

Project Imperium

7-14

Vaz Keanu Jayhan 4A330 (L)

Aiden Ryan Shaharudin 4A201

King Jian Ze 4H115

Ning Xingjian 4P117

Wee Hong Rei Ryan 4P229

Project type: Single Year

Section I: Project Overview

A. Area of concern

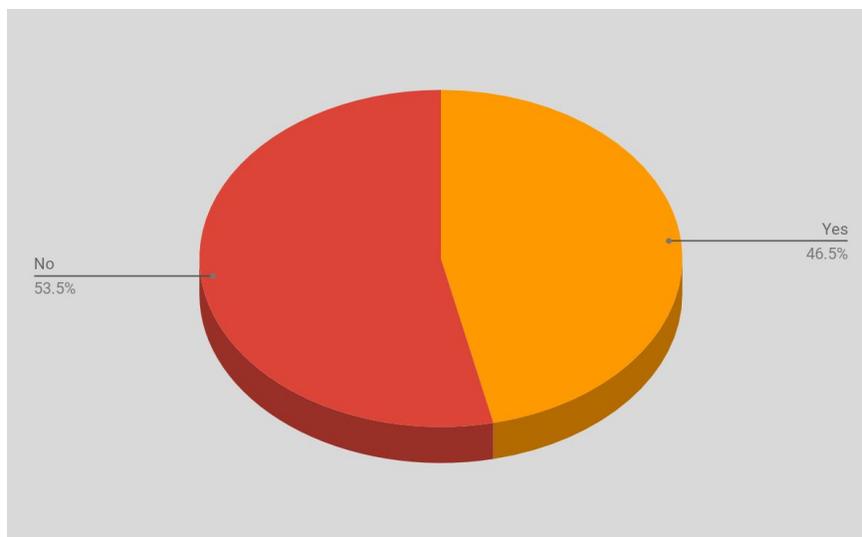
1 in 7,500 live births result in diagnosis of Muscular Dystrophy (MD).

Individuals with MD are often faced with unfettered discrimination in society. Career aspirations of individuals with MD are frustrated by prejudice in the workplace. Persons with MD, who have the same skills and qualifications as their peers are passed over for job, or promotions. They are treated differently, discriminated against, and often misunderstood, such as when they hold up the queue when ordering food.

From interviews with people with MD, it can be seen that there exists a lack of empathy, awareness and understanding for people with MD, which is likely because many people have never interacted with people with MD before and have little understanding of the condition and the difficulties it brings about. Thus, they are unable to empathize with people with MD, resulting in them being ostracised from the society.

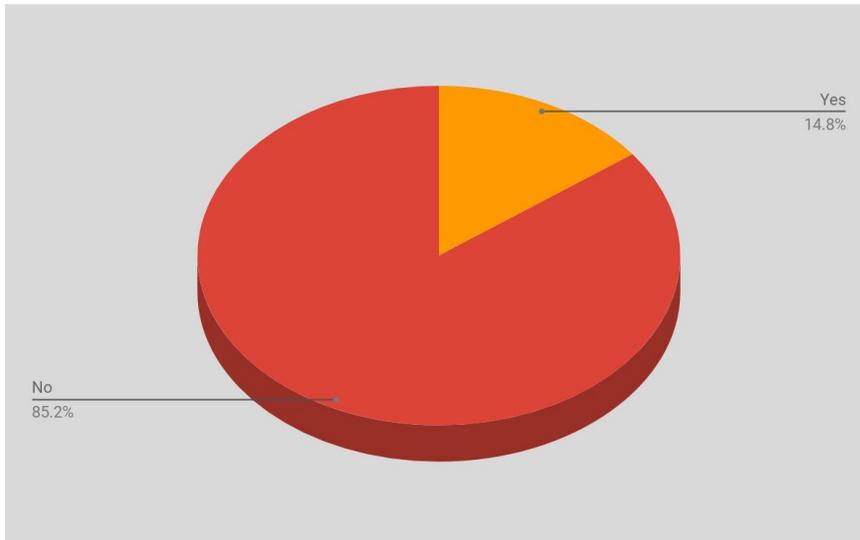
We conducted a survey to have a better grasp on the public's understanding of MD and people with MD.

1. Do you know what MD is?



53% of respondents stated that they did not know what MD is. Showing that there exists a lack of awareness.

2. Have you interacted with people with MD before?



Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they had never interacted with people with MD, showing the lack of interaction.

B. Challenges Identified

COVID-19 restricted physical interactions and meetings, limiting volunteering and interaction opportunities. Muscular dystrophy association Singapore (MDAS) spends an immense amount of money yearly. S\$40000 on publicity, S\$200000 on operations and administrations, and S\$700000 to support people with MD, totaling to about S\$1Million.

C. Underlying problem

Given that there exists a lack of understanding and support for muscular dystrophy and people with muscular dystrophy alongside discriminatory and incorrect stigmas and beliefs, how might we help to raise funds to support them, raise awareness for this issue and promote natural interactions between the general public and individuals with muscular dystrophy so as to help them build up their confidence and eradicate the prejudice around them to help them better integrate into society.

D. Action Plan

There existed a lack of awareness, interactions and funds.

Hence, our first aim was to raise awareness for people with MD, through online talks and social media outreach to provide people with knowledge about MD and to clear misconceptions surrounding them.

Secondly, we aimed to increase interaction through interaction sessions to help the public to empathize and understand more about the difficulties that come with MD.

Lastly, we aimed to raise funds for MDAS, through online fundraisers which will assist them in supporting people with MD by providing wheelchairs or specialised transport, which are expensive.

Section II: Implementation Of Action Plan

Date	Action	Objective(s)
January-August	Social Media Outreach <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Weekly Facts about MD2. Quiz with prizes	Raise Awareness Raise Funds
January-March	Volunteering Sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go The Dystance Carnival2. NLB-MDAS Technology exhibition3. Weekly Boccia Sports Session	Raise Awareness Increase Interaction
June-August	Online Talks <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. With Mayflower Primary2. With HCI Students	Raise Awareness
July-August	Online Fundraiser <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. \$3362 Raised through giving.sg	Raise Funds

Section III: Project outcomes

A. Accomplishments

Our instagram page has gained over **600 followers in a year**, garnering more than **6500 impressions** through our posts about MD. We provided information and knowledge to them, which cleared misconceptions and raised awareness.

We also reached out to more than **300 people and students** through volunteering sessions and online talks. The volunteers interacted with people with MD, and could empathize better, while those that attended the online talks could clear their misconceptions.

Additionally, we raised more than **\$3362** through an online fundraiser, which is able to help provide for about 3-4 months of specialised transport for people with MD.

B. Reflections on outcomes

We are glad that we have achieved our goals of raising awareness, increasing interactions, and raising funds. Although limited by COVID-19, we were able to raise awareness through online talks and instagram, increase interaction through volunteering sessions and raise funds through our online fundraiser.

Some challenges we faced include the COVID-19 situation, which made us replan our whole event schedule, and having no prior experience made it difficult for us to organise events, especially as we had no online presence as a first year project. However, we took it upon ourselves to promote our cause, and eventually made it past this hurdle.

In hindsight, we would have worked more closely with our beneficiary from the beginning, as once the pandemic struck, communication became strained. If we did this, we would have been able to have online interaction sessions and other events. We would definitely pass this experience on to our juniors taking on the project.

C. Scope of Impact

Community impact: Through our project, the public learnt more about MD, became more empathetic of people with MD, cleared their misconceptions and prejudice, and learnt to assist the integration of people with MD into the society.

Community involvement: We had 20 volunteers who assisted us in our volunteering sessions, online talks and outreach. They were key in ensuring the success of the events. Through volunteering sessions which involved interactions with people with MD, the volunteers are more knowledgeable about our cause. We sought to involve and inspire these volunteers to contribute their time and effort into our cause and to improve their outreach and public interaction skills.

Resolution of AOC/UP: We identified that there was a lack of awareness, interaction and funds. In the end, we were able to reach out to an estimated 6500 people through social media, and 300 more through online talks and volunteering. We also were able to allow interaction between our volunteers and people with MD and raised \$3362, addressing all aspects of our project. Lastly, we have involved students from a diverse age range and education levels in this process and empowered them to make a difference.