

Project HOPE

7-22

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Multi-Year Project

Section 1: Project Overview

A. Areas of Concern

- a. According to Straits Times article Family time to support children of offenders (November 19, 2016), Ms Durga Naidu, senior social services executive with ISCOS, said that 'Family members may not have enough time for their children, who might lack a positive role model and parental guidance'.
- b. According to An exploratory study of the developmental needs of children of ex-offenders by the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme, children tend to feel shocked, distressed, and a sense of loss following their parents' imprisonment.
- c. According to Ms Lyn, a staff member at New Life Stories, these groups of children experience one or more traumatic life experiences which may lead to behavioural issues and/or mental and physical health disorder.

B. Challenges Identified

Parental incarceration leads to the absence of a positive influence in their childhood. This may result in unwanted consequences such as physical and/or mental health problems. Furthermore, this may also result in the children being pessimistic and having low self-esteem in life.

C. Underlying Problem

Given that these children whose parents are incarcerated suffer from a lack of parental love which might result in them having low self-esteem

and being pessimistic, how might we provide guidance and act as a role model to the children with our programs to develop the emotional and academic aspects of their lives, so that they can face their future with more joy and confidence in 2020 and beyond?

D. Plan of Action

Activity	Action	Objective(s)
Original Plan (Without Covid-19)		
Early Reader Programme	A programme by our beneficiary New Life Stories. It is a 1-hour reading session conducted at the children's home by volunteers. The session is not confined to only reading as volunteers also carry out various activities with the children to befriend them.	To strengthen the children's English proficiency and nurture them to be more confident, curious and school-ready.
Book Donation	A donation drive to be carried out in school where students are able to donate unwanted children books that are still in good condition.	The books will be donated to our beneficiary to increase the range of reading materials for the children.
Team Bonding Games	A group event carried out with the children. We will plan various games and activities for the children that allow them to interact with each other and us.	To improve their social skills, inculcate values such as teamwork and problem solving and let the children have fun in general.

Learning Journeys	One-day trips with the children to different places such as Kidzania and Science Centre.	Allow them to discover new interests and learn values such as creativity and problem solving.
Back-up Plan (In response to Covid-19)		
Telecommuting with children	Interact with the children through online means such as video calls. We will also carry out different activities such as online board games or card games with the children.	To improve the children's social skills and to let us get to know the children better.
Spreading Awareness through Social Media	Make use of social media platforms to spread awareness of underprivileged children and our beneficiary.	To help more people understand the difficulties faced by underprivileged children and the contributions of our beneficiary.
Children's Worksheets	Lesson packages that consist of short stories that teach moral values.	To make reading fun for the children and impart different moral values in them.

Section 2: Implementation of Plans

A. Actions and Outcomes to Date

a. SCORE Year End-Party

On 11th December 2019, our project participated in the SCORE Year-End Party with our seniors. This was our first interaction with the children and we got to know them through our seniors.

b. Reading Programme

We created 4 children's worksheets, with a total of 6 stories selected for the children. These stories are easy to read, have fun characters, and a straight forward storyline, suitable for children. We designed simple questions regarding the story for the children to answer to help stimulate their thinking and help them understand the values demonstrated, like perseverance and optimism. There are bullet points to remind them of the key learning points, and to summarise the worksheet. We conclude with a quote, picture or message that leaves some room for "food for thought". This adds more value to their learning, giving them an opportunity to fuel their curiosity and keep learning. It also adds some colour and engaging elements to the worksheets to help children stay interested.

c. Spreading Awareness through Social Media

Due to Covid-19, we were unable to carry out any physical activities. Therefore, we chose to use social media to spread awareness of underprivileged children and our beneficiary to the public. By doing so, we hope that more people will understand underprivileged children and the difficulties they face in their lives.

B. To be Completed

a. Early Reader Programme

A reading programme by our beneficiary New Life Stories. Volunteers will visit their respective children's homes weekly to conduct a reading session with the children. This strengthens their English proficiency so that they would not fall behind their peers. Due to Covid-19, the beneficiary postponed the programme until now. We are currently discussing with our beneficiary on which child we will help.

b. Book Donation

We have planned a book donation drive to collect children's books for the beneficiary to help increase the range of reading materials available to the children. This will be carried out in school from term 3 to term 4 where we will place boxes at different locations for students to donate their children books. We are currently seeking approval from the school to do so.

C. Future Plans

a. Team Bonding Games

We plan to carry out team bonding games with the children in the future. We will plan various games and activities which allows the children to interact with each other and us. We hope to improve their pro-social skills, inculcate moral values in them and let them learn through play.

b. Learning Journeys

We want to collaborate with different places such as Kidzania and Science Centre Singapore where children can learn different things from. We hope that the children can discover new interests and learn values such as creativity and problem solving via this activity.

Section 3: Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

We have developed several different lesson packages like worksheets and some activities for the children that we intend to carry out during the reading programme in the future. This is intended to help the children learn moral values such as optimism and perseverance. Besides that, our lesson packages are made to be fun and engaging while also beneficial to the children. We have also made several social media posts to spread awareness about underprivileged children and our beneficiary to the public. Right now, our Instagram page has more than 500 followers.

B. Reflections

No.	Reflections
The Microscope	
1.	Time Management: Time management is one of the obstacles we faced during the course of our project. Due to our busy schedules as students, we did not spend enough time on our project. This impacted the overall quality of our project as insufficient amount of time was invested into our project. If we were to do it again, we would make a fixed timetable for our project. Over the Circuit Breaker period, we discussed ideas and plans, but fruition and concrete execution was unlikely due to all the constraints following on in Phase 1 and 2. As such, less time was spent actually doing physical activities.
2.	Covid-19: Covid-19 has affected the feasibility, impact and potential of our project.

	<p>Most physical activities cannot be carried out due to the restrictions and safe distancing measures implemented by the government. Thus we often struggled to come up with ways to make our project meaningful. If we were to do the project again, we would shift our focus to spreading awareness of underprivileged children among the community rather than carry out physical activities.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Interaction with our Beneficiary:</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 situation, government rules, school rules and beneficiary rules limited our possible interactions with the children. While our beneficiary was able to notify us of any updates, there were communication issues and delays. Apart from those from the government and school, there were also beneficiary guidelines we had to obey. Other constraints include children not having electronic devices/access to electronic devices. As such, our contact and interactions with the children and beneficiary was severely affected, thereby affecting our impact on the community.</p>
<p>The Mirror</p>	
<p>1.</p>	<p>Self Reflection:</p> <p>By doing this project, we learnt that many children from disadvantaged backgrounds experience a bumpy childhood. This may affect their character development and their potential to succeed in the future. This made us realise how fortunate we are to have a smooth-sailing childhood and to have both our parents present to provide guidance and support for us in our growth. This is not the case for them.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Our preconceptions:</p> <p>Before doing this project, we thought that childhood is easy. After learning about these children, we realised that strong support from others during</p>

	<p>childhood is essential for the most effective childhood development. Therefore, childhood may be problematic for underprivileged children as they may lack vital parental and/or peer support. Furthermore, before this project, we did not understand the complex nature of community service. Through this project we have experienced that community service is a long term commitment and requires strong leadership skills. A good collaboration between ourselves is also important to make our project meaningful and effective.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Future Improvements</p> <p>By learning about underprivileged children, we are able to further empathise with their struggles. We should be more appreciative of our parents taking care of us and being there during our childhood. We should also be grateful for our current lives where we have precious resources and support from others. Additionally, this project has also helped us understand why we should be more sensitive and take community service with a more serious attitude. We hope to improve the lives of those in need, and make their lives more comfortable through our project.</p>

References:

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Annex A(i): Children's worksheet 1

Annex A(ii): Children's worksheet 2

Annex B: Project HOPE Instagram Page