

Business Model Canvas (BMC)

For: Community centre in Arques (France)

Date: 16/11/2020

Partners

- **Referring organisations:**
 - Unité Territoriale de Prévention et d'Action Sociale (UTPAS) and Protection Maternelle et Infantile (PMI)¹;
 - these refer parents to childcare and the "centres sociaux".
- **Caisse d'Allocation Familiale (CAF)**²: provides childcare funding.
- **Local government:** promotes childcare provision and provides funding.
- **Schools:** inform families about the childcare offer in the centre.
- **External partners** from other fields such as employment, leisure and welfare:
 - they offer activities and services in the 'centre social', they also collaborate with the childcare setting;
 - for example, parents can participate in a workshop while their children are in childcare;
 - the offer of services and activities for parents are aligned with the childcare offer.
- **Internal:** other services in the 'centre social'.

Costs

- **Staff costs:** professionals' salaries.
- **Buildings:** maintenance and overheads.
- **Time and resources:**
 - management's choice to provide extra budget for team meetings and for team training and coaching;
 - funding from national and international projects provides additional funding to make this possible.
- **Equipment:** for example educational equipment for childcare activities.

Activities

- **Range of activities:** for children, parents, children + parents together.
- **Strong pedagogical principles** from a whole-family perspective:
 - more than just childcare;
 - the whole team supports this vision.
- **Customised personal support:** families receive support with childcare and parenting, but also with looking for work, taking care of themselves, building a social network, etc.
- **Offline and online marketing:** through partners in the area and directly for families.
- **Team meetings and reflection:** in the childcare team and with other teams in the 'centre social'.

People and resources

- **Strong leadership:** the manager is visibly present in childcare and encourages staff and parents to talk with him/her.
- **A clear profile for childcare professionals:** open-minded, flexible and non-judgemental.
- **Good planning system:** always ensures free places for occasional and emergency childcare.
- **Multidisciplinary team:** emphasis on internal cooperation and cooperation with partners.

Value

- **Flexibility:**
 - parents can plan and use childcare flexibly;
 - when there is a change in the childcare planning, they can phone or come in to request an adjustment;
 - childcare at a fixed, income-related price.
- **Occasional places:**
 - are always available: places are always reserved for occasional childcare;
 - in emergency situations, parents can count on getting a place in childcare (during opening hours).
- **Emphasis on parents and the whole family:** one or two staff members are present to welcome and inform parents. They establish personal contact with parents from a whole-family perspective: what is going on with the parents, in the family?
- **Parents are more than just parents:**
 - the centre has an offer that is not only about parenting;
 - there is a wide range of individual and group activities for parents;
 - there is the possibility of individual appointments for parents;
 - staff can also point parents in the direction of external services if the parents have interests or needs that the centre social cannot meet.

User relations

- **Warm, welcoming attitude** to parents and children; parents are always welcome.
- **Parents participate actively:** they are invited to share their ideas, suggest activities and develop them together with the staff.
- **A wide range of activities:** activities for parents while the children are in childcare (sports, language classes, group discussions, job market reintegration programme, etc.), at the same location.
- **Actively informing parents:** parents receive information about their child, but also about the system and what is on offer at the 'centre social' as a whole.

Channels

- **Visibility with partners:** PMI, local government, schools, etc. through visits, leaflets, personal contacts.
- **Presence** in the local area: local events, organising activities in the local area, excursions, etc.
- **Word-of-mouth advertising:** via existing users.
- **Online channels:** facebook, website.

Income

- **Parents' fees:** based on their income.
- **Additional funding:** through the CAF and the local government.

Users

- **Families living in the local area:** families with one or two working parents living in the vicinity of the 'centre social'.
- **Families living in precarious situations:** disconnected from the labour market and with multiple problems (social, family, financial, relational).
- **Families with one or two parents who want to get (back) into employment:** eager to work, with young children but no childcare solution as yet.

¹ PMI: monitors the safety and health of mothers and children, for example performing check-ups during pregnancy. Its services are partly comparable to those of Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) in Flanders and the health visitors in England. UTPAS: a series of services that support families in precarious situations (e.g. living on benefits, of no fixed abode, etc.). PMI may be part of an UTPAS.

² CAF: French child benefit fund. It funds childcare through the settings or through the parents, depending on the type of setting.

Actively welcoming and involving families in childcare

Community centre in Arques (France)



The ‘centre social’ in Arques, like many centres sociaux in France, offers a range of activities for families from the area. Local residents can go to the centre for music workshops, sport, childcare and all kinds of family support. Many centres sociaux also offer out-of-school childcare or other types of childcare.

Why is it necessary?

Parental involvement increases the quality of childcare and ensures that the offer reflects what families need more closely. In the childcare sector, parental involvement and the idea that parents are partners in childcare are self-evident. However, parents do not always experience that partnership and not all parents automatically feel involved. This is especially true of vulnerable parents or those who do not belong to the culturally dominant groups in society. Furthermore, childcare organisations sometimes define the concept of parental involvement very narrowly, in ways that do not always coincide with what really helps families

move forward. The childcare sector in England, for example, defines parental involvement, under the influence of government policy, primarily in terms of children’s learning. This fixes parents in a specific role. There is also a risk that parents will be held responsible for their limited involvement, when this is in fact caused by the specific interpretation of parental involvement. Another risk is that parents will feel responsible if their child has more difficulty learning.

A narrow interpretation of parental involvement is not the best way to welcome families, as it will then seem that they are only welcome if they adapt to that specific approach. By contrast, in a broader interpretation, childcare organisations can support families and communities and look together with them for a form of involvement that is feasible and supportive.

What strategies help?

Welcoming all parents regardless of their employment status and regardless of the regularity of their childcare needs.

Welcoming families and looking at the involvement parents are already showing. A parent who is considering using childcare is already an involved

parent. The parent may wish to use childcare to give the family some peace and quiet. If that parent is then asked to take part in activities or assist with chores, he or she may be surprised or annoyed by the request, because it will put an end to that peace and quiet. This does not mean that the parent has no desire to be involved with the child or the childcare – what it does mean is that parents have a different perspective on this from the childcare setting.

It also helps to look at involvement from a long-term perspective. Rather than thinking exclusively about the here and now, the childcare setting will then also have an eye for the possibilities that childcare offers to families in the long term. For example, ad hoc childcare in the short term may be stressful for the child, parents and staff, but in the long term it may make the difference for a family between employment with a good income and a life of insecurity.

How might that look in practice?

At the ‘centre social’ in Arques, childcare has evolved into an integrated offer: it is available for the whole family, and parents can help shape it, devising and leading activities themselves. The early years practitioners work with the family, not just with the children.