

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY-BASED CONTEXTS

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The concept of Facilities Management in a Community-based setting is derived from understanding the social value of community facilities and the management of community assets, which include people, buildings, voluntary groups and organisations. This research forms part of a PhD study, which aims to critically review the concepts of FM and translate knowledge into the community setting, in order to develop new thinking and demonstrate the added value of FM in the regeneration context. For the purpose of this paper, a critical review is undertaken to identify the key characteristics of FM in the community-based setting emerging from literature. Further analysis is then undertaken to demonstrate the potential contribution of FM to community development. The research identified five areas in which FM had the potential to make contributions in a community-based setting, namely: service management, social inclusion, strategic development, environmental and economic sustainability. These covered all the different aspects of the existing concepts and models, bringing together community and organisational issues.

Keywords: community development, facilities management, service delivery, urban FM, social enterprise.

INTRODUCTION

Facilities Management (FM) was first used as term in the early 1970s. It was introduced by academics and practitioners as a young profession with a very large portfolio (Varcoe, 2000) because of the diverse scope of functions it covers. Though older as a profession, FM still encompasses a wide range of functionalities from operations & maintenance, real estate, technology, auxiliary services, and planning, to finance and budgeting. The multi-disciplinary approach of FM has challenged researchers both in terms of subject and funding. FM research pioneers such as Alexander (1996) highlighted how early development of FM had its roots in practice. Others argue that FM does not have a research agenda and is more practice oriented (McLennan and Nutt, 1992). It becomes clear that there is tension between FM at practice and academic levels, with practice more focused on the operational side of FM and its relation to the strategic possibilities, which has been the subject of much research (Lilliendahl *et al.* 2011). However, the absence of critical thinking and

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research in FM is supplemented by the diversity of FM research. Practitioners' perspective of FM focuses on the physical and economical factors such as information technology, the cost of effective workplace, globalisation, and user satisfaction. In which the social factors are missing such as integration with communities, sustainable development, and community engagement (Varcoe, 2000)

Gibson (2005) stated that "reformed public services need better community buildings" and "sustainable communities need sustainable buildings." This and the need for a new approach to effective public service delivery have led to the development of research into the added value of FM in a community-based setting. In this research, community facilities represent more than buildings to be used by residents; they are the main springboard for engagement and accessing local services. In addition, there is value to be added in terms of translation of FM approaches and principles from the corporate real estate sector to public service management, and a role to be played by community members in service delivery through social enterprises.

Both FM and sustainability have been researched in detail as separate topics. The concept of sustainable FM has only recently been highlighted by practice, but there is a gap in research knowledge. This paper aims to critically review the literature available on existing concepts and models in FM in a community based setting, to identify current position and gaps for future research to address. This will support the on-going research aims to clarify the role of FM in sustainable development and regeneration in order to translate the knowledge and practice from the corporate to the public sector, and to introduce new directions in the evolution of FM in public service management.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

Various definitions of facilities management by researchers and practitioners illustrate the broad magnitude of the discipline. Price (2002) articulated that FM was still debating its status as a profession and field of academic inquiry. Tay and Ooi (2001) suggested that the task of creating a common platform for the theoretical development of FM is faced with a barrier of multi-definitions. This view was supported by Smith and Pitt (2007), and further by Drion *et al.* (2012) who suggested an absence of any agreement on what Facilities Management means as a coherent body of knowledge. So ten years down the line from Price, we are still debating FM's status as a profession and field of academic enquiry.

Alexander (1996) approached FM as process by which organisations can deliver their service in a quality environment to meet their strategic needs. Barrett and Baldry (2003) viewed FM as an integrated approach to maintenance, improvement, and adaptation of organisation's facilities to meet its primary objectives. Others defined FM as an integrated profession that ensures services are tailored to suit people and places, though mainly as a reactive and technical approach (Kelly & Hunter, 2005). Smith and Pitt (2007) on the other hand defined FM as a stable balancing act between the competing pressures of time, cost and quality; whereas Hudson and Kasim (2006) had earlier proposed that the social and financial aspects of FM come together in one multi-disciplinary approach of FM involving not only the management of the organisation's core business, but also the delivery of quality services to the users. Lilliendahl *et al.* (2011) proposed that unlike the previous approaches of FM which are most likely driven by an emphasis on business, social drivers come into play leading to the consideration of FM as "the science and practice of dealing with people, places, and societies".

This is not an exhaustive list of definitions for FM, and there are even more definitions from FM associations and international networks including, from South Africa, FM as "an enabler of sustainable enterprise performance through the whole life management of productive workplace and effective business support services" (SAFMA, 2005). The European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) defined FM as "the integration of processes within an organization to maintain and develop the agreed services which support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities (EuroFM, 2006). This definition has been adopted across Europe by national standards agencies and professional institutions. The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) defined FM as "a profession which encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the work environment by integrating people, space, process, and technology"(IFMA, 2008).

Drion *et al.* (2012) suggested that "organisations that treat FM as a commodity overhead will be at a significant strategic disadvantage" moving into the future. This implies that an advantage is achieved through approaching FM as an integral part of organisations' strategic plans. They further stated that at operational level, effective FM provides a "safe and efficient working environment, which is essential to the performance of any business whatever its size and scope". FM in the community setting therefore becomes crucial in translating strategic plans into effective operational reality. The traditional FM approach focussing on tangible factors concerned with design, construction and operations of buildings would need to make way for a shift in focus to productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency with consideration of the social implications of FM (Lilliendahl *et al.* 2011). For the purpose of this research, Community-based FM is defined as the integration of people, processes and place, to develop, manage and sustain effective and efficient services, which meet the socio-economic and environmental objectives of the community.

FM APPROACHES IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING

Community-based Facilities Management is a concept exploring opportunities for the development of a socially inclusive approach of FM (Hasbullah *et al.* 2010). It is "an emergent term that identifies the role that facilities and their management play in community life" (Heywood & Smith, 2006). This role is defined by the affiliation to the core of community business in which success is measured by the scale and quality of support to enable the community meet its objectives (Hasbullah *et al.* 2010). Several authors have coined new terms for this concept of FM including urban FM, FM as social enterprise, CbFM, Sustainable FM, and Community-based Asset Management. The first four are examined at this stage of the research.

Urban FM

Roberts (2004) saw Urban Facilities Management as an "idea that community management can be wholly externalized to professional service providers". He defined urban FM as a "logical extension of the need to reinvest in community facilities and system, and provide a flexible platform in which agencies and the private sector can come together in new and innovative setting for the benefits of the community". Urban FM was seen as a mechanism for developing a sustainable scheme for managing and operating public facilities (Tobi & Amaratunga, 2010). It is however based on the concept of outsourcing provision of public services in order to leverage knowledge and advantage of private sector FM experience. Urban FM can play a dynamic role in constructing positive changes in local neighbourhoods as well as facilitating innovative improvements for corporations (Lilliendahl *et al.* 2011). Its

philosophy lies in the use of social enterprise to create a model for managing public facilities (Steel *et al.* 2003); and create the right environment for economic and social growth in cities (Lilliendahl *et al.* 2011). However, this is subject to how communities or organisations approach social enterprise. Florida (2003) suggested a manifest shift away from traditional hierarchies towards open type of network organisation in the economy; moving from government to more networked governance and business minded new public management (Lilliendahl *et al.* 2011).

Roberts' (2004) perspective of urban FM was to rebalance the dominance of business imperative and shareholder value, by realignment of FM to the public interest and stakeholder value. He outlined two notions of broadening and deepening engagement between the private and public sectors in the provision of community services; and pulling together agencies responsible for social, health and voluntary services, and community and media. This is closely aligned with the current government's position, creating the right environment for adopting this approach. Roberts (2004) saw urban FM as a solutions provider for the public services sector with advantages of efficiency improvement to public services, greater level of services, and customer oriented public services. He further suggested that the integration of public service and community support could make a significant contribution to the principle of putting people first and meeting best value objectives. The ambiguity will be located in the private sector side, if social enterprise is business with primarily social objectives, the question will be whether this will meet its financial strategy. He also highlighted that if FM wishes to overcome its challenges in the public sector realm, it needs to shift from the traditional approaches towards a new model based on public interest. This was further emphasised by Tobi and Amaratunga (2010) with the need to move away from the traditional service provider approach in which local communities are faced with increased costs of managing, operating, and sustaining their public facilities.

FM as Social Enterprise

The former Labour government proposed social enterprise as the model for maximising the public good through business (DTI, 2002). Social enterprise was defined as "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (DTI, 2002). FM as social enterprise was defined as a "new way of thinking on how to integrate organisational support services and the community support services" (Kasim and Hudson, 2006). The root of this definition dates back to the UK concept of social enterprise, which emerged from community investment activity. Community enterprise is seen as a need to identify factors concerning FM practice in the community context (National Housing Federation, 2005), including: engagement with local communities to promote local economic development and improve employability, and generation of employment to raise local communities' living standards.

In relation to FM, social enterprise has the potential to engage the community to participate significantly in the provision of community services. Kasim and Hudson (2006) debated that the future of FM lies in FM alignment to social community interest, which can be done by changing priorities and improving FM practice to support local communities. They saw social enterprise as promising for the development of Community-based FM; and argued for its unique role in helping form sustainable and socially inclusive economies, creating opportunities for people

working in them and for the communities they serve. Furthermore, they discussed the ability of social enterprise in offering alternative solutions for deprived areas. The level of autonomy in social enterprises makes it a viable business model to deliver the Big Society (Knox, 2011). This contribution may be addressed through the characteristics of social enterprise in engaging with local community, enabling individuals to participate in regeneration, and creating new models of service delivery (NRDA, 2005).

Community-based Facilities Management (CbFM)

Alexander and Brown (2006) further developed Robert's (2004) and Kasim and Hudson's (2006) ideas of urban FM and FM as social enterprise respectively; suggesting that social enterprise can be used as a 'new economics'. Their approach was to identify the involved processes and responsibilities in practice, then explore the opportunities for development of socially inclusive facilities management (Alexander & Brown, 2006). They debated that FM has the ability to add value by delivering social and environmental benefits as well as increasing economical viability. These benefits have been acknowledged by corporate shareholders and Price (2002) felt it was time to be extended to the community. CbFM is "the management of facilities and the delivery of services that reflects the community and environment in which they reside and operate" (Alexander & Brown, 2006). It aims to consider the impact and effect facilities place on the existing environment, empower local communities and spread economic profits to improve quality of life; and promote local economic development and offer more value to the community under corporate social responsibility.

CbFM is a toolkit developed by the Centre for Facilities Management to assess organisational responsibility by evaluating their process transparency. Alexander and Brown (2006) suggested that FM "can assume a central role in local partnerships for regeneration"; and assess the organisation's engagement with customers, employees, services and the community, in order to manage the social, environmental, and economical impacts. The original CbFM model focussed on four areas of impact assessment namely, environment, workplace, social, and economic, alongside three key dimensions of governance, socio-economic development and environmental focus (Alexander & Brown, 2006). The current version has six areas of impact assessment, adding accessibility and resilience. Alexander and Brown (2006) labelled the development of corporate social responsibilities in FM as 'social enterprise'; arguing to create a role for FM in community development, as they saw FM at the heart of urban policy and neighbourhood regeneration. Their approach to the community as an economic multiplier enables FM to play a wider role in regeneration.

Sustainable Facilities Management (SFM)

SFM views sustainability as a core component of FM. Many FM practitioners and researchers build their research and community of practice on the three main components of sustainability - economic, social and physical/environmental. Shah (2007) had previously stated that the integration of sustainable development in facilities management is not new. Furthermore, he posited that organisations have moved to the second stage of proactive engagement of sustainability linked to the provision and delivery of services. The Danish Centre for Facilities Management (DCFM) developed this concept through investigating the role of FM in sustainable development on a societal level (Nielsen & Galamba, 2010). In this approach FM is discussed and defined in terms of its relation to sustainable development, and its aim

to build a strategy for FM to act sustainably, enhance the environmental management practice, and construct a communication strategy (Nielsen & Galamba, 2010). The definition is biased "towards technical and system solutions for isolated environment problems" (Nielsen & Galamba, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative enquiry approach is used in this research with a variety of data collection and analysis tools and techniques including literature review, interviews, content analysis, documentary analysis and thematic coding. Interviewees' were selected by using a purposeful sampling strategy. The first phase of the research focused on the critical review and analysis of diverse literature, approaches for community based FM, and examples of these approaches' application where used. Analysis included SWOT, content analysis, and cross analysis of objectives against concepts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The literature and document review helped to understand the theoretical background of FM in the community context. Although there was plenty of literature on FM in the corporate real estate sector, there was very limited literature on FM in the community context. Most of the literature available also discussed theoretical concepts (Roberts, 2004; Kasim and Hudson, 2006; Nielsen and Gambala, 2010). The focus on sustainability within FM was identified as one of the key issues driving the adoption of FM in the community setting, as was the development of the concept of sustainable business practice. In addition, new initiatives such as PFI and PPP raised questions about the contribution of community facilities to community life (Heywood & Smith, 2006). Community facilities can play symbolic roles in their communities, and their effectiveness and sustainability carry a clear message about the community values. The role of community facilities in community life may vary from provision of services to creation of job opportunities, and the creation of spaces to support community activities to their impact on the sense of belonging through engagement and occupation; which are some of the main challenges for community development. Heywood & Smith (2006) suggested that community facilities are capable of greater contribution to community life than just being accommodation, a view which still needs to be demonstrated. The coalition government's drive towards the development of social enterprises as part of the 'Big Society' agenda also created new opportunities for FM in the community in terms of job creation and engagement of community in public service delivery.

However, the lack of implementation and application of community based approaches proved to be a real challenge in analysing the value added by the concepts to the community; as only the CbFM concept (Alexander and Brown, 2006) has been developed into a model, and applied in assessing community facilities. Comparative analysis (table 1) of the concepts showed similarities and differences between these approaches according to themes derived from the literature review. Table 1 shows the characteristics and objectives of each approach. Urban FM and FM as SE are still in the conceptual stage and are yet to be implemented in practice, or evaluated. Both approaches did not adopt the environmental aspect of community development which is a significant component of sustainable development. Some critics of Urban FM suggest that it is a platform based on outsourcing service provision to professional providers with priority given to the private sector to lead, and with no guidance on how this platform will work (Tobi & Amaratunga, 2010). Although, Roberts (2004) did not give any guidance, he clearly illustrated without any given priority how

agencies and private sector can work together in an innovative way for the interest of community.

Table 1 Critical review and analysis of FM approaches in the community setting

	Urban FM	FM as SE	CbFM	SFM
Level of intervention	Strategic, operational	Strategic, operational	Strategic, operational	Operational, technical
Target of intervention	Communities, Local service delivery	Communities, Local service delivery, local economics	Communities, Local service delivery, local economics	Organisations, Local service delivery
Unit of analysis	Management of community facilities	Management of community	Management of facilities in the community	Management of organisations
Alignment of FM	Public interest	Public interest	Public interest	Private interest
Drivers	Social	Social	Social	Environmental

Urban FM and FM as SE have similar advantages in that they are socially driven for the benefit of the community and public interest. They also have similar challenges, which should be considered in any new thinking of FM in the community setting, some of which are: the internal capacity of the community may lead to poor performance; and applying the concept requires high level of managerial skills which will affect the quality of the final product. The need for work to be done to distinguish between social and community enterprise was also identified. In contrary, CbFM as a model has been applied in evaluating different contexts and communities. Analysis of these evaluations identified an advantage over other related concepts in the consideration of social, environmental and economic components of sustainable development. The main disadvantage is that the model does not address the strategic planning stage of community development.

Table 2 Critical analysis of CbFM evaluations of community facilities

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Functions	Education & enterprise	Education	Health & entertainment
Integrated dimensions	4	3	3
Community engagement	Negative	Positive	Positive
Accessibility	Negative	Positive	Positive
Good location	Positive	Positive	Positive
Community awareness	Negative	Positive	Positive

Further analysis of the CbFM model evaluations (table 2) highlighted that a maximum of four out of six dimensions have been identified in use in practice, with two cases demonstrating only three dimensions. This flexibility of implementing whatever dimensions are applicable might be considered as an advantage; though on the other hand it could be a disadvantage as it is therefore difficult to measure the success of the model. It also highlighted that although the facilities' location played a major role in terms of accessibility, this has to be combined with community engagement and awareness to show a positive result. The results appear to confirm Gillespie and

Murty's (1994) supposition that analysis of the service delivery system provides useful insights on the impacts of various community linkages.

The SFM concept differs from all others in that it is focussed on the organisational and operational issues related to the environment, whilst others are focussed on communities and the strategic issues related to social drivers. The SFM is also aligned with private organisational interests rather than the public service interest. The thematic analysis of the literature identified five perspectives for FM in the community setting as follows:

1. Service perspective: FM in the community setting should provide facilities that enable effective delivery of services in response to local needs.
2. Community perspective: Management of community facilities should include social objectives and involve community members. The management process should empower the community and support the development of confidence and skills, and their ability to shape relations with all public bodies. The facilities should create a platform for engagement, and this is closely linked to the facilities' accessibility.
3. Strategic planning perspective: A strategic FM approach to community facilities would enable facilities managers analyse the urbanism context, and apply principles of engagement with public space such as integrated instead of segregated, invite instead of repel, and open up instead of closing in (Gehl 1980). This approach should enable FM to be fully engaged in urban planning and participate in decision making from the early stages; planning strategically for future needs instead of reacting to issues due to poor management.
4. Environmental perspective: Facilities should be eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable, and awareness of environmental issues raised with the community, including behavioural change.
5. Economical perspective: Facilities should be economically viable and sustainable, and services affordable by the community. The development of social enterprises would create opportunities for members of the community to set up their own businesses and create local jobs.

These five perspectives form the elements of a community based approach to Facilities Management in which all the previous concepts will be presented. Those perspectives will be examined in order to enable this approach to act as new service delivery model in managing communities' facilities. Table 3 shows the links between each approach and these five perspectives.

Table 3 Mapping exercise shows the excluded & included perspectives in each concept

	Urban FM	FM as SE	CbFM	SFM
Service perspective	Included	Included	Included	Included
Community perspective	Included	Included	Included	Excluded
Planning perspective	Included	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded
Environmental perspective	Excluded	Excluded	Included	Excluded
Economical perspective	Included	Included	Included	Included

CONCLUSION

FM in the community-based setting aims to contribute to the creation of sustainable communities through a stakeholder approach to the management of community

facilities. As we have seen, community facilities have a vital role to play in supporting communities, and FM is positioned to make contributions leading to improvements in quality of life, sense of belonging, and providing affordable local services. FM in a community setting is a people-based approach, which could act as an economic multiplier with emphasis on social objectives involving multiple stakeholders. Integrating stakeholders into public service management and delivery processes will significantly improve the facilities use and the benefits to the communities that serve. FM also has a role to play in facilitating and managing the relationships between the multiple stakeholders in community development. Moreover, findings from the analysis of existing literature indicated that research on the added value of FM in a community setting is not yet clearly defined. This may however include providing quality and cost effective services and enhancing community efficiency, enabled by the multi-disciplinary approach of FM to service management.

Analysis of existing concepts identified that the first three concepts were focused on FM's role and contribution to community development, promoting local economies, and were socially driven; whereas the fourth focused on organisational interests and was environmentally driven. Apart from the CbFM model, the other concepts of FM in the community setting reviewed were conceptual and had never been applied nor evaluated in practice. This led to the inclusion of a case study on a community facility geared towards the business community in order to test the principles in the public and private sectors. The five perspectives demonstrate FM's capability to contribute to community development. They address the values that can be added to the public and private sectors in terms of service delivery, environmental performance, economic growth, sustainable development, and socially inclusive communities. These perspectives will be reviewed and updated in light of further case studies currently being undertaken.

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