PERSONAL PROJECT REPORT

2020-21

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Goal- To research physical disabilities and thereby create adaptive wear for individuals with medical conditions by up-cycling old clothes through the empowerment of pandemic-stricken disabled migrant workers. Thus, earning profits of 20,000 rupees by selling the clothing and using it for creation of more adaptive wear to be donated as patient clothing to Thunga Hospital.

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Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I would like to thank my project supervisor & head who have guided me through the whole process of this project and report. Thereby, playing the key role in the whole operation of **Cur8ability**. I have learned so much from working under them. I would also like to thank *Redone/It by Diya*, a USA based personal project for their collaboration and order placement. I would also express my gratitude to the NGO, *My Helping Hand India*, for their support and tailors who brought together my collections.

I would want to thank my parents for their wholesome encouragement and constant support; they were the backbone of this project. Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to all those who donated their old garments during the collection drive and those who bought our garments; my goal would not have been attained without you!

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Investigation

A.   Goal and Global Context

Despite many ideas (A1) such as writing a sequel to my book, sculpting using e-waste and creating art pieces, I chose to do adaptive clothing. Since childhood, I've aspired in the field of fashion (A7) because I'm passionate about my own dressing. This topic was chosen (A5) because I personally witnessed my friend experience a fracture due to which she faced clothing issues. I conducted in-depth research about clothing and difficulties which led me taking up surveys and discussions with caretakers and interviews with doctors through which it was evident that wheelchair users, caretakers and elderly needed garments that met their social and functional needs (A2). It was found that better-fitted (66.7%) and comfort clothing (89.9%) proved to be a morale booster to improve self-confidence (A2). After conducting surveys, it was imperative that I researched a need assessment (A3) to gauge the clothing requirements and purchasing power of such users. To evaluate the adaptive clothing requirements of the disabled as per their age groups (A3.2), there was a need to analyse overall necessity which focused on 6 domains namely: physical health, psychological state, level of dependence, societal factors, environment and personal beliefs (A3). To me, analysing the disabilities (A3.3) and thereby creating adaptive solutions was the best way to create an impact on society. Simultaneously, I wanted the disabled to have the privilege of fashion, thus creating not only functional but 'stylish' adaptive wear that gave a sense of equality and improved mental health by boosting confidence. I came up with a goal that fits all aspects of SMART (A2.4); To research physical disabilities and thereby create adaptive wear for individuals with medical conditions by up-cycling old clothes through the empowerment of pandemic-stricken disabled migrant workers (A3.1). Thereby, earning profits of 20,000 rupees and using it for creation of more adaptive wear to donate as patient clothing to Thunga Hospital. I made changes my goal (A9) initially after having meetings with my supervisor and understanding SMART.

Before choosing fairness and development as my global context, I compared it with personal and cultural expression (*A4*). Despite them having common aspects like entrepreneurship as an exploration and imagining a hopeful future, I chose fairness and development as it was about rights and equality; my projects surrounds the same. In MYP, I've been taught that this is an inquiry into rights and responsibilities as we share our resources with everyone, communities and the relationships within them, provide access to equal opportunities and make peace & conflict resolution. All explorations work as great aspects for my topic, for instance, difference and inclusion, by including the disabled in the clothing privilege all of us have, human development & social entrepreneurs through establishment of a brand with a socially noble aspect. **Cur8ability** covers every aspect of this global context.

This is a highly challenging goal as I'm doing multiple things like producing & manufacturing clothing, communicating with migrant tailors, up-cycling clothes, empowering, conducting donation. I'd taken the responsibility to improve quality of life for people with disabilities with limited medical knowledge about the subject and thus, the commitment to balance between school-work and learning more about disabilities was challenging. During COVID, everything shifted virtually, there was remote working and hence it was difficult to reach out to the migrant workers but we coordinated over the phone (*A6*) and I occasionally visited the production site.

B. Prior Knowledge and Subject Specific

I had multiple prior learnings (*A7.1-.13*) like being an existing blogger, influencer, book author (*A7.3*), which helped me <u>understand and used technology systems</u> and was hence experienced to

mark a presence on social media, which would help in marketing and promotion of my products while also writing about it. I completed a fashion design course by MoMa (*A7.1*). I realised that I was applying transfer skills here as I was able to make connections by using knowledge from other subjects to create my product. However, with limited knowledge about the disabled and their needs, I decided to conduct a survey; I understood dependency ratios, problems and decided to do my part in assisting them.

In school, knowledge from various subjects helped me during the project (*A10*):

Integrated Humanities (Economics & Business)- Studying the market, statistics, analysing trends in economics, helped me understand the market void of adaptive clothing and how I can modify my ideas to fit the public demand. The need for correct incorporation of design and material along with sustainable production and marketing was determined through the business subject.

Mathematics- Both, profit and loss are basic branches of mathematics that deal with the study of profit and loss made in every business.The formula is one of the most important mathematical formulas used to calculate maths problems in our academic and daily schedule. Each product at **Cur8ability** has a cost price and selling price.

Science (Biology)-The medical model helps understand a disability as a physical or mental impairment of any individual, their personal and social consequences while regarding limitations faced by them, resulting primarily from impairments. The unit on protein synthesis helped me understand bone structure and functions.

Design- It helped in various aspects of social media designing for **Cur8ability** like website and logo making. The units on gestalt principles and Mobirise, helped understand the key principles of making a logo while Mobirise helped me understand the functionality and factors to consider while making a website.

English- It helped me the most in terms of essay writing, vocabulary, differentiating between literary & non literary texts and article content writing which were of significance for my website and various other content creations.

C. Research Skills

I was easily able to identify primary and secondary sources which helped me restructure data and make correct implementations of the same. I was capable of seeking multiple perspectives from various sources and collect as well as record appropriate information, while making connections between them. While researching, I used critical literary skills to analyse and interpret media communications as I came across the fact that adaptive clothing was only prevalent in North America (making only 16.5 % of the world), that too solely by 46% (*Coherent Market Insights*) and realised that it didn't exist in India. I looked at existing products (*A8*) like Tommy Hilfiger's adaptive line, comprehensive adaptive clothing reports to understand restraints, opportunities and drivers. As I progressed, I realised the need to gain first-hand experience on the subject and so surveyed disabled patients about their clothing needs, doctors about basic medical requirement and caretakers about clothing needs for the patients (*A2*). The biggest obstacle I faced while researching was being unable to find fellow adaptive clothing competitors in the Indian market to compare my business model to.

I was confident about creating text references and citations to support the bibliography, analyse and reflect on information from multiple sources, and use my critical thinking skills to make decisions. Conducting the analysis of sources was an addition to my research analysis skills during this project as I was unfamiliar with CRAAP and OPVL (*B4*). I decided to conduct source analysis to help me evaluate the reliability and detail of the source I was using for research.

Planning

A. Developing a criteria for the product

After researching and understanding the criteria my product must fit in to be successful, I derived a success criteria for myself to help <u>evaluate and manage success</u> (*B2*). I researched about aesthetics and function of clothing by reading about their characteristics, coming to the conclusion that the first factor of my product's success will be defined as a garment having multiple adaptive features like magnetic closures while maintaining fashion element and durability. I used prior knowledge (mathematics) to understand costings and source cheaper fabrics directly from factories, thereby aiming for higher profits. To define a target audience, I researched about the market segment requiring adaptive clothing and consumer needs and preferences through a survey (*A2*). Being environmentally aware, I wanted to bring sustainability to the project through prior knowledge of recycling denim through *Redone/It (B1)*. I read about standard garment sizing and realised that disabled people would need customised clothing, thus using that as criteria for success. Based on my knowledge about fabrics, I realised that non-synthetic clothes must contain cotton fibre to maintain safety levels while being crease free. I went through many websites and understood that a website must be technically savvy.

Since I had never created a success criteria, in order to set grade boundaries, I referred to resources shared by my supervisor to understand achievement level. At first, I had created a success criteria with only specifications like 'The clothing must be comfortable' and 'The website must be attractive' when I realised that it wouldn't define my success elaborately. Hence, I made changes to it by incorporating Access FM to help me create a proper rubric.

B. Planning and recording the development process

In order for systematic and organised execution of the process, I decided to set long and short term goals (*B3*) that I intermingled with timelines (*B5*). My short term goals were those that I planned on finishing before October, such as branding, social media creation and a collection drive. My long term goals were those that I planned to complete over a longer duration like, donation of 80-100 patient garments to hospitals and empowering 10 tailors by providing jobs. I used a gantt chart to help set deadlines for each task (*B5.A*). However, I wasn't referring to the chart everyday and hence typed down a simpler version of my timeline as a document (*B5.B*). I followed this timeline well however I faced some problems like not being able to import adaptive accessories from The States on time due to COVID restrictions.

While planning, I kept in mind lockdown restrictions and remained notified of my research. This made me decide that fabrics must be purchased, recycling will take place through execution of 30 garment collection drives and clothes will be manufactured by migrant tailors working remotely. I established that I'll need to generate sales of my clothes and profits of minimum 2000Rs through social media marketing. The profits of which, shall be used in order to create clothing of 5 different styles for donation to a hospital. During this time, the most essential protocol to follow is of sanitation and so clothes must be disinfected and washed at every stage. Recording events that took place throughout the project was important to track my progress, remain aware of what to do next, follow deadlines, write my goals. I saw this contribute to organisation, enhancing my ATL skills as I kept an <u>organised and logical system of information files</u>. I also recognised mistakes; different experiences assisted me in deriving further goals. I maintained a written journal (*C2.2*) that

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consisted of my daily thoughts & ideas, mind maps along with accounting, costings and wages (*C2*). I created a flex, business cards, posters to circulate around social media (*B6*) during the initial stages.

C. Self-management skills

Time and self-management are important aspects for success, thus I met with daily reminders and work goals (*B7*). I managed my time by setting a balance of schedules between work, academics extra curricular and time to destress. I created reminder lists on my phone to remind me of work deadlines like calling up a tailor or having to coordinate fabric sourcing. I committed a minimum of 1 hour to the project daily so that I could spread out my work. I believe that <u>affective skills</u> play a major role in wellbeing and so I made sure to practice it throughout. <u>I practiced mindfulness and emotional management</u> by meditating for 10 minutes everyday (*B7*). I motivated myself by celebrating every success. When faced with disappointment regarding any task, my resilience helped bounce back. I spoke to my friends and reached out to them for feedbacks, accepting both, positives and negatives gracefully (*B8.1*). The biggest limitation I faced was not being able to prioritise my mental wellbeing due to too much schoolwork. However, I overcame this by making time for a stress busting activity; reading a novel daily (*B8.2*).

Taking Action:

A. Product in response to goal, context and criteria

Goal- In response to my goal, I devised a detailed plan by <u>strategising and taking action</u> on my adaptive clothing startup called **Cur8ability**. I decided to brand with this name since it symbolises the way I 'curate' (thus Cur8) for people with limited 'ability', hence combining both into 'Cur8ability' (curate-ability). I created my logo after experimenting with different designs (*B3*). In order to collect the used garments for up-cycling into adaptive wear, I set up collection drives from communities (*C1*). I created social media campaigns for the same. Used garments such as jeans, tops, skirts, were collected at various locations. The clothing collection was then sorted into categories as per functionality, colour, shape and size. I brainstormed and recycled these into adaptive wear like back open tops, side velcro pants and many more.

Context- In relation to an exploration of my global context, I was able to 'share finite resources with other people' as after the clothing was sold, 100% of the profits were used to create clothing to be donated. **Cur8ability** has made around Rs.18,000 worth of profits and produced more than 20 clothes.

Criteria- Using my success criteria, I stayed focused on the production for each garment, making sure the outcome was perfect by checking its implication with the disability. With the use of inventory charts, client data, costs and product sheets (*C2*) I was able to learn and grow from my limited knowledge.

B. Thinking skills

The targeted section of the society wanted new garments, not those that were upcycled from donation of clothes; Thus I had to <u>combine knowledge, understanding and skills to create solutions</u>. Since each clothing is divergent in its own way, creating designs was onerous. Keeping both, the garments collected and fabrics purchased, in mind, I thought of innovative designs to create <u>novel solutions to complex problems</u>. These designs were depicted through sketches and drawings. While executing production, many changes had to be made; first, I had planned to create only recycled adaptive wear, but soon realised there was another market section of disabled people who refused to wear recycled clothing. The fresh garment manufacturing technique was thus lengthy and tedious also causing many fabrics and cutting to go waste. The concept of zero waste was then incorporated in stitching, cutting and manufacturing processes in the factory. There was need to create a website with an online store as well as social media platforms *(C3)*. People can access my adaptive clothing designs through the website internationally. I created a product catalogue for understanding products before purchasing (*D1*). I struggled in marketing my products since this was the first time I experienced retail; I decided to overcome it by doing a course in social media marketing to also <u>interpret data</u>.

C. Communication and social skills

A manufacturing team for **Cur8ability** was put together and consisted of 15 migrant tailors who I communicated ideas and knowledge with. They helped in producing each unique adaptive clothing. I communicated with my supervisor through zoom and Managebac throughout the whole process to get feedback for improvement (*C5.5*). I collaborated with an NGO called 'My Helping Hand India' (*C5.1*) for tailors, a fellow brand called 'Address Now' (*C5.2*) in order to gain expert

knowledge in the field of adaptive clothing and 'Redone/It' (*C5.3*) to help me undertake the mask donation. I was able to reach out to them by communicating through social media. Initially I didn't make sales but gradually I <u>used social media networks appropriately to build and develop relationships</u> and people caught eye on the innovative concept and designs. The clothing started selling through word of mouth too. Through my developed social media, The American Cancer Association took notice of my work and placed a collaborative order for 10,000 masks with the Go Pink logo (*C4*) for the Breast Cancer Awareness month 2020. I accomplished the order from start to finish. Due to the pandemic limitations, I couldn't physically participate in exhibitions and events so I indulged in an online showcase of my products via webinars and school showcases (D3).

Reflection:

A. Evaluation against criteria

Criteria	Achievement Score	Justification
Aesthetics	7	The garments have multiple adaptive features (all unique), fashionable, they are easy to put on & off (*D2*)
Cost	6	Cost was recovered and wages were paid (*C2*)
Customer	7	All preferences of every disabled category were covered and needs were researched well (*A4*)
Sustainability	7	Products are sustainable and eco-friendly (*C1*)
Size	7	Everything can be customised (*C5.4*)
Safety	7	Absolutely no hazards, nothing breaks (*C5.4*)
Function	7	Unique and innovate adaptive features in every design (*D1*)
Material	7	Medically approved (D2), trustable source of fabrics, crease free
Website	6	89 clicks and good technicality (*C3*)

B. Reflection

I felt overburdened while balancing the project with academics. I practiced strategies like yoga and meditation to reduce anxiety . I developed my leadership skills and increased my understanding of the topic as it made help people with disabilities by easing their dressing limitations. Understanding the plight of migrant workers during COVID-19 due to their job loss, made me find a way to empower them by creating job opportunities.The project changed me as a person and my understanding of the topic as well as global context grew as I learnt more about the importance of giving equal rights and opportunities .The project rendered me with a keen eye for effective partnership and ability to hire the right team that was needy yet equipped with relevant skills. Living in a metropolitan city, I learnt that I couldn't be indifferent about the plight of the Indian migrant workers and their struggle for survival during COVID-19. I learnt something new when I had to familiarise myself with the regional language (Marathi) in order to communicate, collaborate and connect with the workers effectively. This effort created an interactive atmosphere.

Why we must help others, how can I help clothing difficulties, how must we contribute towards recycling and many other questions were answered for me through this IB personal project when I inquired in different contexts to gain a different perspective. Creating a product that could assist the

disabled to dress in some way was a mere idea that shaped up into reality(D2). Reducing the amount of waste that made up landfills, helping to create jobs, are few of the array of benefits that come with recycling. Data shows that 75% of discarded clothing could be recycled, but we only recycle about 30%. I realised my individual motivation was to protect the future generations by facilitating to reduce and recycle garments.We managed to keep 180 garments away from landfills as we received them in form of donations; 165 adaptive garments were up-cycled from these.

In India, a huge population suffers due to lack of funds for clothing; providing for adaptive clothing becomes additionally stressful. Coping with a disability is one of the most difficult things to do both emotionally and financially. To make a difference in the life of patients with disabilities, I explored the options to provide for donation of adaptive wear. Through this project, I superseded the donation target and effectively donated garments worth Rs. 20,000 to Thunga Hospital, India (D2). Creating adaptive clothing has left me content and I realised that I felt empathy since I could help people cope with their clothing difficulties. I'll continue to create adaptive clothing with an aim to eradicate clothing difficulties.

C. Development as an IB learner

Inquirer	Through my survey, I developed inquiry skills because I inquired into the adaptive field from different perspectives (*A2*)
Knowledgeable	I was knowledgeable as I had apt prior knowledge combined with knowledge gained through research that I kept in mind throughout the process (*A7 & A10)*
Thinker	I developed as a thinker as my research led me to posing a lot of questions to myself which I later moulded creatively into appropriate aspects of adaptive clothing using my thinking (*A3*).
Communicator	I learned to communicate with strangers and had to learn the local language to talk to the tailors (*A6*)
Principled	I worked with deadlines and to-do's in a principled manner (*B5*)
Open-Minded	I accepted mistakes throughout the beginning of the process and then became open to making changes instead of sticking to the original ideas I had (*B5.B*)
Caring	I put myself in place of the disabled people to empathise with them so I could do my best in providing a solution for them (*A7.12*)
Risk-taker	Opting for such a challenging task during COVID made me a risk taker as I wasn't afraid of anything that came my way (*C1*)
Balanced	I balanced studies and personal project articulately (*B7*).
Reflective	I was able to determine my strengths and weaknesses and work towards strategic plans for the future to improve (*D2*)