

CAT 4 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Project Vision Resource

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SPECIAL TERMS & ACRONYMS

VH: Visually Handicapped

ABSTRACT

Project Vision Resource aims to create resources to raise awareness about the experiences and difficulties faced by the Visually handicapped, as well as to clear up common misconceptions that society has of them. Our project supports the Service Learning group under the same name, which collaborates with SAVH (Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped). SAVH assists those with visual impairments to fulfill their needs, pursue their interests and realise their aspirations. Through our resources, the public will be able to understand the visually handicapped and be more accepting of them. We also provide for them the opportunity to contribute to this cause.

REPORT

1. Rationale

A study conducted by the Singapore National Eye Centre in 2015 showed that there were around 17 500 visually impaired citizens in Singapore. Despite this astounding number, the public still holds many misconceptions about the visually impaired, and treats them differently. This causes many difficulties in the lives of the visually handicapped, and many feel alienated from the rest. By changing the public's perception of the visually handicapped, the visually handicapped will be able to integrate into society with greater ease. We can do so by creating resources that highlight and publicise the struggles faced by the visually handicapped on a daily basis for the main team of Project Vision.

2. Target Audience

The target audience is the youth of Singapore, specifically in the 10-20 age bracket. This is because targeting the younger generation allows for a longer lasting impact on the community and for the visually impaired. Moreover, most of the events that the Project Vision group has planned are targeted towards the youth and our HCI students.

3. Review

We retrieved our sources from News Articles as can be seen below:

Even as the government identifies education as a key area of expenditure growth during Budget 2018 yesterday, some students in Singapore still appear to be discriminated against due to their disabilities.

One such child is the teenage daughter of Facebook user Mary Lim.

Lim revealed that although her visually impaired daughter did well for her N-Level examinations last year, both the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and her daughter's secondary school are hesitating to enroll her daughter into their full certificate and O-Level programmes, due to a "lack of facilities," even though school has already started for 2018.

Sharing that she feels disappointed online, Lim appealed "Please do not deprive a blind child from learning" and wrote:

This news article above by The Independent sheds light on how the visually handicapped are discriminated against in Singapore. Ms Lim, a visually impaired student was denied enrolment into ITE's special programmes due to the lack of facilities to cater for her needs. ITE is a public vocational education institution agency in Singapore that provides pre-employment training to secondary school graduates, which would make the decision to deny Ms Lim of her full certificate programmes unreasonable, since the school was meant to be unbiased and provide equal opportunities for every student. This also shows that the visually handicapped are just as or more capable than many of us intellectually, and are able to achieve results that many of us may not be able to attain.

While vision loss can lead to some limitations, the blind are just as capable of doing many things the average person does, and live full and independent lives.

Mr Tan, for example, is more than just walking proof of this - he's a champion in the community.

Despite losing his sight in his late 20s, Mr Tan went on to publish several books. He became the first blind person to be a member of Singapore Association of the Blind executive committee, and later president of the association, now known as the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped. Mr Tan also started a low-vision clinic and library for the blind.

This CNA article above written by a journalist on her thoughts on persons with disabilities. She mentions former President of the Singapore Association for the Visually Handicapped Tan Guan Heng, who is visually handicapped and yet proved himself to be more capable than others. This is solid evidence that the misconception of VH being less capable than others is false.

Refractive error, specifically myopia in children, is a major public health concern in Singapore, with the prevalence estimated to be one of the highest worldwide. One in two children aged twelve has myopia. Among the leading specific causes of eye diseases in men and women, diabetic retinopathy is present in a third of the individuals with diabetes. The lack

This extract is a report by The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness regarding the situation of visual impairments in Singapore. This shows that visual impairments such as myopia are prevalent in Singapore, which means that it is all the more important for us to understand them and create an environment that is VH-friendly.

A blind woman was stopped from boarding a bus on Wednesday morning (June 19) after another passenger insisted that her guide dog was not allowed on public transport.

Cassandra Chiu wrote in a Facebook post that she was trying to board SBS bus service 123 at the bus stop outside Lucky Plaza.

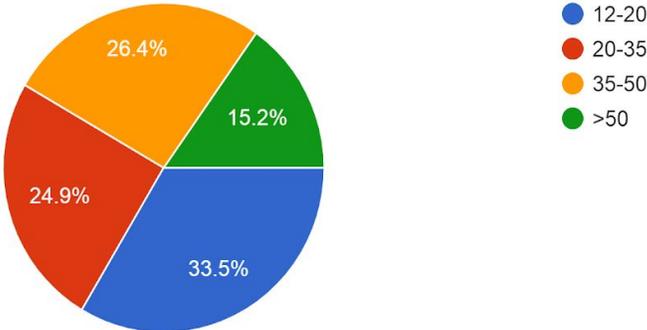
This article above showcases how the public is unaware of the measures taken to accommodate the visually handicapped, and further enforces the need to spread awareness on the situation of the VH.

We plan to edit short video clips addressing difficulties faced by VH/ clear misconceptions to be posted on the official Vision Instagram page. We will also compile some personal stories from the VH we interviewed to be used on the Vision website (with permission from the VH). We also planned to facilitate all Vision events, as well as cooperate with the Vision group to plan and carry out their events. However, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, activities could not be carried out at all.

4.1 Needs analysis

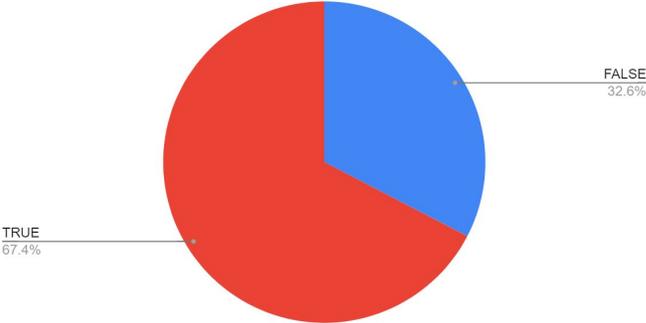
We conducted a Google survey using Google Forms with 197 respondents to find out their knowledge and perceptions of the VH, as well as to ascertain the need for such our project

Please indicate your age group
197 responses

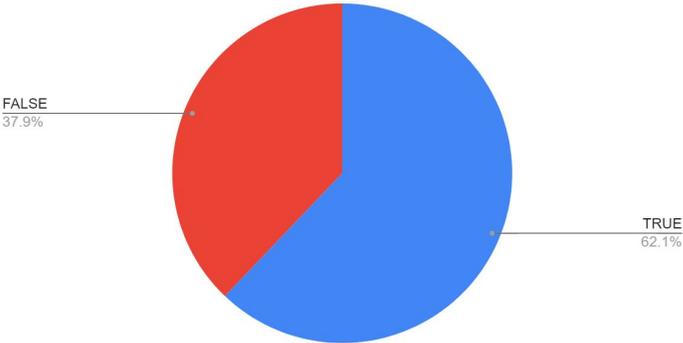


We have approached an equal number of people from each age group to evaluate their different levels of understanding of the VH. (Some of the responses had to be translated into english). The inclusion of other people from outside of our target audience age group is for comparison of the different levels of understanding of the VH between each age group.

Do you know which statements are true and false? [The meaning of being Visually Impaired is being blind] (Age 12-20)

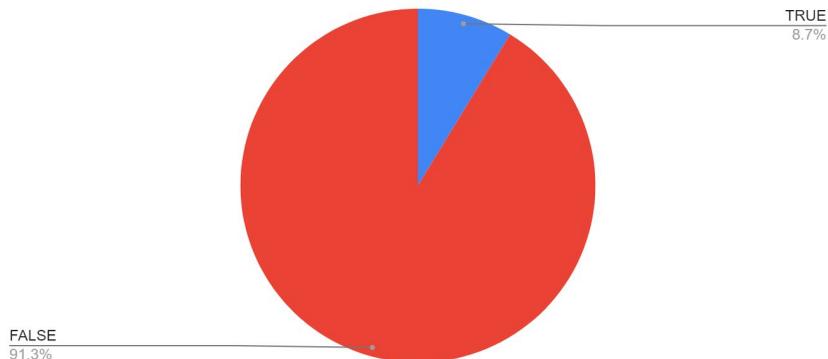


Is this statement true or false? [All the visually impaired rely on and can read braille] (Age 12-20)



We included True or False questions to gauge the public’s understanding of the visually handicapped. These questions were based on common stereotypes that people have of the VH. Here are some of the responses. This shows that the Public seems to overgeneralise the visually handicapped and assume that all of them are completely blind, which is not true.

Do you know which statements are true and false? [The visually impaired are usually the ones doing jobs that require labour] (Age 12-20)

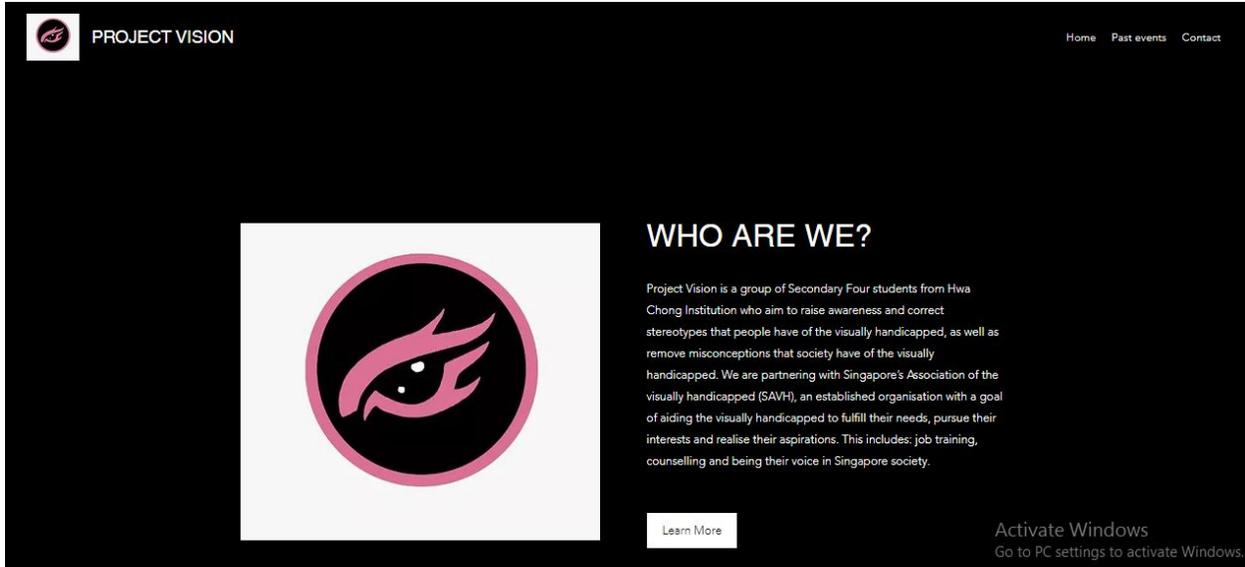


This shows that the public seems to have the common misconception that the visually handicapped are “less capable” than others, and are limited to certain occupations. This is proven to be false, as will be shown in later parts.

4.2.1 Website

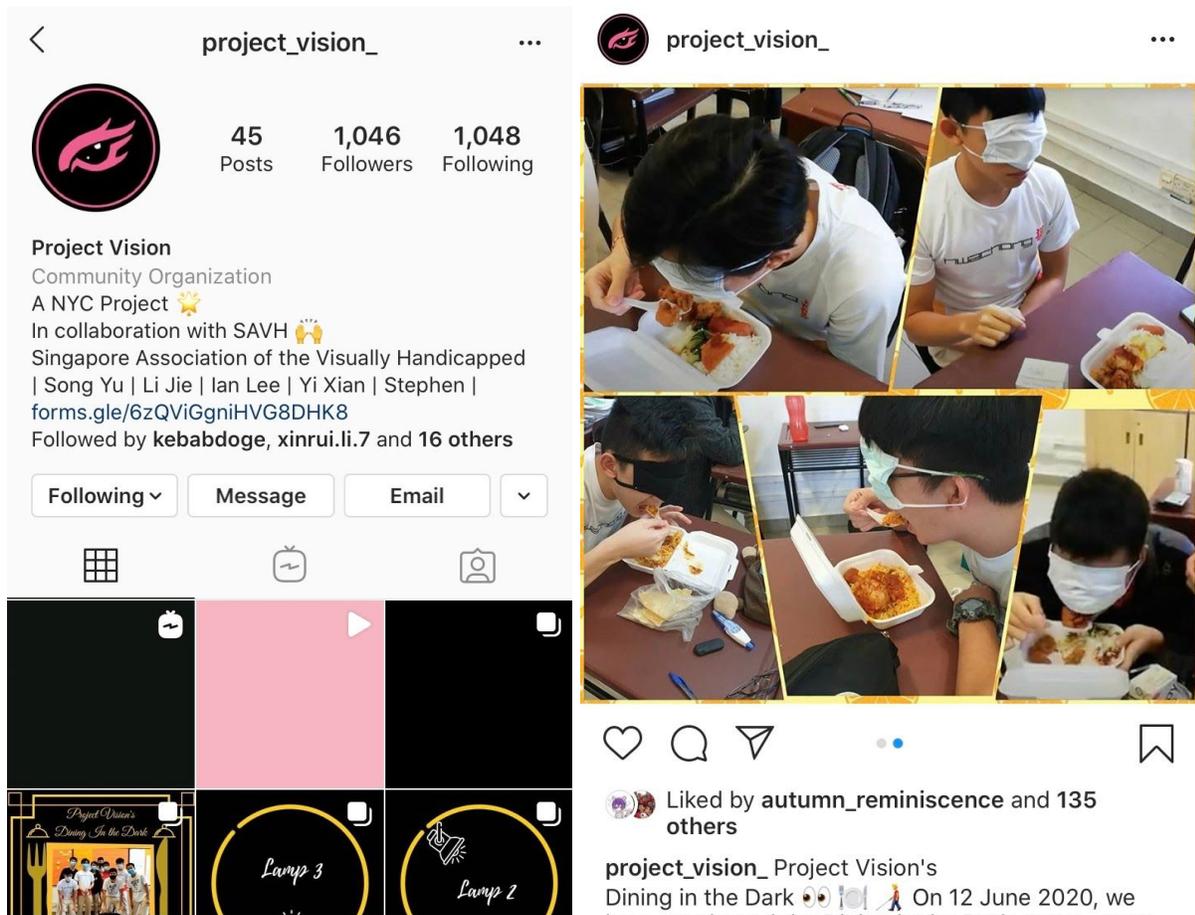
We created a Website so that the public could access Project Vision’s resources and past events. We used a web domain instead of Google sites for greater customizability and accessibility. The site is:

<https://projectvision2020.wixsite.com/website-1>



4.2.2 Instagram Page

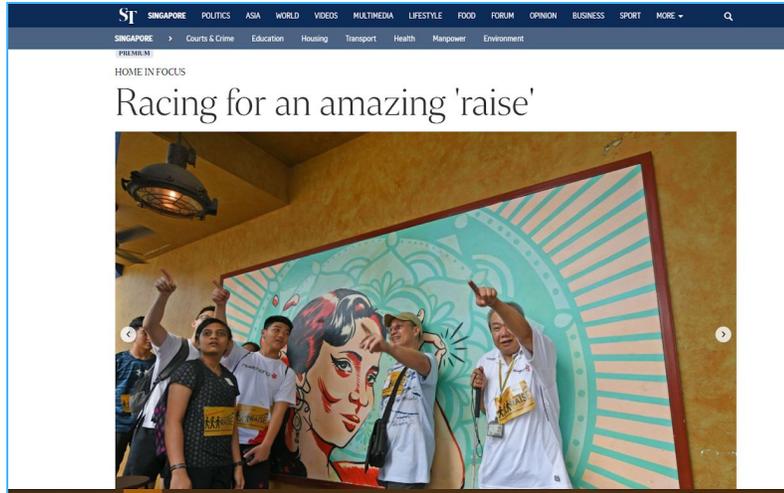
We maintained and updated an Instagram page and have biweekly Instagram posts and updates about the service learning group. We posted facts and information on upcoming events organised by Project Vision like the Dining in the Dark event. Our biweekly posters have information detailing the plight of visually-handicapped as well as to clear misconceptions about them, sourced from articles and research papers as well as some personal experiences by the visually handicapped themselves.



4.2.3 Events

We helped organise and facilitate events such as the Dine in the Dark event, street sales and SAVH’s The Amazing “Raise” 2020.

The Amazing “Raise” 2020 involved volunteers accompanying VH to complete various activities at locations such as Little India, Chinatown and Botanic Gardens to help deepen the public’s understanding of the VH. Our contribution to this event was through the provision of volunteers. This event was also featured in the Straits Times. (This event was held in January, when the situation with the Coronavirus was still mild.)



The Dine in the Dark event was hosted by Project Vision and took place at school, where 12 participants would experience how it felt to do daily activities while being deprived of their sight. (all participants were our own students and followed safe distancing regulations) We contributed to this event by helping with its planning and acting as guides for the participants.



4.3 Pilot test

We collected feedback on our events, as they served as pilot tests for events hosted after them. For the Amazing “Raise” 2020, Luna, a volunteer from CHIJ Toa Payoh reflected:

“Through the amazing race event, I learnt many new skills such as how to **help and guide the visually impaired**. I think that the event really opened my eyes to the number of visually handicapped people in Singapore and it made me more appreciative of what I have. My experience helping out at the event was very **memorable** and I find it very fun and enriching. Firstly, being there with my group made it very exciting and interesting and it also taught me many things like how the visually impaired are able to adapt to their disability and find new ways to cope. It really made me **understand more about them** and learn to **never underestimate them** despite their disabilities.”

Another volunteer, Christa, from Raffles Girls School, commented:

“ The amazing raise event organised by SAVH was really enjoyable! I got to meet a really nice couple as well as another cool guy, we got along well and were enthusiastic about the games...I also gained a **better understanding** of the challenges the visually handicapped faced, and how to properly help them. One memorable experience was taking the escalator together - I had **previously assumed** that the visually handicapped were scared of taking the escalators, but I learnt that they found escalators just as convenient as we do! :) Overall, I had lots of fun that day and hope I have a chance to participate in similar events in the future.”

For the Dine in the Dark Event, Kohlmann of 4O1 commented:

“ I feel that this event is **very enriching** and is definitely a good experience for those who have not tried this on their own and (I) encourage others to try this event for the fun of it as they should try it at least once in their lives”

4.4 Interviews

We conducted interviews with VH on telecommunication platforms to learn about the difficulties they face and their thoughts on their situation. This information was used by Project Vision SL group and SAVH to update their information. (Audio files were typed out and grammatical errors were corrected)

This is a sample interview with one of the VH we interacted with through Zoom:

Q:What are some of the problems you face when you interact with others?

A:I can't see very well and sometimes people forget so they try to show me something but I cannot see it. Also when I talk I am not able to confirm if they are still there so I might end up in a situation where I'm talking to myself.

Q:What impression do you think people have of you?

A:People think that all VH are blind but that is actually not the case. Many of us just have difficulty seeing and we can still see things that are not too far away.

Q:What changes would you like to happen in society to make your life easier?

A:There could be more VH friendly facilities like Braille menus in restaurants so that we are still able to read. the people can also be more understanding and help us when we are in need.

5. Outcome and discussion

Our project has accomplished our set goals of raising awareness and supporting the main SL group through our resources. From only being able to spread awareness through posters, which could only allow us to have a third-person experience, we moved to interviews that allowed us to have a first-hand experience.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to conduct some activities that we have planned and we could only interview the Visually Handicapped via telecommunication tools like through phone calls and Zoom cloud meetings. Many of the events we had planned were cancelled due to the Coronavirus, and the Dine in the Dark event had to be downsized greatly.

6. Conclusion

Project Vision was a fulfilling project as it allowed us to meet VH and understand the difficulties they are going through, which let us create resources that we know will help them. We learnt to empathize with the VH and figure out a way to present their feelings in a way that resonated with people. We also learnt to be versatile and adaptable, as we had to modify our resources on short notice for the Service Learning group.

7. Citations

Here are our citations:

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