**Final Reflection and Preparation for Conclusion**

**Assignment 4**

**Scholarship Education Support Program, The Quest for**

**Community Development and Implementation**

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**a. Complete the reflection on the entire research process, focusing on personal learning**

**and the project's impact on social change.**

The initial conference of stakeholders, spearheaded by the sociological practitioner (SP) at St. Stephens Institute of Technology, SSIT, played a pivotal role in shaping the scholarship award project. The SP was responsible for coordinating the project and ensuring its alignment with sociological principles. The SP worked closely with the director general, the principal, a trustee, a lecturer, and SSIT alums. This collaborative team brought diverse viewpoints and skills to the project, which was instrumental in its success and impact on social change.

The conference unveiled the specific financial needs of the underprivileged students at St. Stephens Institute of Technology, SSIT, the Gambia. These needs included tuition fees, study materials, and living expenses. The project aimed to address these financial needs and ensure the equitable scholarly education of underprivileged students through its aggressive social-educational campaign adverts and contacts involving financial support and sponsorship from corporate institutions, private foundations, and organizations.

The project was not a solitary endeavor for the SP but a collaborative initiative between the SP and the SSIT stakeholders. Each member's distinct viewpoints and skills were invaluable, underscoring the importance of their participation in the project's triumph. This collaborative spirit enhanced the project's outcomes. It fostered a sense of shared achievement and unity among the team, including our esteemed academic community, scholars, and stakeholders in education and community development.

The project's steadfast adherence to professional ethics, respect, confidentiality, and privacy is not just a learning resource but a pillar of its integrity. This unwavering commitment to transparency builds trust and confidence among the project participants, potential and existing donors, and corporate sponsors, enhancing the project's integrity and sustainability.

SP’s cultural sensitivity is an added advantage in the scholarship project process. The SP ensured that the scholarship recipients reflected a broad range of community diversity, demographics, and representations and that the participants abided by ethical standards in the project scholarship process.

According to Saidat, L.B. (2024), three interrelated ideas—poverty, ethics, and morality—can profoundly affect people's lives; they help create positive outcomes. Some of these factors reflect critical elements of the scholarship project in empathic and transformational leadership.

The scholarship project has made a tangible impact on social change, particularly in its positive correlation to the inter- and intra-disciplinarity in SSIT’s modern school scholarship programs. These programs, designed for the equitable scholarly education of underprivileged students and their families, incorporate a broad range of community development through internships, apprenticeships, and volunteer programs. This underscores the transformative power of research in addressing societal challenges, a power that scholars and stakeholders can harness to better the communities and inspire hope for a brighter future.

**b. Prepare critical points for the project's conclusion, summarizing significant findings**

**and implications.**

  The need for St. Stephens Institute of Technology, SSIT students’ scholarships to meet their educational enrolment goals is critical. This looked complex for the SSIT school authority amid recent local and national unemployment and inflationary trends. However, the SSIT scholarship project seemed to have paved the way to address these anomalies through aggressive social-educational campaign adverts and contacts involving financial support and sponsorship from corporate institutions, private foundations, and organizations to fulfill its scholarship drive.

The scholarship project spans four phases, 1 to IV, from March to June 2024. These phases, including specific activities and milestones, were crucial for the project's progress and impact on the underprivileged students at SSIT.

Considering the 75% redeemable pledges of the scholarship funds of $50,000, that is, $37,500 between April and May 2024 (Table 1.1, on page 13), which means that 75% of the pledged funds are expected to be received and utilized for the project during this period, the scholarship will be awarded in two batches of 20 and 10, totaling 30 as projected. This significant financial commitment from the project’s donors and sponsors ensures its financial sustainability and demonstrates their confidence in its potential for long-term impact on social change.

This study reveals the necessity for SSIT to be time—and cost-effective in its transformational leadership roles (Reid, 2020; Parsloe, 2024) in conducting the scholarship drive now and in the future.

Investing in internships, apprenticeships, and volunteering to establish and sustain corporate relationships (Schwartz, 2023) with prospective donors and financial sponsors will help facilitate scholarship and grant funding in the short and long term.

Future research is crucial to understanding and addressing the risk factors and situations that may arise, such as unexpected competition from other schools in the community, which could decrease the number of potential donors or sponsors. This research should also focus on developing strategies to maintain the flow of scholarship funds, particularly during economic downturns or socio-economic factors like droughts and inflation. The SP and Stakeholders’ engagement in this ongoing process is vital to ensure the project's continued success.

Additionally, future research should explore ways to optimize the scholarship project's resources and improve its efficiency and effectiveness. These findings will guide future policy initiatives for SSIT educational projects, ensuring the stakeholders' enduring trust in the project and its long-term sustainability.

Due to climate change, slow business outputs, and socio-economic factors like droughts and inflation, the local and national economic downturn could grossly and adversely affect the smooth flow of scholarship funds from donors and sponsors. However, the project overcame these challenges through its unwavering commitment to transparency and collaboration. The project's resilience and adaptability in these challenges underscore its potential for long-term sustainability and reassure us of its enduring impact on social change.

A standardized scholarship plan will be required to optimize all available resources, primarily on correspondence and virtual communication, notifying the donors and sponsors several months ahead. This plan would focus on the project study's manageable task, timeline, and duration. Other factors include the incorporated benchmarks and milestones that can be utilized to strategize the scholarship project proposal from start to finish and fruition in the 2024 academic year. These plans are designed to ensure the continuity and success of the project, providing our audience with the confidence that their support is well-placed.

Future study research will streamline the scholarship project award in the areas of financial costs, publicity, radio adverts, BBQ fundraising, and logistics (accounting for 7% to 12% of the projected scholarship funds) into standard manageable processes (Shepherd, 2024; Schwartz, 2023; Stammler, 2023) to be time and cost-effective. Studies show donors and sponsors are more likely to be generous to academic institutions during November and December end-of-year festivities, especially when organizational income tax, profits, and staff bonuses are declared ahead of the new year.

**c. Including the “Reflection” section of the Action Research Project Template**

The SSIT scholarship research project identified the areas of interest and intervention in 4-phases from March to June 2024. It conveyed the initial dialogic communication intervention, involving open conference conversations and taking notes with observations about the students and SSIT’s finances at stake, requiring compelling development initiatives (World Bank, IBRD, 2024); Zickafoose et al ., 2024) to drive change.

Some challenges ranged from the recent spillover effects of the aftermath of the pandemic, floods, droughts, and rising inflation, which created mass local and national unemployment in Gambia from 2022 until 2024. Unemployment impacted parents and former SSIT students, causing school dropouts and decreasing enrolments. Through this project, the SSIT is committed to overcoming students’ financial plight by creating a scholarship funding program award for 30 students to lend a hand to prospective students and families.

The project duration may have been underestimated to last three months, from March to May 2024; it has been extended by one month to June to enable the SP and SSIT to execute the project implementation interventions based on the project strength, opportunities, and risk factor analysis (Muma et al., 2024; Kapilima et al., 2024) involving logistics, adverts, and social activities that come with such a project.

Through this project, the SSIT is committed to overcoming students’ financial plight by creating a scholarship funding program award for 30 students to help prospective students and families. Moreover, the project is designed to meet its quarterly and annual enrolment and budgetary targets in the academic year 2024.

The overall outcomes are demonstrated in getting the scholarship program up and running through transformation-oriented processes (Parsloe, 2024; Seif, 2011), with many redeemable and realizable pledges beginning to pour in at a modest rate. The depth and extensive research studies undertaken, coupled with adopted theories, planned principles, and operational models, drive remarkable scholarship project performance and outcomes. The implementation processes are ongoing. Based on contacts, correspondence, and emails received, about 75% of the projected scholarship funding of $50,000, about $37,500, are redeemable pledges between April and May 2024. A local bank will approve an overdraft for SSIT without fees attached (as part of their contributions) based on the trust, strength, and efficacy of the corporate and influential sources of the redeemable pledges.

The first batch of 20 students was awarded the SSIT scholarship on May 15th, 2024, and will commence classes on May 20th, 2024, preceding a brief scholarship award ceremony and orientation of the new students. The second batch of 10 students will commence classes on June 3rd, 2024, as soon as additional scholarship funds are redeemable. SSIT school enrolments are all year round.SSIT will intensify its efforts to accelerate the management and project consultancy it provides on a retainership basis to corporate institutions, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, banks, the community, and diplomatic missions. This will enable SSIT to supplement its scholarship drive, boost its school financial budgets, and sustain its relationships with its most loyal financial donors and sponsors in the short and long term.

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**Glossary of Tables and Charts**

**Table 1.1**

**Scholarship Funds based on redeemable pledges in April and May 2024.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1**  **Scholarship Sponsors and Donors** | **2**  **Contributions**  **$** | **3**  **Gambian Currency**  **Dalasi**  **$1 = D60** | **4**  **Target = $50,000:**  **Column 2÷50,000 x 100%** |
| 1. SSIT | 7,000, | D420,000 | 14% |
| 2. Three Financial Institutions | 9,000 | D540,000 | 18% |
| 3. Five NGOs | 8,000 | D480,000 | 16% |
| 4. Six Religious organizations | 6,000 | D360,000 | 12% |
| 5. Eight Corporate Institutions | 7,500 | D450,000 | 15% |
| **Total** | **$37,500** | **D2,250,000** | **75%**  **(Redeemable Pledges)** |

**Key**

Table 1.1 above shows redeemed pledges of 75%, or about $37,500, between April and May 2024, based on contacts, correspondence, and emails received.

* A local bank will approve an overdraft for SSIT without fees attached (as part of their contributions) based on the trust, strength, and efficacy of the influential sources of the redeemable pledges and donations.