

2010

The Long term Sustainability of Education

Caitlin Lester
Southern Methodist University

Alexandria Davis
Southern Methodist University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.smu.edu/big_ideas_2010_spring

Recommended Citation

Lester, Caitlin and Davis, Alexandria, "The Long term Sustainability of Education" (2010). *Big iDeas 2010 Spring Updates*. 9.
http://scholar.smu.edu/big_ideas_2010_spring/9

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the Big iDeas 2010 at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Big iDeas 2010 Spring Updates by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF EDUCATION



Statement of the Problem

A majority of charities rely heavily on the external funding of donations and grants. During the difficult economic times, cash inflow from donations is apt to diminish due to all-around tightening budgets. This means that any reinvestment for growth is difficult to achieve with the primary concern dwelling upon being able to first cover operating expenses. If these charities are to make a lasting impact, they must be financially sustainable in the long-run.

Concerning Statistics

- According to *Teach For America*, in DISD, approximately 50 % of all students meet proficiency standards on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exams and only 68 % of students graduate. Of these graduates, only one in five is deemed college ready.
- According to the *Giving USA Foundation*, the drop in charitable giving last year was around \$6.4 billion and was the largest drop seen in 54 years. The type of human service agency most likely to be underfunded was youth development/serving children and youth. Of this type of group in the study, 74% said they are underfunded or severely underfunded

Our Aim

The goal of our project is to research means for generating independent cash flow for the purpose of growing and assuring long-term sustainability of education-oriented charities.

We will research potential sources of income beyond donations and grants to help create long-term sustainability within these educational charities. Some fundraising programs might include:

–Volunteer Tutoring

- Income Source: Payment for competitively lower-priced tutoring services

–Professional College Counseling Services

- Income Sources: Payment for competitively lower-priced college admissions guidance

–College-oriented seminars and fairs

- Income Source: Ticket Sales

The money generated from business with middle and upper class families for can then be reinvested back into the charity for growth.

Anticipated Benefits

The anticipated benefits of our endeavor centers around two foundational goals:

- 1) long-term sustainability
- 2) growth of educational charities

Our hope is that our research and potential implementation of our findings will yield a steady and independent cash inflow. This cash inflow will create long-term sustainability because it offers a safety net source of income when donations dwindle for various reasons, like difficult economic times. Moreover, when alternative sources of income are strong, educational charities can use the additional funds for reinvestment to expand the program to other educationally disadvantaged school districts and cities.

Questions

In our research we would work to answer several questions:

- Where and how can we recruit volunteers?
 - College students as tutors
 - Previous admissions representatives as counselors
- How can we continuously motivate volunteers?
 - Minimum payment
 - Credit hours
- How can we best sell these services to those who can afford them?
 - Marketing
 - Competitive edge of lower prices
- How can we ensure the quality of our services in order to provide reputable service for our clients?
- What other services are plausible independent revenue streams?

We will go about trying to answer these questions through various meetings with people who have some expertise in relevant fields.

Methodology

- Where will we go from here?

Our research will work to compile an inventory of the types of organizations that aim to improve education such as EIF, UPLIFT, ARISE, and KIP.

We plan to gain information through surveying and interviewing organizations that can offer some insights as to the plausibility of our ideas.