

CAT 4 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

GROUP 4-028

Project Concordia External Core

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Abstract

Project Concordia is a Service Learning Project aimed at facilitating the reintegration of ex-offenders into society. The project recognises that ex-offenders, upon returning to society find it difficult to re-establish their place in society due to a bias against them. Project Concordia aims to spread awareness about these problems through the creation of content designed to educate our fellow students on such issues present in society.

Introduction

1.1. Rationale

Ex-offenders in Singapore face various problems even when they come out of prison. Frequently, they are discriminated against as many view them as being untrustworthy, think that they are unreliable and they are not a part of an 'ideal' society.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of Project Concordia External Core are:

- Create resources to educate our target audience and raise awareness on the challenges ex-offenders face when integrating back into society
- Find ways to educate our target audience on how to help ex-offenders.
- Work with the main group, Project Concordia, on their resources (e.g. Documentaries) and their publicity(Unable to do so due to COVID19)

1.3. Target Audience

The target audience was Singaporean youths, as they are at an age where they are able to understand more about this issue. Based on our needs analysis, many teens have negative views on ex-offenders and for they are the future of society, they must have a welcoming and positive mindset towards ex-offenders as they enter adulthood.

1.4. Resources

The resources created for this project were an Instagram page with various posts, a website and a set of videos.

2. Literature Review

Case 1: Mr Chee Chu Siong, 26, was arrested after leaping onto the bonnet of a private-hire car

He lost his job and found it hard to get steady employment as his name and face are all over the Internet

Case 2: Anonymous sentenced to a jail term and slapped with a driving ban for her role in a fatal car accident

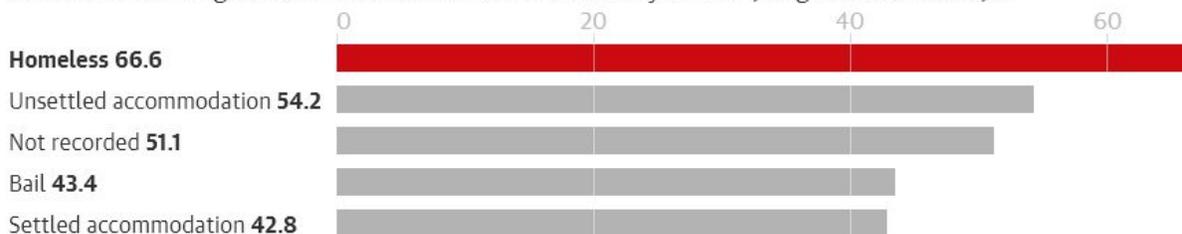
Online articles and discussion have made it way harder for her to deal with the guilt.

Requests to have the articles removed were denied.

Society is unforgiving towards ex-offenders and shaming, and discrimination occurs even after they have paid their dues in the eyes of the law. Unforgiving netizens may criticize them relentlessly and knowing that their personal information is there for others to view can result in emotional harm. Denying requests to have such articles removed cause their wrongdoings to be forever attached to their names despite already turning over a new leaf.

Two-thirds of prisoners who identify as homeless reoffend within a year of release

Proven reoffending rates for adults released from custody in 2016, England and Wales, %



Guardian graphic. Source: FoI request to MoJ

Some ex-offenders are unable to integrate back into society and thus live in poverty. They end up reoffending due to a lack of society's support.



This infographic from the ISCOS website, the beneficiary of our core group, Project Concordia (SL) shows ex-offenders face many difficulties relationships, psychological and financial-wise. It is essential to help them and educate others so that fewer problems are created for these ex-offenders. Supporting the many ex-offenders released annually would be good.

Methodology

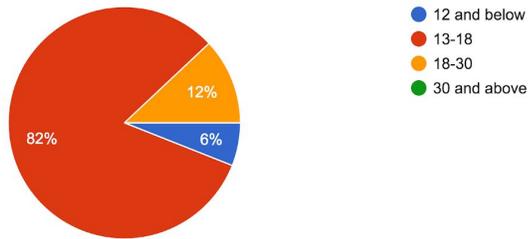
2.1. Needs Analysis

We have carried out a survey to cover a broader range of people, whose ages range from below 12 to above 30. Most of the responses are from youths between the ages of 13 to 18, who are our primary target audience.

2.2. Survey Results

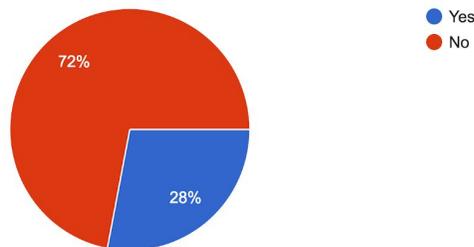
How old are you?

50 responses



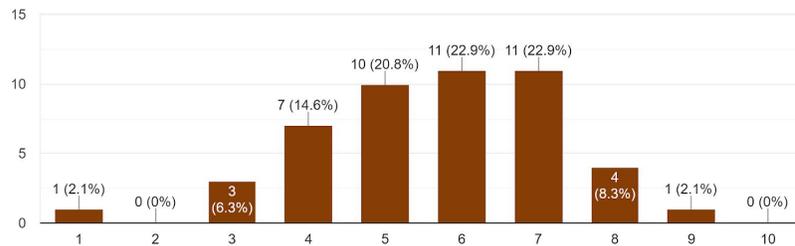
Have you ever met any ex-offenders in real life?

50 responses



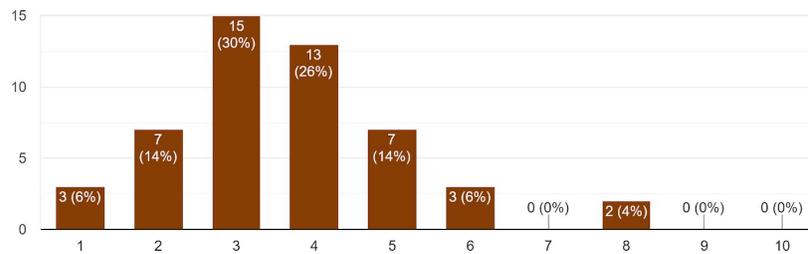
From a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest) how likely do you think it is for someone who has been convicted to re offend again?

48 responses



From a scale of 1-10, how likely do you think it is for ex-convicts to get a job?

50 responses



2.3. Focus Group

We assembled a focus group consisting of our friends and classmates who have different views on the judicial system and whom we feel would be able to provide varied and diverse responses.

To maintain confidentiality, we have kept them anonymous when

comparing their responses to our questions.

Questions asked:

1) Do you think ex-offenders should be given a second chance?

2) What first comes to mind when you think of the work “ex-offenders?”

3) If someone you knew was an ex-offender, and one day he approaches you and asks you out to a movie, what would you do?

4) How would you describe ex-offenders?

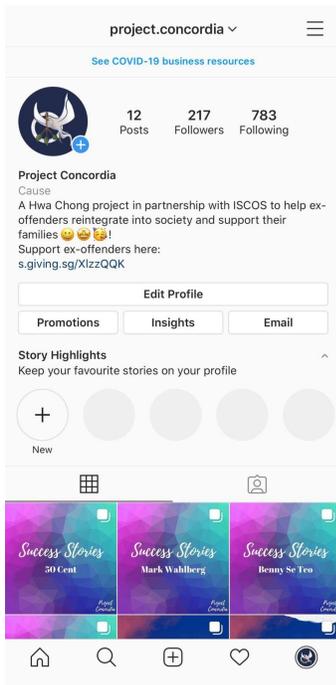
5) Would an ex-offender's life change for the worse, or will it be just as before they committed the crime?

6) Imagine you are an interviewer and you are interviewing two job applicants, one of them who was an ex-offender but was more passionate about the job and another who was less passionate. If both applicants have the same qualifications and skill sets, who would you pick?

2.4. Development of Resources

2.4.1. Instagram Page

- Instagram Posts on the group's Instagram page
- Posts featuring corrections of common misconceptions and stereotypes regarding ex-convicts
- Statistics about the problems ex-convicts face
- Purpose:
 - ❖ To reach out to youths, allowing them to understand the difficulties faced by ex-offenders
 - ❖ To provide bite-sized information that is important in shaping one's perspectives on ex-offenders
 - ❖ To clear up misconceptions regarding ex-offenders
- Target Audience: Youths who use social media
- Post Content:
 - ❖ Problems faced by ex-offenders
 - Family (2 Part series)
 - Technology (2 Part Series)
 - Misconceptions (3 Part Series)
 - ❖ Success stories of ex-offenders
 - Benny Se Teo
 - Robert Downey Jr
 - Mark Wahlberg



Instagram Page: Left, Posters: Right

2.4.2. Website

- Purpose:
 - ❖ To provide a platform for us to
 - collate all the resources that we have made for ease of access
 - understand more about the ex-convicts
 - ❖ To give more details about the core group Project Concordia
 - ❖ To give a platform to showcase all our products
 - ❖ To provide information on services and initiatives which help ex-offenders such that they would know where and how to seek help
- Content:
 - ❖ Information about Project Concordia and ISCOS, our beneficiary
 - ❖ Statistics and data about problems faced by ex-offenders
 - ❖ Success stories
 - ❖ Misconceptions surrounding ex-offenders
 - ❖ Initiatives by ISCOS or other agencies to help ex-offenders re-integrate
- Target Audience: Youths who want to have a more in-depth understanding of our project.
- Website Link: <https://181887m.wixsite.com/projectconcordia>

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Problem- Technology

Ex-offenders are often not familiar with using mobile phones since some are not accustomed to the rapid developments in mobile phone technology during their long periods of incarceration. Also, they may not have been properly equipped with the knowledge of handling mobile devices during their incarceration. With this disadvantage, ex-offenders may be hindered in their daily lives, which calls for more awareness regarding this issue. Ex-offenders may have difficulties using mobile phones, especially complex applications. Therefore, some applications like food delivery, online shopping and even social media may not be used to using mobile phones and this predicament would certainly prevent

Problem- Family

Ex-offenders have spent extended amounts of time incarcerated, separated from their families. This has resulted in their ties with their family being strained, as the rest of their family waits for them to return. Some ex-offenders may have been the sole breadwinners for their families prior to being incarcerated, and had left a huge burden on the rest of their family. As a result, their young children may not feel a sense of attachment to them and result in a cold relationship. For others, they may be seen as a disgrace for having been imprisoned and result in cold attitudes from their family towards them.



Robert Downey Jr.

Born in 1965, Robert Downey Jr who is an American actor, producer, and singer was arrested numerous times on charges related to drugs including cocaine, heroin, and marijuana and went through drug treatment programs unsuccessfully from 1996 through 2001. He explained to a judge in 1999 that : "It's like I have a shotgun in my mouth, and I've got my finger on the trigger, and I like the taste of the gun metal." that he has been addicted to drugs since the age of eight due to his father, also an addict previously, giving drugs to him, thus he's numerous relapses. After five years of substance abuse, arrests, rehab, and relapse, Downey began working hard to rebuild his career and reputation he has lost. He is best known for his roles starring as Tony Stark/Iron Man in ten films within the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In 2008, Downey was named by Time magazine among the 100 most influential people in the world, and from 2013 to 2015, he was listed by Forbes as Hollywood's highest-paid actor. His films have grossed over \$14.4 billion worldwide, making him the second highest-grossing box-office star of all time.

“ People never change because they are under threat or under duress. Never. They change because they see something that makes their life seem valuable enough to start moving toward a life worth living. ”

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Project Give a Line, Change a Life by ISCOS

DONATE NOW

In Singapore today, digital technology has become an important part of our lives to communicate with one another, search for information and access online resources. At times, we may need to use smart devices to receive salaries, make online payments and transactions. For ex-offenders who have been away from the community for a long period of time, digital connectivity is now an essential component for their successful reintegration into society.

With Project Give A Line, Change A Life, newly-released ex-offenders who meet the relevant criteria or those undergoing community supervision and community-based programmes may be eligible for a free smartphone with six months' worth of unlimited data mobile plan. This is to help them reconnect with families and friends as they rebuild their lives after prison.

Taken from the ISCOS website

Mirah (not her real name), 30, was excited and happy to receive the smartphone, as she can now use it to keep in touch with her family.

She is unable to see her four children regularly, as she is under the Work Release Scheme, where she is released to work but has to return to Lloyd Lees Community Supervision Centre in Changi at the end of the day.

With the phone, she can video call her children every day.
"I miss my children a lot, and now I can use this to call them and find out how they are doing," she said.

2.4.3. Interviews with general public

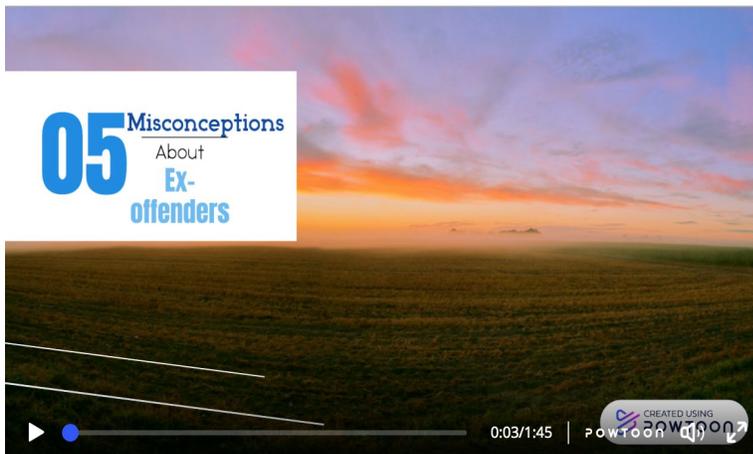
- Purpose:
 - ❖ To collect the opinions and beliefs of the general public regarding ex-offenders
 - ❖ To catch and correct misconceptions and stereotypes from the general public on the spot
 - ❖ To get a better understanding of the people that this project is supposed to change the mind of

- Initially intended to do physical interviews with the general public during events organised by ISCOS but Switched to e-interviews due to the cancellation of events due to the COVID-19 outbreak
- Snippets of responses of the interviews will be inserted into our videos
- Target audience: Youths who want to understand more about social stigma towards ex-offenders

2.4.4. Educational Videos

- Short but informative Videos would be uploaded on Concordia official Youtube channel
- Includes responses of the e-interviews we conducted
- Purpose:
 - ❖ To collate everything that we have been trying to do regarding misconceptions, stereotypes and education into a visual medium
 - ❖ To provide a more appealing and creative medium for our target audience
- Target Audience: Youths who use youtube and prefer videos/ graphics
- Video links:
 - <https://youtu.be/45JkET5gd0M>
 - <https://www.powtoon.com/s/fDMe4trHgDO/1/m>
(We are unable to upload this on our youtube channel as it is undergoing vetting from our beneficiary ISCOS)
 - <https://youtu.be/t-ReW0zJ7I0>

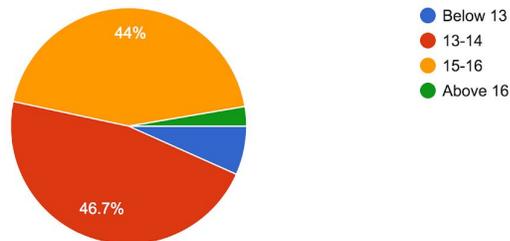




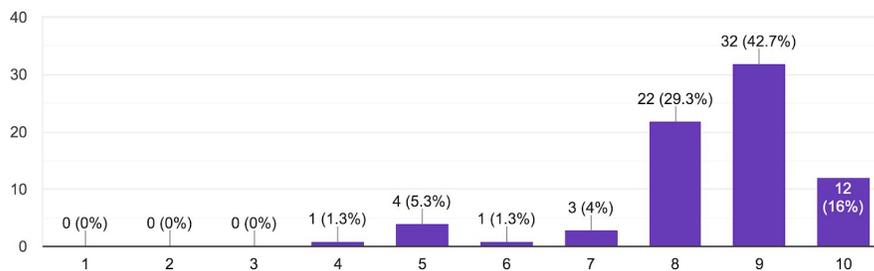
2.5. Pilot Test

We created a survey to obtain feedback on each of our products. The results show that a vast majority of the people who completed the survey felt that our resources were appealing and satisfactory with almost all responses being above 7/10 for all our products.

How old are you?
75 responses

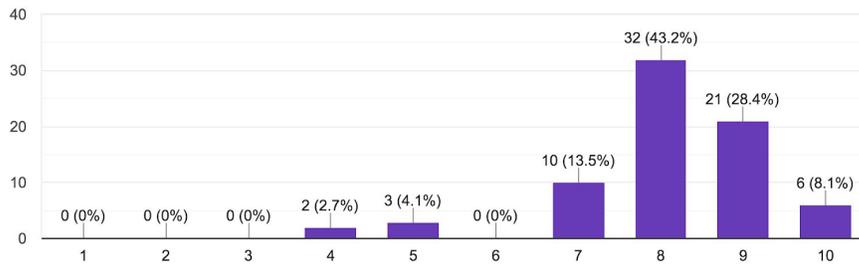


On a scale of 1-10, how useful is our Instagram? <https://www.instagram.com/project.concordia/>
75 responses



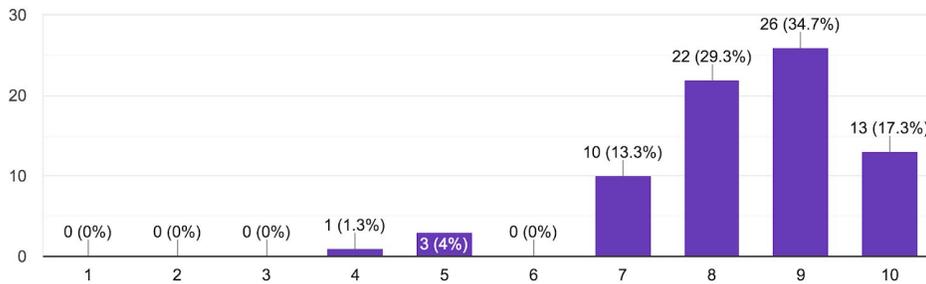
On a scale of 1-10, how useful is our website? <https://181887m.wixsite.com/projectconcordia>

74 responses



On a scale of 1-10, how useful is our video?

75 responses



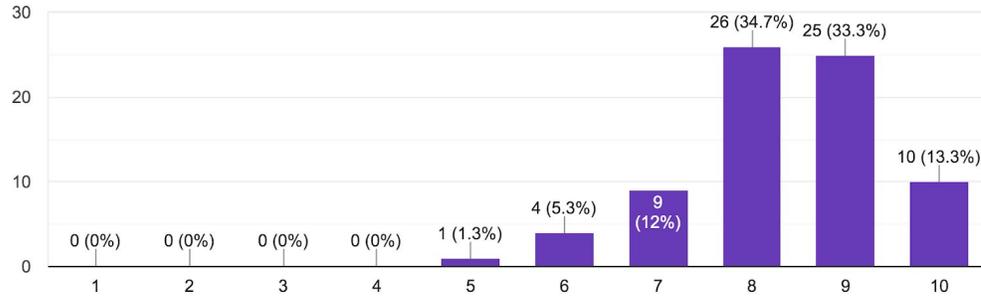
3. Outcome & Discussion

3.1. Final Outcome

We have a survey to ask our respondents on if they learnt more about ex-offenders from our project. We have received a majority of positive responses and feedback as shown from the results below.

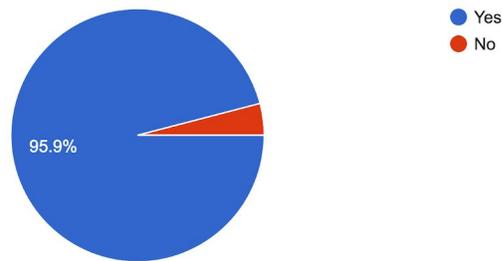
On the scale of 1-10 how much have you learnt about ex-offenders?

75 responses



Have you understood more about ex-offenders after viewing our products

74 responses



Our products have gained recognition from our beneficiary ISCOS and they have also been using our products to raise awareness on the problems ex-offenders face:

iscos_regen_fund



12 likes

iscos_regen_fund Thank you Project Concordia for giving us a shoutout for Project Give A Line, Change A Life! To find out more about the project, head to our Giving.sg page to find out more!

3.2. Limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the core team of Project Concordia were unable to organise activities that they have planned. Thus we were unable to help them with publicity and posters for those events. Even though the Concordia core team and our project group had intended to create a

documentary on our various activities to further increase the reach of Project Concordia, this was unable to materialise owing to the lack of events organised due to COVID-19 and the safe-distancing measures put in place. Despite all these difficulties and challenges, our group has managed to think of more creative and innovative ways to face these problems.

3.3. Possible Further Works

In 2021, we will likely take over Project Concordia and would thus be able to make use of the resources we currently have to reach a wider audience and raise awareness among more youths. These resources would also be an excellent introduction to Project Concordia and ISCOS as it provides details about both the service learning project and its beneficiary.

4. Conclusion

Even though our project work was handicapped this year, our group has many takeaways. We learnt to be flexible and adapt to a dynamically; our plans may have to be cancelled, and we should think of other alternatives. Secondly, we have learnt to better work with the core team of Project Concordia. As we are an external core of a service learning project, we have to work hand in hand with them, as well as our beneficiary ISCOS, to ensure the smooth release of our resources. Lastly, we have also learnt more about ex-offenders and how they are a marginalised community in society after researching the issue. We have developed a passion for helping ex-offenders and other marginalised groups in society.

5. References

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