

Project Integrate 3.0 (7-25)

A multi-year project

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Section I: Overview

1. Area of Concern

Based on the data provided by the Ministry of Manpower, there were 1,368,000 migrant workers in Singapore in December 2017. That is an astounding 25% of Singapore's 5,607,000 headcount. However, there is a growing divide between Singaporeans and the migrant workers of Singapore. Xenophobia, which refers to a dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries, is on the rise and migrant workers feel increasingly excluded from society causing tensions between the two. This can be seen in the Labour day protest on 1st May 2014, where hundreds of Singaporeans rallied at Hong Lim Park to denounce the government's immigration and labour policies where xenophobic sentiments ran rampant. According to a Singapore Management University (SMU) survey of 605 workers, consisting mostly Bangladeshi and Indian workers, released on the 4th of November, more than 60 percent of lower-skilled South Asian migrant workers who had outstanding injury or salary claims were predicted to have serious mental illness.

HealthServe is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing healing and hope to migrant workers. Through medical clinics, casework, social assistance, advocacy, research and outreach programmes, HealthServe works to address the complex and intertwined needs of our migrant workers - from medical to legal, physical to emotional.

2. Challenges Identified

HealthServe does not have adequate funding and manpower to accommodate all the migrant workers' needs. One of the main concerns HealthServe has asked us to address is the psychological issues that the migrant workers face. Many of the workers suffer from xenophobia in Singapore and feel lonely and excluded. This effect is even more apparent in injured workers who have no sense of purpose as they are unable to work and thus are unable to pay off the debts they incurred in migrating to Singapore. These migrant workers have nothing to do and may develop mental illnesses during their stay in Singapore. Many Singaporeans also do not understand the conditions under which the migrant workers come here to work. This results in xenophobic sentiments and migrant workers are stigmatized as there is a lack of understanding and acceptance.

3. Underlying Problem

Given that there is a dichotomy present in our society, how may we bridge this gap by raising awareness of the similarities of both sides, facilitating interaction and bonding between the two as well as improving the physical and psychological welfare of the migrant workers, so that firstly, the migrant workers would feel accepted and proud to be a part of Singapore and secondly, Singaporeans would be more accepting of the migrant workers and willing to interact with them?

4. Plan of Action

Our plan of action is centered around improving the physical and mental welfare of migrant workers. We started by conducting a survey on Singaporeans and found out that there was a lack of opportunities to interact with migrant workers. As many of the migrant workers suffered from poor mental health and as many of the migrant workers face financial problem, we decided to raise funds and push out welfare initiatives to help alleviate the financial burden of the migrant workers. We also aim to combat xenophobia by facilitating sustained interaction between migrant workers and Singaporeans so that the two groups can look beyond stereotypes and preconceptions to forge strong bonds and build strong friendships. We also decided to raise awareness of the issue so that a larger audience can be reached.

Date	Action	Objectives
January - April	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Liaising and communication with HealthServe2. Needs analysis3. Weekly Sports Session (whatsapp group created with all the volunteers to ensure sustained interaction through sports at the dormitory)4. SLS Book Sales	<p><u>Overcoming stereotypes and preconceptions</u></p> <p><u>Fundraising</u></p> <p>We sold books about the lives of migrant workers and Integrate T-shirts to raise funds to continue our initiative last year which was to buy chicken pox vaccines for migrant workers so that their work will not be affected by such diseases.</p>

<p>May - June</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly Sports Sessions 2. Fishing Excursion 3. Instagram Initiative 4. Movie Screening 5. Dorm Library 6. Shirt Distribution 7. Cookie Sales 	<p><u>Raising awareness</u></p> <p><u>Bonding</u> Reach out to different audiences by appealing to different hobbies and we posted facts about migrant workers to raise awareness on the similarities between migrant workers and Singaporeans</p> <p><u>Welfare</u> We reached out to Singapore Council of Women's Organization to give migrant workers donated apparels to alleviate their financial burden. We also provided the migrant workers an avenue for them to destress and access enrichment materials by bringing donated books from SCWO to their dormitory for them to read. We also provided the migrant workers with an opportunity to unwind and by allowing them to enjoy a movie with their friends.</p> <p><u>Fundraising</u> We held cookie sales within the school compounds to raise awareness about the xenophobia and the problems migrant workers face as well as raise funds to contribute to the vaccines for migrant</p>
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July & August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly Sports Session 2. National Day Carnival 3. Cookie Sales 	<p><u>Bonding</u></p> <p><u>Welfare</u> We held a carnival to allow workers to enjoy different games as well as compete in various sports to win prizes to provide for their daily needs. This allowed migrant workers and volunteers to get together to achieve a common goal, strengthening their sense of community.</p> <p><u>Fundraising</u></p>
September - November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly Sports Session 2. CAPT International Student-led Symposium 	<p><u>Bonding</u></p> <p><u>Raising awareness</u> We plan to share about xenophobia and migrant workers' lives</p>

Section II: Implementation of Action Plan

1. Actions and outcomes to date

- We were able to raise \$285.35 in cash from cookie sales and the SLS book sales. We plan to combine this sum with \$138 of leftover funds raised from last year and will donate \$200 from the project accolade to purchase 12 chicken pox vaccines to help migrant workers. We also managed to get many Singaporeans to retract their stereotypes of migrant workers and look past their differences to bond with migrant workers and forge strong friendships with them. We have also provided many tangible benefits to the migrant workers, enriching their lives and easing their financial burden by donating daily necessities. We are glad to have been able to bring the migrant workers and Singaporeans together and strengthen their sense of community and identity as one Singapore.

Section III: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

- We accumulated a total of \$623 of which will be used to purchase 12 vaccines to improve the healthcare of migrant workers and ensure that they would not have their salaries suspended due to this virus. We have an Instagram account with 1,678 followers and 20 volunteers who frequently come to interact with the migrant workers. Many of them forged strong friendships with the migrant workers and continue to keep in contact with them till today. Many of the migrant workers have also expressed their gratitude for the events that we have organised for them and actively participate in our latter events.

2. Reflections

- Throughout our almost two-year journey, we have experienced first-hand the challenges that migrant workers face in their day-to-day life. We, alongside our volunteers, have forged strong bonds with many of the migrant workers who we are proud to call our friends. Our two-year journey has not been easy but it has definitely been rewarding. Through all the hardships that we faced in pushing out various initiatives, we have learnt of the value of effective communication and teamwork, especially since there are many parties involved in our events, including our various beneficiaries, the migrant workers, Singaporeans and within our own group. Effective and clear communication is pivotal as it helps relay information effectively and allows our events to be pushed out the way we envision them to be. Our interactions with the migrant workers have prompted us retract the preconceptions and stereotypes that we had of the migrant workers. The migrant workers truly work extremely hard everyday to earn an earnest living so that they can provide for their families back in their home country. It is veritably inspirational to see the sacrifices that the migrant workers make everyday to earn a living. Their selflessness have led us to develop a newfound respect for their work and contributions to our country and re-evaluate our own life choices and cherish those around us. The more we interacted with the migrant workers, the prouder we felt of our country's economic stability and the more we empathize with the migrant workers. As the old saying goes, "there is no greater joy than the joy of giving", organising all of our events for the migrant workers has been extremely gratifying, especially when we

saw the smiles on the faces of the migrant workers whenever they came for our events. We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to bring the community together, allowing parties of different backgrounds to bond with each other and forge everlasting friendships.