

THE ECONOMIC REINSERTION OF AT-RISK YOUTH: EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR DISSEMINATION

TEAM PROFILE

3 to 5 students coming from different countries/cultures ideally. Demonstrated interest in Venture Philanthropy and with “interest/knowledge/experience” re. At-Risk Youth (ranging from ex-offenders, underprivileged neighborhoods, addictions, prostitution, migration as well as physically- and mentally-handicap). Fluency in English (for all) and Spanish (at least one) and French (at least one) as case studies will involve dealing with multi-languages field experiences.

PARTNER

Fondation Demeter <http://fondation-demeter.com>
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PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT

Pascal Vinarnic – Founder

Etienne Eichenbeger - Director - Wise Philanthropic Services

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTITUTION AND CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Fondation Demeter was set up in 1994 to sponsor innovative economic solutions to social issues. Working with pilot programs in any geography over a period of 3 to 7 years, Demeter’s sponsored projects try to demonstrate:

- an innovative economic solution is delivering social results
- scalability options can be identified and start to be executed upon
- impact is measured and is obtained with most adequate resource-minded business model to ensure best possible financial independence.

After 12 years sponsoring microfinance, Demeter has been focused for almost 15 upon the economic reinsertion of at-risk youth (broad definition ranging from ex-convicts to handicapped – all underprivileged and vulnerable youth Civic Society too often would prefer to see “behind bars”).

At-risk youth represent almost 1 billion individuals from 16-to-24-year old with little hope of ever having a proper job. That group is at risk of becoming a prey to all forms of extremism if alternative integration solution cannot be developed and made available to them.

Using Entrepreneurship as a path to Employability, Demeter has sponsored 10's of successful initiatives showing that everyone could access proper integration conditions. However, despite their success, most of such initiatives have remained local and did not scale.

During the past 4 years, Demeter with the support of Team Project Students from Sciences Po have developed definitions, processes, rationales and solutions to explain those successful experiences as well as the (not-so-many) failures we suffered from.

It is now time to wrap it up all and to propose (a) more global plaidoyer(s) to disseminate the theory of change which is compulsory to enable Civic Society's successful integration of all as one single community.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

Venture Philanthropy is trying to duplicate the venture

capital model into the social sector. To ensure proper sharing of know-how is easily available and well disseminated, it is critical to document best practices experienced on field projects and to make those available to the widest possible audiences using the most adequate format.

Demeter has developed a "library" of case examples based upon its own "empiric" field experiences to show best-demonstrated practices in the field of venture philanthropy – in Demeter's case to be related with At-risk Youth successful economic insertion into Society.

Typically, 3 to 5 "organizations/programs" were selected to produce pre-defined deliverable contents and the media format was determined on a case-by-case basis. Demeter's board is seconded by Wise Philanthropy Advisors, a group of expert advisors in the fields of venture philanthropy and communication.

The Team Project Students are offered to assist the advisors and Demeter's board in all phases i.e. using all available materials based upon Demeter's know-how to recommend the most adequate way to disseminate such experiences – from setting the objective to participating to the production of the deliverables.

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES INTENDED

For the past 4 years, around 20 case examples showing Best Venture Philanthropy Practices around the successful Paths towards the Employability of At-Risk Youth have been developed. In most cases, the deliverables included the definition, the rationale, the process followed, the solution and its impact as well as its possible specific dissemination media.

NGOs traditionally focused upon "back-to-school" type of programs to prepare for the (re)-insertion of at-risk youth. And too often failed to obtain satisfactory results: jobs are not interesting causing significant turnover among employees; the social differences with the rest of the Civic Society increase due to jobs with little value added, hidden from the public, and/or having low-tech contents.

However, a successful economic insertion proves to be often more significant than a proper education. As soon as someone is "employed", the change of mindset from Civic Society is more easily achieved. The person stops being her/his past history (addict, offender, migrant, handicapped ...) to become simply one of us.

Despite such experiences being relatively well-known and documented, how come the Civic Society, Employers or Policy-Makers are not committed to **systematize such theory of change** and too often prefer to continue with using taxpayers benefits or funding to run programs to apart such Youth from the rest of Society, hiding Society's failures when success is at reach.

SCHEDULE

September/November: Part I - Investigation of available experiences and their impact / lessons to get students familiarized with topic of dissemination

December/January: Part II - Recommendation of dissemination strategies and specific examples of deliverables and their go-to-production paths.

February/April: Part III - Execution in collaboration with Wise Philanthropy Advisors and other relevant partners.

METHODOLOGY

Students define / investigate / compile in Part I. Then in Part II, Team Project Students work upon recommendations to Demeter's Board about the best possible dissemination. After approval from Demeter's Board, the Students will execute during Part III.

Team is composed of various Demeter board members, Wise's representative and other contracted partners as well as 1 lead student per "case" though all the group continues to interact together as a rule. They meet mostly through digital media once / twice a week during Parts I & II. During Part III, Team liaises twice a month for follow-up.

LOGISTICS

The students will have access to the Team Projects' room, equipped with a computer, a printer and a phone.

Demeter will give access to their internal experience base (not necessarily under a formalized format) and will help the students with introduction and support to outside parties that need to be contacted for the project. If specific and pre-approved expenses are required to conduct the projects, Demeter will be funding those.