

TEDI-LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL 2020**CASE STUDY: ENTREPRENEURIAL****PROJECT
WELINK****DELIVERED BY
THE WANA TEAM**

Describing themselves as a Collective Impact Social Enterprise, WANA – We Are Never Alone – was a mixed Australian/European student team whose backgrounds included engineering, design, architecture, science and business.

BRIEF

Design and prototype an innovative solution to develop a dementia-friendly outdoor environment, then pitch the idea to British Land for consideration as part of the Canada Water Masterplan.

PROJECT OVERVIEW**CONTEXT**

Dementia is a major barrier to accessing the public realm – 47% of people with dementia feel that they aren't part of their community. A new dementia case is already being diagnosed every three seconds and rapidly ageing populations will lead to many more people becoming vulnerable to isolation.

WANA's research revealed that loss of agency is among the biggest problems facing people with dementia. Taking a person-centred approach is vital and non-pharmacological solutions to promote independence and quality of life are the most effective.

WANA planned to improve community services and reduce isolation at Canada Water by providing public hubs in recycled shipping containers. Dementia-inclusive and affordable, these resources would provide agency and socialisation opportunities for local people with dementia, and their caregivers.

THE BIG IDEA

WeLink

Dementia-inclusive community engagement centres to bring together local residents and provide access to services and workshop facilities lost during the redevelopment of Canada Water.



Built offsite, the repurposed shipping containers would be adaptable spaces, quickly erected and easily identifiable to aid wayfinding. They would have dementia-friendly features such as contrasting colours, good lighting, carefully considered fittings and unobstructed access. Additional hubs could be leased out, fostering small enterprise in Canada Water.

APPROACH

WANA divided their project into four phases punctuated by mentoring sessions, after which plans were updated to accommodate the feedback of their dementia, business and TEDI-London advisors:

1 INITIATION

Getting to know each other, setting the ground rules and learning how to work together.

2 RESEARCH AND LEARNING

Identifying a problem facing people with dementia and starting to plan a solution.

3 PROTOTYPING AND REFINEMENT

Developing the project's scope through multiple iterations and critical reflections, eventually leading to simplification in order to become commercially viable.

4 EXECUTION

Development of a pitch presentation, including financial modelling and key milestones.

The WANA team aimed to design a realistic project with real impact, ready to implement in the near future. However, they discovered that trying to consider the whole community and the entire first decade of the development timeline led to the scope and number of problems to be solved becoming unmanageably complex.

During Phase 3, there was a loss of direction as the project split into two distinct sections that the team struggled to reconcile. A crucial mentoring session helped WANA to focus on the shipping containers concept, leaving a secondary garden design idea as a potential WeLink legacy project.

WANA projected WeLink would make a consistent profit even with conservative revenue and uptake figures. Their final presentation included a Social Return on Investment (SROI) forecast, emphasising the project's broader social and environmental values for multiple stakeholders, as well its entrepreneurial vision and economic benefits. This impressed the panel and influenced WANA being crowned the winning team.

DID IT WORK?

Reflecting in their evaluation, the WANA team were proud to have developed a project that would improve the lives of people with dementia and their caregivers, and that was attractive to multiple stakeholders.

The challenge of splitting into time zone groups (with existing expertise unevenly distributed) demanded that people explore new disciplines, for example scientists making financial projections and business students getting to grips with 3D modelling. Everyone was able to share their skills and develop new ones.

The team was made up of very strong personalities but together they focused on the organisation and distribution of work, dividing the project into areas of expertise. A positive group dynamic developed, which helped them to negotiate a sharp shift in focus late on. Their presentation prototype demonstrated that, though the WeLink concept may not be a permanent structure, it would make an indelible impression.

“From the outset, the team agreed on the importance of creating social impact through our work.”

THE WANA TEAM

KEY LEARNINGS


Key points identified by the WANA team after their TEDI-London Summer School experience included:

- Work on the research phase together to help communication and improve brainstorming.
- Organise your team at the outset and define each person's role.
- Use mentors to test your ideas from multiple perspectives.
- Be aware that mentors' advice may be conflicting so you will need to contextualise.
- Focus on the specific messages you need to convey.
- Explore how to scale your idea by replicating and adapting.

“This team embodied TEDI-London's aim to create socially-minded engineers in all aspects of their project. We were really impressed with their resilience, perseverance and open-mindedness.”

DR SARAH CAMPBELL – TEDI-LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL DIRECTOR, 2020

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