Outdoor Activity and Wilderness Therapy

Haida Gwaii, Canada
Port Clements, Canada
Alanlore

Project Stage:
Idea

Budget:
$50,000 - $100,000

- Biodiversity
- Boys' development
- Community development
- Food security
- Indigenous cultures
- Mental health
- Substance abuse

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Counselling youth in an engaging way, helping prevent self-destructive behaviors, bullying, substance abuse, and can raise self-esteem and community wellness.
Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?
A form of counselling on Haida Gwaii that works with young men and deals with substance abuse and addiction, as well as self esteem, unemployment and a growing highschool dropout rate is needed. Counselling young men needs to be engaging as well as recreational to build a desire to seek counselling in a more traditional means. Building capacity and interest for young men to help themselves and to generate interest in activities that are not self destructive, addictive, or otherwise detrimental to their health and the health of their peers. (Anti drug, Anti Alcohol, and Anti Bullying). Close to 5000 people live on Haida Gwaii with 2 Indian Reserves of just under 1000, 3 municipalities and 2 unincorporated communities make up close to 3000 more population.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!
Outdoor youth counselling (Wilderness Therapy) using culturally and geographically relevant means to explore outdoor recreational and cultural activities in a way that would improve participant's mental, physical and social wellness as well as environmental empathy and knowledge. Food and resource gathering in modern and traditional means as ways to engage young males in provider (bread-winner) and adventure seeking behaviours that generate an interest in continuing therapy and programming for wilderness based learning and activities. Empowering young men's sense of self worth by providing for their community whether it be foods; (fish, berries, deer, fowl, mushrooms, urchin, and seaweeds) or resources; (fire wood, cedar bark, spruce roots, eagle feathers and down). This provides a recreational form of therapy that young men enjoy as well as connecting them in their communities by bringing food and resources to their elders, families, friends, and neighbors.

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.
Services include counselling, through camping, food gathering, hiking, and touring, attending cultural and community events and other green recreational activities (skateboarding, long boarding, surfing, skim boarding, paddle boardings, canoeing, kayaking etc). Touring services include fishing, hunting, camping, cooking, bird and mammal watching, and other green recreational activities as well as touring cultural items and areas. As participants carry through the program together I believe they will develop friendships and partnerships that help them to better appreciate the outdoors with other participants. Counselling with anti-bullying and pro-leadership approaches. As friendships develop and interests build participants will generate both interests and a social circle with interests revolving around the outdoors whether it be; hiking, kayaking, swimming, canoeing, fishing, mushroom and berry picking, hunting, sea asparagus picking, cedar bark gathering and weaving. These activities will hopefully replace or prevent drug, alcohol, and high risk taking activities. My hopes are that a participant with who had had little chance to experience food gathering would learn about picking a variety of foods, and would get the chance to see the outdoor beauty that is Haida Gwaii and build up a wealth of activities that they enjoyed. Foods gathered could be presented to families or to community groups and this gifting would be a modern way of improving self esteem by being a provider as well as a traditional means of raising ones own self worth and status in the community.

Impact: How does it Work

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?
Rediscovery and Youth Stewardship Programs. One week to one month summer camps that are offered during the tourist season for youth on Haida Gwaii. Cultural Camps of Lepas and Swan bay focus on regaining Haida youth culture, while the youth stewardship Program at Mosquito lake focuses on connecting youth the the land for 2 weeks for each of two high schools during May. There is no competition which would offer counselling through wilderness therapy year round, only for set periods of time. The HG Rec Commission provides a wealth of athletic based programming such as the surf lessons provided by North Beach Surf Shop or rugby lessons. My program would be a year round and would focus on activities that participants could do with their friends and themselves rather than on a seasonal basis.

Team

Founding Story
I have been working as a Family Outreach Worker for Haida Child and Family Services. I work predominantly with young men who often have little desire to seek counselling and gain their support to continue services by providing outdoor activities and education. Young men who I have taken surfing have found parttime jobs to buy surfboards and boys that I have taken chanterelle picking now wait for the time each fall when mushrooms begin to flower so that they may pick and sell them to generate sustainable local food. I worked at Talung Slung Cultural Camp and watched the change in young ‘at risk’ youth who spent a week at a time in the wilderness 6 hours by boat from the nearest community. I weave cedar bark with the elders of Old Masset each week and have received their support for more outdoors programming for grandchildren to provide food and live off the land in a more traditional means. The smiling face of a young girl who had caught her first Nuu (Octopus) was my Aha moment.

About You

Organization: Outdoors Haida Gwaii

First Name
Alan

Last Name
Lore

Twitter URL

Facebook URL

About Your Organization

Organization Name
Outdoors Haida Gwaii

Organization Country
, BC, Port Clements

Country where this solution is creating social impact
, BC, Haida Gwaii

Region in BC where your solution creates social impact
Coast and Mountains, Northern British Columbia.

How long has your organization been operating?
Less than a year

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen.

Innovation

How long have you been in operation?
Still in idea phase, but looking to launch soon

Which of the following best describes the barrier(s) your solution addresses? Choose up to two
Cost.

Social Impact

Please describe the goal of your initiative; outline what you are trying to achieve
I would like for the youth of Haida Gwaii to appreciate the outdoor paradise that they were lucky enough to be exposed to. My vision sees young people fishing, berry picking, and kayaking outdoors and to restore the disconnect with nature that has been created by the introduction of computer and television based recreation. I want to see the young people the move away from Haida Gwaii to pursue an education come back to the lands that they called home so that they can work in a place that will protect and encourage their culture. I would like to see the foods that the land provides to be utilized in a sustainable way to feed those who cannot feed themselves and to generate a 'workforce' that could feed themselves, their families, and their communities like I try to in my life.

What has been the impact of your solution to date?
I've been working hard to create an appreciation for natural harvest on Haida Gwaii. I'm sure that my client load at Haida Child and Families is a great example. Nonnies(Grandmothers) have been grateful for the berries that I and their grand children have provided them with. The Transition house in Masset has used well over 20 lbs of sea asparagus for their foods programs. The Elder Centers in both Skidegate and Old Masset have received gifts and showered praise on the young men who have gathered and delivered Styuu (Green Sea Urchin) to these community programs.

The education that I have been bringing the youth to, the lands have been benificial in young men's physical health through exercise and a nutritious diet. Cultural identity and self esteem have been strengthened in this work. I believe the self esteem and defenses against substance abuse have been strengthened through my previous work and can be strengthened tenfold with more time, energy, and capital directed at them.

What is your projected impact over the next five years?
In 5 years I would like to have run 100-300 young men and women through programs that show a variety of outdoor activities as well as educating a wealth of participants on survival skills, and methods of food harvest in a natural setting. Highschool completion rates would go up as well as a measurable difference in how knowledgable young people on Haida Gwaii are in relation to their enviornment. Learning about the plants, animals, and lands of Haida Gwaii will provide a base in biology, geology and geography for students as they go through school, and will also provide a wealth of recreational activities that are seperate, and preventative of alcohol and drug use. Employing 3-4 counsellors that would work in an outdoors enviroment with young people to create a health wealth of programming.

What barriers might hinder the success of your project? How do you plan to overcome them?
Startup funding as well as obtaining the funding for continuing counselling services I see as the biggest barrier in creating this type of work. I have found a variety of partners that are interested in supporting me with clients through referral however to create enough programs with clients so support a full time worker is the first step. Creating a participant load of 20 youth with full sponserships may take over a year but if grants can alleviate the cost of programming (2500 per youth per year) it would be easier to show the kind of positive change in the community. Distributing a finished factory bound book detailing the journeys and learnings of youth who have gone through the program may be a barrier as well but with photo releases and information sharing forms seems feasible.

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

| Task 1 | Obtaining grant funding to cover startup (Liability insurance, safety gear, activities equipment) |
| Task 2 | Obtaining funding to begin programs with up to 20 participants to justify full time work on the programming |
| Task 3 | Present to numerous potential partners about services to be provided in and to develop sponsors for programming |
Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your 12-month milestone

Task 1
Create first years factory bound books detailing a participants journey through the program, What was gathered, donated, learned

Task 2
Show created book detailing a youths 'work' to potential partners in awareness raising for the program.

Task 3
Generate a full year of sponsored referalls through RCMP, MCFD, HCFSS, the school district, parents or other organizations

Sustainability

Tell us about your partnerships

I'm in the process of sharing business concepts with a number of groups, including my employer Haida Child and Families Services, and HCFS partners that I have also presented to include the HG Society for Community Peace. Talung Slung and Swan Bay Rediscovery are interested in outdoor activity done year round. I plan to present to RCMP on using this wilderness therapy as a means of restorative justice donating the foodstuffs gathered to community organizations. I also have partnerships with Haida Gwaii Recreation taking the children in their programs on various educational outdoor activities.

Are you currently targeting other specific populations, locations, or markets for your solution? If so, where and why?

I have plans on targeting both aboriginal and non aboriginal youth on Haida Gwaii but I also have plans to expand to intercity youth from elsewhere who require or could gain from wilderness therapy in this elite setting. My networking needs to expand before I can expect participants from elsewhere however.

What type of operating environment and internal organizational factors make your innovation successful?

Three programs are currently developed for wilderness therapy with a recreational drive currently. For this to run smoothly and be successful first of all the programs need to run smoothly. Second of all participants and partners need to be interested in the final factory bound book detailing the journey of the participant, and there needs to be either a desire to enroll in additional years by participants or interest needs to be generated in those not participating to participate in future years. Advertising and Marketing are going to be extremely important in years 1-5 and I foresee grant writing and partnership building (networking) being extremely important in the first year of operation.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren't specified within the list

Safety in adventure based learning, and wilderness therapy is one of the most important issues. I have a safety plan for my programming that has been well thought through and researched. An insurance company on Haida Gwaii has bought into my safety planning and has offered an inhouse rate that will grant a huge competitive advantage if I can obtain the kayaks, canoes, and participants to utilize it.

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