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Article · March 2024

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Case Study 05

The Journey to Empowerment through Social Entrepreneurship*

Introduction

The Sejal New life foundation (SNLF) is an India-based charity that was established in 2011. Their mission is to promote good mental health in every section of society and to prevent mental health issues through training and awareness programs. SNLF has conducted 250 campaigns and programs in villages, schools, colleges, and organizations pan India and across the globe through online and offline modes to promote their cause.

The organization aims to:

- Empower children and the general population to improve their well-being and emotional health through awareness campaigns and training programs.
- Reduce the stigma associated with the mental health of children, women, and the public through the dissemination of information across print, TV, Radio, and social media platforms.
- Conducting free camps and training programs for those who can't afford medical management of their mental health issues.
- Free treatment for some patients who cannot afford medicines and therapy for their mental health issues.

The structure of Sejal New life foundation includes:

- Board of directors: SNLF has nine boards of Directors. Dr. Lokesh Babu is the President and Secretary of the board. Dr. Padmakshi oversees the organization's activities and provides strategic direction. The organization envisions bringing

** This case was developed by G. Radha Kiranmayi (Pendekanti Institute of Management, Hyderabad, Telangana), Sarita Abhay Dhawale (Ashoka Business School, Nashik, Maharashtra), Tamizharasi D (RV Institute of Management, Bangalore, Karnataka), Rahul Trivedi and Tanmay Bhale (G. H. Raisoni Institute of Engineering & Business Management, Jalgaon, Maharashtra) during the 8th Online Case Writing Workshop organized by the Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS) from 09 to 11 March, 2023.*

back smiles to the people who lost them and thus making a difference in the mental health of society.

- Staff: It has six paid staff members who work on a full-time basis to manage the organization's programs and activities.
- Volunteers: SNLF relies on volunteers to support its programs and activities. Volunteers include people with lived experience of mental health issues, mental health professionals, students, and other community members who are passionate about mental health.
- Advisory committees: SNLF has an advisory committee to guide on specific issues, such as program development, or advocacy.
- Partnerships: It had partnered with other organizations, including mental health organizations, healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies, to support their work and achieve their mission.
- Donors and funders: Individuals interested in helping society with mental health sometimes donate to projects held by SNLF. Some organizations fund the required medicines or provide free samples for people with mental health issues.
- Associates: SNLF sometimes associates with other organizations working for other causes and activities along with mental health upliftment.

Some of the key areas of focus for the Sejal New life foundation include:

- Preventing mental health problems through early intervention and support.
- Promoting good mental health and well-being through education and awareness-raising campaigns.
- Increasing the Improvement of access to mental health services and support.
- Addressing the stigma associated with mental health issues.
- Addressing the social determinants against women and adolescent children and the public about emotional and sensitive issues.
- Addressing mental health issues of children of single parents.
- Addressing and providing facilities to nomadic children for better living and emotional well-being.
- Providing training and support to employees and employers to improve their performance at workplaces by reducing anxieties and stress-related issues.

- Offering training to students at various levels will increase the efficiency of acquiring knowledge and skills to develop their personality in a much better way.
- Providing posh training at various levels of the organization to improve quality at workplaces.
- It also focuses on working for addictions in teenagers.

Though the entire team of Sejal New life foundation is working for a noble cause, the team must continuously face many challenges in their efforts to promote better mental health and well-being.

Some examples are:

- Stigma and discrimination: Mental health issues are still often stigmatized and discriminated against, which can make it challenging to raise awareness and support for their work.
- Funding: Sejal New life foundation often faces challenges in securing funding for its programs and activities.
- Access to care: Access to mental health care can be limited in some areas, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Sejal New life foundation faces challenges in providing care and support to those who need it most.
- Lack of awareness: Many people are still not aware of the importance of mental health and the impact it can have on their lives. Sejal New life foundation faces challenges in raising awareness and educating the public about mental health issues.
- Integration with healthcare systems: Mental health is often seen as a separate issue from physical health, which can make it challenging to integrate mental health services into healthcare systems. Sejal New life foundation works closely with healthcare providers to ensure that mental health is integrated into overall healthcare provision.
- Language and cultural barriers: Mental health issues are often perceived and experienced differently in different cultures, and language barriers can make it challenging to provide effective support to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Coordination with other stakeholders: Mental health is a complex issue that requires coordination across different stakeholders, including government

agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and individuals with lived experience of mental health issues.

Scenario

Dr. Padmakshi– A Doctor by profession, a philanthropist, an educationist and stress management trainer, a wellness coach, and a social entrepreneur in India. She is one of the founders of SNLF which focuses on mental health awareness and treatment, particularly for women in rural Karnataka. Mental health is a major concern in India and worldwide, and SNLF aims to promote good mental health for all and prevent mental health problems through awareness-raising campaigns. The organization faces challenges in stigma and discrimination, funding, access to care, lack of awareness, integration with healthcare systems, language and cultural barriers, and coordination with other stakeholders. Despite these challenges, SNLF continues to make a significant impact on society and improve mental health outcomes for those they serve.

With the zeal to change society, Dr. Padmakshi Lokesh and her team conducted several events at various locations in Karnataka. During her frequent visits to different places, she identified how adolescent girls of certain sections of society (like girls belonging to nomad communities and orphaned or underprivileged backgrounds) lacked confidence in facing mainstream society. This thought disturbed her, and she wanted to contribute to this section as well.

After a lot of consideration and deliberation, Dr. Padmakshi and her team emerged with an idea to conduct a fashion show and make these girls walk on the ramp like real models. Though the team agreed on this event, they had to face many challenges for making the event happen. Firstly, the team had to convince the participants and their parents or guardians of their participation. It was a major challenge as it is taboo in many parts of society for adolescent girls to participate in fashion shows. The team convinced the girls and their families by letting them understand the real cause of why such an event would be useful.

Secondly, legal opinion had to be taken on understanding the framework of law in conducting such events to avoid any unpleasant situations in the future. The team then had to approach the local politicians for support. The support of both cash and kind was required for Dr. Padmakshi's team. The team had a setback when local politicians supported the event but were reluctant to offer any sponsorship for the cause. The team decided to self-fund the event and an estimated budget of four lakh rupees was created.

Dr. Padmakshi and her team decided to use social media platforms for the publicity and promotion of the event and requested their families and friends to spread the word around. The venue was soon finalized and arrangements for the event followed. The team realized the significance of costumes and professional makeup for the participants. The strength of individual team members had to be identified at this stage to exploit the skills of the team members. The motto was to bring the best out of every volunteer to contribute to the success of the event. Ms. Sheetal, a fashion designer, volunteered to help them with costumes. The costumes were custom-made for each participant and stitched with utmost care. Some volunteers agreed to do Makeup for the participants, while some trained the girls for the ramp walk.

Though the team agreed to self-fund the event, the necessary funds were not adequately arranged. The efforts put in by Dr. Padmakshi were noticed by the family and friends. Dr. Padmakshi's father A Gangaiah and her Husband Dr. Lokesh sponsored the required funds and so the team finally got all the necessary resources.

The event took place on women's day and the participants stormed the stage and displayed their strength and confidence. The audience was initially apprehensive about the thought of a fashion show but was awestruck with the outcome. Prizes for the winners were announced and the event had a grand finale.

The girls approached Dr. Padmakshi after the event and expressed their deep gratitude for the effort. They told her that they would always remember this day and will put every effort to improve their quality of life. The girls felt empowered, and the team felt the happiness of success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dr. Padmakshi Lokesh is a respected figure in the field of mental health in India and her work with Sejal New Life Foundation. The organization has received several awards and accolades for its efforts in promoting mental health awareness and treatment. However, despite the progress made by the organization, there is still a long way to go in terms of improving access to mental health care and reducing stigma and discrimination around mental health in India. Mental health problems continue to be largely misunderstood and stigmatized in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas, and there is a lack of resources and trained professionals to address the issue. Sejal New Life Foundation's work is critical in addressing this gap and bringing about lasting change.

Dr. Padmakshi Lokesh and her team, despite facing numerous challenges, persevered and managed to organize an event that not only provided a platform for the girls to showcase their talents but also helped boost their confidence and self-esteem. This event is an example of how a small group of people can come together to make a big difference in the lives of others. The team's dedication to the cause and efforts to overcome social and cultural barriers to make this event happen to demonstrate the importance of education and awareness in promoting social change.

Furthermore, the team's use of social media to promote the event highlights the importance of utilizing all available resources and platforms to raise awareness and gather support for important causes. In summary, Dr. Padmakshi Lokesh and her team's efforts to conduct a fashion show for underprivileged adolescent girls not only provided these girls with a unique opportunity but also served as an inspiration to others to make a positive impact in their communities.

Questions

1. What are the key environmental factors described in the case in which Sejal New Life foundation was found to be operating?
2. If you were a team member of the Sejal New Life foundation, suggest an event you would like to conduct for the empowerment of working rural women. Discuss the probable challenges you would face in conducting the event.

Teaching Note

The Journey to Empowerment through Social Entrepreneurship

A synopsis of the case

The case is about an NGO, named Sejal New Life Foundation which was established in the year 2013 in Tumakuru district of Karnataka, India. The NGO aims at working for mental health improvement and women's empowerment in society. The organization works on major challenges that are faced by adolescents and women alike, especially in the rural area. Anxieties, feelings of isolation, depression, peer pressure, performance pressure, broken families, etc are the areas name on which the NGO works predominantly.

The leadership of the NGO includes the President- Dr. Lokesh Babu and Founder: Dr. Padmakshi Lokesh. The NGO could be promoted through 150 episodes and 400 plus

TV shows across various districts of Karnataka. The case focuses on the strengths of the organization viz. working in the space of social entrepreneurship, a strong presence in rural as well as urban areas, innovative practices to promote, mental health and self-esteem of Nomadic and women from the downtrodden strata of the society.

While the transition of this self-funded NGO from an individual entity to one of the most popular catalysts in promoting women's empowerment had its challenges that may be the scarcity of funds, limited demographic reach, and lack of permanent employees, volunteers, and political support. But via various innovative and unique initiatives, the NGO could positively transform the lives of underprivileged and nomadic women and adolescents.

The target learning group

This case is targeted at undergraduate and postgraduate students, corporate employees, and people working in NGOs of the same nature. This case presents an opportunity to understand the nuances of exceptional social entrepreneurship, teamwork, charismatic leadership, and social sensitivity.

The learning/teaching objectives and key issues

- a. To analyze the significance of social entrepreneurship.
- b. To help readers understand the significance of being a leader without a label.
- c. Assess the problems and issues related to mental health, emotional well-being, and women empowerment.
- d. To give students exposure related to various challenges faced by women in social entrepreneurship

The teaching strategy

Case discussion focused on issues mentioned earlier. The case requires individual analysis followed by group preparation and class discussions. Each group can put forward its interpretation and suggestions on the problems involved in the case, followed by open discussion. Twenty minutes of meeting time among each group may be allotted to solve the case.

Questions for discussion

1. *Enlist the probable obstacles of a social entrepreneur. Suggest workable solutions.*

Some of the common obstacles faced by Social entrepreneurs are funding, Scaling a social impact venture, Legal and regulatory barriers that can prevent them from operating their ventures effectively, social and cultural barriers, and resistance to change. Some workable solutions to overcome these obstacles are building partnerships with other organizations, stakeholders, and communities, leveraging technology to create innovative solutions, increase efficiency, and expand their reach, building a strong network of supporters, including investors, donors, and volunteers, advocacy and education to raise awareness of their cause and to build support for their work and measuring impact to demonstrate the value of their work and to attract funding and support.

2. *If you were Dr. Padmakshi, how will you raise funds for Sejal New Life Foundation?*

Sejal New Life Foundation could consider when raising funds for their organization:

- Grants and awards
- Crowdfunding
- Corporate partnerships
- Individual donations
- Events
- Social impact bonds

3. *How Sejal New life foundation can expand its access to mental health care at the grass-roots level?*

Sejal New Life Foundation can expand its access to mental health care at the grass-roots level by adopting a multi-pronged approach that involves partnerships, community outreach, tele-mental health services, capacity building, and advocacy.

4. *What community outreach programs/initiatives can be implemented by Sejal New life foundation to increase awareness of mental health and empowerment of Women in Particular?*

Sejal New Life Foundation can implement several community outreach programs/initiatives to increase awareness of mental health and empower women, such as mental health awareness campaigns, women empowerment programs, support groups, crisis intervention, mental health first aid, and partnerships with local organizations. These initiatives can be implemented in a phased manner, starting

with a pilot program in one community and gradually expanding to other areas. The foundation can leverage social media platforms and other digital tools to reach a wider audience and raise awareness about its programs. Sejal New Life Foundation can also seek funding and support from government agencies, corporations, and philanthropic organizations to sustain and scale its initiatives.

Analysis of data

No data was analyzed in this case and it is a qualitative case study.

Background reading

1. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/topic/civic-issues-in-karnataka>
2. https://www.academia.edu/36333881/Social_Entrepreneurship_A_Few_Case_Study

Experience in using the case.

This is a new case, and yet to be tested in the class