White Paper

Social Immersion Programme

JAGSoM in Collaboration with 8 One Foundation

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1. Introduction

1.1 Contextual Background

The Social Immersion Programme (SIP) is a unique initiative integrated into the curriculum of the JAGSoM (Jagdish Sheth School of Management) PGDM program. The course is designed to instill a sense of social responsibility and community engagement among management students. This initiative aligns with the institution's commitment to producing socially conscious leaders who can bridge the gap between corporate objectives and societal needs.

In 2024, a cohort of 14 PGDM students specializing in Business Analytics undertook their SIP in collaboration with 8 One Foundation, an NGO focused on community development and educational upliftment. The program aimed to enrich the educational experience of students in middle-class and government high schools in Bengaluru by introducing innovative learning methods and fostering key competencies such as collaboration, creativity, and communication.

8 One Foundation, an NGO committed to improving education and community welfare, played a pivotal role in facilitating the SIP. The foundation's expertise in working with marginalized communities provided valuable insights and support to the students throughout the immersion program. The collaboration between JAGSoM and 8 One Foundation exemplifies how academic institutions and NGOs can work together to create a lasting impact on society.

2. Problem Framing

2.1 Broader Description of the problem

Education in India faces significant challenges, particularly in government schools, where limited resources, language barriers, and outdated teaching methods often hinder the learning process. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds frequently struggle to keep up with the curriculum, leading to a widening gap between them and their peers in private institutions. The SIP aimed to address these issues by providing innovative teaching methods, focusing on English language skills, and fostering a more engaging learning environment.

The specific problems identified during the SIP included:

- **Language Barriers:** Many students in government schools had limited proficiency in English, which is often the medium of instruction in higher education.

- **Resource Constraints:** The schools lacked adequate educational materials and infrastructure, which affected the quality of education.

- **Administrative Hurdles:** The process of obtaining permissions from government authorities to implement the program was time-consuming and challenging, revealing the complexities involved in working within the public education system.

2.2 Situation Analysis

The Social Immersion Programme (SIP) identified several critical challenges in implementing educational initiatives in middle-class high schools in Bengaluru. These challenges include:

1. **Language Barriers:** A significant number of students and teachers have limited proficiency in English. This language barrier hampers effective communication and the delivery of educational content. The students struggle to grasp concepts that are taught in English, and the teachers face challenges in conveying complex ideas, which ultimately affects the overall learning experience.

2. **Administrative Hurdles:** The SIP faced numerous bureaucratic processes and permissions that needed to be navigated before implementing educational initiatives in government schools. These administrative challenges can slow down the process, making it difficult to get the necessary approvals in a timely manner, and potentially stalling the momentum of the programme.

3. **Limited Resources:** Government schools often suffer from inadequate infrastructure and a lack of essential materials, such as textbooks, teaching aids, and technology. This resource limitation hinders the ability to provide a quality education and limits the opportunities for students to engage in interactive and experiential learning.

2.3 Problem Definition

The SIP aims to overcome these challenges by creating and delivering interactive sessions that engage both students and PGDM participants. The programme's objectives include:

1. Skill Development: The SIP seeks to develop crucial skills among PGDM students, such as empathy, communication, and leadership. By engaging directly with students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the PGDM participants learn to understand and

respond to the needs of others, thereby enhancing their social responsibility and emotional intelligence.

2. Promoting Social Immersion: The programme fosters a deeper understanding of societal challenges by immersing PGDM students in real-world educational settings. This immersion helps participants to appreciate the complexities of social issues and motivates them to contribute positively to society.

3. Enhancing Learning Outcomes: The SIP is designed to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students by providing them with better learning opportunities. Through interactive and experiential learning methods, the programme aims to make learning more engaging and effective for these students, thereby helping them overcome the challenges posed by their environment.

3. Programme Objectives

3.1 Primary Objectives

The primary objective of the SIP was to engage with middle-class and government high schools in Bengaluru, teaching students in grades 7, 8, and 9. The program sought to:

- Enhance students' English language skills through interactive and engaging teaching methods.

- Develop students' critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills.

- Provide JAGSoM students with hands-on experience in social work and community engagement.

3.2 Secondary Objectives

The program also aimed to:

- Foster a sense of social responsibility among the PGDM students.

- Create a sustainable model that could be replicated in other schools and communities.

- Strengthen the relationship between JAGSoM, 8 One Foundation, and local government bodies.

4. Collaboration with 8 One Foundation

4.1 Overview of 8 One Foundation

8 One Foundation is a Bengaluru-based NGO dedicated to creating meaningful change in society through education, health, and community development initiatives. The foundation works closely with local communities, government bodies, and other stakeholders to implement programs that address the root causes of social issues. In the context of the SIP, 8 One Foundation provided crucial support in navigating the administrative processes, coordinating with schools, and ensuring the smooth execution of the program.

4.2 **Role in SIP**

The foundation's role in the SIP was multi-faceted:

- **Facilitation:** 8 One Foundation facilitated the process of obtaining permissions from local government bodies such as the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCIA) and the Bengaluru Education Office (BEO).

- **Logistics:** The foundation coordinated with the schools to schedule sessions and provided logistical support to ensure the program's smooth execution.

- **Mentorship:** 8 One Foundation's staff mentored the JAGSoM students, offering guidance on effective teaching methods and community engagement strategies.

5. Proposed Solution

5.1 Identification of Solution Alternatives

The SIP explored several alternative solutions to address the identified challenges:

1. **Partnerships with Government Authorities and NGOs:** Collaborating with government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was considered as a way to leverage existing resources and expertise. These partnerships could help in overcoming administrative hurdles and providing the necessary support to implement educational initiatives.

2. **Collaborations with Private Organizations and Educational Institutions:** Engaging with private organizations and educational institutions was seen as a potential way to supplement the resources and expertise needed for the programme. These collaborations could provide additional funding, materials, and manpower to support the initiatives.

3. **Development of Customized Learning Materials and Resources:** The SIP considered creating tailored learning materials that cater to the specific needs of the students and the context in which they are learning. This approach would involve designing content that is accessible and relevant to the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

5.2 Evaluation of Alternatives through TEV Analysis

1. Partnerships with Government Authorities and NGOs

- **Technical Feasibility**:

    - **Strengths**: Government authorities and NGOs have established networks and experience in the education sector. They can provide access to resources, expertise, and existing infrastructure, making the implementation of educational programs technically feasible.

    - **Challenges**: The process of securing partnerships with government bodies can be slow due to bureaucratic procedures, which might delay implementation.

- **Economic Viability**:

    - **Strengths**: Partnerships with government and NGOs often come with financial support or subsidies, reducing the overall costs of the program. NGOs may also have access to grants and funding specifically allocated for educational initiatives.

    - **Challenges**: Dependence on government funding or NGO support can introduce uncertainties, especially if there are changes in policy or funding priorities.

- **Social Impact**:

    - **Strengths**: Collaborating with NGOs and government authorities can enhance the program's credibility and reach, ensuring a broader impact on the target student population. These partnerships can also facilitate the inclusion of socially relevant content and promote greater social responsibility among PGDM students.

    - **Challenges**: The impact may be limited by the extent of government or NGO involvement, and the bureaucratic nature of these organizations could hinder quick decision-making and adaptability.

2. Collaborations with Private Organizations and Educational Institutions

- **Technical Feasibility**:

    - **Strengths**: Private organizations, especially those in the ed-tech sector, can provide advanced technological solutions such as digital learning platforms, smart classrooms, and other educational tools. These organizations often

bring innovation and efficiency to the table, making the implementation of modern teaching methods more feasible.

- o **Challenges**: There may be a learning curve for both students and teachers in adopting new technologies. Additionally, not all schools may have the necessary infrastructure (e.g., stable internet connections, devices) to support these technologies.

- **Economic Viability**:

  - o **Strengths**: Collaborations with private organizations can be cost-effective if they involve Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, where companies provide resources or services at reduced costs or for free.

  - o **Challenges**: The costs of maintaining and upgrading technological tools can be high, and schools may struggle with long-term sustainability if external support is withdrawn.

- **Social Impact**:

  - o **Strengths**: Introducing modern technology in education can significantly enhance learning outcomes, making education more engaging and accessible. This can also expose students to digital literacy, which is essential for their future careers.

  - o **Challenges**: The social impact might be uneven if not all students have equal access to the necessary technology, potentially widening the digital divide.

3. Development of Customized Learning Materials and Resources

- **Technical Feasibility**:

  - o **Strengths**: Developing customized learning materials that cater specifically to the language and cultural needs of the students can directly address the challenge of language barriers. These materials can be tailored to the specific educational requirements of the target demographic.

  - o **Challenges**: The development process requires significant time and expertise, particularly in creating content that is both educationally sound and culturally appropriate. Additionally, updating these materials regularly to keep them relevant can be resource-intensive.

- **Economic Viability**:

  - o **Strengths**: Once developed, customized learning materials can be distributed at a relatively low cost, especially if they are made available

digitally. This can lead to long-term savings compared to constantly sourcing new textbooks or materials.

- o **Challenges**: The initial development costs can be high, especially if it involves hiring subject matter experts, translators, and graphic designers. There may also be costs associated with printing or digital distribution.

- **Social Impact**:

  - o **Strengths**: Customized learning materials can significantly enhance educational outcomes by making content more relatable and understandable for students. This approach promotes inclusivity, ensuring that all students, regardless of their language proficiency, can benefit from the education provided.

  - o **Challenges**: The effectiveness of these materials depends on their quality and how well they are integrated into the existing curriculum. Poorly designed materials could fail to engage students or may not align well with standardized testing requirements.

5.3 Proposed Solution with Rationale

Based on the TEV analysis, the SIP proposed a collaborative initiative with the 8 One Foundation, a well-established organization with expertise in educational initiatives. This solution was chosen for several reasons:

1. **Technical Feasibility:** The 8 One Foundation has a proven track record of successfully implementing educational programmes. Their experience and network make them a reliable partner in delivering interactive sessions and overcoming the technical challenges associated with the programme.

2. **Economic Viability:** The partnership with the 8 One Foundation offers a cost-effective and sustainable model. By leveraging the foundation's existing resources and expertise, the SIP can implement the programme within budget while ensuring long-term sustainability.

3. **Social Impact:** The 8 One Foundation's focus on educational initiatives aligns with the SIP's goal of promoting social responsibility and experiential learning. The collaboration has the potential to make a significant social impact by improving learning outcomes for disadvantaged students and fostering a sense of social responsibility among PGDM participants.

This proposed solution effectively addresses the challenges identified in the situation analysis and aligns with the SIP's objectives of enhancing educational opportunities and fostering social responsibility.

6. Solution Implementation Process

6.1 Preparation and Planning

The SIP began with an extensive preparation phase, where the JAGSoM students, guided by 8 One Foundation, developed a detailed plan for the program. Key activities included:

- **Permission Acquisition:** The students worked tirelessly to secure permissions from ELCIA and BEO to conduct their activities in selected schools.

- **Curriculum Development:** The team designed a curriculum focused on improving English language skills through interactive methods such as storytelling, vocabulary games, and reading comprehension exercises.

- **Team Division:** The students were divided into smaller groups, each assigned to a specific grade level, to ensure focused and personalized attention to the students.

6.2 Project Execution

Once the preparations were complete, the students began their immersion in the selected schools. The program's execution was characterized by:

- **Interactive Sessions:** The students conducted sessions that were both educational and engaging, using a variety of tools and methods to make learning enjoyable.

- **Adaptation:** The team had to frequently adapt their methods to suit the students' proficiency levels and the resources available in the schools.

- **Collaboration:** Close collaboration with school staff was essential in overcoming challenges such as language barriers and resource constraints.

6.3 Challenges Faced

The implementation of the SIP was not without its challenges. Some of the key obstacles included:

- **Language Barriers:** Many students and school staff spoke primarily in Kannada, while the JAGSoM students communicated in Hindi and English. This necessitated creative solutions, such as assigning Kannada-speaking team members to leadership roles.

- **Administrative Delays:** Obtaining permissions from government authorities proved to be a lengthy process, requiring persistence and frequent follow-ups.

- **Resource Limitations:** The lack of adequate educational resources in the schools required the team to be resourceful and innovative in their teaching methods.

7. Impact and Outcomes

7.1 Student Engagement

The SIP had a significant impact on the students in the participating schools. Despite the challenges, the students showed remarkable enthusiasm and engagement during the sessions. The interactive and team-based learning activities helped students improve their English language skills and develop critical thinking abilities. Teachers reported noticeable improvements in the students' confidence and willingness to participate in class.

7.2 Feedback from Stakeholders

The feedback from both students and teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers appreciated the innovative teaching methods and the positive impact they had on the students. The students, on their part, enjoyed the sessions and expressed a desire for more such initiatives in the future.

7.3 Personal Growth of PGDM Students

For the JAGSoM students, the SIP was a transformative experience. It provided them with a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the education sector in India and the importance of social responsibility. The experience also enhanced their skills in teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, which are essential for their future careers in management.

8. Lessons Learned

8.1 Importance of Flexibility

One of the key lessons learned from the SIP was the importance of flexibility in both planning and execution. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances, whether it was adjusting teaching methods or navigating administrative challenges, was crucial to the program's success.

8.2 Value of Collaboration

The collaboration between JAGSoM, 8 One Foundation, and the local schools was instrumental in achieving the program's objectives. This experience underscored the value of building strong partnerships and working closely with all stakeholders to create a meaningful impact.

8.3 Understanding the Ground Realities

The SIP provided the students with a firsthand understanding of the ground realities in the Indian education system. This experience highlighted the disparities between different types of schools and the urgent need for innovative solutions to bridge these gaps.

9. Future Recommendations

9.1 Sustainability of the Programme

To ensure the sustainability of the SIP, it is recommended that JAGSoM continues to collaborate with 8 One Foundation and other NGOs to expand the program to more schools in Bengaluru and beyond. Regular follow-up visits and continued engagement with the schools will help maintain the momentum and ensure lasting impact.

9.2 Scaling the Initiative

Given the success of the SIP, there is potential to scale the initiative to include more students and cover additional subjects beyond English. This could involve training teachers in innovative teaching methods or developing digital learning resources that can be used across multiple schools.

9.3 Strengthening Partnerships

Building stronger partnerships with government authorities and other educational institutions will be crucial for the continued success of the SIP. By engaging more stakeholders and leveraging their expertise and resources, the program can be expanded and its impact multiplied.

10. Conclusion

The Social Immersion Programme at JAGSoM, in collaboration with 8 One Foundation, has been a significant step towards bridging the educational gap in India. By engaging directly with students in middle-class and government schools, the program has not only enhanced the learning experience for these students but has also instilled a sense of social responsibility in the future leaders of tomorrow.

The challenges faced and the lessons learned during the SIP have provided valuable insights that will inform the future iterations of the program. With continued support and collaboration, the SIP has the potential to make a lasting impact on the educational landscape in India and contribute to the development of a more equitable society.

Pic: Students of JAGSoM are teaching in Konappana, Agrahara Government School; Abhishek Padhy (in extreme right)