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Imani Unidad

DESIGN BRIEF

Project Description

Imani Unidad is a not for profit organization that aims to help individuals affected by HIV, drug abuse, and a criminal past to better their livelihood with education and through community efforts.

Intent/ Scope

The initial scope will focus on better understanding of how to approach the needs of the target users. The organization, Imani Unidad, inclusively approaches the members with decision making, education, advocacy, service delivery, public relations, research and leadership.

A main barrier for reaching the organization's purpose is the current stigma against this group members, both societal and self-imposed. We intend to examine the reasons and history behind the different various barriers to engage in the community, including: asking if someone is an ex-convict during job applications, and examine if anything can be done legally or socially to eliminate the stigma behind this issue.

Exploration Questions

- What are our milestones to quantify?
- Will our contributions be sustainable enough to keep as long-term alternatives to affected individuals?
- Will affected individuals be open to engagement and openly accept help?
- Are there other stigmas (or other causes) for the social segregation from the rest of the community?
- Can anything be changed socially/culturally in the community to help give these ex-convicts or drug addicts a second chance?
- Can Imani Unidad pair with companies/other organizations/government in the area to help in areas like employment, transportation, or housing?

Target Users

Individuals with a criminal record, specifically those with a drug abuse history and those who are HIV positive. Imani Unidad works primarily with African American community members who are living in low-income areas in Michiana.

Research Plan

We will research other non-profit organizations throughout the nation that serve similar individuals in their respective communities, in order to draw from their successes in breaking barriers that prevent individuals with a history of drug abuse and a criminal record from fully engaging in their communities. We will also research local organizations that Imani Unidad can pair with to help achieve objectives.

Expected Outcomes

We expect to identify several opportunities for Imani Unidad to:

1. Help HIV positive individuals and individuals with a prior conviction obtain affordable housing and transportation.
 2. Help to alleviate the negativity associated with answering "yes" to the question "Have you ever been convicted of a ..."
 3. Generate public awareness about the mistreatment of affected individuals by professionals/providers and how it can be reported.
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Success Metrics

1. Have we identified and collected information on numerous other nonprofits with similar missions?
 2. Have we extracted the best strategies from these other nonprofits and made them into a strategic plan for use by Imani Unidad?
 3. Have we provided Imani Unidad with a sustainable way to help HIV positive and former convicted criminals obtain employment, affordable housing, and transportation?
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Project Planning

A 4-person team of full-time students at the University of Notre Dame will work with Imani Unidad over the course of the Spring 2017 semester. Throughout this time, the team will work to develop strategies for Imani Unidad to combat the stigma against individuals with a criminal and/or drug abuse history.
