The Wellbeing University

Note of Intent

Well-being University

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Problem

The key problem that we want to address with this project is the negative effects of loneliness in people under 30 in Paris and the importance of wellbeing in every day personal, social, academic, and professional life. The project starts by focusing on universities in France and then aims to expand to universities in the Eurozone. In the long term, this project aims to address this problem not only in universities but also in corporate, professional, and personal environments.

Loneliness is defined as sadness because one has no friends or company by the Oxford Dictionary. Worldwide prestigious organizations like The Washington Post, No Isolation and The Guardian have emphasized that loneliness is a problem that is recognized among the elderly communities but often overlooked in younger generations: "Loneliness is a recognized problem among the elderly – there are day centers and charities to help them… but when young people reach 21 they're too old for youth services" (Gil, 2014) (No Isolation, 2018). This is problematic because of the close relationship between loneliness and mental health – it is linked to increased stress, depression, paranoia, anxiety, addiction, cognitive decline and is a known factor in suicide. France has the highest number (12%) of people who don't have anyone to discuss their personal matters with (Eurostat, 2017). The British government has appointed a loneliness minister to help fight this public health concern. An ever evolving and growing digital revolution has provided easier, cheaper, and faster access to cheap forms of entertainment and social platforms that are contributing to increased isolation in younger generations that to a certain extent are neglecting their personal wellbeing and prioritizing their digital life or 'avatar'. David Foster Wallace, discussing his book *Infinite Jest*, captures this phenomenon by stating that:

> *"our decisions about how we relate to fun and entertainment and sports and pretty much anything, are very personal, private that they're sort of between us and our heart. There's a fair amount of high comedy at the government, going around ringing its hands trying to figure out what to do. In fact, I think what's going to happen, I don't think it's all that hard to see. What's going to happen is that these are decisions that are going to have to be made inside us as individuals about what we're going to give ourselves away to and what we aren't."*
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> *(Reike, 2018)*

With this project, we intend to create a concept called Wellbeing Unviersity, an organization of students that seeks to do diagnostics at universities where loneliness becomes a problem and eventually issues recommendations, by leveraging on social sciences skills such as surveying.

Proposed Concept

StarTravel has decided to address this problem by creating the Wellbeing University.

The Wellbeing University is not an institution as such, but rather a junior consulting company that provides a service to universities to enable them to locally combat public health issues – both by rising awareness and adapting their locations, facilities and services. Our goal is to create a healthy environment that minimizes previously mentioned public health issues and maximizes the productivity and potential of individuals in different work and study settings.

The project is constructed around the idea "start small, get global", which is further detailed in the *Deployment Strategy*. First, we focus our service on French universities. We will start our project with a website that connects major stakeholders in universities, as well as in society in general, to ideas, experiences, donors, feedbacks, suggestions, and expertise, that will enable the local actors to launch their public health initiatives. In a second step, we will supplement the website with consulting services, offering analysis and implementation support.

While the feasibility of the Wellbeing University in greatly linked to our detailed step-by-step approach, its originality results from the efficient exploitation of collective intelligence: Many universities already invest in public health projects, many student societies are engaged in awareness campaigns – so instead of choosing one possible initiative, we provide the platform for exchange. The communication thus facilitated allows steady progress thanks to experience, suggestions and prior results instead of having to "reinvent" the same project in different locations.

Expected positive impacts

Sustainability and high impact are at the heart of our project: instead of leading one campaign by itself (or a series of campaigns), we intend to build long term partnerships and a web platform, to be a constantly updated source of inspiration. In providing the ideas, the know-how and the contacts necessary to succeed, we enable our local partners to take action. Those partners are permanent actors in their respective university, thus implementing and perpetuating our initial objective in their institutions.

Our business model even provides our project with the possibility of a snowball effect: each successful initiative does not only enhance public awareness about health and wellbeing issues, but also attracts new stakeholders to our website, which in turn increases the number of potential future projects.

Major risks and preventive actions

As the topic is rather non-controversial in its general scope, no major oppositions towards the Wellbeing University as such are expected. However, we are prepared to deal with student associations perceiving us as a rival to their legitimacy. We intend to make it very clear, that we don't intervene locally on a long-term basis. We rather see our mission as enabling local

associations by providing ideas, suggestions, experiences, and partners to achieve a bigger impact with their actions.

We are also aware of possible skepticism from the side of the administrations. We will overcome this attitude by keeping them updated of all our actions concerning their university and providing them with reports, impact evaluations and cost-benefit analysis to prove the utility of the measures.

It is possible that controversial initiatives will be suggested on our website. In those cases, we see it as our obligation to ensure a professional and factual level of debate and expert opinions on the suggested measure.

Deployment strategy and major milestones

We suggest a step-by-step implementation regarding three different levels: 1. the geographical scope, 2. the sectorial scope, 3. the provided service. While the first two levels set a general framework of where our project is situated and provide a potential outlook for an expansion in the future, the focus of the practical implementation lies obviously on the service itself.

Objectives for the geographical scope

In the early stages, the Wellbeing University will focus on France. However, due to the increasing interconnectedness of European students, universities, and even student associations, we are planning to target (at least for the website activities) European universities. The first step towards this realization is to transform our website into a bilingual one, available in French and English.

Potential for the sectorial scope

As the name already suggests, the Wellbeing University is catering in the first place to French universities. However, public health issues are a societal concern and our main objectives, creating a healthy environment and raising awareness on public health issues, are not limited to the field of higher education. Quite on the contrary, our solutions are also transferrable to companies or governmental agencies.

Keeping in mind those potential future partnerships and sectors, we center the project's immediate planning and short and middle term forecasts exclusively on universities.

Steps towards a multifaceted service

Creating a website

The first step into life of the university of Wellbeing is a website. Inspired by the example of the "European Citizens' Initiative" (http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en) we want to offer a platform revolving around public health initiatives in universities. Thanks to our website, university administrations or student associations, both essential partners to our

wellbeing project, who are willing to launch a campaign or implement new strategies are not obliged to come up with completely new projects from the ground up. They rather get ideas from other projects by sharing experiences and exchanging suggestions. This leads to an efficient application and replication of the most successful projects – and the steady improvement of their concept due to collective intelligence.

Furthermore, this website enhances the connections between inner-university initiatives and actions outside of university circles. Connecting campaigns, sharing knowledge and experiences, and exchanging with professionals in the same field of action increases the impacts of the University of Wellbeing.

Last but not least, the home page allows for investors to easily get in touch with promising projects – or for organizers to look for funding possibilities.

The first, immediate goal of the website is bringing together ideas and actors - which we will facilitate by installing certain additional features like the possibility to sign up for alerts informing you instantly about new initiatives fitting specific criteria.

Offering a consulting and active implementation service

On the basis of the database of our website, we intend to establish a consulting service that offers support implementing initiatives related to well-being. Our service is based on the adaptation and personalization of templates for successful initiatives in order to fit the local requirements and conditions. We are going to draft those templates on the basis of the information provided on our website, exploiting, filtering and evaluating the projects, actors and suggestions. The analysis of the specific conditions includes finding sources of funding, local partners, and feasibility studies. Regarding this on-site service, our capacities are limited in the early stages of the project (due to our primary obligations as students). Therefore, the geographical area, where StarTravel will start to intervene is primarily limited to Ile-de-France. However, due to the essential link to the homepage, the consulting activities will only start after a successful launch of the website and a first data analysis review.

Return on investment analysis

As our project starts with a website, with us working on a voluntary, non-profit basis, there are no fixed costs involved. We will set up the website ourselves: Even if it will take longer to optimize the final version of the website, there is no need to pay for a web designer. Also, we won't have an office in the beginning, but manage the client-interactions primarily via the website, e-mail, social media, and personal visits.

On the other hand, thanks to the website, we will be able to collect data and contact information which will serve as our primary resource when setting up the consulting activity.

Partnerships and cooperations

The entire business model of the Wellbeing University is based on partnerships and cooperations. We offer the inspiration and guidance necessary to take the first steps, suggestions, and contacts to those actors who are locally present. Thus, it is essential to have both backing from the administration of the universities and from the student associations. However, in order to profit from the synergies of projects in universities and external actors, we are going to link our external partners, including associations, public health experts, doctors, psychologists, municipalities and other investors with stakeholders in the sphere of higher education.

In order to establish our partnerships, our first step will be to contact the relevant Sciences Po student clubs, professors and the administration to cooperate with them as well with their partner organizations.

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