

Project Educar 7-17

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Project Type: Single Year

Section I : Project Overview

A. Area of Concern

According to the Ministry of Social and Family Development (2017), 5,644 young households (below age 35) received short to medium-term financial aid in the financial year of 2015, a 40.54% increase from 2012. The increase in financial aid means there are more underprivileged families that require assistance and are unable to provide their children with the adequate learning opportunities which other more privileged children might have. Furthermore, the Department of Statistics (2015) measured the amount needed for basic living expenses to be at \$1,250 per month, per household. 10 – 12% of households (110,000 – 140,000) fall under this level, which is around 440,000 to 560,000 people (assuming each household has 4 family members). This indicates that close to a tenth of the country is living below the ‘absolute poverty’ level, living below the minimum financial requirements necessary for living in Singapore, including how much is needed for food, shelter, clothing and other basic necessities to survive. With the focus placed on fulfilling basic needs rather than enriching their child’s learning experience, these families cannot afford to allow their children to have additional educational activities. This causes the children to lack the opportunity to enrich their learning experience, widening the inequality gap between some of these children as they do not have the same opportunities others their age are receiving.

B. Challenges Identified

The children at Care Corner Singapore (Woodlands) often spend their time after school at the centre completing their homework and assessments, and lack exposure to other aspects of holistic education as a result of their more underprivileged family backgrounds. Care Corner also has insufficient monetary resources to fund this kind of exposure for the kids under their care.

C. Underlying Problem

Given that disadvantaged children in Singapore aged 7-9 face many hurdles in their educational journey, lacking adequate exposure to meaningful and educational experiences and that there is a lack of awareness amongst the public about the plight of these children, how might we alleviate the problem by means of raising awareness, funds and providing them with meaningful holistic activities that would broaden their range of learning and perspective, ultimately enriching their educational journey?

D. Plan of Action

Our plan of action is detailed in the table below which also indicates the date of completion of each action. We kickstarted the project last year with a meeting with Care Corner’s administration team to confirm partnership and to finalise details and outline of upcoming plans and activities. We confirmed that our main objective will shift from interaction sessions with our target audience to raising funds, as Care Corner gave feedback that fundraising was an important aspect we should focus on. We then started recruiting student volunteers to be in our Organising Team, before applying for fundings from the organisations Citi-YMCA and NYC. We have since held a plethora of activities in both interaction and fundraising aspects, ranging from engagement sessions and learning journeys to street sales, busking sessions and a concert. After each of the learning journeys, we have had after-action reviews to reflect on what could have been done better during the trips to improve on our trips the next time.

Section II: Implementation of the Plan

A. Actions and Outcomes to Date

Date	Action	Objective
December 2017	Meeting with Care Corner's admin team	Confirm collaboration
	Recruitment of OT members	Acquire manpower
January-February	Meeting with Care Corner's admin team	Finalise partnership details and provide brief outline of upcoming plans and activities
	First OT meeting	Icebreaking, allocation of committees
28th March-29th August	Engagement Sessions x8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carried out activities which included outdoor team bonding games, indoor games and handicrafts ● Students learn essential life skills such as teamwork, cooperation, creativity, communication and self-confidence 	Educational experience
March	Educational Trip to Kidzania (16th March) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children learnt about the different job scopes in the real working world and got to experience first-hand some of the skill sets required for different jobs ● Children are able to cultivate their interests and passions at an early age whilst having fun. 	Educational experience
	Service Learning Summit (23rd March)	Raising Awareness
June	Educational Trip to S.E.A Aquarium (8th June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students learnt about the variety of marine wildlife and Singapore's maritime history and heritage 	Educational experience

	Street Sales x16	Fundraising, Raising Awareness
	Busking Sessions x3	Fundraising, Raising Awareness
	Concert Aurora (16th June)	Fundraising, Raising Awareness
August	<p>Educational Trip to Sentosa Imbiah Trail (10th August)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learnt about the thriving natural ecosystem existent at Sentosa, and various facts about the Imbiah Trail, topped off by the Amazing Race which helped consolidate their knowledge 	Educational experience

Section III: Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

We have raised a total of **\$8,243.60** for Care Corner Student Care Centre (Woodlands) through our street sales, merchandise sales and busking sessions. We had **120 volunteers from the public** and **65 volunteers from our Organising Team** for our street sales, and through actively seeking for donations and selling our merchandise, the volunteers got the chance to understand more about our project and our cause! For our fundraising concert, we sold **300 tickets**, totalling to around **\$3,000** in ticket sales, and received **100 signatures** for our cause through our signature booth. On Instagram, we have **over 700 followers** who are aware of and support our cause. We have helped **42** kids from Care Corner Student Care Centre (Woodlands) and went down to their centre for **8 engagement sessions**. We have also held **3 excursions**, in which the children managed to experience first-hand classroom knowledge being brought to life.

Previously, there were **inadequate opportunities** provided for children to **experience learning outside normal classroom settings** as these children's families have financial difficulties. We have provided these children with **empowering and educational activities** which **enrich their overall experience and brightens their lives**. These activities help to **improve their self-esteem** and **build their social interactive skills**, as well as **vital life skills** and values such as teamwork, patience and determination.

B. Reflection on Outcomes

While Care Corner has managed to reduce the burden faced by these families by taking care of the children, they **may not be able to tackle the root of the issue - the children's dysfunctional family background**, due to the sensitive and complex nature of the problem. We hope our project has empowered the children with the **optimism and resilience to persevere through the situation they face at home**. We have also come to **understand and empathise with the challenges faced by the underprivileged in Singapore and the dangers of having a latch-key child**. Although we have achieved our aim of providing educational activities for the children to develop themselves and forge new experiences, we are ultimately still **unable to address the systemic cause of the problem, that is to help alleviate the financial situation of the needy families**. Through this project, we learnt how to assign tasks most appropriate to our individual abilities to get the most out of each of us. Also, when planning for events we have learnt to coordinate better with organisations and to plan ahead to allow for buffer time. In addition, we have learnt to **focus more on the happiness we bring into the children's lives** rather than the intricacies of our events and that we should remember that **every activity should be children-centric** and ensure that our **activities cater directly to the children's needs, and that numbers and statistics should be secondary to our main cause**.

C. Scope of the Project

Community Impact: Members of the public could learn more about Care Corner SG, as well as the plight of the disadvantaged children of Singapore. The public also had a method to show support for these children through donations and assisting in spreading awareness for our cause. Of course, the children directly benefited from the range of events we have planned, and they definitely enjoyed them thoroughly and took home invaluable life lessons at the end of the day.

Community Involvement: At the beginning of the year, we started off with 5 core team members who recruited 60 Organising Team (OT) members from different secondary schools who helped us spread awareness and recruit volunteers for our events. The OT members were key in ensuring the planning and execution of our events such as engagement sessions, street sales, our fundraising concert and also the educational outings. The OT members were also helpful in ensuring that our cause could be spread to other schools and we could recruit volunteers from other schools. The OT members helped provide diverse perspectives and opinions on various methods and initiatives, which was helpful in ensuring the project's success. We also managed to involve 120 public volunteers in our street sales, and besides collecting donations from the public, they also helped to educate the public regarding Care Corner's cause.

Resolution of AOC/UP:

Given that we have identified a lack of educational opportunities for the children, we have conducted 7 engagement sessions and 3 excursions to teach the children social skills and teamwork, as well as educate them with hands-on experiences through our excursions. As for our fundraising and awareness raising aspect, we have raised \$11,243.60 and reached out to an estimated 10,275 people. More importantly, we have sown the seeds for sustainable development of this project, by involving students from a diverse range of schools and education levels in the problem-solving process and empowering them to make a difference in the lives of the children. We hope that future batches will be able to take on the mantle and build on this foundation, to provide a sustainable solution to aid the underprivileged children and in future perhaps tackle the cause of the problem with door to door visits, getting to understand the families and hence address the problems better.