LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR AT-RISK YOUTH AT SOLEDAD ENRICHMENT ACTION CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL: A GRANT PROPOSAL

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By the year 2015, it is expected that the population of youth ages 14 to 24 will reach 41.9 million (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

More than 14 million youth under the age of 18 are living in poverty in the United States (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013).

Students who attend alternative schools are at higher risk of engaging in sexual risk behaviors (Coyle et al., 2012).

Research shows that poor academic achievement is linked with higher levels of problem behavior and higher dropout rates (LeCroy & Krysik, 2008).

There is not a clear definition of a perfect education system but an education that follows the child’s growth is a great philosophy to follow (Miller, 2004).

GOAL: The goal of this program is to provide a life skills education to at-risk youth that will provide the necessary skills in order for them to be connected to school and improve socially, vocationally and academically.
Social Work Relevance

- Social justice for vulnerable and oppressed individuals by creating changes in the areas of economic justice including reducing poverty and unemployment and in the area of civil rights when we confront discrimination (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008)

- This project can serve to bring social and economic justice to at risk youth by offering them the opportunity to gain the necessary skills in order to successfully transition into adulthood
Multicultural Relevance

Latinos and African Americans experience high unemployment and high school dropout rates resulting in a greater percentage of Latinos and African Americans living below the poverty level.

In the year 2010, African American youth accounted for 31% of the unemployed youth (16-24 year olds), while Latino youth accounted for 21%, compared to White and Asian youth who accounted for 15% each (Aud, Ramani, & Frohlich, 2011).

In California, Latino and African Americans had a 34% high school dropout rate in comparison to Whites of only 7.4% and Asians with the lowest rate of 4.7% for the school year 2012-2013 (California Department of Education, 2014).
Methods

- **Target population:** High school students from Soledad Enrichment Action (SEA) Charter High School. Specifically, students who are in the Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) program.

- **Strategies used to identify and select a funding source:** primary source was an internet source with keywords such as grant/youth/California, grants/life skills/California, grants/basic skills/California, grants/adolescents/Los Angeles, grants/education/California.

- **Funding source:** J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation was selected as a potential funder for this program. The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation is one of the oldest financial institutions in the United States. The focus of this foundation is in education: to ensure that all children, especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to high quality educational opportunities.
Methods

Sources used for the needs assessment:
- California Department of Education (2015)
- U.S. Census Bureau (2010)
- SEA Charter High School (2015)

Projected budget range and categories
- Total projected budget amount: $50,502
  - One bilingual (Eng./Spa.) MSW Social Worker
  - Life Skills curriculum
  - Supplies
  - In-kind funding
Program Summary and Description: The overall goal for the life skills program is to facilitate a positive transition from high school to adulthood for at-risk youth attending SEA High School South Central in Los Angeles, California. The program will be 3 months long and will be held during the afterschool hours at SEA High School South Central site for three cycles for one calendar year.

Population Served: Youth ages 14 years old to 19 years old. Students enrolled in the GRYD program at SEA Charter High school.

Program’s Evaluation: The pre-test will help the social worker see where each student is in his or her developmental capabilities about the life skills education. A post- test will be administered to the students at the end of each cycle. The post-test will help the social worker see whether the students learned from the program.
Grant Proposal

Program’s objectives:

1. Provide Psycho-educational Modules.
   - Over the course of 9 months, modules that are both didactic and interactive focusing on job readiness skills and modules to promote health dating and relationships will be provided afterschool for 60 minutes daily.

2. Increase Attendance
   - The social worker will inform the students that incentives for perfect attendance will be given at the end of each cycle. Providing prizes as incentives will increase student’s attendance to the program and in their regular classrooms.
Lessons Learned/Implications for SW

- More research should be conducted on the benefits of a life skills education amongst high school age youth.
- The grant writer found it useful to speak with the agency’s administrators to ensure that the agency’s mission were being met by the proposal’s objective.
- Social workers can utilize their advocacy skills to influence systematic changes to individuals and their community.
References


