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Institute of Advanced Studies

***“Make a World of Difference”* Foundation**



Introduction

Educators with vision in Australia are working to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills, values and understanding required to become socially responsible global citizens. This involves introducing, into the new Australia-wide school curriculum education, teaching, training and assessment that focuses on the civic values and skills that will empower students to become champions and/or leaders of a globally sustainable future¹.

Australian Pilot

The Make a World of Difference Foundation² is a non-profit organisation, established in 2012, with explicit aims, including:

- the engagement of school students at various levels in important social, economic and environmental issues within their own communities and beyond
- interaction via ITC and social media between groups of students from different socio-economic settings
- changing the outlook of students within our own environment and improving the lives of their national and global peers
- developing student based initiatives that will “*make a world of difference*”.

In 2012-2013, a pilot program to assist in the re-orientation of existing education policies and practices towards a globally sustainable future is to be trialled in Australia. The Australian pilot, as outlined in the following project concept, if successful, will be adapted to other international educational settings and measured by key performance indicators.

¹ Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, 2008

² To be termed “the Foundation” or “Foundation”

The proposal

To build on the skills and values evident in the support material already developed, the Foundations proposal is the facilitation of a global program for children of different socio-economic backgrounds to interact and learn from one another, via Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)⁴, for the benefit of their individual communities⁵. Interaction between the students will be multifaceted, and involve the mutual exchange of their culture via multi-media material⁶.

It is through this interaction participating students will be guided to share stories of what they, as active citizens, are doing in their respective communities to make a difference locally that is compatible with a sustainable global future. Students will be able to share with one another their strategies, successes, and how they have overcome barriers and difficulties. By sharing such stories, children will have the realisation that whilst their tasks may be different, sharing commonalities is the most important aspect of all relationships.

A key aspect of this interaction involves committees of students, from different contexts, collaborating over two extended periods:

1. two years in primary school, and/or
2. two years for high school,

During this time student committees will identify ways in which each group may offer assistance, advice or support to the other. The necessity to gain skills and knowledge may be identified as a need. Regular interaction with each group will be monitored with the aim that they better understand the value of helping their communities, and the global community, through active citizenship.

⁴ For example: social media such as webcam, Skype, email, photos and messages sent through social media sites.

⁵ Technology to support this program, plus protection to ensure its safe keeping from natural disasters, vandalism and theft, would be part of the program expense funding.

⁶ For example: written and spoken text, drawings, photos, video clips generated by inexpensive flip cameras.

In collaboration with the other, the student committees will put a submission together to present to the Foundation a request for practical assistance with specific projects to achieve their aims of helping their communities, and details of activities that potentially offer change or improvement to their counterparts. Assistance could take the form of training, resource acquisition and liaison with other community or group experts.

Successful student submissions would be supported by Foundation grants and awarded appropriate funds for the achievement of their aims.

Social media will record the experiences of student committees. With the cooperation of students, teachers and governments (and appropriate funding), we envisage this program could be implemented globally.

Role of the Foundation

The Foundation is administered by a Board of Directors comprising twelve educators from government and non-government sectors. The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the project and ensuring equity, efficacy and compliance with the goals and aims of the student submissions.

The Directors will employ, on a needs basis, project managers in each participating country. The role of the project managers, under guidance from the Foundation, will be to:

1. ensure that the ICT requirements allowing communication between two student groups are in place
2. provide knowledge and skills to the schools involved about the submissions (principals and teachers)
3. ensuring that there is an active and sustainable team in each school that will complete the submission
4. assisting and advising students crafting their submissions for the Foundation to consider
5. oversee successful submissions to their fruition, including an annual evaluation

The submissions

Each submission must be solely student-based, pertain to an innovative and unique concept, and clearly demonstrate how each project will “***Make a Difference***” to the lives of those affected by its implementation.

Each submission must include:

- a concept outline
- the name/s and roles of project participants
- a detailed action plan
- proposed budget
- goals to be achieved that link with Foundation aims and objectives.

The selection by the Foundation of student-designed submissions for grants is intended to facilitate a sustainable future by student bodies. These submissions may focus assisting local communities, such as indigenous Australians; Australia at large; or communities in other regions of the world, in collaboration with other student committees.

Each submission is required to name a student project leader from an Australian school, as well as a project leader at the focal destination setting, thus formally establishing a relationship between two groups of students from different socio-economic backgrounds and opening up lines of communication between each.

Members of the Foundation will evaluate each of the proposed student submissions according to a very rigid and pre-established, advertised criteria. This criteria will include: originality, merit, clarity of communication and likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.

The value of the student submissions will vary greatly, and may range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars depending on specific needs. Successful grant recipients (student submissions) and their appointed project managers will upload information about their proposals onto the Foundation website in the form of written reports photos, video clips, to communicate their progress.

Theory Based Assumptions

- Pre-adult socialisation involves learning agents such as schools and parents and is a crucial means by which children develop positive attitudes towards prosocial behaviors
- Lived experiences, including “learning by doing rather than passively observing” strongly contribute to changed and positive attitudes
- Learning by collaboration, requiring comprehensive planning, implementation and evaluation, and defined rules of engagement, results in greater accomplishment and high levels of task satisfaction.
- Multi-media experiences are more likely to result in learning/knowledge/attitudes that are resistant to extinction/loss⁷.

Pre-learning for Australian Students

Before Australian students are involved in the “Make a World of Difference” program and prepare future submissions for the Foundation, they are required to build their knowledge of global citizenship through the guidance of activities in the associated student support material already developed.

Timeline, and Funding

STAGE 1 (2012) has already been partially achieved, with the establishment of a Foundation Project Team, now termed the Board of Directors that includes representatives from public and private schools and the tertiary sector.

STAGE 2 (2012) has been partially achieved with the installation of licensed internet technology at the proposed destination setting in rural Cambodia. This equipment was donated and installed by Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) and enables live, “real time” video streaming to any destination in the world. This equipment is now installed, secured, tested and operational.

⁷ Caldwell, 2011

- Pilot: To begin with, a pilot group of nine student committee groups (25 students per class) in Australia will be linked to nine student committee groups in Cambodia.
- The Foundations Board of Directors will meet to:
 - write role statements for future project managers and in-school facilitators
 - establish criteria for student submissions
 - set the key performance indicators for the school submissions
 - identify schools in Australia and Cambodia and ensure appropriate ICT facilities are available and reliable in each school – a seeding grant of up to \$US2000 may be granted by the Foundation to assist schools where necessary
 - appoint project managers of each country
 - distribute designated student workbooks to pilot schools⁸
 - evaluate student submission of applications to the Board that outline specific student-based initiatives for consideration
 - account for, and evaluate, funding

STAGE 3 (2012) seeks funding for the project. Funding of \$500,000.00 is required in 2012 to administer the pilot between Australia and Cambodia and to offer funding for the development of student-based submissions toward sustainability projects to the successful applicants.

⁸ “*Make a World of Difference : A Guide to the Global Citizen*” was launched in the Australian schools environment and has been well received by schools administration, teachers at grass root levels and students alike. Students study the existing resources as a part of their established curriculum, and actively research a wide range of issues pertaining to local, national and global importance, complete the required activities and assignments and broaden their understanding of important local, national and global issues.

STAGE 4 (2013-14) is aimed at evaluating the pilot to ensure key performance indicators have been achieved and that all aims and objectives have been met. It is at this stage that, based on successful governance, an additional \$3,000,000.00 is required to develop teacher support material and update current student support material; to include examples of successful initiatives as examples of how students have changed their own lives, as well as the lives of others, hence....they will **have “made a world of difference”**.

Expansion of the Foundation’s “Make a World of Difference” program will then expand into regions around Australia and communities globally.

STAGE FIVE (2015-18) is aimed at the further development of project into United Kingdom, United States of America and other interested international educational settings. An additional \$6,000,000.00 is required.

Total Funding Required

Full financial transparency is available to any and all parties upon request. All quantified and qualified data will be audited by University of Sydney, Discipline of Marketing, Faculty of Business.

STAGE 1 – 3	2012-2013	\$ 500,000.00
STAGE 4	2014-2115	\$3,000,000.00
STAGE 5	2014-2018	\$6,000.000.00

Conclusion

The “**Make a World of Difference Foundation**” was established to meet the needs of a rapidly changing learning environment where students are fast becoming empowered learners to actively contribute to their own communities and to those in our small world, and to make their mark toward a sustainable future. This project, if successful, will certainly work toward accomplishing many goals: it will potentially change the way students perceive their own lives and the lives of others, with key learning outcomes reinforced that..... despite different social and economic backgrounds, we are all just different and yet so much alike.

Reference List

Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008),
downloaded 26 February 2012 at
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/index.htm>