

Written Report

Project Stretch Out 07-12

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Single-Year Project

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Section 1: Project Overview

i) Area of Concern

Singapore faces the growing issue of youths getting arrested for criminal offences. Police have noted an upward trend in youths being nabbed for two crimes: shop theft and possession of weapons. A total of 317 youths were arrested for shop theft - an increase of 10 cases from the same period in 2016.

This may be attributed to several factors:

- High proportion of unsupervised time with peers and poor parental discipline. In a survey conducted by The Families for Life Council, one in 10 of the 700 respondents spend six hours or fewer with their immediate families a week.
- Parental criminality. In Singapore, four in 10 of the juvenile offenders in the Singapore Boys' and Girls' Homes have a family member who has been jailed before. Moreover, criminal justice researcher Sytske Besemer found that children with criminal parents are 2.4 times more likely to exhibit criminal behaviour than those without.
- Low family income. In a research study conducted by Cambridge University, children from poor families are 2.5 times more likely to commit crimes as compared to kids from a well-to-do background.

Hence, our focus is to help the youths learn to step away from bad influence by providing them with more positive interactions and activities to have a positive outlook towards their lives.

ii) Challenges Identified

1. Reach Youth being a non-governmental, voluntary organisation, will result in a restraint on the amount of manpower in the organisation, and the drawing of funds from the organisation.
2. We had some trouble trying to bring a message across to the youths since they rarely listen to us when we try to address them due to their short attention span, and were not that interested in the academic part of the camp and some of them lost their attention and interest very quickly and have a strong preferences towards activities that are more hands-on and physical.

iii) Underlying Problem

The majority of the youths are between 10-16 years old, and are also less academically inclined, with many having less fortunate family backgrounds and financial status. Given the nature of how these youths are facing complex and sensitive problems in their daily

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lives like being ostracised and neglected by peers, they might not be able to get the support that they need since there is a lack of awareness for less-privileged youths and the struggles which they face on a day-to-day basis. So, how can we provide them with more positively impactful activities and help them be more meaningfully and positively engaged to prevent them from veering onto the wrong path of delinquency?

iv) Plan of Action

Our plan of action is detailed in the table below which also indicates the date of completion of each action. Our activities are based on the **Positive Youth Development (PYD)** framework which focuses on one's merits instead of one's detriments and enhance their skills, interests and abilities.

| Time Period | Action | Objectives |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| January to February | 1. Liaising and discussing with Reach Youth | Discussion for confirmation of activities |
| March to April | 1. Introducing ourselves to the youths during their in-house activities 2. Interacted with youths through dodgeball and baking activities. | Needs Analysis |
| May to Early June Holidays | 1. Camp planning and preparation 2. Handed out brochures for youths to sign up for the camp | Preparation for the camp |
| Mid-June Holidays | 1. Commencement of 5-day camp 2. Stayed with youths at the end of each day to further socialise with them | Socialising and forming friendships |
| Early August | 1. Making of encouragement cards and interaction with the youths | Help youths to preserve friendship and give them encouragement |

We also did several in-house visits every 2 weeks to interact with them.

Section 2: Implementation of the Plan

i) Actions and Outcomes to Date

| Time Period | Action | Objectives (PYD) |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 12 June 2018 | - Games (Charades, | Develop self-confidence |

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| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bingo, icebreakers) - Zentangle | <p>Form positive bonds with others</p> <p>Discover new identities, interests and strength through art.</p> |
| 18 June 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rock Climbing - Bouldering | <p>Instill values of self-confidence</p> <p>Develop teamwork through overcoming obstacles with others</p> |
| 19 June 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amazing Race @ Zoo | <p>Develop the spirit of teamwork and communication through the different stations</p> <p>Develop the ability to plan ahead of time</p> |
| 20 June 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laser Tag @ HomeTeamNS | <p>Develop communication between themselves</p> <p>Understand importance of teamwork</p> |
| 21 June 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Movie Screening (Inside Out) | <p>Learn how to better control their emotions.</p> <p>Learn to embrace their emotions rather than suppress them.</p> |

Section 3: Project Outcomes

i) Accomplishments

A total of **50** brochures were printed to promote the June Holiday Camp. An approximate of **40** youths signed up for our activities and about **25** of the youths attended our activities for each day. More than **10** volunteers also showed up during the camp. Also, despite our budget being \$4,000, we managed to organise interesting and fun activities for the youth with only \$2,000.

Comments from beneficiary:

Though it was the students' first time planning such a big scale project that catered to approximately 25 beneficiaries, they exemplified creativity and sincerity in planning the camp, desiring to really know and meet the needs. They had to adapt quickly in a short span of time and learn to interact with people from different social strata and backgrounds. It was overall a great experience for all parties involved in the planning

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and execution of this camp. - **Shermaine Tan (Youth worker for REACH)**

ii) Reflections on Outcomes

Participants:

- One youth shared his experience in school about how people annoyed him, which caused him being unable to regulate his emotions and breaking into an emotional outburst. Him being able to share this experience with us shows he trusts us in helping him overcome these obstacles so that he can better know how to deal with similar situations in the future. Many of these youths have similar problems and through our project, we're able to "Stretch-Out" to them.

Group:

- We learnt to craft our activities in the future to suit the demographic of the target audience, both mentally and physically.
- We also learnt that we have to screen our volunteers in the future to ensure that they are there for the passion or for the contribution they were making, instead of just for the CIP Hours.
- We also learnt that we have to create backup plans in the future based on the setting so as to be able to adapt if a problem arises.

Organisation:

- Since it was our first time working with an external beneficiary, the organisation we were working with were micromanaging our planning of the activities at first. However, this was reduced over time when we gained their trust and became more familiar with the process for organising activities.
- We learnt that because we were working with an external organisation we had to uphold a certain amount of responsibility. Therefore, we had to complete what was required of us before the deadline and honour what we have promised.

iii) Scope of the Project

Community impact:

- Besides helping the youths, we can help the society by lowering crime rates amongst youths, so these youths can grow up to inspire others to become better people and contribute to our society.
- The modern society is practical and only accept people with good character and good academics. People should not judge a book by its cover and instead treat them with the respect they deserve. Just because they may not come from great backgrounds or did something irresponsible in the past doesn't mean that we should neglect them.
- The society has to give them the hope and support they need, and a chance

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before labelling them, so we are able to forge a better community, starting from helping the youths.

- However, what we can do will never be enough to solve such a Herculean goal, and there will always be some less fortunate youths out there that require assistance, but there is always a limit to the help society can provide.

Community involvement:

- We managed to get the staff from Reach Youth and our schoolmates together to help with the Camp. We hosted a briefing for the volunteers to be ready to help accompany the youths in completing the activities.

Conclusion:

- When deciding on activities for the youths, we should have identified that they do not have a high attention span for academic-related activities, hence, activities which included questions led to the youths getting restless. This shows that we have to better understand the youths' attitudes towards activities through doing a more in-depth needs analysis.
- For next year's plan, we can focus on raising awareness on the state of less-privileged youths. We decided that we can work 1 more year with Reach so that we can focus more on raising awareness. This can be done by giving out more brochures, holding fundraisers or events to educate the public about them.
- Our collaboration with Reach to help the youths was able to help them step away from bad influences by providing them with fun activities so that they can engage in more positive interactions with us and their peers at Reach.