

**Project Work - Written Report**  
**#07-09 Project H.O.P.E.**

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*Single-Year Project*

## Section 1: Project Overview

### AREA OF CONCERN

According to statistics released by the **Singapore Prison Services**, the overall two-year recidivism rate of 27.4 per cent for inmates released in 2011 was the highest in at least eight years. Also, the overall rate of recidivism as of 2014 is 26.5% which is about a quarter of all local inmates released. Since 2005, it has maintained around the 24% - 27% range. It is also expensive to hold a prisoner. According to CNA Insider clip *IT Figures - Prison High* , it costs around \$27,375/year to house an inmate. Hence it is evident that the rising recidivism rate is not beneficial to the country as it is taking up the country's money, resources and time. Our project's main area of concern are the impacts caused by the rising rate of recidivism.

## IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

According to Straits Times article *ISCOS' executive director Lisa Lim: She helps ex-inmates get back on their feet*, ex-convicts are 'lost' when they are released, especially when they have 'no family support' or are 'estranged from their families' because 'their needs had been taken care off by prison officers'. According to the **Singapore Prison Services**, the recidivism rate depends on many factors such as 'presence of positive family and community support'. The first identified challenge lies with the ex-convicts. They lack family support and care when they are released, resulting in them being lost and not knowing what to do. The non-acceptance and lack of support from family and community leads to the rising recidivism rate.

According to Straits Times article *ISCOS' executive director Lisa Lim: She helps ex-inmates get back on their feet*, the odds of offending for children with parents who are offenders are on average 21/2 times higher than children with parents who are not offenders. According to Straits Times article *Family time to support children of offenders* (November 19, 2016), Ms Durga Naidu, senior social services executive with ISCOS, said that 'Family members may not have enough time for their children, who might lack a positive role model and parental guidance if the remaining parent is busy working to support the family.' The second identified challenge lies with the children of incarcerated parents/ ex-convicts. Recidivism causes a situation where parents lack the time for their children. Children lack proper parental guidance and care which causes them to be frustrated and sad, in turn increasing the chances of children mixing with wrong gang. Hence this increases the odds of offending for children.

Our project has decided to focus on identified challenge 2 as as children are more suitable for students our age to work with and engage. Due to our limitations, we are unable to focus on the ex-convicts/ incarcerated parents themselves. However we would still try to include them wherever possible and raise awareness about them.

## **UNDERLYING PROBLEM**

Given that there is a general lack of guidance and care for children of incarcerated parents/ ex-convicts, which may increase their chances of offending, how might we engage, support and increase awareness and public understanding for these children so as to reduce their chances of reoffending and improve their lives?

## PLAN OF ACTION

<b>Dates (2018)</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Jan - Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online research, news articles</li> <li>- Meetings with New Life Stories</li> <li>- Obtained brochures and publicity materials for fundraising sales</li>   <li>- Setting up of Instagram account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand problems faced by ex-convicts and children</li> <li>- Plan activities more targeted towards identified problem</li> <li>- Discuss PoA</li>   <li>- Raise awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Mar</b>	<p><b>Bake Sale (28/3/2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held in school compound</li> <li>- Sold baked cookies</li> <li>- Distributed brochures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise awareness</li> <li>- Raise funds</li> </ul>
<b>May - Jun</b>	<p><b>Concert Constantia (30/6/2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held in school Drama Centre</li> <li>- Liaised with performance groups</li> <li>- Sold concert tickets and merchandise from beneficiaries</li> <li>- Talk by beneficiary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public awareness</li> <li>- Raise funds</li> </ul>

<p><b>July</b></p>	<p><b>Kidzania Outing (21/7/2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaised with Kidzania for sponsorship with help of NLS</li> <li>- Organised and facilitated event</li> <li>- Interacted with ex-offenders and their families (esp. children)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Platform for interaction</li> <li>- Family-bonding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sep - 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Early Reader Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paired up with Dhiyaulhaq, an 8-year old boy under the ERP</li> <li>- 6 months programme</li> <li>- Read and interact with him</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interaction with beneficiaries</li> <li>- Service to beneficiary</li> </ul>

## Section 2: Implementation of the Plan

### ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES TO DATE

Date	Progress
Nov 2017	Formation of core team
Mar 2018	<b>Bake Sale @ Hwa Chong Institution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sold 136 cookies</li><li>- Raised \$272</li></ul>
Apr ~ Jun 2018	<b>Concert Constantia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Planning of Concert</li><li>- Invited 10 performance groups</li><li>- Reached out to 91 members of public</li><li>- Raised a total of \$383.95</li></ul>
July 2018	<b>KidZania Outing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reached out to 58 ex-offenders and families</li><li>- Garnered volunteers to help facilitate programme</li></ul>

Currently, we have 1 initiative that is yet to be completed. We will be starting our volunteering programme with NLS starting on 25 August for a period of 6 months.

### **Section 3: Project Outcomes**

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

We have raised **\$635.85** for NLS through our bake sale and concert. Approximately **50 people** volunteered for our concert. These student volunteers also learned of our cause through interactions with representatives from the beneficiary. A lot of them brought their own friends and family to the concert, helping us expand our outreach to students from different schools and members of the public. For our bake sale, we sold **136 cookies**, and reached out to many students through the distribution of pamphlets and brochures. During our KidZania outing, we were able to interact with around **58 ex-offenders and their families**, which allowed us to understand their plights and engage them better. We have approximately **1200 followers and 1090 likes** on Instagram, which allowed us to reach out to many members of the public, thus achieving our aim of spreading awareness for our beneficiary. Through the course of our project, we have been able to allow the public to gain deeper insight into the lives of ex-offenders and their families, and in doing so we are able to reduce stigma of the ex-offenders. Furthermore, through garnering volunteers, we have also managed to alleviate the problem of lack of manpower our beneficiary is facing. In the long-term, more like-minded people will be able to band together for this cause and more members of society would be willing to interact and engage the ex-offenders and families, alleviating the root problem of lack of acceptance.



## **REFLECTIONS ON OUTCOMES**

### **A Scope of Impact**

We have learnt that since we are students, we are only able to achieve a limited extent of impact as it is quite difficult to reach out to members of the public on a large scale. Hence, we decided to focus on the school community as it would be much easier and more feasible for us (we did so by organizing events mainly in school compounds). In order to solve the problem of limited scope of impact, we would try to engage more sponsors and companies that are working towards the cause of integrating and raising awareness for ex-offenders and families so as to increase our outreach to the public community. We would also tap on our beneficiary's connections to increase our outreach so as to better achieve our goal of spreading awareness.

### **B Public Awareness**

Through the relatively enthusiastic response received through our events, we realised that the school community and the public do care about the ex-offenders and their children. This is evident through our bake sale where many students were willing to buy the cookies when they learnt that it was for the beneficiary and our concert where many student performers and external performance groups were willing to volunteer to perform for the concert. This shows that our project is feasible since there is already a certain amount of understanding and concern towards the ex-offenders and their families. In future, we would focus more on facilitating interaction between ex-offenders' children and the public so that the children feel a sense of acceptance while the public gains a deeper understanding of the beneficiaries' plights.

## **C Utilization of resources and Organization of events**

Throughout the course of our events, we were largely hindered by the lack of resources since we were a first year start-up project and we did not have any sponsors or seed funds. This affected the quality of our events as we were unable to utilize many resources for our events such as our lack of technical equipment for our concert which resulted in the audio and lighting effects being slightly compromised. However, our lack of resources made us resourceful in the way we handled our existing resources. Also, as it was our first time organizing events on a large scale, we were inexperienced and this resulted in many problems during our events such as struggling to gather and lead the families around for our outing. Hence, in the future, we would try to engage companies and sponsors working for the same cause which would be able to provide us with increased resources and help in the management and running of our events.