Global team regarding community building. The interview was conducted to get an understanding on how the organisation will be operating with all the teams from the different countries. The level of control and autonomy.

- What is the role of the community members?
- What are the leadership structures and roles in the community?
- What is the ownership structure of each community and the contribution to the global team?

Like other processes, in team building there are steps to consider and follow. One of the major considerations is considering community spaces. Community spaces refer to the various places and platforms community members meet to interact with each other.

Summary of Responses (Global, 2020)

They are six main people in leadership positions who manage the activities of an ambitious team, they are free to create more roles to suit their local needs. Every Ambitious team has at least two Nordic representatives who own projects and events. Teams are open to everyone to anyone who wants to take part in leading the change. They are independent and oversee running their own operations and making decisions. The Ambitious team is responsible for building the local community in the country. They serve as the link between the community members and the global team. An ambitious team brings people together through events highlighting local strengths or challenges. They organize workshops to offer training to local members. They identify, plan, and execute initiate projects in collaboration with Ambitious Global.

Strategy for community building in organisation X

- **Fair** - Every member of the community is treated equally without discrimination.
- **Proactive** - Give feedback about events and other happenings in the community
- **Fun** - Create a relaxed and casual environment where people can be creative while enjoying others' company.

Goals for organisation X

- Compassionate, composed, engaged and vibrant communities
- Young people leading Change
- Excellent learning by doing experience for volunteers

Values of organisation X

- Collaboration- We value collaboration - learning from each other and working together towards a better future.
- Transparency- We value transparency – we base our decisions and actions on a transparent and clear communication and decision-making process.
- Trust- We value trust, we are trustworthy, and we trust others.
- Learning by doing - We value learning, we think it is important to learn things and gain experience through active doing, not just thinking.
- Leading the change - We value a proactive attitude; we want young people to be in charge and lead the change towards a better future.
- Openness - We value an open and honest attitude and communication. We are not only for a few but for all.

4.6 Considerations in team building

Countries are dynamic and unique in culture, political climate, economic, and technological factors, and social situations. Considering the situation of the country, team building can begin after a pestle analysis is conducted. The local knowledge or experience. Suggested channels to use in community buildings. WhatsApp groups, Facebook groups in your local area, Instagram, Student groups on university campuses, Start-up hubs and incubators, through other similar organisations in your country, Church groups, through events, other relevant platforms where the youth meet to engage with each other.

Culture is learned mostly from the social environment and not from genetic characteristics.

Culture is something shared by a group or category, it refers to a collective group.

Culture provides parts to a society; they are interrelated parts that work together for

complete the whole. Considerations.

1. What are the most suitable and popular means of mobilizing people?
2. What are some of the significant challenges people face in the country?
3. What are the population characteristics, young or old population groups?
4. What factors will hinder collaboration among individuals?
5. What are the most popular platforms do people use in the country?

5 Community engagement

Numerous studies have stressed the importance of engagement which leads to more commitment to organisational goals. (Hakanen, Toppinen-Tanner, & Perhoniemi, 2008) In accordance with this, organisation X engages actively with members in the community continuously designing activities for the community spaces. Employee engagement refers sometimes also referred to as motivation or commitment can be summarised as the satisfaction gained in a particular position, how an employee is committed in a position and the willingness to go beyond the job description to achieve more (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014).

Engagement is an effective way to keep the interest and commitment of people throughout their employee or volunteer life cycle. Some benefits include increased productivity, increased retention, and improved customer service. According to Tervela (2016) there are three main components want to see in an employer thus achievement, Camaraderie aspect and equity. Achievement involves the positive feeling volunteers feel that their actions are contributing to something great and been recognized. The camaraderie aspect refers to the sense of community in the organisation that facilitates collaboration and equity refers to the fair treatment of all contributors.

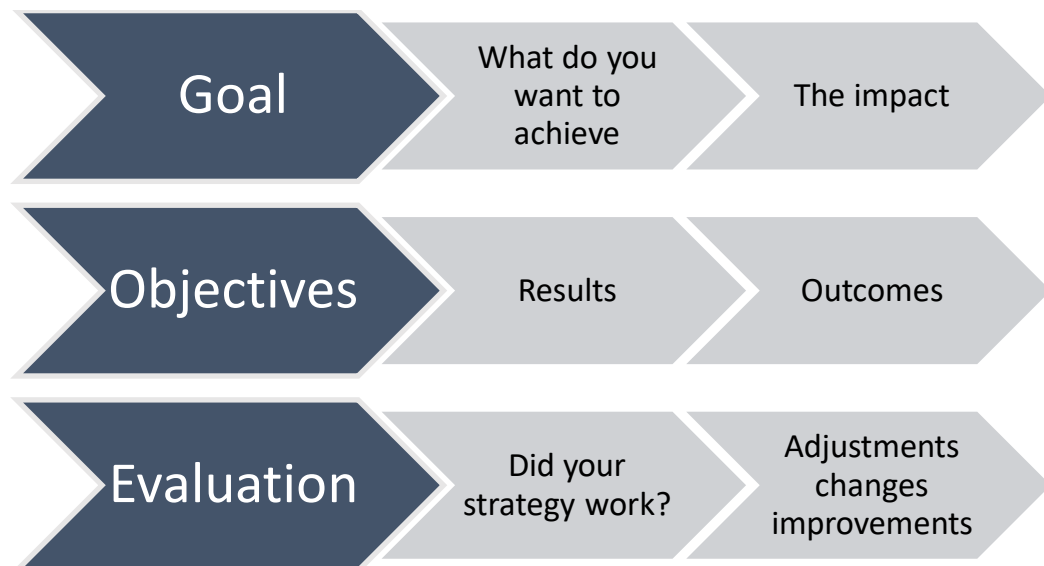


Figure 14. Community Engagement Strategy Creation process (Tervela, 2016)

For every community engagement plan drawn, overall goals, specific goals to address specific aspects in the community, the objectives of the plan and finally and evaluation to assess its effectiveness. Relevant changes and adjustments should be encouraged after

each implementation. The most important aspect of engagement is identifying what motivates volunteers. Engagement is not a one-time activity and has to be continuous, especially in a non-profit organisation. It is good to start engagement one-on-one, followed by a team or group of individuals. After team engagement the whole organisation can be engaged. Focusing on new volunteers ensures a sound base for the future (Mitchell, 2017, p. 9)

According to the Chartered Institute of personnel and development, there are three types of engagement. Social engagement is the opportunity to collaborate and interact with others at work for changes and improvements. In terms of volunteer work, this type of motivation is necessary to get people to create new connections, expand their network and share their expertise with others in the community. Intellectual engagement is thinking about the job or the organisation and how to improve it throughout your work cycle. In the case of organisation X, this is especially important as National teams are encouraged to initiate and implement projects.

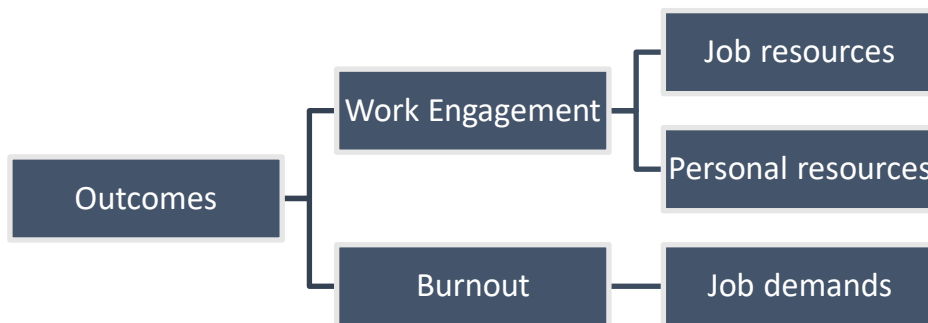


Figure 15. The job demand-resources model (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014)

Explaining the diagram above, different elements come together to foster the outcome expected from the job. Job demands in any activity refer to the physical and psychological contributions that are involved in the work which can lead to stress or low performance. Poor or insufficient resources may lead to burnout and job demand may lead to increased engagement. According to Catherine, Rick, Kerstin, Amanda, and Emma (2014), hindrances that may affect personal growth and learning do not affect engagement. The term engagement has been used over the years to describe ways organisations keep their employees motivated to perform their work. Why is engagement important? It is very essential to ensure the community is onboard with objectives, decisions, events, and

activities organised by the organisation. An increase in contact with people of diverse cultures, education and wealth reduce cross cultural differences. Engagement influences an employee's mindset and relates to personal initiative and learning. The level of engagement for groups with distinct cultures can only be compared when the measuring instrument is unbiased and equal to in all other groups (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014) According to Swindell, there are four main reasons why teams fail thus: skill, knowledge, resources, or motivation. Work engagement refers to the relationship of an employee with their work. Engagement leads to motivation and an engaged community will lead to proactiveness from community members. There have been twenty-five teams launched since organisation X commencement. Identifying the reasons for failure is particularly important to revive a disengaged team.

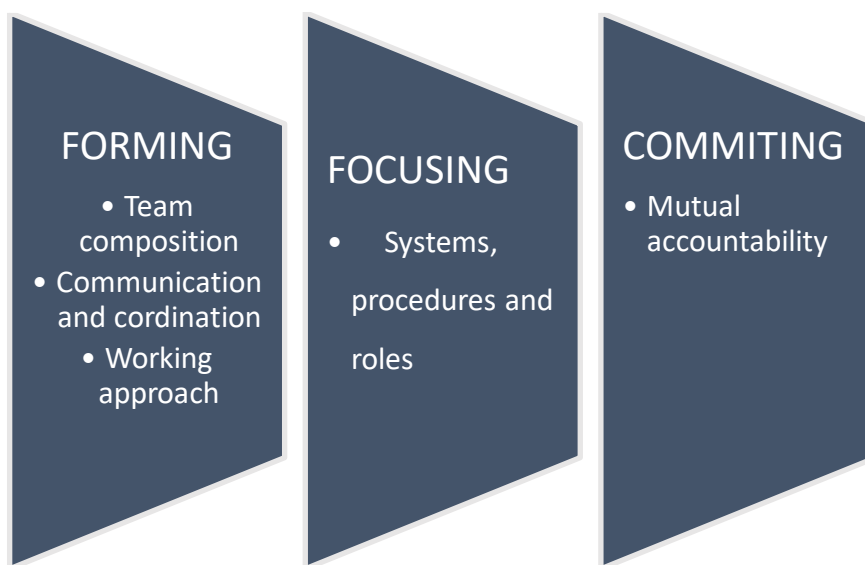


Figure 16. Framework for team success (Manion, 2012)

The first item of consideration is the formation of the team. Who is in the team and what are their roles? Secondly, it is important to consider communication and coordination methods. Communication facilitates motivation as the means to motivate depends on the way a message is communicated (Forsyth, 2006) Last in the formation phase is the working approach thus the structures and guidelines on how work will be performed. The three points are a crucial step to achieve success since it forms the basis for teamwork.

The people in the team will contribute varying skills and knowledge to make the activities been undertaken successful.

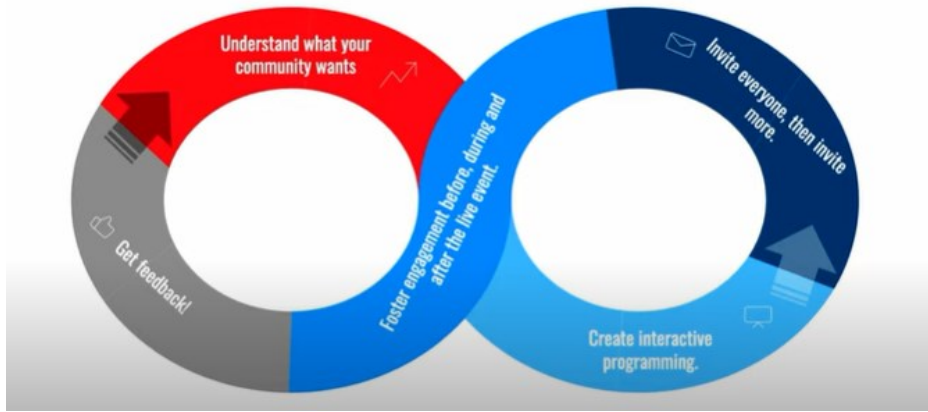


Figure 17. Power to Fly process for community engagement planning

The figure above shows how the loop of community engagement can be pictured. Where is engagement happening in the community and what is the community talking about? Fostering engagement before, during and after a live event facilitates engagement throughout the community. Understand what the community wants.

Stages of Engagement for communities

Based on discussions and observations in the Ambitious Africa Organisation, four main stages of engagement in the organisation. These various stages help increase interest, motivation, and commitment. Additionally, produce contents to suit different preferences (text, audio, video). In these videos, give instructions on becoming a member, intro videos from the countries. In Ambitious Africa, engagement has four main important stages that have been identified.



Figure 18. The stages of engagement for volunteers

First Contact

Before becoming a volunteer. This is the stage where an individual encounter the organisation for the first time either online or by recommendation. To ensure interest is triggered, make the post or information clear for understanding without using complicated words taking into consideration the multi-cultural nature of the community members.

Before

Before they join a team or community. This is the period when potential volunteers weigh their options and consider availability and willingness based on the attractiveness of the organisation goals, missions, visions, and objectives. Virtual team building sessions in this period are recommended since physical meetings are impossible. Highlight each role function and responsibilities to enable understanding. This also includes job posts made in Team tailor, which is the recruitment platform for the organisation, social media platforms articles, events etc.

During

When they join a specific team or community. This is the most crucial stage of volunteer life. Communities must implement different events, activities etc to keep the volunteers and reduce turnover. Virtual team building sessions with fitness instructors or other essential services. Virtual conferences with real time illustrators like performance. Breakfast and lunch sessions where participants bring their lunch or breakfast, and the team gets to network while enjoying a meal virtually. Sending gifts and other giveaways to virtual attendees who interact the most with others. Create competitions to get people active during meetings or events.

Progressing community building and engagement, consider the below listed ideas for engagement. These are easy to organise activities which can easily be implemented.

- Monthly community pitching contest
- Internal training
- Open relaxation hours (physical space)
- Peer Learning

These below listed activities will help the community to do better in their work and help develop a sense of achievement.

- celebrate each milestone
- mix teams to work together
- highlights for each member

After

After leaving the organisation as a volunteer.

Happy former employees are great advocates for any business. This same principle applies to volunteers. Every volunteer has a motivational motive for volunteering therefore, jobs assigned must be in line with the volunteer motivation.

5.1 Types of leadership in the communities

The leaders in the will be leading the community by one of the below specified styles or types. More importantly, at the core of the leadership style is the personal behaviour of the person in the position.



Figure 19. Leadership types (Swindall, 2011)

5.2 Directional leadership

Directional leadership ensures that the volunteers work in the right direction to achieve the visions of the team. In organisational leadership, leadership is responsible for setting vision. They are also responsible for ensuring that people understand their vision.

Ways of implementing directional leadership in a team.

Procedure

Start by recruiting a few supporters from the people who understand the vision to serve as the support group for the rest of the disengaged group.

Make sure these people understand their vision and agree with it.

Explain to the community in ways they can contribute to achieving the vision set. Setting out how individual contributions add up to achieving the overall vision of the organisation.

Every single person should know about the strategy and how their role and work contribute to it. After the direction is clear, continue with motivational motivation.

5.3 Motivational leadership

After the strategy has been communicated, it is important to work on building understanding and all employees do not necessarily have to “agree with “the strategy, but they just

must “agree to it.” Constantly communicate the progress of the organisation to the rest of the group. The vision has been explained to the volunteers and they have gained understanding, it is important to encourage or inspire people to want to achieve their visions. The first step in doing this is to take steps to recognize them and their efforts. Encourage volunteers to show up with some personal inspiration. In your monthly meetings, communities and volunteers can be recognized by their efforts by announcing the progress made on all projects and events.

Ways of achieving engagement.

- Lead with positive motivation. Instead of stressing the consequence of negative behaviour or deficient performance, stress the positive reward when an assigned task is accomplished. Celebrate small successes in the national teams. This simply means recognizing achievements by the team members and showing appreciation for demanding work. This can be in the form of mentioning their names in meetings or giving them a gift.
- Encourage a work life balance for all people in your team to reduce stress and burn-out of members. Event organising can be a stressful and demanding task. Ensure work is divided to get as many hands to help as possible. Understand the volunteers and try to work with them when life changes prevent them from executing some tasks. Work on creating a free and fair environment for members and volunteers. Treat all the volunteers equally and give out the same consequences for unaccepted behaviour. This will create trust, commitment, and teamwork.

5.4 Organisational leadership

Organisational leadership is about developing the team to see the vision of the global organisation to work towards it. A vision can be written down, but it needs to be explained and thought to team leads to ensure they understand what it means.

Ways of ensuring organisational leadership.

- Identify the appropriate talents and put them in positions they can perform. There are a lot of people who volunteer which exceptional talents who can help the organisation achieve its goals. Identify these people in your team and give them tasks to perform. Note: The national team leads, or community coordinators are responsible for keeping the team engaged. They maintain a community of informed individuals, manage their activities etc.

- Bridge the gap between the old and the young. People from different generations perform differently and it is important to adjust methods and procedures to all generations. In the national teams, there are old and young members at different points in their lives. Maintaining and creating a community where activities are suitable for all members is crucial for maintaining a productive community. Communities should move toward empowering people. Create an environment that encourages people to fail without fear of getting sacked or getting put down. Give out enough information to all country teams, community members and volunteers to feel empowered to make informed decisions.
- Create a strategy to maintain success. This involves training others to ensure someone can take over when you move on to other things. Every position should have two people responsible for that specific department. This will enable continuous activity and accountability in the national teams. There must be effective communication in this regard to get everyone onboard. Without information, people cannot perform their tasks and responsibilities. They have the best knowledge about their nations and the problems or sectors that need improvement. Through this process, questions are like.
How can community buildings be made effective?
How do we attract local companies and organisations to collaborate with us?
How can we create the most impact on our activities in teams?

Engagement is encouraged throughout the life cycle referring to the entire period spent by volunteers in the organisation. This begins with the first contact with Ambitious Africa Organisation. Once the volunteer is chosen as a potential person to a position or assigned to a community, the cycle continues beginning with onboarding. After the direction is clear, continue with motivational motivation.

Affective engagement can be described as feeling positive about the job or the organisation you are working for. Most people who volunteer for an organisation or a cause are happy to be contributing to making a change or impact. When there is transparency and effective communication, everyone will feel a part of the activities and what has been developed. There are four main levels of engaging with the community. Each of the four levels will ensure the overall engagement of everyone in the organisation.

One-on-one engagement. This type of engagement is targeted at individuals in the organisation aimed at understanding their targets and expectations in the organisation. This is an exceptionally good basis to get a mutual understanding of why someone will or has

joined the organisation. A person is engaged when they can express themselves and are ready to invest their personal energy into the work they do. This will help individuals relate more to the organisation when they understand how they contribute. (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014).

Team engagement. The whole team is engaged collectively to enable them to work together better and improve their way of working. In engaging in a team, it is good to let them know you have confidence in their ability. This can be done by assigning them responsibilities and giving them the space to implement their ideas.

Organisational engagement. This is engagement done on a large scale like the monthly meeting held for all teams to hear updates like new partnerships, new projects, exciting progress made by national teams, the organisation, and upcoming events. Modern organisations need employees who are willing to invest psychologically in their work. (Cathrine ;Rick ;Amanda;& Emma , 2014) Training in the assigned position is encouraged.

For every stage in this cycle, it is important to keep the employees engaged as rejected applicants are ambassadors of the organisations and any bad experiences will be shared with others. Engagement can only exist when we work in an environment where honest opinion is encouraged. Below is a simple communication plan for engagement after onboarding. Based on the sample strategy creation for engagement (figure 18) the table below is formulated.

Table 1. Planning table for activities for the community engagement based on figure 14

Milestone: Write the rationale for communication currently. (Example Info session)
Engaging volunteers and community members. Keeping volunteers informed Motivating volunteers to continue supporting the vision of the organisation
Scheduled Date: Estimate date
After onboarding
Objective: What is the main objective for communication activity (Example; Update community members on things happening, coming up and successes)
Volunteer Engagement

Audience: Who is your target group or audience for communication?
Ambitious Africa Volunteers Ambitious Africa National team members
Key Messages: List 3 to 5 messages intended to convey in the message
Recent updates Upcoming events Feedback Collection
Media: What is your chosen platform to communicate?
Example: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram
Owner: Who is responsible for making the milestone happen? This person is accountable but may not be responsible for creating the content and making the post.
Community Manager, Marketing lead, team lead etc

5.5 Best Practices

The best practices are a set of behaviour that is a widely accepted standard for adoption in an organisation. In organisation X, they lead by example, encourage proactiveness, learn by doing, creativeness and encourage teamwork. The practices that are set up by the organisation which guide members' behaviour and methods of working can be found in the code of conduct. Discipline refers to a set of rules governing conduct or activity (Merriam-Webster.) In any organisation, the set rules guide its members to ensure discipline is referred to as a code of conduct.



Picture 2. Organisation brand colours representing the organisation

The rules are set by the core team of the organisation in consultation with mentors and advisors, passed down to all national teams and volunteers. These best practices are stated in the code of conduct, volunteer contract, brand book, templates, project proposal form, volunteer job posts, organisation website and social media platforms. Although the

national teams are independent, they are expected to work in line with the guidelines of the global team. To ensure uniformity and easy identification across all national teams, all materials produced are done with the same brand of colours.

Strategy for community building in Ambitious Africa

- **Fair** - Every member of the community is treated equally without discrimination.
- **Proactive** - Give feedback about events and other happenings in the community
- **Fun** - Create a relaxed and casual environment where people can be creative while enjoying others' company.

Goals for organisation X

- Compassionate, composed, engaged and vibrant communities
- Young people leading Change
- Excellent learning by doing experience for volunteers

Values of organisation X

- Collaboration- We value collaboration - learning from each other and working together towards a better future.
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- Leading the change - We value a proactive attitude; we want young people to be in charge and lead the change towards a better future.
- Openness - We value an open and honest attitude and communication. We are not only for a few but for all.

5.6 The Future of the organisation X

Organisation X is all about young people leading to a change in mentality, way of working and how projects are initiated and undertaken. If young people continue to lead the new world we envisage, there will be a total change in the next 5 years for the next generation. The future looks overly exciting and bright with the latest achievements and collaborations established through demanding work.

The two great ambitions behind the initiative are to transform African and Nordic collaboration within 5 years. Secondly, the organisation plans to transform Africa in the next five years. For more direct future implications, below is a list of ten.

In the future.

- There will be a subsidiary in every African country, with this in place, multiple projects can be initiated led by the national teams and their local members.
- There will be at least 500 people from the five Nordic countries.
- There will be more involvement from young people from African universities and other student associations.
- The organisation will be recognized globally.
- Projects initiated by organisation will create employment in African countries which will contribute to reducing unemployment.
- More African leaders will develop interest in the vision and mission of organisation X in Africa.
- People will consciously adapt to a proactive attitude towards solving problems in their society.
- Every graduate will develop skills and interest in entrepreneurship as an option when they graduate from their tertiary education.
- Africa's contribution to the SDGs by the United Nations will increase and more impact will be made by the continent.
- Nordic knowledge about Africa and vice versa, which will deepen understanding through which more collaborations will be created.

6 Conducting the research

The research part of this thesis was conducted over a period of seven months by been actively involved in the activities of Ambitious Africa as a contributor. Together with the organisations, we organised events, formed partnerships and started projects with multiple organisations like Haaga Helia Start up school, Artic15 organisers, Embassies, start-ups, entrepreneurship societies, ministries, universities, corporations, companies, start-ups and many more. During this period, multiple methods of gathering information were used to gather data to better understand our contributions and how best we can engage with the community. These methods included interviews, questionnaires, surveys, one-on-one meetings, group meetings, events etc.

6.1 Qualitative approach

There is a community of over 1000 people in Ambitious Africa with over 300 active volunteers so far from over 25 countries across multiple continents. There were questionnaires sent directly to volunteers to gather their feedback about the community. Based on the feedback gathered, there were adjustments and improvements.

6.2 Other research methods

In this report, the other methods that were adopted in the gathering of information included conscious methods such as participation and observation. Also included are sources like books, videos, and other articles. While drafting this report, there over 500 people attended or participated in events organised. Surveys, comments, questions, and feedback were considered in this study to address challenges and suggest solutions.

6.3 Discussion of results

As stated in chapter 1.2, the objective if this report was to design a framework for community building in the Ambitious Africa organisation. There is a comprehensive step-by-step An approach is outlined in the report to guide teams to start community building. The next chapter explained the approach utilized to conduct research.

Chapter 4 discusses community building in-dept and gives examples of how it is done now in the organisation. Why is the community important to Ambitious Africa? This is because the organisation works through people and with people. Every project needs to be implemented using individuals referred to as a community in Ambitious Africa.

The results discussed show that the research was successful, and the commissioning company continuously applied it in their activities. Chapter 5 explains the community

building process and some of the best methods that were tested and successful in other teams to build their community. There are comprehensive steps listed to be taken to guide teams from the ground up.

7 Key discussions

The main research question for the study is:

7.1 Question 1

What is the best method of community building and engagement for Ambitious Africa Organization?

The most common response observed during the study was flexibility, facilitation, provision of guidelines and clear communication. To answer the above question therefore; the best method of community building and engagement is effective facilitation as this will ensure understanding. Sub questions for the research study are as follows:

7.2 Question 2

How has the team been performing? What are some of the successes so far?
What have been some of the significant problems ?

The teams have been performing well but could do better. Some of the successes of the team include people who commit some hours each week to pursue objectives of Ambitious Africa and people who occupy key positions. Also, some of the significant problems include ineffective communication which leads to inadequate understanding.

7.3 Question 3

What problems or barriers exist in the structure now and what has been done to address them?

In the study, it was discovered that some of the barriers to the effective performance of the Ambitious teams were age differences, limited time commitment, varying experience, and an inadequate understanding of what the Organisation It is working to achieve it. As a solution, it is proposed each team has two people in the leadership roles. It is important to pair a lot of experienced, well connected, and older people with younger, less experienced people. This will facilitate peer-learning and exchange knowledge.

8 Summary

In gathering data for this report, I have been actively involved in the activities of Ambitious Africa since August 2020 contributing as a community coordinator for the organisation. Information gathered and methods suggested in this report are based on active listening and information gathering through community meet up and get togethers. All suggestions in this report are methods tested in the organisations that proved effective. As a part of my role as a community coordinator, my responsibilities included meetings and event planning, hosting community meetings, responding to enquiries, assisting national teams build the communities in Africa countries. Additionally, I assisted in volunteering onboarding, activity planning and project coordination for partners and other stakeholders. In this role, I was in constant contact with community leaders, stakeholders and members providing guidance, answering inquiries, and presenting community projects.

8.1 Conclusion

In the autumn of 2020, organisation X experienced rapid expansion. For this reason, it is recommended that each national team selects a community coordinator to assist the team leader in developing programs and other events for their members. Create events calendars for the community and monitor activities in the community closely. The events, meetings, and other gatherings are organised to bring people together for networking at least twice a month. During meetings, inform about new tasks, projects the community is working on and events coming up in the community.

Communication with the community members must be constant and effective. The vision of bridging the gap between countries, ages and qualifications can only be achieved with the right applications. Creating an atmosphere that enables, encourages, and motivates community members to thrive is very crucial. More people will be needed to manage the community as it grows. It is suggested that continuous study and development is done as the organisation grows and expands. It is particularly important to stress the importance of paying attention to intercultural communication. Considering the extreme diversity of contributors' caution should be taken when designing activities and events.

In conclusion, effective engagement will keep the community members active. It is particularly important for continuous feedback collection from community members and other stakeholders as the numbers grow. This will help to build vibrant and engaged teams throughout the contribution period. Based on information gathered and observations, a

single method cannot be applied to all teams in the community building process due to extreme diversity. It is therefore important to consider each local environment and adapt to the methods suggested to fit needs.

8.2 Evaluation

At the early stage of any organisation, it is important to ensure that a strategy is in place together with working methods and goals. It has been a wonderful opportunity to be able to practice learnings from Haaga Helia to a real organisation of such a large scale. Most of the initial methods used in trying to gather information proved ineffective. I had to continuously change approach and method to gather data. Continuous and persistent communication with various stakeholders in the end was more effective than sending out surveys and questionnaires. I have developed my communication, organising and coordination skills through this process and continue daily. It would be unfair to say my single effort has adversely changed how things are done in the organisation, but it helped shape some community practices. Visibly, methods have improved as well as operations of the organisation by gathering feedback and questions as a community coordinator. With over three hundred volunteers and sixty partners, my personal network and connection as well as improving my skills in people management.

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Appendix

Community building and engagement help Kit

Questionnaire



Organisation X

Community building and engagement help Kit

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1 Building the community



Picture 3. Google image representing community

The community building is the process of assembling people together to work towards common objectives. The objectives must be tailored to the country as every country and environment has diverse needs. The following positions are necessary to fill.

1.1 Positions in the Community

Team lead

The team leader is coordinating that the team is succeeding at the right pace and that communication within the team and with the Ambitious Global team is successful.

The best team leaders see themselves as catalysts (Patrick & David, 2002, p4.) A person is the first point of contact and enables efficient work within the team as well as cooperation in the community. This is a challenging opportunity but will also create an amazing experience future career-wise.

Task

Coordinating tasks within the team

Keep the team motivated and engaged by enabling projects and events

Organize and host weekly meetings and take care of the documentation

Be the main contact with the global team

Weekly/biweekly meetings with all other national team leaders

Requirements

Great cooperation skills

Strong organizational skills

Excitement to run Ambitious Africa within the country

Availability to contribute Ambitious Africa 10+ hours / week

Head of Marketing

This person oversees marketing, social media, and outreach. The organisation wants to reach as many people and relevant organizations that can benefit from our events and projects as possible. Ambitious Africa has some essential marketing templates ready, but they need to be adapted to a country specific by this person. This person is also in charge of communication, especially on social media.

Task

Creating visuals (posters, banners, social media content) in line with brand assets

Branding important documents (internal documents, presentations, etc.) to highlight and support Ambitious Africa's statement

Collaborating with the marketing leaders of other National Teams and the Global Team

Create, distribute, and promote compelling content about the Ambitious operations

Create marketing strategies and execute them

Requirements

Excellent written communication skills in English

Creative and adaptive, but also organized attitude, ability to be detail-oriented while not losing sight of the big picture

The ability to organize and structure the workload according to the team's needs

Availability to contribute to Ambitious Africa at least 5-10 hours a week

Head of media

This person oversees the media and provides content (articles, videos, photography) to be shared on the country's specific social media channels. People will create a list of media organizations and contact them to spread the materials further on local channels.

Task

Creating and editing media content (videos, photography, articles) together with the Global media team

Contacting relevant media organizations and sharing content with them

Collaborating closely with the Head of Marketing on content creation

Requirements

Can-do attitude, great written and spoken communication skills

Good cooperation skills, availability to contribute to Ambitious Africa at least 5 -10 hours a week

Head of operations / projects

This person will oversee starting and facilitating projects, making sure that the proposals will be in place and things are going forward. Templates for proposals and instructions on how to get started the Ambitious Africa projects (e.g., Envisage Incubator, 5G Mökki) will be provided by the Global team. The person is also responsible for supporting and enabling kickstarts for other projects.

Task

Background research to find out the biggest challenges / gaps that a team wants to tackle

Communicate with a global team about projects that can be easily established

Make project proposals to partners and funders recruit project teams (together with the Ambitious Global team) when needed to perform individual projects

Requirements

Strong organizational skills, interest in project management, can-do attitude, great written communication skills in English, availability to contribute to Ambitious Africa at least 5 -10 hours a week etc

Head of Events

This person oversees making sure everything is in place to succeed and provide high quality events. She/he will be communicating with speakers and partners before/during/after events. In addition, the person is helping to look for relevant partnerships for the team and closing deals with partners based on the instructions by the global team.

Task

Create content for panel discussions and guide speakers before / during / after the events

Update the Deal Room and make sure everything is in place for events.

Create a list of partners and contact them.

Recruit an event team (together with the Ambitious Global team) to make awesome events happen)

Requirements

Good digital communication skills

Detail-orientation individual

Passion to create events

Availability to contribute to Ambitious Africa at least 5-10 hours a week

Head of Partnerships

This person oversees acquiring local and international partners that are relevant to the national team as well as for the respective projects within the country. This, for example, entails establishing collaborations with universities, start-up ecosystem players, government entities, corporates and so on. Funding and revenue streams help a national team to run and even pay salaries to its team members (if working full time in the team).

Task

Map out and contact relevant partners

Plan on how to fund the operations of the National tea

Establish long-term as well as project specific partnerships

Maintain relations with existing partners

Send out a monthly partner-newsletter

Coordinate with the head of global partnerships

Requirements

An outgoing enterprising person who is not afraid to pick up the phone is excellent. communication skills, basic understanding of finance, take the initiative to create new partnerships.

Additional roles that are recommended but can be defined later:

University Ambassador Coordinator.

Sustainability Coordinator.

Community coordinator.

2 Community building

The process of community building is encouraged to begin after the required positions are filled.

2.1 By word of mouth

The most effective method based on observations personally has been by word of mouth where friends invite friends to join our work. It is however recommended for communities to find methods that work best for them to achieve their goals.

2.2 Community building using WhatsApp

Step 1

Organizing the launch of the country team which signifies the presence of the organisation in the country if there is not an Ambitious team already in existence.

The launch event is the first official introduction of a new Ambitious team in a country. Community in our context refers to all the ambitious change makers in Ambitious Africa who work together through collaboration to organize, execute events, projects to achieve our goals and targets. These groups form the community, Ambitious teams, Global team. (+Atlantes Americas etc.)

Step 2

Select five leaders who will lead the operations of the Ambitious team as a steering board. The team will oversee the supervision of marketing, operations, projects, partnerships, and events. These people will be responsible for the initial management of the community and for starting community building. The community building can start once space is identified and created. These spaces can be created, for example, WhatsApp group, Facebook, or onsite groups. Methods of mobilization depend on the country and their location. WhatsApp is reported to be the most effective method of mobilization of people for major demonstrations in modern times. Its efficiency and popularity make it an ideal application for connecting and mobilizing people.

Step 3

Start community building in the country.

One of the most effective methods tested and working so far in other teams is the use of WhatsApp. However, it is still especially important to stress the importance of using methods that suit the local population. WhatsApp group will not be effective if people have poor internet access or cannot afford to pay for the use of the internet.

Create a WhatsApp group using the country name. It is important to create a registration form to gather people's information when they join the WhatsApp group. Follow the steps below to create the registration form.

Steps to take in creating the registration form:

1. Create a registration form to record the names and other details of the people who will join the group.
2. Ask the right questions are asked in the form to gather all relevant details.
3. Invite people from the country through your personal contacts to join the community and ask them to spread the message and invite friends' other friends.
4. First 1 or 2 days, grant access to Admins to comment, welcome people and share rules of the group occasionally.

Community coordinator: This is the person who is responsible for managing the community at the local level. Usually, there can be more than one community coordinator depending on the number of people in the community.

After members have registered, send out an introductory package focusing primarily on what the local chapter has set out to achieve in the country.

After inviting people into the community on WhatsApp

2.3 Community Engagement

Community engagement ensures members remain informed and interested in activities happening in the community. The engagement may come in various forms and it is a continuous process that requires a lot of creativity.

2.3.1 Introductory message

Ambitious Africa is an organization with support from Nordic entrepreneurs, ministries and over 30 African countries. It is about young people leading the change while leveraging Education, Entrepreneurship and Entertainment.

Welcome to the new world where Education, Entrepreneurship and Entertainment have become the foundation of growth. Ambitious Africa is a growing community of people like you, connecting the Nordic and African ecosystems together to promote innovation and exchange. Become a member of the Ambitious Zambia community and let us transform the Nordic and Zambia cooperation.

Join us on WhatsApp:

Example of a group link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/Ch4v2sXCn4xBGW1mAdlozU>

Register Officially here:

Example of registration form: <https://forms.gle/LXJLqD4bKoa6i5cu8>

Example Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/ambitiousZambia>

Example of LinkedIn account of Ambitious LinkedIn account:

<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/ambitiouszambia>

Example of Twitter account of an Ambitious: @ambitiouszambia

Stage 4

Send out a welcome message to the people who join the community through the link or otherwise.

Step 5

Create rules of engagement for the community. This is important to keep unrelated posts and other content out of the group. It should be clear and simple.

Welcome message to people who join the WhatsApp group, to always be shared when ten new members join:

Welcome to the Ambitious Zambia Community!

Step 6

Create rules of engagement

Purpose of this Group

This group is created for the purpose of connecting with players in entrepreneurial, eco-system, education, and entertainment by sharing opportunities and collecting feedback to build robust and relevant projects to suit your needs. Sample rules of engagement for the WhatsApp groups.

Rules

Always keep the purpose of the group, only pertinent content is permitted.

This means the following should not be allowed:

Advertising pornographic materials and product sales

Posting of any political related content

Posting of any religious based content; this is due to different religious beliefs

Members who post content not relevant to the focus will be deleted from our community without notice.

Be courteous and respectful of other members and expect your opinions to be respected too. We can disagree with others and challenge others' opinions but please do so with fairness and courtesy.

We do not allow partisan discussions here; this is because the group is not a political platform. No arguing, no insults, no heated opinions, no fear mongering, no hyped-up drama, no fake news. Check your sources before you share it.

1. Do not have one-on-one conversations in the group. Switch to private messages.

Exiting from the WhatsApp Group

Do not be offended if others leave. Not everyone wants the same information.

Do politely excuse yourself before you leave a group.

Beyond everything, you are encouraged to join the conversation! Share your thoughts, ideas and ask questions, you will learn a lot and you never know who you might help.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the group administrators if you have questions.

Note: Rules of the group, to be always shared when 10 new members join,

☒ Step 7

Registration form questions to register new members

What is your full name?

Email address

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other, specify _____

_____ Location (country)

_____ What is your WhatsApp number?

What is your occupation?

- Student
- Entrepreneur
- Employee
- Searching for opportunities
- Other

Briefly talk about your occupation and yourself

What is your educational level?

- High school
- Training college
- University
- Higher

3.2 Stage 2: Before the volunteering journey begins

Volunteering contract should be sent before an individual start contributing as a volunteer. Collect all relevant contact information from the volunteers, this will help keep records of the volunteers and enable you to share relevant volunteer-related materials.

The introductory package for registered people gives a brief on everything about the organisation. You can attach any other relevant information relevant to the community. Attach the poster of AA for communities here. An introductory package is a means of giving more information to the new people who join the community. This is the first active community engagement initiated by community leaders. A message can be drafted to suit the locals, but it is important to include in the package basic information about organisation X as well.

Sample message to include in package

Africa is a youth-led African/Nordic organization that connects entrepreneurs, investors, students, educators, and policymakers. Ambitious Africa was founded with a goal to initiate and support Nordic and African youth-led large-scale grassroots projects with social impact in Africa. It is about young people leading the change leveraging Education, Entertainment and Entrepreneurship. The organization provides stakeholders with a platform to make relevant connections to develop projects in a specific country, supports the scaling of successful initiatives across Africa as well as offering consulting and impactful internships to students. Ambitious Africa has been supported by many relevant global actors such as Mr X, Angel investor and founder of Slush, the world's leading start-up and tech event, Mr Y, Minister for Development and Trade, organisations like Pipedrive and many African Ministers and Ambassadors.

After establishing operations across some African countries, the organization has started operations in (Country name) and joined the Ambitious team. A community of impactful young change makers through the links provided below below:

And follow us on our social media handles and other platforms:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmbitiousZambia>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/ambitiouszambia>

Twitter: @ambitiouszambia

You can attach any other relevant information relevant to the community. Attach the poster of AA for communities here.

To keep community members up to date with activities, updates and others it is good to organise weekly or bi-weekly meetings to discuss and plan activities.

Bi- weekly Community Get-together. Calendar invites should be sent separately.

Monthly Community Meet-up. Thursday of each month, calendar invites sent separately.

Physical Events after COVID-19. More information about the gatherings will be shared in our newsletters and social media.

Onboarding Of members through a virtual or physical meetup.

Onboarding involves explaining the values and work of ambitious Africa to the understanding of all members. Onboarding can talk in different forms, but we suggest a meeting where everyone can introduce themselves to other members and interact with others.

Email after onboarding to a position or community

Hello!

Thank you for attending the Wednesday virtual meet up. We are delighted to have you join. In this email you will find more info to get started:

- Contact details
- Volunteering possibilities
- Community groups on Facebook and WhatsApp
- Community Meetings

3.3 Stage 3: During the time of volunteering

This refers to the period of volunteerism with the maximum limit for leadership been one year. When a volunteer finds a role, the guide below can help them post involvement on social media channels.

How to share your Ambitious journey (for all volunteers):

When you post, Include # ambitiousafrica and country-specific hashtag (for example, # ambitious Ethiopia) and tag @ ambitiousafrica. Share your volunteer experience on LinkedIn:

Organisation X a was born out of the realization that the Nordic core strengths of Education, Entrepreneurship and Entertainment could be harnessed for increasing global wellbeing and happiness. Ambitious Africa is all about young people. Young people are leading the change. Young people are working together for a better future. With the support of the African governments and the Nordics. Ambitious Africa is about the best Education. For all, not just a few. Ambitious Africa is delivering through Entrepreneurship. Organisation X is about the best Entertainment."

You can add the above brief description to your post on social media handles. Join an ambitious network group on Facebook, Instagram, and twitter. You can join WhatsApp group chat for organisation chat sharing. This group offers you first-hand access to all Ambitious projects that could be shared.

Schedule of community Events and projects

Create a schedule of activities for the community members at least once a year. This will enable efficient and effective planning. The marked days for events can also be included in calendars and essential activities can be taken to fulfil them. The head of marketing of organisation X created the sample below showcasing weekly events. (Hradilova, 2021)



Figure 21. A sample post announcing weekly events.

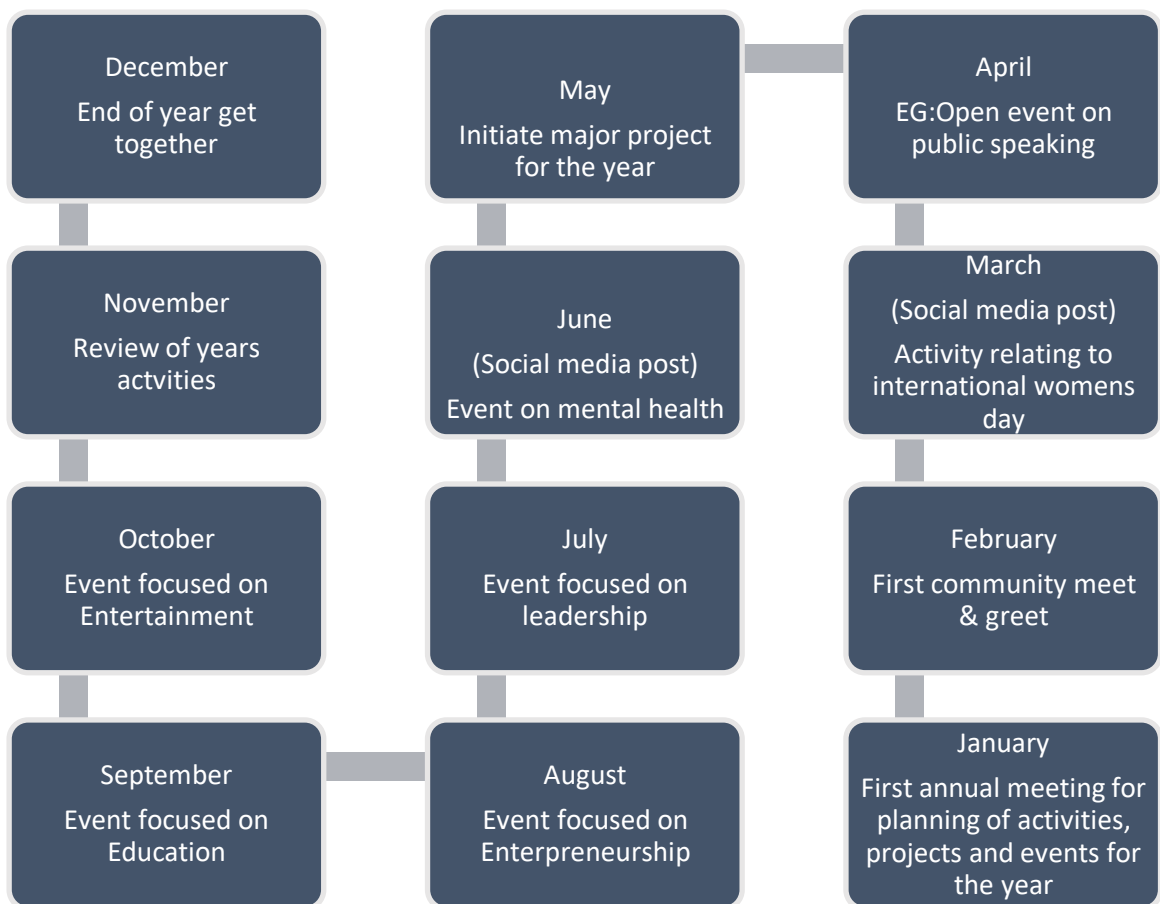


Figure 22. Sample event calendar for community engagement.

It is recommended for materials for marketing be created early enough when an event is decided to inform community members and induce interest from the public.

3.4 Stage 4: After the volunteer period ends

This refers to the period after the volunteer contract has ended. This is a crucial stage as leavers become ambassadors of the organisation. Make sure to present a certificate of service to the volunteer. It can be difficult to draft messages for volunteers who leave the organisation (White, 2021) Considerations in crafting the farewell messages according to Mary White, customize the message to relate to the volunteer leaving and add a delicate touch. Do not touch on topics of limits or offensive to the volunteer leaving. Encourage leavers to share their experience with Ambitious Africa by filling out a feedback form which will help the organisation make changes and improvements where needed. Send out a

farewell message on social channels. To keep up with our most common medium of communication, create a post on social media to highlight the contributions of volunteers to the organisation.

4 Questionnaire for global team members

1. What is the leadership structure of the organisation?

2. How many people form the basis for the community and what will be their duties?

3. What do you expect from various communities to ensure you achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation?

4. What are some of the challenges you are facing now and what has been done to address them?

5. What are the expectations of the various communities?

6. What are the long-term goals of the organisation?

7. If you were a member of a community, how would you like to be engaged?

—

Thank you for answering my questions.

5 Questionnaire for community leaders and members.

Why did you join the Ambitious Africa community?

What do you expect from the community as a member?

What kind of activities or events would you like to see organised in the community?

Do you have suggestions on how we can improve our interaction with the community?

Which platform/ platforms will you like events to take place?

What are some of the challenges you are facing in building your community and what has been done to address them?

What is your overall feedback this far regarding our activities?

Thank you for answering all the questions.