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CounselEd

PROPOSED BY

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VISION

For every child in a government upper primary school to have access to a career counselor, to be able to pursue any career and life path they choose.

MISSION

To provide career counselors to students in 7th and 8th standard in government schools in rural communities, giving them access to knowledge and resources of potential career options.

INTRODUCTION

In this day and age, having a proper education is vital. Innovation and growth follows knowledge, and as we are shifting towards a knowledge-based economy, it is of paramount importance that the marginalized population receives adequate education. This will be necessary for people to not be left behind by today's rapid development. Education holds the key to addressing the greater issue of inequality in countries around the globe. Our proposal is focused around providing guidance counseling to rural government school students in India so that they can better navigate their educational future.

PROBLEM

Our mission in India is to provide guidance and a sense of direction within the rural communities. 70% of Indians live within rural areas, which highlights the importance of focusing on these regions. Though there are many interwoven reasons as to why the dropout rate is so high, it was reported in 2014 that 17.6% of children in India do not continue to secondary school. Not being able to continue their education would mean that those children cannot complete the 10th grade examination. Successfully passing this exam gives a certificate that can be used for employment and as government identification. It will also dictate which path students will take before entering university--either higher secondary schooling or the pre-university courses.

Dropout rates are increased for the age group beyond 8th standard. This is due to many varying reasons. For example, 39.3% of girls in a rural area in the state of Uttar Pradesh drop out of school due to distance whereas only 2.4% of boys drop out for the same reason. Migration also poses a challenge against a child's continuing education. As children of migrant workers who move from one state to another, they are unable to register to government schools. Lacking birth certificates and government ID numbers, it is difficult to access resources such as free education. Seasonal returns to their home state poses further problem, as a linear curriculum is not designed for long-term absence. Cost plays a huge role. Government education is free until 8th standard, but after that, students are required to pay. Language becomes another deeply rooted concern as government schools are taught in the mother tongue of any state, and rarely cater to others.

During our school visits, a lot of students expressed that they would want to become engineers, scientists, and doctors in the future. However, there is a huge gap between aspirations and knowledge of how to achieve their career goals. The lack of direction also leads students to undervalue further education, which contributes to the problem of school dropouts after 8th standard.

From our observations and research, we determined the following problem.

Many children lack the access to resources and viable career planning in rural government schools.

EXISTING SOLUTIONS

The Delhi model

The Delhi government launched a project in 2017 that aims to provide career guidance to students from 10th-12th standards in government schools. The government has partnered with India's largest career counseling company--iDreamCareer.com--to implement the project, with support from UNDP India and Central Square Foundation, a grant-making policy think tank in the education sector.

Under the initiative, 4 lakh students studying in 1029 government schools now have access to one-on-one career counseling service. The existing 175 education, vocational and guidance counselors (EVGCs) in Delhi government school system have received training which aims to build their career counseling capacity. Students are to take a psychometric career assessment test which will be used to generate a report that details students' strengths, weakness, personality traits, and interest areas along with scientific career recommendations. The students have access to dynamic and updated information on careers, scholarship, entrance exams, and college admission process through a web portal which is available in Hindi. Counselors also uses the online portal to access students' report and queries.

The project has gained traction among students. Its online portal has 3,500 visits and more than 50,000 page views from students daily in 2017, with an average of 6.30 minutes spent on the portal. It's stated in the project's report that with these resources provided, students are more aware about career opportunities, especially those in the vocational fields.

CMCA

The Children's Movement for Civic Awareness, or CMCA, was founded in the year 2000 with the mission to transform the youth of India into active, informed, and inclusive CMCA has a few methodologies to carry out this goal. It is a nine-month program for 8th standard students. The program uses various activities including student-led campaign to motivate students to become responsible citizens.

The impact of CMCA shows both increased awareness of children who participated in the program as well as positive results from the campaigns. Increased awareness ranges from changing opinions regarding accepting or paying bribes, and the attitudes towards violence against women. Positive outcomes of campaigns include speaking to local officials about lack of facilities in their local schools and securing the necessary funds and administrators to have them fixed.

The success of CMCA shows the ability to provide increased motivation for students when they are given the adequate resources to satisfy their curiosity and promote changes as they see fit.

SOLUTION

Our solution is to provide career counselors to students in 7th and 8th standard in government schools in rural communities.

The concept is to work with current running organizations to access government schools. By pairing with an established network, such as the one that exists with Agastya International Foundation, the trust and location of the schools are already determined. This organization conducts bi-weekly visits to rural schools, bringing in labs in physics, chemistry, and more. By utilizing this venue, we can establish a Career Day. Other potential organizations we can partner with is SELCO Foundation and Tata Trust.

On the ground, this model looks similar to the traveling Lab-In-A-Box model of Agastya. The counselor will carry a box full of materials and possible handouts to the children. The counselor will be present at the schools from 12-6pm two days a week for a full year, so that she/he will be present for both part of the school day as well as after school hours. This after-school session will open the resources to students from other schools, parents, and drop-outs. It will function as an access point to the other resources offered by organizations and the government. By arriving on a set schedule and a set time, the counselor would become a reliable asset to the community as a whole.

The counselor will be someone who is trained in the viable careers and paths open to rural students. We will look for graduate students in the education or psychology department that are looking for an internship to complete their degree. Potential partners include Christ University, Azim Premji University and Srishti School of Art Design and Technology. Through this mutually beneficial agreement, we will get a year-long relationship between the students and the counselor.

The current phase of the program begins with a two-part assessment crafted by the CounselEd team with input from various counselors and teachers in the field. This is intended to gauge interest in school, desired careers, knowledge of approach to careers, and difficulties faced in the education process. It will be administered before and after the initial meeting, with repeats to measure any shift in understanding and interest. Two

months into the program, a separate personality assessment will be distributed in order to survey children's individual skills, interests, and knowledge of potential careers.

Beyond the assessments, the model will be a one-on-one session with each student. This approach will encourage students to express their interests, motivations, and ideas for their career in a safe and non-judgemental space. The counselor will then have a variety of materials to assist the student, such as pamphlets, videos, talking points, and online resources. These exploratory materials will help the student create a feasible and achievable timeline to pursue higher education or career options that were previously obscure or seemingly unobtainable.

The website will also host resources that extends the impact of our project to students who are not yet visited by our counselors or who want to access material at a later date. Students will be able to go on our website to explore future career opportunities and learn about the necessary steps to take in order to pursue them. We understand that university education may not be a good fit for every student; the website will also serve as a link for these students and vocational schools or different companies they can work for.

PILOT

Our pilot program consisted of a graduate student from St. Joseph's College, who has a degree and experience in sociology, an initial and final survey, and one-on-one sessions with students from two schools. Our recruited counselor read the survey answers for children and discussed their interests, issues, career goals and aspirations. The discussion was centered around career counseling, with room for discussion on other topics.

Two schools participated in our pilot program. Jaraganahalli Government School was a standard urban government school where we interacted with a class of 8th standard students. From this school, we have 20 initial surveys and 5 students were given 10-minute one-on-one sessions. The Brilliant School works with the Non-Governmental Organization Samridhdhi Trust, a bridge school for migrant children who have dropped out of regular school. We have 11 initial surveys from this school, and 7 students were given 10-minute one-on-one sessions.

Results:

Students had an overwhelmingly positive experience with the counselor. Spending time with the counselor allowed students to focus their goals and ideas on how to reach them.

12/12 students wanted to see counselor again

8/12 students changed their views on their careers after the session

9/12 students were curious about other careers after the session

The success of the pilot program showed the positive impact on students after just one session with a counselor.

MARKET

Throughout our research, we have identified several customers that will be viable candidates to support this program, both initially and in the long term ecosystem. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are currently working in the field can provide initial investments. Website advertising can be sold to vocational schools and corporations to generate a cash inflow. In the long run, governmental subsidy and corporation donations will create a sustainable system.

During the current phase, partnering with NGOs that are currently working with government schools will be critical. Not only will this add ease to the logistical aspects of our project and provide assistance with their years of experience, but it will also provide a source for funding. Organizations such as Agastya International Foundations and Samridhdhi Trust have impressive lists of donors, and are open to investing. This will be vital in the partial donor-based model that will need a modest investment to ensure transportation and living expenses for the counselor. We can generate revenue by selling advertising on our web portal to vocational schools and corporations. This return will be mutually beneficial as the students may be more likely to enroll or apply to the advertisers, while investing in a multimedia approach to increase student access to information and organizations.

The future of the model will remain partially donor-based, targeting the large corporations that are required to give CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds. The website will remain a viable revenue source that will gain momentum amongst various companies seeking new hires and technical students. This career counseling model will gain enough funding to hire professional counselors, but the idea of training the new generation of professionals to become invested in this problem is essential.

Based off of our research, we found that the government is likely to adopt programs that are already proven successful into their existing system. In the long run, we hope that the government will implement this career counseling system into their schools once our program shows viability.

IMPACT

By providing a counselor two times a week, the students would receive support for pursuing secondary and higher secondary school. This would allow them to have the resources and motivation to pass the 10th standard examination. A massive milestone in an Indian child's educational process, this exam offers many options and projections for the rest of their career path. By continuing on to higher education, by finishing 11th and 12th standard, it will increase their odds of attending a university and receiving a higher degree. This counseling program will grant them the chance to access resources to pursue their goals.

This will also have impact on their community. By gaining knowledge about further educational and career options through their counselor, the students will be able to spread this knowledge throughout their families and communities. In this fashion, siblings, parents, other family members and neighbors will gain this access to these resources. It will impact a bigger community than just the students at the school.

The counselors that we receive from the university will gain connections and experience working in rural areas with students in underprivileged communities. They will expand their understanding of the lack of resources, hopefully guiding them to a career path with these areas. The limited resources faced by rural students leads to underutilizing one of the largest pools of future intellect and innovation that India has to offer. CounselEd intends to invest in these children to bring about a more equitable and inspired society.

TEAM

Irene Bembenek is a Civil & Environmental Engineering student in her junior year of her Bachelor's degree coursework. A woman with a broad range of interests, her breadth of education helps her excel at thinking through new perspectives. The equality of education proposed by this project is a personal passion that inspires her to remain motivated and energetic.

Rebecca Keyser is an Environmental Science and Resource Management preparing to graduate with a Bachelor's of Science. Working in developing worlds has always been her goal, while promoting the idea that the poverty of the world is an untapped resource of intelligence and ingenuity. The hope of universal education inspires her to bring the spark of curiosity, scientific learning, and environmental awareness to all corners of the world.

Alexandra Megard-Murphy is a Medical Anthropology and Global Health student in her junior year of her Bachelor's degree coursework. An ambassador for Love Your Melon, her experience in fundraising and caring for those in need has inspired her to focus on combating malnutrition and supporting underprivileged communities. CounselEd has become a point of personal pride as she faces the viable world of nongovernmental organizations and prepares for a future of humanitarian work.

Nikita Sharma is an Industrial and Systems Engineering student in her junior year of her Bachelor's degree coursework. From creating a Personal Lifehacker System to an Orbital Debris Collection Device, she is intent on designing solutions to the challenges faced every day. CounselEd has given her the chance to enter into the world of Grand Challenges, and innovate on a deeper global scale.

Jiajin Zheng is an International Studies and Economics student in his junior year of his Bachelor's degree coursework. His experience of growing up in China and studying in the US leads him to wonder about the many issues surrounding development. He is especially interested in the topic of inequality in the developing world. Working on the CounselEd

project has enabled him to study one aspect of development up close while challenging him to propose a solution.

Appendix A

CounselEd Initial & Final Survey

CounselEd Initial Survey (Text Provided in Kannada and English)

1. How do you like school? What else would you like to learn?
2. Have you had any career guidance or taken a career assessment before?
3. Who is that one person whom you can talk to about career and future options? What does he/ she do?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you like coming to school? Tick the following:
I come to school because:
 - a) I like the food
 - b) My friends
 - c) I have to
 - d) for marks and certificates
 - e) I don't like coming to school
5. What difficulties do you face in your studies? What kind of support do you require?
6. Have you used a computer before? What all can do you with it?
7. If there is a program after school, on career and academic training (out of syllabus), would you be interested in attending something like that?
8. What do you want to do when you grow up?
9. What made you choose this career?
10. What should you do now to get there?
11. What steps have you already taken to reach your career goals?

CounselEd Final Survey (Text Provided in Kannada and English)

1. After today, are you curious about any other careers?
2. Have you learnt anything new about yourself today?
3. How has this session been? Would you like to see the counselor again?

4. What steps are you going to take to reach your career goal?

5. Has your view about your career goal changed ?

Appendix B

The Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas

Team or Company Name:

CounselEd

Date:

03/05/18

<p>Key Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • Vocational schools • Donors • University • Company 	<p>Key Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career counselor guides student • Counselor is a resource for them to continue to secondary school • Counselor can give them information on how to achieve career goals • Access to website that provides the resources 	<p>Value Proposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can achieve a higher education • Students can reach their intended career goals • Students can understand the process of how to reach their goals • Spread knowledge to their community 	<p>Customer Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term relationship in order to gain trust between counselor and school • Implemented in already established system— counselor should be backed by school principal in order to cultivate support by parents • NGO provides donors • Companies and vocational school pay us for advertising on our website • Connect university with NGO 	<p>Customer Segments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government schools • NGOs • University • Company recruitment • Vocational schools
	<p>Key Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor • Training to counselors so they can adequately address students' needs • Website 			

Cost Structure

- Most important cost is paying counselor's salary and counselor training
- NGO will pay the counselor's salary and training
- Long term the goal is to subsidize through government spending, but need to prove to the government that the model works first

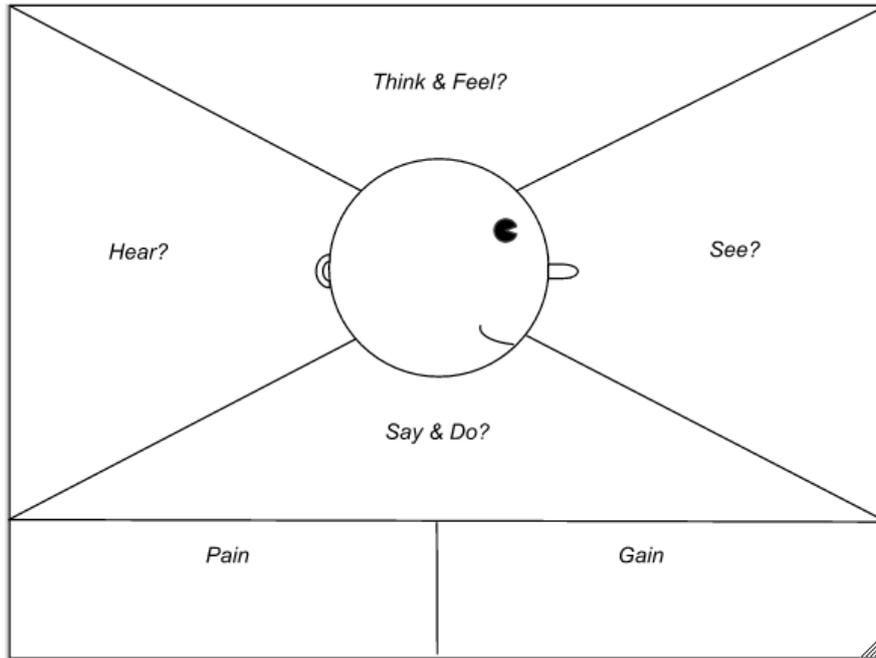
Revenue Streams

- Students will not have to pay and have not been paying
- Will get money to fund counselors and training from NGO donor
- Companies and vocational schools will pay to be on the website and used for a resource for students

Source: www.businessmodelgeneration.com

Appendix C

Empathy Map



Beneficiary: 8th standard student

Think and Feel

- Does not know that there is a career option for what he is passionate about helping family with work
- Passionate about engineering and wants to learn more about it
- Develop skills to farm because no point in getting further education when can't go to college
- Does not see the point of further education
- Preoccupied with helping family and hanging out with friends
- No resource for information about things they are passionate about
- Lack of support from parents and community to pursue higher education
- Wishes he had a way to explore his potential career path

See

- Village
- Friends don't think education is valuable
- Not a lot of other students continue on to secondary school
- School where teachers lack motivation
- Around adults who didn't pursue a higher education or career path

Say and Do

- Acts like he does not care about school
- Does what parents tell him too
- Might have brought up passion for engineering, but got unmotivated to further explore the idea due to lack of resources and support

Hear

- Parents and others in the community talking poorly of higher education and prestigious career paths
- Friends talking about how they are going to help their parents with work or work in the local village
- Parents telling him that he will work locally and it does not make sense for him to continue on through school

Jobs/Duties

- To go to school
- To help parents with work

Pains

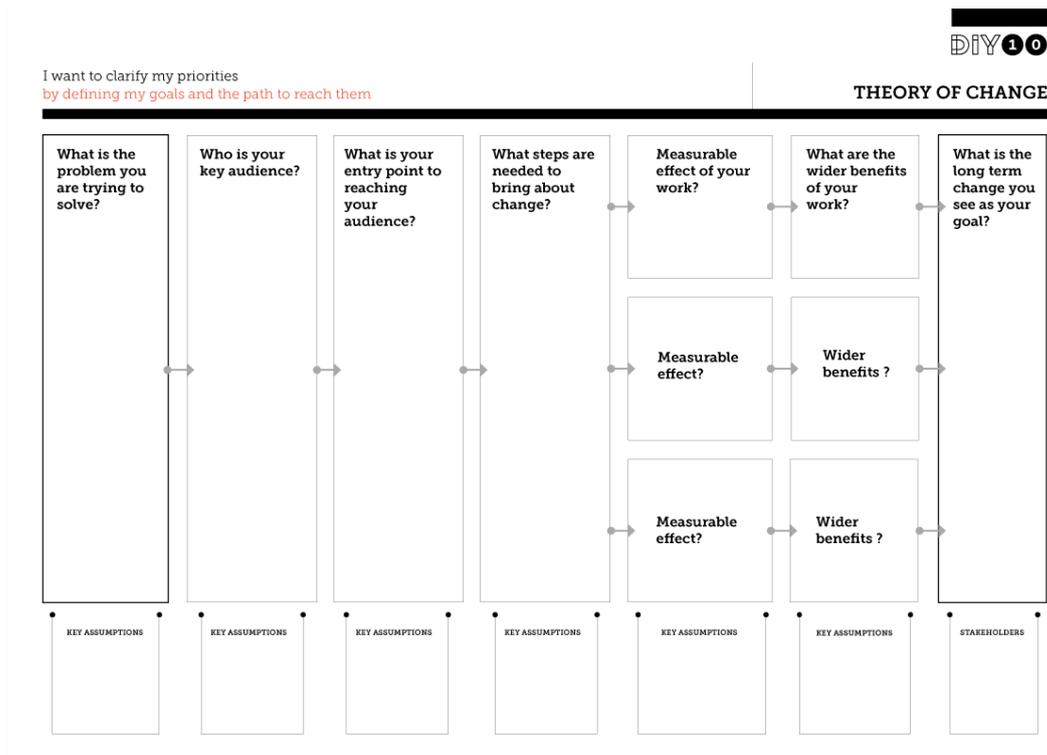
- Frustrated that he does not have support from anyone
- Sad that he can't explore what his different career options are
- No resource for questions or options
- No knowledge of career paths

Gains

- Confidence
- Information
- Access to resources
- Opportunities

Appendix D

Theory of Change & RCT



Problem: Many children lack the access to resources and viable career planning in rural government schools.

Assumptions

- Kids want a job other than farming
- Kids would want to talk to the counselor

Audience: children in 7th and 8th grade standard

Assumptions

- Those students are the ones that need counseling
- That's the age students decide to dropout

Entry point to reach audience: NGO already working in that rural community

Assumptions

- Those NGOs would want to partner with us
- Students would like this part of the NGO interaction as much as the other programs they implement
- They could fund this program with their existing donors

Steps needed to bring about change

- Get students to realize that they want to access a career counselor
- Get a school to want to adopt the counselor, a school that the NGO already works with
- Implement the program
- Do an end survey on feedback on program and look for progression

Assumption

- Schools want to implement our program
- Kids will use the school counselor

Measurable effect #1

- Running sociological survey

Assumption

- Students and teachers will fill out the survey honestly

Measurable effect #2

- Drop out rate over period of five years

Assumption

- Reason for dropping out is solely lack of guidance and resource

Measure effect #3

- Track usage of website

Assumption

- They are students
- They are interested in the resources the website has to offer

Wider benefit #1

- Community will gain knowledge through children

Assumption

- Children will talk to people in their community about it
- Parents will seek the career counseling in the after school hours

Wider benefit #2

- Resource investment of counselors to rural areas instead of urban areas

Assumption

- Counselors will see the benefit/enjoy working with rural upper primary students

Wider benefit #3

- Teachers will face less pressure to teach students about career options as well

Assumption

- Teachers feel the pressures of too much work, too much to take on and effectively teach the students
- Teachers will use this stress release to make better use of their time

Long term change you see of goal

- Career counselor system funded by state
- Increase in students in careers
- Lower dropout rate after upper primary school
- Website will be further resource to students
- Stakeholders
 - NGO
 - University/Vocational Schools
 - Government schools
 - Counselor

RCT: We will randomly select 20 students in 8th standard from three different primary government schools that do not have access to career counseling. We will use a short survey to establish a baseline of interest, career goal, and knowledge. Then, after one-on-one sessions with the counselor, the same survey would be administered. This way, the students will act as a control to themselves, with the second surveys being the intervention cases. Any change in the child's understanding or motives would be recorded.

The sessions will be repeated twice a week for more than two weeks. This will establish whether children are benefiting, learning, and growing under the paradigm of a one-on-one counseling session.

Appendix E

A Story in 7 Sentences

Once upon a time there was a 14 year old boy named Nadiv who went to 8th standard in a primary government school in Ujire. And everyday, he dreamt of learning how to create a drone to fly in his own backyard, but realized he doesn't have the resources to know how. This made him sad and lose hope of continuing school next year to complete secondary school because he could not pursue a career that he is passionate about. But then one bright and sunny morning an Agastya's lab-on-a-bike showed up, but this time...NOT with science but A CAREER COUNSELOR! He spent one-on-one time with the counselor where Nadiv learned that there was actually an educational path, and career, where he could get paid to build drones! This made him very excited to go to school and meet with the counselor every opportunity he got to learn more about his possible future options. Ever since that day, he had direction and a career goal with a drive to pursue a higher education.

Appendix F

Prototype

Our MVP consisted of a Krishna, a graduate student from St. Joseph's College with a degree and experience in sociology, an initial and final survey, and one-on-one sessions with students from two schools. Our recruited counselor read the survey answers for children and discussed their interests, issues, career goals and aspirations. The discussion was centered around career counseling, with room for discussion on other topics.

Two schools participated in our pilot program. Jaraganahalli Government School was a standard urban government school where we interacted with a class of 8th standard students. From this school, we have 20 initial surveys and 5 students were given 10-minute one-on-one sessions. The Brilliant School works with the Non-Governmental Organization Samridhdhi Trust, a bridge school for migrant children who have dropped out of regular school. We have 11 initial surveys from this school, and 7 students were given 10-minute one-on-one sessions.

What we learned from our MVP:

- 6th standard is too young to focus on career advice, and we should have more of a focus on counseling.
- The students would benefit immensely from this counseling.
- 8th standard would benefit more from career counseling.
- Good feedback from both the counselor and the students, so we know this could be successful.
- It is an extremely valid problem and solution based off of our survey results.
- Counselor expressed interest to go back to school, which means that other potential counselors would be interested.



This was our counselor, Krishna.