

Project Hear Me Out

Group 7-03

Multi-year

Tan Jiecong (L) 4S325

Charles Bryan Lim 4S303

Fan Ryan 4O107

Lee Xing Yu 4O110

Tan Jen Han 4O123

Introduction

a. Area of Concern

In Singapore, there are about 500,000 people with varying degrees of hearing loss. This number will increase in the near future as age-related hearing loss is becoming more prevalent. Generally, there is a lack of knowledge of the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community and how to interact with them. The fear of discrimination is prevalent among the Deaf community as there is a communication barrier between the Deaf and Hearing, resulting in problems faced by the Deaf, including difficulty in finding employment opportunities. With little understanding or empathy from the public, it is likely that little assistance will be rendered to the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing.

The Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf), established in 1955, has been serving the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community for the past six decades. It has had a gradual increase in the number of clients over the years and now has more than 5,600 clients, providing a range of services including sign language interpretation, employment support, counselling and financial assistance.

b. Challenges Identified

From a survey conducted with the public, we found that most of the general public is unaware of the Deaf community and SADeaf, and they lack knowledge of the terms used to address the community. People need to be educated with correct information to aid them in simple interaction. Through our focus group discussion with a deaf staff at SADeaf, we understood that the Deaf face multiple difficulties in areas such as communication and discrimination.

Also, SADeaf requires a significant amount for its daily operations and services, yet the amount received in donations has decreased from S\$324,898 in FY16/17 to S\$284,655 in FY17/18.

c. Underlying Problem

Given that there is a lack of awareness about the needs of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community, arising from a lack of interaction and communication with them, how can we organize events that engage mainstream society to learn about and interact with the Deaf, such that the Deaf may feel understood and empowered?

d. Plan of Action

We have raised both funds and awareness through our cookie sales, carwash and street sales events. Our social media awareness, door-to-door visits and public exhibitions also further educate the public of our beneficiary and cause. In addition, our various interaction events give volunteers and clients precious opportunities to understand one another.

We had planned to organise a sabbatical to educate Hwa Chong students about sign language and give them the opportunity to interact with the Deaf. Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to low sign-up. In addition, our interaction session with the Hard-of-Hearing children, which was intended to encourage interaction through a series of sports and games, was cancelled due to low sign-up.

Implementation of Project

Month	Activity	Objectives
January - February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment of Organising Team ● Needs Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Survey ○ Focus Group Discussion at SADeaf (23 Jan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying needs of beneficiary and clients
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cookie Sales (1 Mar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share about our cause to about 300 students ○ Raise funds for SADeaf (\$250 raised) ● Deaf Awareness Course (19 Mar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducted for 20 members of our Organising Team ○ Learnt important skills to interact with the Deaf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise funds - Raise awareness - Interaction opportunity
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arts-and-Craft Interaction Session with Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Elderly (11 May) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 participants made origami and terrarium sand art ○ Volunteers applied their skills when interacting with the Deaf ● Carwash (29 and 30 May) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteers simulated hearing loss by wearing noise-cancelling earplugs ○ Educated 50 parents about SADeaf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise funds - Raise awareness - Interaction opportunity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Washed a total of 26 cars and raised \$700 ● Cookie Sales (31 May) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reached out to about 200 more students and teachers ○ Raised \$350 	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Street Sales (2nd and 3rd weeks of June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publicised our project and spread awareness of our cause ○ Merchandise sold to raise funds ○ Raised \$3000 ● Youth For Causes Social Bazaar (14 June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educated about 100 Citibank workers about SADeaf and interaction tips ○ Sold merchandise ● Board Games Interaction Session with Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Children (27 June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteers interacted and played games with 10 children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise funds - Raise awareness - Interaction opportunity
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exhibitions at Bedok and Marine Parade Public Libraries (6 and 27 July) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visitors (at least 300) were taken through a four-part learning process - about SADeaf, Deafness, Interaction Tips and Sign Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public penned messages to the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community ● Door-to-door visits (21 July) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducted around SADeaf to educate around 100 residents about interaction tips 	
January - August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Media Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update event happenings ○ Post short, simple facts ○ Misconceptions series to correct our viewers' understandings 	- Raise awareness

Project Outcomes

a. Accomplishments

In total, we have reached out to over 1100 people who consist of the general public, parents and students, and engaged 40 volunteers, educating them mainly on the correct terms to address the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and about common misconceptions. A total of \$4300 was raised through our fundraising initiatives which go in hand with raising awareness for our cause and beneficiary. This year, we have interacted with 25 members of the Deaf community, better understanding them and bonding with them through fun activities. As of 4 August 2019, we have 1000 followers on Instagram.

b. Reflections

Before embarking on this project, we had misconceptions and assumptions about the Deaf. Previously, we were worried for our first interaction, thinking that one could not communicate comfortably with them without using sign language. However, we realised that the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing were independent and extremely expressive with their emotions. They do not view hearing loss as a disability - an important part of deaf culture. This motivated us to share our experiences with the public so they will approach the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community with a proper mindset.

Everyone should take initiative to learn about communication methods or simple sign language, and not view the Deaf as less capable. Anyone can play a part in allowing the Deaf to be more integrated into our society, as long as they have a respectful and caring heart, and their misconceptions are corrected. Finally, we learnt to never judge anyone based on their differences or make generalisations about a community, but instead open ourselves up to learn from new experiences with others.

c. Scope of the Project

Community impact: Members of the public learnt about SADeaf, and interaction tips with the Deaf community. They can spread this awareness to others that simple gesturing and writing are enough to communicate, and correct common misconceptions.

Community involvement: We recruited 25 Organising Team (OT) members together with 15 volunteers from different secondary schools, assisting our various events. By conducting a meeting and allowing our OT to attend the Deaf Awareness Programme, they are more knowledgeable and inspired to spread this awareness to others. The interaction opportunities give them a first-hand experience of understanding that the Deaf are as capable as the Hearing.

Resolution of AOC/UP: We identified a lack of awareness towards the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community, hence we reached out to an estimated 1100 members of the public through our events. As there is also a lack of interaction and communication with them, we have given students precious chances to form bonds with the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community.

References

Introduction. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2019, from <https://sadeaf.org.sg/about-deafness/introduction/>

Annual Report 2017 - 2018. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2019, from <https://sadeaf.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SADeaf-Annual-Report-2017-18.pdf>