

Putting Business in Community Development: Managing A Social Franchise

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Research Background

- The UWI, Mona campus has had some purposeful community development focus in communities that are within very close proximity to the campus since 2006.
- This was due largely to high levels of crime and violence being experienced within the community of Greater August Town in particular.

Research Background

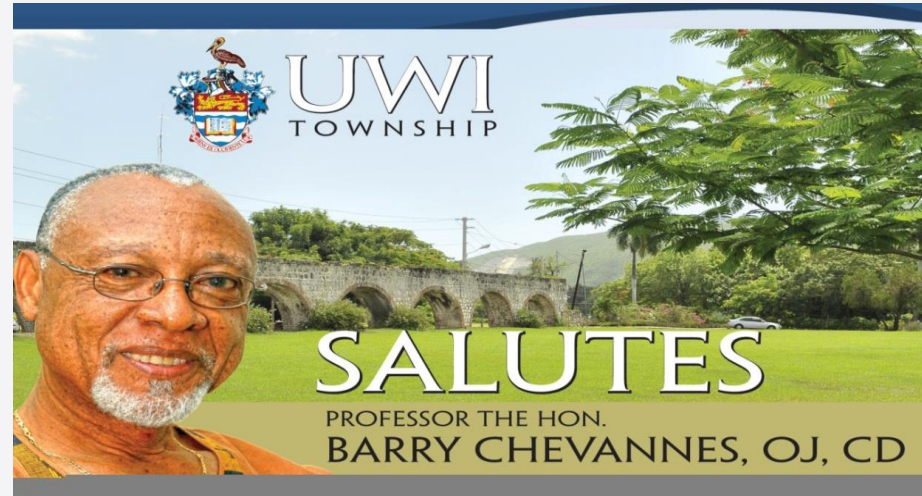
- These incidents spilled over on the campus and there were high increases in robberies and break-ins on the campus and immediate surrounding.

Research Background

- Residents of the community tried to help themselves to combat the violence
- Later approached the UWI for help in stemming the violence which they believed resulted from poverty as well as adult and youth unemployment, among other social problems that were plaguing the community.
- UWI began a more meaningful and focussed approach to reach out to the community.

Research Background

- This gave rise to the birth of the UWI Township Project, otherwise called the Barry Chevannes Civic Engagement Initiative, named in his honour as the founder.
- A 6 pillar approach was adopted to assist in community development.
- Entrepreneurship is one.



Mona Social Services Company
Barry Chevannes Civic Engagement Initiative
A Community and The University of the West Indies Partnership



Research Background

- The Mona Social Services, the umbrella body for the Township, manages the UWI Mona Source, an entrepreneurial community social enterprise in Greater August Town, St. Andrew, Kingston.
- The vision of the Source incorporate the idea of the Community Development Council operating the entity, residents being employed to the entity and it contributing to the development of the community.

Research Background

- A fact finding exercise
 - i. described the Source as a “social-entrepreneurship... developed after community consultation on what their needs were and how JN could best support the empowerment of members of the community”.(Onuora, 2013).
 - ii revealed issues affecting the profitability and sustainability of the entity

Research Background

- Changing consumption of products and services at the Source due to increase access of internet on mobile devices influences management of the community enterprise.

Research Objectives

- To identify how assumptions in systems thinking can assist with managing two community social franchises, one being the UWI Mona Source.
- To propose recommendations from qualitative and quantitative analysis, for the future management of the community social franchises under study.

Research Goals

- A responsive management strategy for both social enterprises to keep them viable.
- Increased social and economic benefits to residents in communities where the entities are located, because of the sustained existence of the two enterprises.

KEY Research Questions

What assumptions in systems thinking have been useful to the management of the UWI Mona Source?

What are the different outcomes associated with various management techniques utilized in the UWI Mona Source?

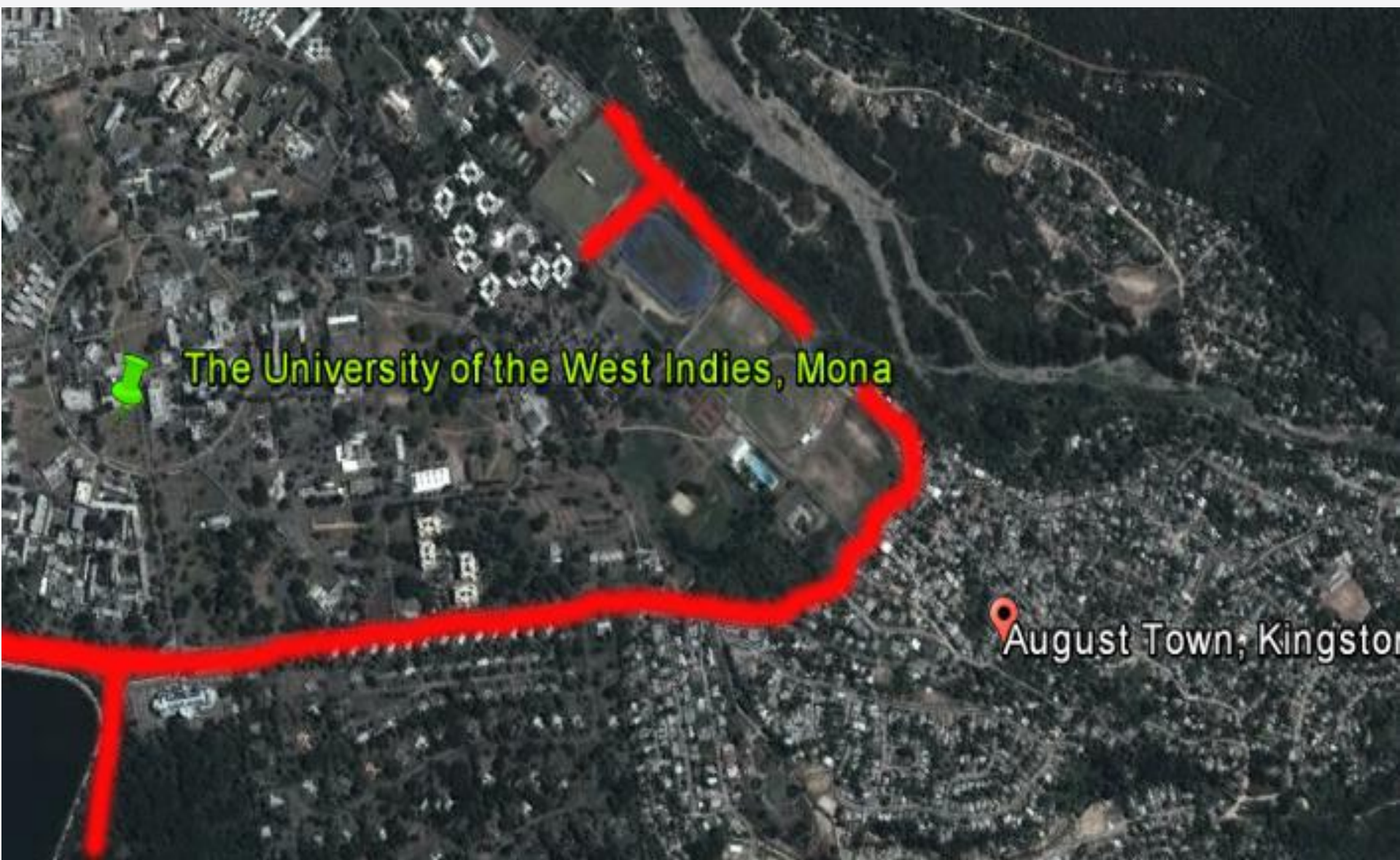
What is the shared management experience of Source entities across two communities?

The UWI Mona SOURCE

- The Source, is one of three similar entities, started by Jamaica National Foundation, a non-for profit organization.
- The UWI Mona Source established in 2007, is located in Greater August Town, an underserved community characterized by political divide, disunity, high unemployment, crime and violence.

The UWI Mona SOURCE

- UWI Mona Source was expected to be handed over to the Greater August Town CDC which would then manage it for the socio- economic benefit of residents.
- The Mona Social Sevices became the interim operator in 2010, by virture of the many interventions it was undertaking in community development.



The University of the West Indies, Mona

August Town; Kingston

The UWI Mona Source

- The facility provides the following to residents:
 - Internet cafe/access via desktop computers
 - Homework assistance
 - Stationery shop
 - Travel documents assistance:
visa etc
 - Printing, photocopying, scanning
 - Mail pick up and delivery
 - Meeting and Conference room



Theoretical Lens- General Systems Theory (GST)

- Founding theorist: Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968)
- Used widely across various disciplines to understand relationships between various elements within a system.
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Theoretical Lens-GST

- In this study a sociological lens was utilized. This focused on seeing the community where the two centres were located as organisms.
- This means approaching the community as comprising several different parts, all with a role, serving the greater whole.

Theoretical Lens-GST

- In systems theory, the emphasis is on structure and less about agency.
- No emphasis on mechanistic values or mechanistic modes of operation. Relationships are organic.
- In GST, systems can be open or closed and can comprise subsystems. E.g. a household (subsystem) within the community (system)/a small business (subsystem) in the business environment (system)

Assumptions of GST

A few assumptions flowing through systems thinking that can be labelled as criteria for success

- 1. Consensus:** All parts of the system are in agreement with it and its functionality. The community has to buy into the vision of the Source.
- 2. Hierarchy-** subsystems are subordinate to the overall system. This is a type of relationship.

Assumptions of GST

- 3. Patterns of relationship:** no mechanistic behaviour. Parts are allocated roles and transmit specific throughputs and outputs. What is the nature and type of interaction that should take place between the community and the Source.
- 4. Interdependence & inter-relationships:** Parts have different roles, but fulfilment of roles are interlinked. There must be integration about the type of support the entity should get for its vision to be realized.

Methods

- Utilized a mixed method design that is exploratory in its approach. Meaning, qualitative insight was first used with quantitative element to follow. (Creswell, 2011)
- 5 individuals were interviewed. Two from one and three from the Source. At least one from each had to be there from inception. This would help manage validity of information collected.

Methods

- Snowballing
- Prolonged immersion of researchers and interviewees in local environment.
- Used a site of reference for exploring shared experience in managing social franchise and comparing it with the UWI Mona Source.

Site of Reference

- *Characteristics and Community Challenges*

High youth unemployment

High adult unemployment

Low levels of literacy

Underserved community

Males participating in anti-social behaviour e.g.
smoking marijuana

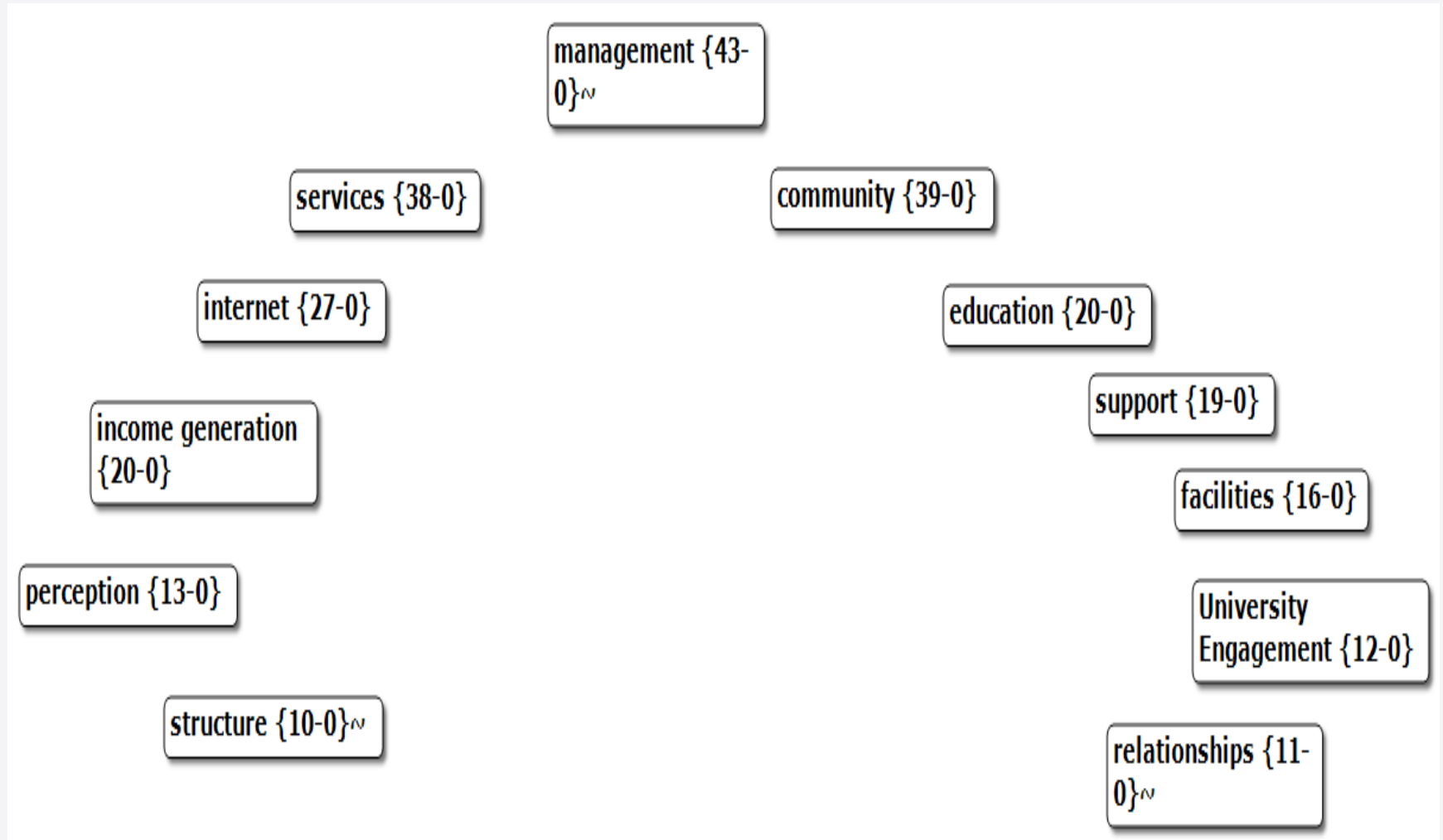
Several retail shops.

Poorly maintained recreational facilities.

Research Results

- The predominant theme emergent in the data was “management”.
- Other themes included: “internet and services”, “community and the Source entities”.
- Management meant: communication, highly consultative. The existence of various layers: Management Board, Management Committee and Consultative Committee.

Research Results



Research Results

- Management is highly hierarchical for both entities. UWI Mona Source more consultative in type equalling more ownership of outputs from staff.
- Internet and services were provided by both entities at their inception. Opening of access to internet on mobile devices and lowered pricing by providers shifted product offerings for both entities and hampered survival.

Research Results

Several entities in community competing with UWI Mona Source. Since inception, both entities have had to undergo a redefining of their focus.

An interviewee described “services” as:

“Well essentially we look at internet activity, so this means that they would be able to browse the internet, for want of a better term, they’d be able to do research, they can play games, they can prepare uhm homework, reports, we also look at things like offering internet service that would allow persons to uh apply for their birth certificates, death certificates, uhm all the activities that you can relate to a SOURCE.

“In our case, we expanded it, we have two conference rooms, mini conference rooms I should say, so in terms of a meeting place, we offer that as well, uhm to host other activities and we mentioned the fact that we have health fairs.”

Research Results

- Both entities are perceived by residents in the community as providing a social service. This relationship has a negative outcome for the two franchises and earnings fall below expectation.
- For the UWI Mona Source, the perception of UWI and its relations and expectation from the community is a crucial element in breaking the negative profit outcomes.

Concluding Thoughts

Management for such enterprises has to be responsive to the need of communities in which these enterprises are located. Since their inception there has been a shift in the consensus on the need of each entity and what they should be doing.



Concluding Thoughts

- Both entities have been victims of fierce competition in the removal of price boundaries on internet service provisions and packages. These entities have been out-priced by macro competitiveness in the retail of internet.
- The clientele in the communities, spending power and attractiveness, has been displaced by structural change in the communities alongside poor social capital.

Concluding Thoughts

- Both entities need support. Support has to be multifaceted to help them reach revenue goals and community development goals.

Concluding Thoughts

- A significant contribution in the philosophy of GST is the reality that systems can exist within systems and that these systems are not always synchronised to work together or they are unable to make the connection. This signals the need for bridging between the disjoint of different but similar purposed entities- as in this case the social franchises and entities providing similar services.

Concluding Thoughts

- Both social franchises are open to forces influencing their sales and sustainability.
- Management has to continue being transformative and creative with the development of products for sale.