

PROJECT LYRA

Group 7-30

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Project Type: Single Year

Section 1: Overview

1. AREA OF CONCERN

Our team which is part of the South-East CDC Community Laboratory Programme was assigned to Shan You Activity Centre in Eunus. Shan You activity centre has a large demographic of elderly, age group is from 50-60. The activities of Shan You are plentiful and attractive to the elderly, as it works their physique and minds. However, there is a worrying sight whereby many of the elderly mention they have nothing to do after the centre closes and before the centre opens. One mentions she lives alone and the only thing she would do is watch the TV, another mentions she thinks it's boring to stay at home and goes to the void deck to talk to other elderly. This is not the best way the elderly should spend their days. According to a study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, both boredom and loneliness are associated with a higher risk of mortality in adults aged 52 and older. Dr. John Cacioppo, a neuroscientist and psychologist at the University of Chicago, has been studying social isolation and boredom for 30 years, showing that boredom is linked to poor cognitive performance and quicker cognitive decline. Seniors who feel lonely and bored are more likely to report also having poor physical and/or mental health, as reported in a study using data from the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project. Given the immense research and studies that shows the detrimental effects of boredom, this is an issue of paramount importance to tackle.

Another area of concern that we identified initially was also the separation of different racial groups in the area. There is a large population of Malays and Chinese in the area, with the daycare, activity centres being catered to Malay and Chinese communities. There are not many real-life surveys done on this area, however, there has been many popular examples worldwide that showcase its benefits.

In Eunus alone, there is a wide demographic of people - elderly, children, teens and adults. There is also a large presence of both the Malay and Chinese community. After finding out from the centres and doing ground-surveying, we have noticed that there has been a lack of interaction, both multi-generational and interracial. The activity centre's initial purpose was to improve the quality of

life through strengthening aspects of wellness amongst families and individuals, however it lacks the presence of adults, families and teens as well as people of different races. Since only the elderly frequent the centre, no gelling and bonding takes place amongst different groups and age of people. According to a survey by Associate Professor Philip Yap, director of the geriatric centre at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, seniors who mix with young kids and interactive families showed improvement in brain and physical functions. It also helps the children in their social development. They develop empathy and learn to help others, such as when they “aid the elderly in performing tasks because their hands can be weak.”

2. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Shan You Activity Centre is a non-profit Voluntary Welfare Organisation set up in 1995. Thus, they rely solely on their sponsors from Community Chest, Corporate and individual donors, receiving zero funding from the government. Their funds are rather restricted (no disclosure of exact amount), and careful consideration is taken before any purchase.

There has been previous attempts in order to gel different racial groups and generations together, however attempts were futile. According to the centre manager, many of the elderly were unreceptive and uncomfortable with the presence of other races. The schedule of the elderly also varies greatly, some had medical appointments or helped out at religious activities. Thus, it may be difficult to initiate our racial-bonding efforts. We started with a small mixed-race group, and through interaction and communication through combined art tasks with each other was our plan of approach, to get them to understand one's unique culture and practices. We also checked with the elderly on their commitments for the week before going ahead to plan the day for the main activity. This time we faced some issues trying to contact Malay Health and DayCare Centre as we attempt to do some bonding among different groups of people. Some elderly were less receptive to learning something new and meeting new people, causing poor attendance. However, over time attendance rose due to word of mouth and elderly become more receptive to getting to know one another and learning art techniques along the way.

3. UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Given the inference we have made that elderly face boredom and unhealthy engagement after the centre closes and there is a lack of interracial interaction

between the elderlies of the community, how can we craft more engaging activities and programmes for the elderly while creating a conducive and inclusive environment, so that they can carry out their daily activities more fulfillingly and a closely-knit sense of community and family can be created among the elderly within the centre, regardless of race, from the year 2018 and beyond.

4. **PLAN OF ACTION**

Based on the underlying problem of the elderly at the centre facing boredom and unhealthy engagement daily, we wanted to ensure that the elderly are able to be continuously engaged with fruitful activities both while at the centre and at home. We identified art as one of the ways for the elderlies to progress and learn as it is something that does not require much motor skills and anyone can learn easily with the right resources. Starting off with learning simple painting/art skills, as time goes by, we will advance the difficulty of the activity slowly and eventually become a hobby. So even after the centre closes, they have some form of healthy engagement for them to enjoy.

Date	Action	Objectives
January - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attended South East CDC Community Lab Program Briefings ● Established first contact with our beneficiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Obtain a preliminary insight to the Community Lab Program so as to allow for better planning
April - May	<u>Weekly visits and Trial Runs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular visits to the beneficiary ● Began testing some potential activities and basic art skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better understand the profile and needs of the beneficiary ● Helps us formulate a solution to the problems faced by

	<p>for the main events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for proposal evaluation 	<p>the centre.</p>
<p>June - August</p>	<p><u>Trial Runs (June)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed reception by the elderly, and made changes to our plans accordingly • Begin to bring in Malay elderly around Eunus as the centre had contact and portfolios of the elderly. <p><u>Painting Month (July)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated our project's main events, holding regular painting sessions at the centre (2-3 days a week) every week for the month of July • Various forms of painting, such as on cardboard paper, acrylic paint paper and wooden planks • Initiated activities that simulated their mindsets more through interactive activities involving communication and creativity (Sharing of unique food culture through art, painting their mobile phones) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed us to tackle the underlying problem of boredom and unhealthy engagement of elderly in the area. • Also allowed to a certain extent, create a bond between some of the participating member, not limited by age.

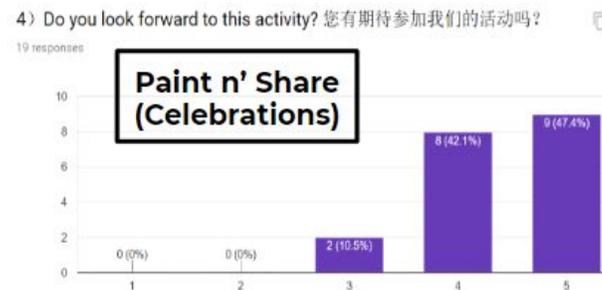
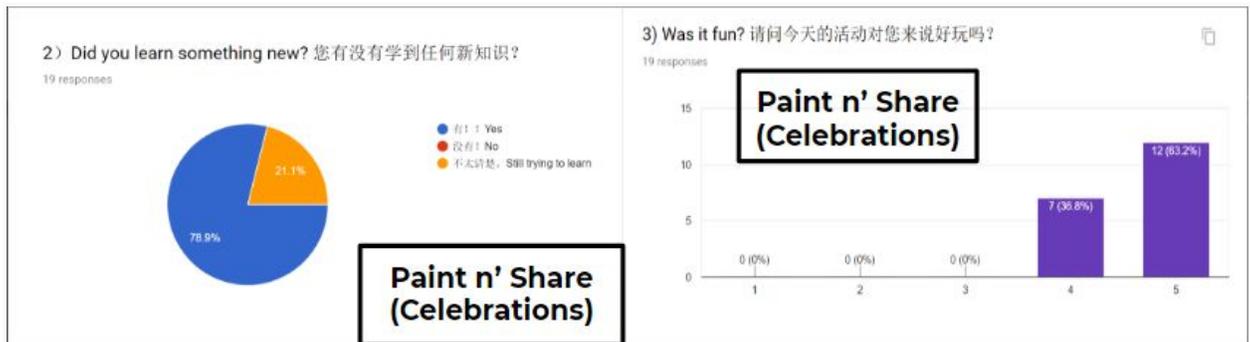
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Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

5. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

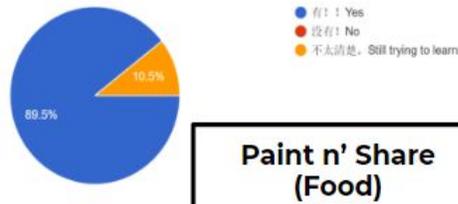
According to Shan You's daily attendance database, the average turn-up number in the month of April was an average of 22 in the Morning, 30.3 during Lunch, 24.2 during the afternoons and 15 just before dinner. This was surveyed for a span of two weeks with the help of the centre (9th April - 19th April). At the end of May, there is an average of 21.4 in the Morning, 32 during lunch and 39 in the afternoon. Dinner remains the same of 15.1. We switched up activities (June 4th) with more continuity (Beach Signs), average of 22.1 in the Morning, 33.1 during lunch and 42.1 in the afternoon, 16.4 during dinner. There is an increasing audience in the afternoon, when our activities took place. Mid-June we brought in Malay elderly with the help of Muhammadiyah Health & Daycare Centre. Introduced 2 Malay elderly at the start, slowly expanded to 8 by August 13th. Some children (grandsons of the elderly) turn up as well.

We have the elderly respond to a Google Form after every unique activity, these were some of the responses (generally positive).



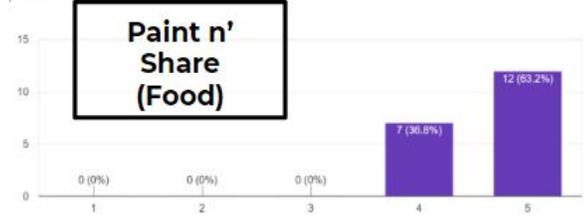
2) Did you learn something new? 您有没有学到任何新知识?

19 responses



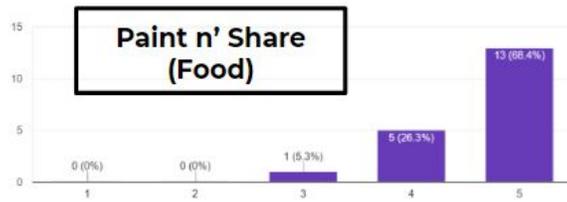
3) Was it fun? 请问今天的活动对您来说好玩吗?

19 responses



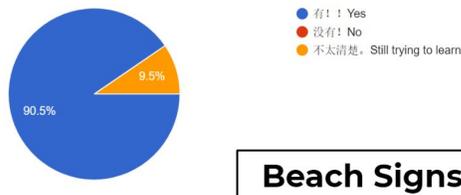
4) Do you look forward to this activity? 您期待参加我们的活动吗?

19 responses



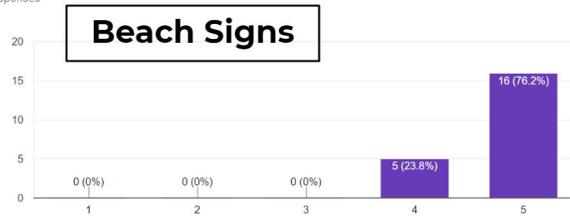
2) Did you learn something new? 您有没有学到任何新知识?

21 responses



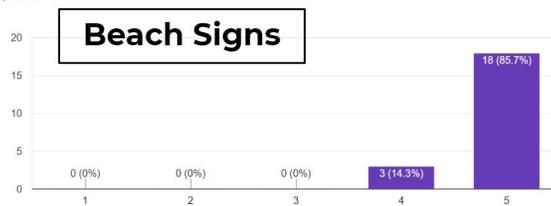
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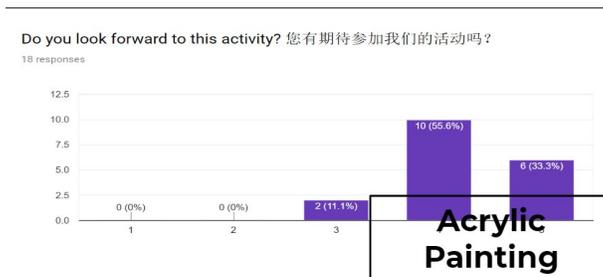
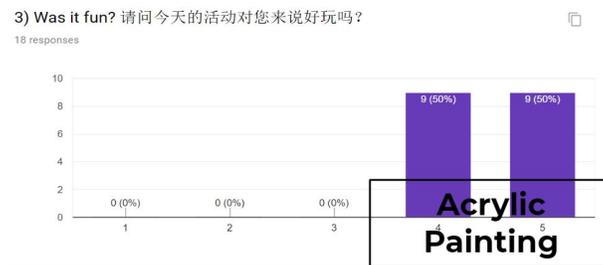
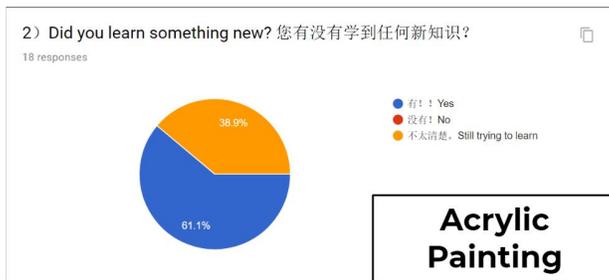
21 responses



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21 responses





6. Reflections

We have picked up meaningful, valuable and insightful experiences on the community as a whole through the interaction, planning and visits to the centre and the neighbourhood. It is of paramount importance to communicate with the older generation by picking up a bit of dialect. The older generation, given the chance, can pass on nuggets of knowledge to us. Their knowledge is more than just a artifact of the past. Through communicating to those around, what we really gain is invaluable advice, as well as joy.

It also takes time, thinking and brainstorming to plan out such activities that are beneficial, and fun for the elderly, providing constant activity for their minds and motor skills while striving to promote interracial interaction . Undoubtedly, we gained a lot of valuable experience handling such projects, understand the people around us better and more importantly gaining more insight on the society that we live in.

7. Scope of Impact

The Eunoes community is what we were aiming for. The presence of the activity centre was not just to cater to the elderly but rather families and teens who wish to take part in the activities. Since there is a large proportion of elderly at the centre, we decide to engage and interact with the elderly first. After the elderly (mainly chinese) engage in the progressive art activities, we moved on to the malay elderly. Slowly after, the elderly brought along their grandchildren and a few adults of the Malay elderly join in the activities if they were free during the day. Each session has an average of around 30 people, usually 20 plus elderly and 2-3 grandchildren. Adults usually come in groups of two (families of 2 elderly).

References

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- J. C., & L. H. (2009, August 31). Perceived Social Isolation and Cognition. Retrieved August 16, 2018, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2752489/>
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