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The Stronger Roots Program

Case Study:
Center for Palliative Care

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Center for Palliative Care: Using card game about dying as an unconventional tool for building a social base

The Center for Palliative Care launched a successful crowdfunding campaign to develop a conversational card game about the end of life, and kick-start community play. Through a creative approach and a carefully planned campaign, the organization managed to raise awareness and to get people connected to the difficult topic. By having old and new supporters playing and sharing the game, they are spreading their mission to a wider audience.

The Center for Palliative Care (CPP) was established in 2014. It is a Czech non-profit organization focused on improving accessibility and quality of palliative care through education, research and advocacy activities. CPP does not provide direct patient care, but aims to facilitate a systematic change through supporting care providers and policy makers in developing effective ways of helping patients and their choices at the end.

TELL ME HOW IT BEGAN

In 2016, CPP director Martin Loučka came across the original version of the game at an American conference, brought it to Prague and later purchased the license. He liked its creative ability to reach not only a professional audience, but also a broad spectrum of people and introduce them to the sensitive topic of dying and palliative care. Together with deputy director Alexandra Trochtová and the CPP team, they decided to adapt the game for the Czech audience with the help of the Stronger Roots program. So began the journey of **Tell Me - a conversational card game for living and dying well.**

TELL ME ABOUT CROWDFUNDING

In order to be able to produce and distribute the game, CPP decided to organize a crowdfunding campaign, targeting the general public on the HitHit platform. From their long term experience the team knew that dying and palliative care are sensitive topics to communicate about, often raising fear or denial. With the game, they created a gentle, yet imaginative narrative, through which they shared their vision to help people open important life issues and improve communication about end-of-life wishes. A website, promo spots and photos were created and

shared across social media. They set up financially diverse (from 150 to 75,000 CZK) donation options and associated rewards. These included the opportunity to purchase the game, join a team play, become a program partner, get special merch etc. Eight themed podcasts and a webinar were also added on an ongoing basis.

Three potential milestones were planned for the campaign:

1

First milestone: Producing the first 500 copies

Achieving this milestone was important not only from a fundraising point of view, but also as confirmation that there was interest in a game with such a theme in the Czech Republic. The campaign kicked off in May 2021, and the required amount of 125,000 CZK was raised within the first 48 hours.

2

Second milestone: Community play

CPP wanted to get the game to as many people as possible. Therefore,

they decided to train 60 facilitators who would get trained in meaningful, but also entertaining ways to get involved and would be able to play with larger groups of people in e.g., libraries or cultural centers. The aim was to create a space where the game would be played regularly, so that people who would not otherwise know about the game, or CPP, could access it.

People interested in the position of the facilitators, mostly existing followers, were approached through the web and through social media, and were selected based on their coordination skills and alignment with the purpose of the game and CPP's values. Location was also important in order to cover all 14 regions in the country. The CPP coordinators trained the facilitators on the rules, methods of how to motivate others to play, or how to react in difficult situations, e.g. when someone cries, or wants to quit playing the game. The team also helped them start their first community play. At this stage of the campaign, they published a webinar describing the use of the game in health and social services and beyond. While the webinar was still airing, the necessary amount of 300,000 CZK was raised.

3

Third milestone: The guide to prospective care

CPP wanted to create a tool that would add the possibility to have a real impact on the care a person receives at the end of life to the game. Their final call to action in the campaign was: *“We want to help to ensure that it doesn't stop at playing, but that people can record their wishes in a document that they can pass on to their doctor, care home staff or their loved ones. If we raise 500,000 CZK, we will create a Guide to prospective care, form and instructions on how to use it, and we will distribute the Guide to health and social services.”* At the end of the campaign, (after 75 days) in June 2021, 550,195 CZK (22,440 Euro) had been collected. All interim milestones were exceeded, with a total 440% of the original amount raised. Most of the donations were from first-time donors, which indicates that the game actually helped CPP to burst their bubble.

TELL ME WHAT IS NEXT

Thanks to the campaign, CPP reached out to brand-new supporters, who helped them share the vision of the game. They have also benefited from their existing constituencies, such

as allied staff from hospitals and hospices, or their courses attendees, who buying and playing the game at their workplaces. Good relations with some of the media also helped. At the same time, the team faced difficulties associated with the topic of palliative care and end of life choices, for example, when a well-known game publisher refused to produce their game, or some influencers wouldn't share it because they didn't want to be associated with the topic of dying. Overall, the CPP reflects that creating the game and going through the crowdfunding campaign was a great move forward and the game proved to be an excellent tool for spreading their vision and achieving their ultimate mission. *“Through our work with the Tell me game, we have been able to strengthen relationships with our constituencies, give them the opportunity to engage with us more and get to know many of them closer. Spreading awareness of the game and the CPP itself has become a snowball that will probably stop at some point, but the hugely successful campaign itself has been a great motivation for us to carry on.”*

LEARNING POINTS:

- Finding playful or unconventional tools such as card games can be a good way to transform difficult, or even taboo subjects into something more appealing. It also reached new audiences, those who wouldn't otherwise react to the topic.
- Gradually planning milestones, and being able to follow a plan according to how each milestone is reached made the big, possibly even unexpected results possible.
- People love to be part of communities, creating the facilitator role appealed to this need. And the way it was combined with crowdfunding, made the two goals stronger, strengthening each other.





Used quotations are from Alexandra Trochtová, CPP deputy director and their Hihit website

This case study was written as a part of the Stronger Roots Program.

The Stronger Roots Program aims to increase the resilience of civil society organizations and their networks, strengthen their social capital and embed them in the communities and societies in which they operate. It is implemented by Open Society Fund Prague, the NIOK Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava and Glopolis.

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