

Case Study

Langs

Commissioned by

Community Hubs and Partnerships

Produced by

Deloitte Access Economics

December 2017

Case Study 6: Langs



Ontario, Canada

Overview

Langs has grown from a neighbourhood development program in 1978 into one of the largest community hubs in Ontario, with six sites. It was initially developed to address a lack of services, with a vision to provide services to help address the substantial social and economic needs in a densely populated, isolated community³. The main Langs site, The Hub@1145, in Cambridge brings together over 20 collocated community and social services^{1,3}. Langs aims to build stronger and healthier communities by increasing access to a variety of services, serving all members of the community, from children to older people^{3,4}.



Source: Langs

Context/setting



Service mix



Education, including an early years centre

Health, including a community health centre, mental health services, self-management programs for people with chronic health conditions, diabetes education program, counselling services (individuals, couples, families and youth counselling), visiting geriatrician services⁴

Community infrastructure, including a community centre with meeting rooms, community kitchens⁴

Community services, including services such as Youth and Teen resource centre, addiction services, domestic violence services, credit counselling, child protection, sexual assault services, and adults and seniors programs (e.g. cooking classes, retirement programs)⁴

Wellbeing, including a gymnasium and community trails⁴

Level of integration

Degree of integration differs between agencies; the design of the building is cognisant of the benefits of shared spaces to facilitate relationship building and collaboration between service providers, promoting opportunistic and ad hoc integration. Shared spaces include lounge and dining areas.

Site characteristics



Greenfield, land purchased from the Catholic church at below market value
Urban

Funding



Public/private, funding sourced from a combination of federal infrastructure funding, municipal seniors services funding, fundraising, equity from value of land^{1,6}.

Partners (inc. lead agency)

Lead Agency: Langs (incorporated not-for-profit organisation)

Partners: Over 20 partners (profit and non-profit) renting space, and another 27 using the space on a monthly basis⁶. Rental agreements are based on needs assessments and ability to pay of service providers. All partnerships sign an agreement, lease, shared space/resources and a means to resolve conflicts¹

Foundations for success

This hub exhibits five key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



Focus and vision

The goals and objectives of Langs has always been focussed on the needs of the community, from the establishment of the community organisation in 1978 to address concerns about vandalism and service requirements in the local area. This focus on community needs has flowed through to the planning and establishment of the Langs hub, aimed at changing lives and creating a healthier community, and vision of creating a community 'home' where all are welcome³.

Leadership and management

Investment was made to develop a partnership framework and model to guide the planning of the hub.³ The importance of providing strong leadership was evident, linking with the clear focus and vision for the hub. Consultation indicated that there was a recognition that collaboration and integration evolves, and it is important to provide the right physical and management environment to facilitate and support that, rather than being heavy handed.

Collaborative and detailed planning

The community was engaged as part of the planning process to ensure their needs were considered. Langs takes a community development approach, with ongoing consultation and engagement with the community. Proposals for new services are taken to the community to discuss alignment with the vision and goals, and gauge community interest.

As part of this process in the planning, 60 organisations were contacted about opportunities for partnerships, 35 expressions of interest were submitted, 5 planning sessions were held and 72 stakeholders participated in decision making⁴. The design of the facility also enabled Langs to be responsive of changing community needs¹, and to enable partnerships and collaboration such as shared staff kitchens to foster a collaborative culture.¹ Other factors to encourage successful partnerships include lunch and learns to share information and knowledge, partnership evaluation tools, and joint programs and events¹. The importance of having an inviting and welcoming physical environment was emphasised as a key design consideration.

Measurement

Langs, in partnership with a neighbouring service, Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region, commissioned an independent evaluation of their respective services. An Evaluation Committee was formed, that included representation from both hub sites and the Community Hubs Division. This committee worked with the evaluators to articulate the evaluation purposes, from which evaluation questions and data collection and measurement methods were developed. These included mixed-method collection and analysis of primary and secondary data sources.² Data collection tools were developed specifically for the evaluation of the hub, recognising the contextual considerations.

A structured framework outlining short, medium and long-term outcomes has allowed Langs to evaluate the degree to which the hub is on track to achieve its vision and mission, as well as share learnings with other municipalities. Over 60 municipalities have visited the hub to understand how this approach could be implemented in their local areas.

Governance and culture

Langs' board is reflective of the community and is comprised of 15 members. Additionally, the Community Services Committee, comprised of 17 members, was established to recommend, plan and evaluate programs and services. This involves a range of stakeholders across the community, volunteers and partners. This group helped create the hub and continues to guide it today³.

Each partner has a partnership agreement, lease, shared space and resources, along with conflict resolution agreement¹. Prospective partners are required to present their proposal to the Langs Community Services Committee, articulating how their organisation and service will contribute to the objectives and mission of the hub. This enables both diversity of partners and alignment with the focus and vision.⁶

Outcomes

Improved community networks, cohesion and engagement

Results from the evaluation report published in 2017 indicated that clients of the hub reported to meet new people when visiting the hub (over 80% of respondents), and other evaluation research reinforced the finding that the hub was contributing to a sense of community and place². This has also contributed to reduced isolation, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Health, social and physical outcomes

Clients reported that they had attended a program at the hub that had helped them (45%), had learned new skills by being involved (37%), and felt healthier from visiting the hubs and accessing the services (35%)². Longer-term health outcomes are not likely to have been realised for the client cohort as yet.

Service awareness and access

Almost three quarters (74%) of evaluation research respondents reported that they are more aware of services in their community and 72% reported that they accessed new services and programs whilst visiting the hub². Further to this, facility use quadrupled since the main hub opened¹. Partner organisations also saw value in the collocation in having increased awareness of other services and programs (67%) and providing opportunities for collaboration (48%). Over 80% of clients also reported that having multiple services at the hub was 'very important'. In addition, 55% of clients reported that the ease of access was the aspect of the hub that they liked the best.

Improved services

Over 60% of clients reported the feel of the centre was the aspect of the hub they liked best, and 59% like the broad range of programs /activities offered most². It was also noted that efficiency gains were not monitored, but understood to be present from logistical benefits. Through collocation of services, there are increased opportunities for partners to collaborate and integrate with other partners through activities such as cost sharing².

Civic involvement

The hub had over 167 volunteers and more than 10,000 hours of volunteer work in 2016/17. Moreover, the Community Services Committee, which includes community representatives, helped create and guide the hub today³.

Lessons

- Continuous reflection and sharing of these learnings helps to guide future planning of collaborative social infrastructure, allowing Langs to focus on the key principles and avoid potential risks.
- Creating and supporting ongoing relationships is vital, but can become increasingly difficult as hubs grow and become more complex. There may be resistance as partners may perceive a loss of culture. Challenges associated with collocating partners should be addressed and considered early
- Establishing a centralised funding body to oversee hub development can help to streamline the funding process.
- Promotion of the hub is important to spread awareness of services and programs in the community
- Involving community members in the selection of partners improves community engagement and likelihood of service access and improved outcomes⁶
- Understanding synergies for partners and opportunities for integration allows for better use of scarce infrastructure⁶
- Investing in evaluation, and collaborating with stakeholders through this process, engages partners in the collection of data and the evaluation findings
- Successful hubs are built on relationships with communities and partners, and leadership

References

1. Langs, 2015, Moving forward with Community Hubs in Ontario
2. Ricardo Ramirez Communication Consulting, 2017, Community Hub Evaluation
3. Brown and Emary, 2017, An Introduction to Langs An Economic and Impact Perspective
4. Langs, Growing a Community Hub (supplied by Langs)
5. Langs, 2017a, Langs, <http://www.langs.org/>
6. Langs, 2017b, Langs Hub - Cambridge

The Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning

Copyright

This publication is protected by the *Copyright Act 1968*. **Licence**



This work is licensed to the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 3.0 Australia licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>

You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this publication, as long as you attribute it as follows:

© State of Queensland, Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, February 2018.

Prepared for Community Hubs and Partnerships by Deloitte Access Economics Pty Ltd



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this publication and need a translator, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on telephone 131 450 and ask them to contact the Queensland Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning on (07) 3452 7100.

Disclaimer

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.