

# **Project Integrate 4.0**

**07-05**

**Single-Year**

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## **Project Integrate 4.0 (07-05) - 2019 Written Report**

### **Section I: Overview**

#### **1. Area of Concern**

Xenophobia against workers is rising and is evident in our society through the following. In a 2014 survey conducted by Singapore's government-linked Institute of Policy Studies, over 30% of citizens and PRs felt that nationality-based prejudice had risen over the past five years<sup>[1]</sup>. Also, numerous public shopping centres such as Wisma Atria and Marina One Centre have been lambasted for enforcing toilet bans against construction workers<sup>[2]</sup>. These case studies underscore the blatant discrimination blue-collared foreign workers often suffer from the Singaporean society due to their limited interaction with the public which engenders misunderstandings between both parties. Foreign workers have also become active volunteers in Singapore, contributing back to express their gratitude. Willing Hearts vice-president Charles Liew reports that foreign workers actively volunteer in the soup kitchen every weekend<sup>[3]</sup>. However, it is concerning that the lack of trust in these passionate workers limits volunteering opportunities accessible to them.

HealthServe is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing healing and hope to migrant workers. Through various medical, social, research and outreach programmes, HealthServe addressing the complex needs of our migrant workers - from medical to legal, physical to emotional.

## **2. Challenges Identified**

Some challenges we identified in the process of championing for the integration of migrant workers included:

- 1) Lack of Opportunities for Social Interaction - Many workers work for long periods of time a week and rarely have free time to spend interacting with locals.
- 2) Reluctance of foreign workers to open up to us - Most foreign workers are wary of us due to limited interaction with the general public.
- 3) Reluctance of organisations and the general public to open up and interact with foreign workers
  - a) Organisations are wary of the foreign workers who wanted to serve the community and only a few opened their doors to the workers in volunteering.
  - b) Members of the public were afraid to participate in activities involving contact with the workers due to preconceived stereotypes.

## **3. Underlying Problem**

Given the alienation of foreign workers in Singapore is due to the strain of relations between Singaporeans and foreign workers stemming from a lack of sustained interaction between both parties, how might we alleviate the status quo to firstly, increase the frequency of interaction between both parties, secondly, provide opportunities for foreign workers to volunteer in society and thirdly, improve the welfare of foreign workers to help them feel accepted and be better integrated into Singaporean society?

#### **4. Plan of Action**

We started by conducting surveys on Singaporeans and discovered the lack of opportunities to interact with migrant workers. Our groundwork also allowed us to discover the changing needs of the workers. Thus, we adopted a 3-pronged approach to tackle these issues.

1. Foster interaction between foreign workers and Singaporeans.
2. Improve the welfare of the foreign workers
3. Offer more volunteering opportunities for passionate foreign workers to give back to society

To increase interaction, we held weekly sports sessions and a one-time sports tournament where we invite members of the public to engage in sports activities with the foreign workers in Mandai Westlite and Tuas View Dormitories. As a universal language, these activities allow Singaporeans to overcome language barriers to deepen mutual understanding between both parties.

For the improvement of welfare, we held book drives where we collect Singapore textbooks and give them to the foreign workers at Various Dormitories, sending a portion to the workers' families overseas. Health screenings services were also organised to detect common chronic illnesses. We held a workers carnival where workers had a day of fun and relaxation. These activities allow us as Singaporeans to show our gratitude for the foreign workers and provide them with something that may be inaccessible to them.

We organised regular volunteering sessions at St Lukes' Hospital where foreign workers helped out with renovation works and had opportunities to interact with the patients, putting many smiles on the patients' faces, and aided in dispelling some misconceptions Singaporeans had against the workers.

## **Section II: Implementation of Action Plan**

### **1. Actions and outcomes to date**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<u>2019</u>		
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Taking over of Project</li><li>2. Volunteering Sessions</li><li>3. Fieldwork and Market Surveys</li><li>4. Analyse survey data</li><li>5. Research Phase</li><li>6. Discussions with Seniors and Mentors</li></ol>	Interaction Awareness Understanding the Problem
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Continuation fo Research Phase</li><li>2. Identify underlying problems</li><li>3. Research on the underlying issue</li><li>4. Beginning of Planning phase</li><li>5. Weekly Sports Sessions</li></ol>	Interaction
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li></ol>	Interaction
April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li><li>2. Volunteering Sessions</li><li>3. Healthserve Coffee &amp; Kaya Chats @Twitter Singapore</li></ol>	Interaction Awareness
May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li></ol>	Interaction
June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li><li>2. Volunteering Session</li><li>3. Book Drive</li></ol>	Interaction Awareness Welfare

	4. 7th SUSS Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Service Learning	
July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li> <li>2. Book Drive</li> <li>3. Workers' Carnival at Bukit Timah Community Club</li> </ol>	<p>Interaction</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Welfare</p>
August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weekly Sports Sessions</li> <li>2. National Day Celebration at Tuas View Dormitory <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sports Tournaments</li> <li>b. Concert</li> <li>c. Book Drive</li> <li>d. Health Screening</li> <li>e. Diabetes Talk</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Interaction</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Welfare</p>

### **Section III: Project Outcome**

#### **1. Accomplishments**

We've been able to impact an estimated 6390 people through this project, including local volunteers and migrant workers and their families. Free health screenings provided basic amenities and eased the financial burden for migrant workers. Book drives helped to fulfil their material needs. Approximately 200 student volunteers have been able to interact with the workers through our various events, some being able to forge strong bonds with the workers, and others even sharing personal stories through sports and volunteering. Local and migrant participants of our events have also expressed their gratitude and appreciation to us, and many continue to volunteer with us consistently and expressed their interest to participate in future events. In addition, both members of the public and workers have expressed a change in attitude towards the opposite party, fulfilling the goals our project has set out to achieve.

#### **2. Reflections**

Through the course of this service-learning project, we had a chance to understand some challenges faced by fellow migrant brothers while working and living in Singapore, such as their 7-day work weeks. On the other hand, we also saw and felt their optimism and enthusiasm especially towards sports and volunteering, to give back to Singapore. The core team and many of our volunteers have forged new friendships with our fellow migrant brothers, many of whom have become familiar faces through our activities and we are extremely heartened to see them enjoying our activities.

Initially, we came into the project thinking we would be the ones serving the migrant workers. Yet we never expected that the experiences gained with them would help us to mature as individuals. Through the interactions, we gained valuable insights into the lives of these workers and learnt about the family problems and hardships they faced in Singapore. This allowed us to understand the position of privilege that we enjoy as youths living in such an economically successful and safe country like Singapore. The migrant brothers work tirelessly to support their families abroad and their dedication is truly admirable. Hearing about the sacrifices they have

made and the hardships they underwent to give their families a better life has influenced us to cherish those around us and be thankful for what we have today.

We are blessed to have the opportunity to give back to the community and champion for such a meaningful cause. We are also extremely proud to have met our goals we set for ourselves at the beginning of our journey. Seeing where this journey has taken us and how far we have come, overcoming every obstacle we have encountered, we are extremely comforted to pass the torch on to the next batch who will take this legacy to greater heights.

### **3. Scope of impact**

Impact on Public: We got 57 OT members and over 200 volunteers from different institutions to assist us and participate in our activities. Through interaction opportunities and publicity through social media, more awareness about the stories of these migrant workers can be raised to the public, allowing workers to gain acceptance within our society and dispel stereotypes against them.

Impact on Migrant Workers: Over 2330 workers from over 7 countries benefited through our initiatives. The interaction opportunities promoted mutual understanding and thus helped migrant workers feel more welcome in society to more easily open up to Singaporeans. Volunteering opportunities serves as a platform for them to pursue their passion in volunteering and give back to their society in a different way. Our welfare activities eased their financial burdens by providing basic healthcare needs and educational materials as gifts of appreciation

Resolution of AOC/UP: Given the alienation of foreign workers in Singapore is due to the strain of relations between Singaporeans and foreign workers stemming from a lack of sustained interaction between both parties, we have impacted 6390 people through conducting interaction sessions, such as the weekly sports sessions at Mandai Westlite Dormitory, to encourage interaction between Singaporeans and workers for mutual understanding and cultural exchange, thus dispelling any preconceived notions about the workers. Volunteering sessions at St Luke's Hospital highlights the enthusiasm of the workers in the area of volunteering and their selfless side to the general populace, hence helping them gain acceptance in society.

**References:**

Perceptions of Nationality-based Prejudice Among University-educated Respondents by Race [Chart]. (2017, October 30). In The Malay Gap in Singapore. What Factors Play a Part? How Is the Issue Being Tackled? [Investigative Journalism]. Retrieved from <https://offbeatperspectives.wordpress.com/2017/10/30/the-malay-gap-in-singapore-what-factors-play-a-part-how-is-the-issue-being-tackled-investigative-journalism/><sup>[1]</sup>

Paramanatham, M. (2018, July 20). Toilet bans for construction workers common. The Straits Times. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/toilet-bans-for-construction-workers-common><sup>[2]</sup>

Seow, J. (2014, January 6). Migrant workers spend rest days volunteering. The Straits Times. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/migrant-workers-spend-rest-days-volunteering><sup>[3]</sup>