

**Written report -
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Section I: Project Overview

Area of concern: Children with severe developmental difficulties that prevents them from being able to study in normal schools. Based on a study done by our government, 1 in 150 children in Singapore have autism, **6% higher** than the global average. Even though **1 in 150** may seem like a small amount, it is worth noting that it means that around **30 thousand children have autism**, which still is not inclusive of the other disabilities such as cerebral palsy and Asperger's, which are often overlooked and as a result, children of these communities are often ignored and receive little to no help. In a survey conducted by the Lien Foundation, amongst the 835 parents interviewed, **1 in 3** claimed that their children, who faced developmentally difficulties, had been **treated unfairly** as a result, for example being called violent while playing at the background. This is proof that these children are not only not given enough assistance, our society **stigmatizes** them and **brands** them as undisciplined.

Challenges identified: While the financial support given by the government is most of the time, sufficient for these children to survive, they may be struggling in their academics, general well-being and lack social-wellness.

Parents of the disadvantaged children are also unable to support them academically as they themselves lack formal education, and does not have enough money to send them to tuition. They also cannot afford to buy luxury items for their own children that most children of the same age would have.

Underlying problem: Thus, Given that there appears to be a lack of help and social stigma towards children who are developmentally disabled, what can we do to ensure that these children are receiving enough support and change the public's opinion on them?

Plan of action: Our plan of action is detailed in the table below which also indicates the date of completion of each action. We started with a meeting with Ms Sharon Chew of the Rainbow Centre followed by a tour around the school to see what they needed and to get to know the objectives of the organisation better. Our first aim was to raise funds for the RCYPS, such as to be able to buy gym equipment, in which they were severely lacking. We could then supplement the fundraising efforts by contacting fitness companies to sponsor gym equipment. We will also interact with the children via participating and coordinating events at the RCYPS.

Section II: Implementation of Action Plan 1. Actions and outcomes to date

Date	Action	Objective(s)
April	<u>Meeting up with the Rainbow Centre</u> 1. Liaising and communication with Rainbow Centre 2. Planning of Open House sales and events at Rainbow Centre Yishun Park School (RCYPS)	Planning
May 19	<u>Open House Sales</u> 1. Handmade products provided by students at RCYPS 2. Sold to parents and children visiting Hwa Chong Institution 3. Assisted by 3 students from St Margaret's Secondary School 4. Sold \$593.0 worth of goods, net gain of \$288.0	Raise Funds ,Awareness
June 29	<u>Helping out at Hari Raya Concert</u> 1. We got another chance to interact with the children 2. Watched the children performed, eye opening experience 3. Gathered more information about how to treat the children to include in posters	Gather information
August	<u>National Day Sales</u> 1. Collected about \$100 before being told to stop by police 2. Unsold items used for Teacher's Day sale 3. Rest of the day spent spreading awareness to public	Awareness, Raising funds

Section III: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

We have raised a total of **\$593.0** from sales of handmade products with the assistance of **3 students from St Margaret's Secondary School**. We have reached out to over **200 people** in public through the pamphlets that the Centre provided and our own posters and we have interacted with the children via **emceeing at their Hari Raya celebration on 29/6**.

2. Reflections

Our project initially dealt with the extremely taboo subject of child abuse and were advised by many to

not pursue this path. During Project Evaluation, we were unable to put up a convincing case and due to our lack of knowledge in this matter, we thought the better course of action would be to switch the focus of our project. Fortunately enough, the beneficiary we were in contact with was associated with the Rainbow Centre and we successfully switched our focus to helping children with developmental disabilities. We were given the task of filling up the gym room with gym equipments, but our primary goal was still to spread awareness about the stigmatisation of these children with developmental disabilities and educate the public about how these children behave in school and the challenges they might face. Given our initial lack of knowledge about how these children would behave, we thought that the children are vulnerable and would require help from others in order to carry out basic tasks. We were proven wrong immediately when we had our first visit to the centre and interacted with children. While the children does still require help from the teachers, they were shown to be rather independent and possessed a resilient mentality, often shrugging away help from the teachers and opting to do things themselves. We were also extremely surprised at how vocal most of the children are and even the younger ones were capable of communicating with us. We were even more amazed when we came to learn that some of the children will be performing during Hari Raya celebration and watching them rehearse was an incredible experience as they displayed their performing talents and their ability to work together.

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Our second giant obstacle came when we were told that another group has already filled the gym room with equipment and we were told to redirect our funds to other facilities in the Centre. This was largely

our fault as we were slow to produce results and were also incapable of raising enough funds by the end of year anyways. However, this does not affect us as much as we initially thought it would as our funds still goes to critical parts of the Centre that will still aid the Centre in helping out the children. We also hope that the Centre would take up our offer of renting some of the equipment instead of buying them as it is more practical in the long run as it includes equipment servicing.

Our biggest obstacle arrived when we were not allowed to sell items in Marina Bay due to a lack of permit. The Centre initially told us that no permit was required and that the contract between our Project and the Centre would be enough but this was a miscommunication on both the Centre and our part as it turns out a permit by NEA was required. We did insufficient research before going out to sell the Centre products and did not even thought to check with our schoolmates to find out if this was true and therefore, we are largely to be blamed here. We were told off by the police and eventually decided to sell our products during Teacher's day instead.

We also have learnt more about the plight of dyslexic children, and the day to day challenges faced by these individuals. At the same time, we are certainly heartened by the overwhelming support from the public, and we have faith that Singaporeans will continue to help others with a good cause. Throughout the project, we are pleased that we have accomplished our proposed plan of action and successfully met our objectives of raising funds and spreading awareness. The overall success in our initiatives has proven that we have made a substantial impact on the community. In hindsight, we could have had more sessions of street sales and activated more volunteers by having our recruitment drive earlier and reaching out to more secondary schools to increase our volunteer pool. However, we are grateful for the support and effort put in by our volunteers. We will work with the next batch of members of Project Guardian next year to ensure that the project can replicate our success and even bring the project to greater heights.

3. Scope of Impact

Community impact: Members of public could learn more about these children with developmental difficulties, as well as the fact that they are actually independent and talented in their own ways. We hope that the public are more well-versed on the prevalence of learning disorders in Singapore, and that if they can continue to support the students of RCYPS and other children with these disabilities.

Community involvement: We managed to get 3 OT members from SMSS and 2 external students to help

us with sales.

Resolution of AOC/UP: Given that we identified that there is a lack of societal awareness and focused on children with developmental difficulties, we have raised **\$593.0** and reached out to an estimated of **200** members of public through our activities. More importantly, we have sowed 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. We hope that future batches will be able to take on the mantle and build on this foundation, to truly provide a sustainable, long term solution to raising awareness and the destigmatisation of children with developmental difficulties.