

Project Change

7-08

Ron Ang Jun-Yi (L) 4A222

Eldridge Ng 4A206

Sean Matthew Ang 4A223

Nicholas Xie 4H119

(Single Year)

Section 1: Overview

1 AREA OF CONCERN

Our main area of concern is underprivileged children in Singapore. The underprivileged children that we are working with is focused on children aged 6 to 12 years old, who either suffer from child abuse, come from low-income families, or are deprived in terms of “food, education and parental care”. For our project, we are working together with the Singapore Children’s Society (SCS). Through our research, we have found statistics from the Ministry of Social and Family Development that indicate a rising trend in the cases of child abuse [2], which can result in physical, behavioural and psychological impacts [3]. For example, a study conducted by Gombay-McGill (2017) [4] found that child abuse affects parts of the brain controlling emotions and mood, which can cause long-lasting effects which contribute to the emergence of depression and similar disorders.

Types of abuse	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Physical abuse	124	188	138	177	148	161	263	444	373
Sexual abuse	45	58	72	70	60	56	82	107	181
Neglect	103	144	205	136	135	164	206	322	340
Total	272	390	415	383	343	381	551	873	894

Fig 1. Statistics from the Ministry Of Social and Family Development which shows the increase in child abuse cases in Singapore.

In addition, underprivileged children coming from low-income families may suffer in terms of education, care and socio-emotional needs [5]. International research has shown that family background may have more impact on reading and academic achievement in developed countries compared with developing countries. In Singapore, the education landscape is highly competitive and children from a lower socioeconomic status may not be able to attend tuition or afford multiple assessment books to aid them in their education. Children from low-income families might have an absenteeism of one of both parents in their daily lives, which might stem from the

parents working long hours to earn money to support their families or being in the presence of arguments between parents, causing them to develop feelings of unwantedness and self-loathing. This also results in a lack of awareness towards their education and emotional needs, which can lead to numerous adverse effects such as poorer health due to chronic stress, shortened attention span and development of behavioural problems.

2 CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Singapore Children's Society is an independent organisation that runs on public donations alone, and they spend a large sum yearly. In 2018, \$2 595 208 was spent on the Children's home and related expenses, while \$405 511 was spent on Children's medical fund expenses.[1] Accordingly, they do not have sufficient money for extensive upgrading of the student care centres, which are already old and have seen little changes since its opening more than a decade ago. Funds are needed to fund upgrading works as well as more learning materials for the children.

3 UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Given the rising trend in the number of cases of underprivileged children and side effects such as child abuse and the lack of attention towards this issue, how might we raise awareness amongst the general public on the issues faced by vulnerable children in Singapore, such that the public can better understand and provide support to them in 2019 and beyond?

4 PLAN OF ACTION

Our timeline and initiatives are shown in the table below which also indicates the date of completion of each action. At the start of the year, our group did a needs analysis to identify the issues SCS faces by having an interview with the director. Through this, we got to know the objectives of the organisation better. After much discussion, we decided that we would focus on two main aspects - direct interaction and fundraising, as per requested by the organisation. We then planned our activities and started to search for items to sell during the street sales. We would also begin the recruitment of volunteers from our school shortly afterwards. Following that, we also sourced for sponsors for our movie screening, which would have been expensive to host otherwise.

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

1. Actions and outcomes to date

Date	Action	Objective(s)
Jan - February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaising and communicating with SCS 2. Set up Instagram pages, introduction of group 	
March - May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start of weekly interaction sessions at SCS (Until September) 2. School Brownie Sales 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make children feel cared for 2. Awareness, encourage school community to volunteer and raise funds
June - July	<p><u>Street Sales</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 volunteers, 8 locations islandwide, 5 days (1000h - 1300h)(1400h - 1800h) ● Sold tote bags ● Distribution of nearly 3000 project cards ● Raised an estimated \$3000 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise awareness about underprivileged children in Singapore 2. Fundraise (For learning materials and stationary)
August	<p><u>Movie screening</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Held at Golden Village Bishan, sponsored by GV ● Exclusive screening for beneficiaries in which more than 70 beneficiaries attended ● Gave free drawstring bags and posters of the movie sponsored by movie distributor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an enjoyable experience for the children to bond with their families

Section 3: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

We have raised \$2972.40 for SCS through our initiatives. This may not seem like a lot but the main focus of our project is to raise awareness of Singapore Children's Society and underprivileged children.

We have managed to reach out to a sizeable number of people. From our sales, we have spread the word about SCS, as well as ways to volunteer. For the movie screening, we invited 70 SCS beneficiaries for a free screening to provide the children a rare chance to bond with their parents while enjoying themselves in a private screening. In addition, we have 610 followers on Instagram, which is where we publicise our initiatives, gather volunteers, and spread the news on our cause.

We have also consistently attended weekly sessions at the SCS centre from March until now to help the children with their worries both in their studies and day to day life. By doing so, the children feel more care from their peers and are able to learn and play easier.

2. Reflections

We have learnt about the daily difficulties the children face, the worries they have, and ways to help them. 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 planned many large initiatives that more popular groups had done. However, we faced many difficulties such as a severe lack of volunteers and having no organising team. This made organising events such as a bowling competition extremely difficult and in the end, not cost effective. As a result, many of our planned initiatives were unable to be made into a reality. Nevertheless, after thorough reflections, we are genuinely pleased that we

have successfully met our most important objective which is directly teaching, playing with the children and positively impacting their lives.

Our secondary objective of fundraising was also met successfully with the help of our volunteers. The success of our initiatives has proven that we have made a substantial impact on our beneficiaries and the community. In hindsight, we could have had more sessions of street sales and activated many more volunteers by having our recruitment drive earlier and reaching out to more friends 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 Change to ensure that they will be able to accomplish more.

3. Scope of Impact

Community Impact: Approximately 3000 members of the public learnt about SCS, the problems underprivileged children face, as well as the reasons and ways to help improve these children's lives through our project cards. We hope more from the public would volunteer at centres, or attend SCS activities such as their walk to support underprivileged children and their families.

Community Involvement: Although we could not source for a large pool of volunteers, we were directly involved in helping to improve the children's lives at the centre. Our 10 volunteers from various schools were also educated on ways to help these children as well as being involved in our street sales. During our street sales and social bazaar, our volunteers and ourselves explained to the public about our project and SCS, and gave out project cards detailing our project. Through this, we were able to have an outreach of about 3000 people and the public were more educated about the underprivileged children in Singapore.

Resolution of AOC/UP:

Given that we have identified that there is a lack of awareness from the public with regards to the rising trend in underprivileged children which results in more cases of child abuse in our underlying problem, and from our needs analysis conducted with SCS we found out that their

main focus is fundraising, we have managed to raise a total of **\$2972.40** and our project has an estimated outreach of **3000** people. In addition, we were able to educate the members of the public as well as our volunteers hailing from a diverse range of schools on the general problems that the underprivileged children are facing in their daily lives. We have also identified potential members to carry down our project in the year 2020 to build on the foundation and make further improvements, and will continue to interact with the children of Henderson Centre on a weekly basis so that they are able to have long-term companionship and do not feel neglected. Therefore, our project will continue to be sustainable and a long-term solution about the awareness of the underprivileged children in Singapore and SCS can be achieved.

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