

THE RED HEN PROJECT

Introduction

The Need

15 years

The gap in healthy life expectancy between women across Cambridge

13.5%

of children in Cambridge live in poverty

In 2018, Cambridge was named the **most unequal city in the UK** by the Centre for Cities

Red Hen Project

A Cambridge Charity that supports families to raise happy, healthy, and independent children.

They offer 1:1 casework, weekly groups and events, courses (cooking, parenting, first-aid...) and much more.

Their holistic support is built on trusting relationships, and empowering families without creating reliance.



My Goals

To help communicate their unique value:

1. Use the Social Determinants of Health to explain their impact

2. Communicate this impact to different audiences

3. Support funding applications

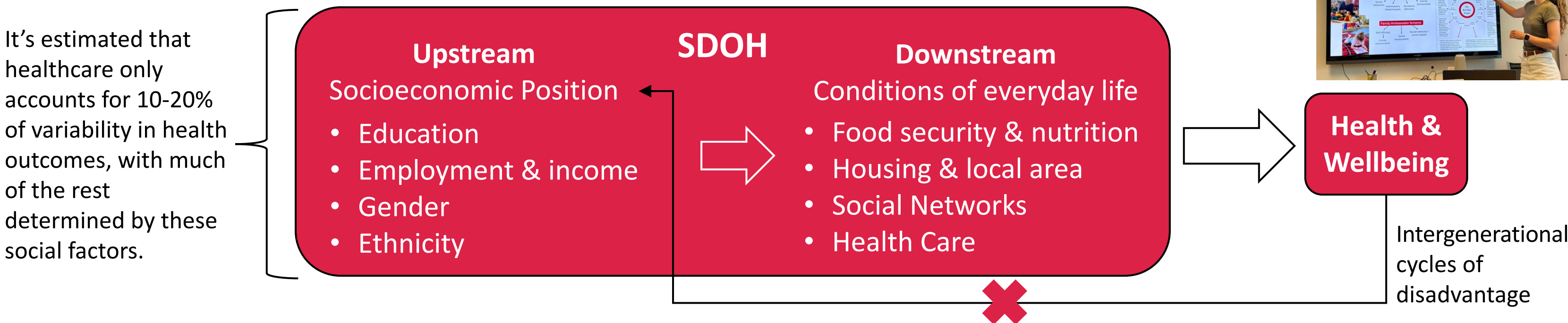


My Work & Impact

The Social Determinants of Health

- Best explained as the ‘causes of the causes’
- I mapped the Red Hen Project’s activities onto the key SDOH, to frame their work through the impact they have on health
- I also highlighted the long-term impacts for different stakeholders, from the families to the community and service providers

This diagram is a high-level summary of the SDOH, how they interact, and where Red Hen intervenes:



Red Hen contributes to breaking this cycle of disadvantage, supporting long-term improvement in health & socioeconomic position:

Stakeholder	Red Hen's Work	Short-term outcome (n = 120)	Long-term impact	Relevant SDOH
Children	1-2-1 support & STEM sessions	Increased enjoyment of school (reported by 83% of parents)	Better educational attainment & economic prospects	Education
Parents	Parenting group & 1-2-1 support	Better practical skills (finances) & access to resources (reported by 98% of parents)	Greater financial security & improved child outcomes	Income
Communities	Term-time groups (e.g. Tea & Toast Tuesday)	Better relationships within the community (98% feel less isolated)	Increased social cohesion & social capital	Social Networks

Communicating my findings:

The report

Presentation to staff: tailored & engaging

Briefing for trustees: concise & strategic

Funding guidance document: clear & practical

This taught how to tailor the same evidence into a different story for each stakeholder, and the importance of balancing logos with pathos (technical detail with emotion).

Funding

A resource to assist with applications, which combines:

Statistics proving short-term impact

+

Evidence-based link to long-term outcome

+

Case studies of stories from individual families

Together, these provide a stronger evidence base for communicating Red Hen's impact to funders.



Community

- A highlight was attending their weekly groups and events to raise their profile and meet the families.
- Hearing the huge impact the charity has on the families' lives was highly motivating
- It also exposed me to the stark inequalities ingrained in a city so close to home

Reflections

Leadership Lessons

- Leadership is a **responsibility**, both to those you lead and the communities you serve
- Leadership requires a **drive** to move forward, even in the face of uncertainty
- Being able to **adapt** as the project evolves is essential to maximise impact
- **Trust** between a team and their leader is vital, as is building their autonomy

Key Takeaway

Both in Healthcare and in leadership, we must work **upstream**, tackling the root causes rather than treating the symptoms.

"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in"

- Desmond Tutu

Next steps

This report will keep serving Red Hen after I've gone, helping them to communicate their impact and assisting them in securing more funding.

For me, the project introduced me to public health: seeing how income and social networks shape a child's life just as much as medicine does was eye-opening. I hope to make a widespread impact in this field, improving the lives of families across the country through health policy.

References:
Woolf, S. H. (2019). Necessary But Not Sufficient: Why Health Care Alone Cannot Improve Population Health and Reduce Health Inequities. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 17(3), 196-199.
<https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2395>
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<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>



Link to the full report