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Reflection on St. Vincent's Family Project

I decided to analyse the social project of St. Vincent Family Project (SVFP) for the reason that it concerns a situation where I am particularly sensitive about it. I am at age 29 and, maybe because the standard of society influences me, my desire for maternity it becomes stronger every day.

However, I am also aware that I am a student from abroad, with a low-income, and with a part-time job, alone in a big city like London, far from my family and sharing the apartment. I am aware this is not the best time for me to become a parent, as it is not for many other women in a similar position. I have been thinking about several situations, as people becoming parents without had planned for it, scared by low economic resources, or facing the situation alone. Later I have been seeking for a solution, a social project that would help these people, and I found the result of my research in SVFP (Svfp, n.d.).

Furthermore, this project is not only limited to assist the parents; it also helps children affected by a mental issue, or coming from a disagreeable background, like domestic violence.

However, I realised that if I had not been searching for this project, I would not know about it. It means that the project flaw in a lack of information, and it could affect the parent's decision. E.g. Considering a single pregnant woman that ignore the existence of the project,

and worried about becoming a mother, maybe she could consider the abortion. The same woman, thoughtful and worried, may start searching for a solution that could help her, and she could find the SVFP.

However, reading a few information online, probably, would not be enough to reassure her. The issue, in this case, could be a lack of engagement with the project, caused by an initial lack of information and the decision of the abortion as a result. It is a gloomy picture of what could occur.

Nevertheless, it is essential to consider all the aspect and consequence may occur when planning a project. I addressed the final decision of the abortion as a consequence of a lack of engagement because sometimes it is not enough for people been informed about the help they could receive it. It is only an idea; it is abstract. When people are scared to undertake decision that would broadly impact their life, they do not want to see only ideas. They want to see concretely what the project is about and how effectively can help them. E.g. many people require the help of the project because they have low economic resources or problem of communication because of the language.

These people are mostly not high-well educated. It means the project needs to reach them; it cannot expect the opposite; they do not know about its existence. Sometimes they came from a poor country where these project do not exist. Maybe they just moved to London, and they do not know how and where to ask for assistance. E.g. Let consider the same single mum of the previous example but with a different background. She already knows and heard feedback about the project from her colleague. Sometimes she even has been accompanied her to the centre. Now, the project is grasped as something real, not just as an idea.

Consequently, the mum may think to visit the centre and avoid the idea of abortion. I think the project needs to extend its network to engage and inform about its programme the

broadest number of people. I believe it could improve its lack adopting tools and technique like “Community Mapping”, “Creative Art”, “Social Media” and developing the Principle number 5: increasing the collaboration with more organisation (CDC & ATSDR, 2011).

Community Mapping brings everything in the community into a prospective. It explores the potential of the cluster to connect the people and understand their environment. It helps to interact and understand the aspect of the community. SVFP needs to create a new contact point with the purpose to extend its social network. It needs to map the places where it can reach its target (family with young children, sometimes affected by a mental issue or by unfortunate circumstances) and establish a connection. These places would probably be schools, family counselling, clinic, job centre, gynaecologist and paediatrician.

Once the community map is defined, It is possible to adopt the Principle number 5 of Community Engagement (CDC & ATSDR, 2011); creating a collaboration with the connection point identified. SVFP could present and explain the benefit of its project, e.g. to the teachers, the counselling, the gynaecologist. They are professional staff, high-educated, they recognise when people may need SVFP. Once they are aware of the project, they could disclose it to people who are in contact with them. The pivotal is sharing the stakeholder and information to meliorate a collective benefit.

(Thackeray, R., Neiger, B.L., Keller, H., 2012) Now-days social media acquired a significant impact on people’s social life. It has the power to influence, rapidly communicate and engage with the people, breaking barriers as distance and shyness. SVFP has already its page in several social media; however, sometimes it is not enough. It should improve the powerful synergy and potential of social media and social marketing. It needs to leverage the possibility of sharing video and post to show how is the life inside the centre and to extend its social network. Social media offer the opportunity that other tools or technique (email, public

meetings, focus group, street stall) do not. Although other tools give the option or explain and present the objective of the project, they are not capable of showing a realistic deep perspective from inside. E.g. Public meeting can show video concern the activity of the project. However, this video is planned; it would not result as natural and real as a various video shared on Instagram's stories day by day. Projects can gain credibility through Social Media.

I accessed Instagram's page of SVFP and, in my opinion, is low of material. The error to imagine the project as the gloomy environment could quickly occur, since assisting people in need. Social media are capable to avoid the misunderstanding. The activities are fascinating, and people are enjoying participation. E.g. through post or video is possible to show the attractive plates prepared during the Healthy Living Programme and how the preparation was enjoyable. Social media it is a useful cost-efficient tool that requires a daily update of new material to maintain and expand its relationship with the followers. It is indispensable remember that although many people would love to appear in social media's video, some people may prefer discretion and confidentiality rather than be exposed online. Before starting any action, it is essential gathering the opinion and the permission of the stakeholder in order of respecting their privacy and later react appropriately.

Regardless the recommending developing the Social Media network, I do not mean to disregard the relevance of other avenues of engagement. Social Media implies the use of technological resources as a laptop, mobile, connection. To avoid barriers of discrimination (for who do not have access to these resources) it must be considered as an additional tool to reach the community, rather that the only one.

I would recommend the project to exploit Social Media and Creative Arts to extend the engagement of the Art Therapy Programme. During the programme, the children prepare

dramas, dancing, painting. It can be exciting to share the video of the blooper, or the final show in Social Media's platform, to amuse and entice potential stakeholders. For a deepest engage, the project could interact with the followers with a competition or enquiring opinion, and let them decide. E.g. SVFP could post pictures of different outfits and let the followers vote for their favourite. The one with more likes, it would be used for the show. E.g. SVFP through the post could ask the followers what they would prefer as a topic for painting. Later, create a competition of the painting and let the followers vote.

SVFP could leverage on the basic that arts can be express anywhere for its auto-publicity, bringing the Creative Arts programme to the street. The Children, in the squares, exposing their painting, dancing, or presenting the shows they have been prepared can generate multiplicity benefit. First benefit: increasing the popularity of the project. People, walking down the street, would be curious about what they are watching. They would ask information regarding the project and what it concern. They may start to follow the project on the Social Media platform, increasing the network and the number of stakeholders simultaneously.

Second benefit: increase the foundation and volunteers. More follower, more publicity, means more founders willing to spend money in the project. Probably the project would also receive some money during the representation, as occur for the street performance.

Volunteers would have more propensity to apply for transparency and trustworthy project.

Candidates tend to prefer to work for an organisation with an excellent reputation. Especially in a social project, when volunteers are not aiming for a high salary, people want the certainty that their contributions will effectively help society (Freeman R. E., Harrison J. S.,

Zyglidopoulos S., 2018). Sometimes many people also believe that a well-known

organisation, popular in the Social Media network, would also improve their further employability.

Third benefit: children can experience something different. It helps who is struggling with shyness. The applause and the admiration from the passer-by can be rewarding and meliorate the self-confidence. Fourth benefit: it is possible, through Creative Art, to communicate and deliver the message is prefer to the community.

It is essential to identify the keys of the success of SVFP to gain the ability to reproduce them in further projects. I identify one of the principal keys in to do not limit the project just offering a drop-in session, like many others. It looks beyond the temporary help that families need. The time the stakeholder spend on the project is valued, and it is used to improve their skill and knowledge. E.g. the children during the drop-session are no just playing on their own. The professional staff involves them in constructive activity with the purpose to educate them. The project is not restricted to provide only the help that stakeholders required. It provides the added value to meliorate and empower the community asset. It offers, to parents and children, transferable practical skills to encourage their self-sufficient.

In conclusion, I consider the SVFP a successful project with considerable potential to offer. I propose my suggestion because I believe its potential can be boost even more, with these small tips. I would like the project to grow because I believe in the positive impact of the project in the community. It respects all the quality standards required for Community Engagement (SCDC, 2016). It does not discriminate anyone; instead, it promotes inclusiveness, participation and collaboration. The existence of this project reassures me, like many others. It is comforting to know that in a difficult moment, you have a community to support and encourage you. In a world dominated in part by capitalism and individualism, become pivotal sustain and promote the social project to preserve collective benefit and develop the social capital.

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