Instituto Se Toque
Alexandre Travassos
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Case Study - Instituto Se Toque

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Introduction

This case study describes the services provided and current structure of Instituto Se Toque (IST), a not-for-profit health initiative based in São Paulo. The name of the institute means “touch yourself” or “be aware” in colloquial Brazilian Portuguese.

The main goal of the organization is to increase the early diagnostics of breast cancer in women, promoting mammograms and other preventive techniques. The organization reaches women through their children. Young interns from the Institute go to public schools and teach children and adolescents about hygiene, sexuality and have send invitations for mothers to visit local primary healthcare facilities for check-ups.

The following case intends to look at the structure and how the organization is financing itself in São Paulo.

The Institute

IST is a not-for-profit association, founded in 2005 by Monica Serra, then the first-lady of the city of São Paulo (SP). Lack of funds from the city government for a program for cancer education at the time led the first lady to start a private initiative. The institute has education as an instrument to build awareness and community mobilization to prevent diseases. The main focus of the institute is prevention and diagnosis of breast cancer; it empowers women, who they believe are the pillars in their families.

The institute reaches out to the public through 3 different channels:

1. Through public theater sessions, targeting children from 4th and 5th grades.
2. Through lectures at schools, targeting adolescents from 7th and 8th grades.
3. Through public lectures, targeting overall community.

In 2007 the institute went through restructuring - an official institutionalization and the development of the programs to reach more communities. In that same year, Alexandre Travassos took over as the director and the institute started raising funds exclusively from private donors.

Ms Serra helped the Institute to coordinate with the Secretary of Education of the State of São Paulo to obtain access to public high schools. The state government offers scholarships to teenagers in exchange for community work. Se Toque decided to train these teenagers so they
would be able to teach adolescents about cancer diagnostics and self-assessment. Later in 2007, Se Toque implemented an official internship program to college students, where they are paid to implement the institute’s work in the selected communities.

**Delivery of the solution**

Programs are held in public schools maintained by the state of São Paulo and at community centers called CEU- Centro Educacionais Unificados (Unified Education Centers), maintained by the government of the city of São Paulo. For about one hour, IST interns talk to children and adolescents about sexuality, preventable diseases, hygiene and other health promotion topics according to their age. Currently the Institute works in two neighborhoods- Mooca and Vila Nova Cachoeirinha.

At the end of each presentation, participants are gifted necklaces (Colar da Vida- necklace of life), to be given to their mothers and grandmothers. These necklaces have different bead sizes, to teach women to identify abnormal lumps during self-examination. They also take home a so called Passport, in which women write their names, address and free public health identification number and are signed up for a mammogram in at the nearby hospital, coordinated by Se Toque.

**Program for Children**

Se Toque holds educative theater sessions at the CEUs for children of 4th and 5th grades. The plays teach kids to pay attention to their and their families’ health. Since the mother of these young children are likely under 40 years of age, the play focuses on emphasizing the health of all women in their families, including grandmothers. At the end of these sessions the children are given the institute’s necklace and the mammography passport to take home. The mothers that fill in the passport and return it at the schools have a mammography booked at the nearby hospital for free.

**Program for Adolescents**

Trained interns from the Institute hold four one-hour sessions at public schools for students between 7th and 8th grades. Each session addresses different health topics, to capture the interest of the teenagers and then prepare them for a final session on breast cancer diagnostics. The interns talk about sexuality, how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS, HPV etc) and undesired pregnancies and then introduce breast cancer and self-examination. The adolescents are asked to fill in questionnaires to test their knowledge and also to take home the mammography passport and necklace.

**Program for the Community**

This program is organized to take place at community centers, where parents can attend sessions about sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases and breast cancer diagnostics. The women that attend the sessions are given the mammography passport and necklace.

**Demand**
There is still a very high rate of breast cancer incidence. Many studies have showed that in poorer communities, women find out about the cancer when the stage is too advanced. There are few prevention programs targeting this problem and directing women to mammogram centers.

IST was the pioneer organization targeting breast cancer prevention in São Paulo. Their target population are 40 year-old women and older, who reside in medium or high social vulnerability regions and users of SUS. In 2010, Instituto Se Toque benefited 27,753 people in the North and East regions of São Paulo. Of this total, 2,746 women had access to mammograms organized by the institute.

**Employees**

IST hires college students who are getting degrees in social and biological sciences (Psychology, Pedagogy, Biology and Medicine.) They work as Education Agents on the projects and at the end of their degree, they can become employees of the institute. In two years, 3 interns have become employees. IST employs 18 interns, college students that are paid for hours worked, transportation and meals. Out of the 18 interns, 2 are administrative and assist with office work; the others are deployed at schools for awareness programs. Each classroom receives 2 interns, that cover 8 different classrooms a month or in average one school per month.

In addition to interns for the programmatic content, IST hires employees to take care of the administrative work and management of the organization. Instituto Se Toque employs 8 full time workers- among them director, fundraising and marketing director, pedagogy specialist and program assistants.

**Governance**

The management of the organization is constituted by a President, Vice-president and Executive Director for institutional and strategic decisions. The Fiscal Advisory Committee encompasses 3 members and Advisory Board 12 members. The Executive Director is responsible for the coordination of the day to day activities of the organization. He reports his activities to the institutional advisory.

The President has a mandate of 2 years and can be elected by the council and financial advisors. Financial reports are provided every six months and accounts audited on a yearly basis.

**Process and Procedures**

In 2008, Se Toque hired a consulting company focused on non-for-profits, to help the organization restructure its accounts, programs and define more efficient fund-raising strategies. Since then the institute has raised funds from private donors, as well as companies that sponsor not only the organization’s management as well as individual programs. Se Toque has annual auditing of its accounts to ensure transparency.

Since 2010, Instituto Se Toque uses SMS to confirm the date and time of mammograms. That shows the penetration of cell phones in poor communities. The response of such practice has been very successful to curb absenteeism. IST also relies on the use of social network to evaluate their impact and public perception. Beneficiaries know about the projects of the Institute through social networks like Orkut.
In 2011, Instituto Se Toque developed closer relationships with mammogram centers and they call the centers to enquire about the attendance of mothers. They also follow up with the CEU, whether the mothers visited the doctor. This new process has decreased absenteeism.

Instituto Se Toque is a certified OSCIP (Organização da Sociedade Civil de Interesse Público- Civil Society Organization for public good), registered at COMAS (Conselho Municipal de Assistência Social- Social Assistance Municipal Council) and FUMCAD (Fundo Municipal da Criança e do Adolescente- Fund for children and adolescents).

Impact Measurement

The organization is implementing a monitoring and evaluation system for all completed projects. This system will analyze the results on the most important missions of the institute: detection of early stages of breast cancer and the knowledge about cancer among the students who took classes at the program.

Instituto Se Toque estimates it reached out to 25,000 people in 2010. The cost of the program, covering administrative expenses, two schools, for 6 months is estimated to be R$ 60,000 (US$ 34,400).

Funding

The organization does not receive public funding for its activities. IST relies on donation of institutional and private donors, which represents 72.66 percent of their income and revenues from sales of products and events, around 27.34 percent of income. See ANNEX 2 for more details on partners.

IST is implementing the sales of t-shirts and other consumer goods at higher end shops to increase their source of revenue.

All office assets of the organization are bought and management is centralized. The organization pays rental space for the HQ building. Their goal is to either receive a space donation or eventually purchase an office area.

Replicability

IST is documenting its activity model to create a replication manual. The organization wants to develop a model that will be replicable in other regions and schools. Their goal is to create partnerships with local hospitals and primary health care units to have women directed for mammograms efficiently.

Currently, Instituto Se Toque has 3 different work fronts. The first coordinated effort between 25 local schools and public hospital of Vila Nova Cachoeirinha, a poor neighborhood in the north of the city of São Paulo. It also works in partnership with Hospital Oswaldo Cruz, a private hospital that offers community services and 10 schools in the neighborhood of Mooca, east of São Paulo. More recently, Se

Challenges faced by the Institute:

- Fundraising
- Absenteeism of women to mammography appointments
- Yearly mammography of women
- Access to reliable and updated information on public health by the Brazilian and local governments.
- Broader assessment of results.
Toque established a partnership with the Hospital do Câncer and the School of Medicine of the University of São Paulo to cover communities in the western neighborhoods of São Paulo. In this last region, Se Toque expects to work with 5 schools.

Instituto Se Toque has kept its operations centered in these three neighborhoods as they have secured coordination of services between schools and hospitals. At the end of 2009, the institute has started evaluating the level of absenteeism of the women that scheduled the mammography but missed their appointments. The numbers have dropped from 30 percent absenteeism to 15 percent. The institute wants to collect more data on the program results in these three regions before replicating the model.

Se Toque has now established relationships with the Unidades Basicas de Saúde- UBS (Basic Health Units), primary care assistance units in the covered neighborhoods and are training the assistants to diagnose breast cancer and participate on Se Toque Community programs. Once these centers are more empowered to help on the diagnostics, there will be a more responsive channel between community and healthcare units. The goal is to follow up with women that had booked the mammography and ensure that they return to the hospital every year for periodic exams.

The most recent project implemented by the institute to increase their coverage and action are Mobile Program Units. The Institute has received donation of trucks from Mercedes Benz and negotiating with partners to operate units in different neighborhoods.

ANNEX 1
## ANNEX 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Profile</th>
<th>Area of collaboration (1-2 word description)</th>
<th>What do they bring in to the partnership (Details of monetary / non-monetary key inputs)</th>
<th>What does the organization contribute to the partnership? (Details)</th>
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