

Project Euphoria

7-06

Jeston Ho 4P108 (L)

Travis Ng 4P131

Luke Tham 4i423

Zaccheus Tan 4i433

Wong Kai Ray 4i227

Project Type: Single-Year

Project Overview

A. Area of Concern / Significance of issues

Chronically ill children require frequent visits to hospitals for treatment, complicated therapy and long-term medication. This takes a large portion of their time away from their schooling and personal life, affecting their development emotionally, mentally, socially and academically.^[1] While many of these children receive excellent medical care in hospitals, they and their families, have a host of other needs for which no one organisation could provide comprehensive and sustained support services.^[2] Furthermore, COVID-19 has only served to aggravate the effects of already present discrimination and ostricisation from the public towards chronically ill children. Such is the case of Blaze Kwok,^[3] a beneficiary of Club Rainbow Singapore, who suffers from a myriad of neurological disorders that renders him medically exempt from wearing a mask in public, despite the COVID-19 measures imposed by the government. His caregiver, Mdm Wong, noted that she was hesitant to bring Blaze out of the house due to scoldings from members of the public stemming from the disbelief and misunderstandings of Blaze's condition as well as his medical exemption from mask wearing.

B. Challenges Identified

According to Club Rainbow Singapore (CRS), feedback from parents highlighted a pressing need to provide emotional, informational, educational, social and financial support to families and their children. Additionally, parents are constantly caring for their child and worrying for their well-being, thus lacking the time to meaningfully bond with their child. Another challenge is the issue of discrimination further enhanced by the pandemic, which has led to social isolation and fear among the children with chronic illnesses.

C. Underlying Problem

Given that children with chronic illnesses often lack psychosocial, educational and social support further aggravated by the COVID situation, how might we create enriching experiences by providing the children with meaningful activities that will allow them to bond with their families and holistic learning opportunities in order to impart important moral values in them, while raising awareness for their plight to ultimately integrate them into society?

D. Plan of Action

We will be working with CRS as our beneficiary and People's Association (PA) as a partner to help with outreach and coordinating interactions sessions.

We aim to take on a three-pronged approach:

- Raising awareness for children with chronic illnesses
- Organising regular meaningful activities such as workshop sessions
- Providing opportunities for greater family bonding

Implementation of Action Plan

Month	Activity	Objectives
2020		
October - December	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core Team formation 2. Discussion with representatives from CRS, PA and mentor 3. Area of concern research 	Gathering information, planning
2021		
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Action plan approval from beneficiary 2. Introduction to beneficiaries 	<p>Ensuring quality of activities</p> <p>Establishing a connection with beneficiaries</p>
February - April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular physical interaction sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. CNY Handicraft b. Balloon Sculpting c. Poetry 2. Writeups showcasing beneficiaries 3. Frequent Instagram Posts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project members introductions b. Fun facts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Common chronic illnesses c. Rainbow Stories 	<p>Interaction</p> <p>Raising awareness</p>

<p>May</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-discussion of plans for the year due to COVID-19 restrictions 2. Instagram Posts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fun facts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Impacts of chronic illnesses on children ii. Impacts on the families b. Rainbow Stories 3. Preparation for Webinar 	<p>Raising awareness</p>
<p>June - July</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shifted interaction sessions online <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dreamcatcher Making b. Plant Pot Painting c. Python Programming 2. Held Euphoria's Webinar: Supporting Children with Chronic Illnesses 3. Replaced with virtual sessions and write ups about beneficiaries 	<p>Interaction Awareness</p>
<p>August</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Release of activity booklet 2. Interaction Sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. National Day Dance b. Python Programming c. Virtual Tours 3. Instagram Posts 	<p>Bonding sessions with parents Interaction Awareness</p>

	a. Experts Explains 4. Went on Kopi With Vans Podcast	
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Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

On social media, we had more than **850 followers**, where we shared a plethora of resources pertaining to chronic illnesses, including stories of such children and interviews with caregivers and experts in the field. Our infographics and write-ups reached out to **more than 2000 users**, helping to dispel misconceptions and create lasting impressions on our viewers. We held a webinar, where experts shared different perspectives on such children and was also used to garner donations from the public. The webinar was held live with **over 40 participants** joining us, and was thereafter posted as clips on our social media pages, where we had **over 1000 views**.

We had regular interaction sessions throughout the year involving **15 children per session** to provide them with **holistic learning opportunities**. Our activity booklet also provided them with **meaningful and fun activities** despite the circumstances.

B. Reflection on Outcomes

Overall, we were **heartened** that by using **creative** online methods and resources to reach out to children with chronic illnesses, we were able to **meaningfully engage** them and impart **important moral values**. Through our interaction sessions, we were also pleased that the children were able to **grow holistically** and learn in a **fun environment**. However, the journey here was **not smooth-sailing**. The sudden COVID restrictions forced us to think **outside of the box** and **innovate** in order to come up with alternatives to engage the children online. The **sudden resignation** of our contact person from Club Rainbow also proved to be a setback, as we had to go through **multiple employees** of Club Rainbow in order to get back on track with our activities as scheduled. We are pleased to be able to **shed light** on the **plight** of these children, in an attempt to **dispel any prejudices** and to create a more **inclusive** and **welcoming** society.

C. Scope of Impact

Community Impact

Members of the public learned more about Club Rainbow (Singapore), as well as the plight of the children of chronic illnesses in Singapore. They **showed support** for these children through **donations** we held during the webinar and by **spreading awareness** through our social media initiatives.

Resolution of AOC/UP

Through regular engagement sessions, we were able to provide an **outlet** for **fun and joy** in the children's lives. These interaction sessions also helped encourage **family bonding** and provide children with exposure to **new and fresh experiences**, allowing them to develop **important skills** and **values** such as teamwork, critical thinking and compassion. Additionally, by establishing a social media presence, we were privileged to have been able to speak with **many stakeholders** and created **infographics** on social media, raising **public awareness**. Our project has built upon a **sustainable** way to engage such children, providing them with **psychosocial, educational** and **social** support, all while **raising awareness** such that others understand their needs and issues.

References

[1] President Message. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.clubrainbow.org/president-message>

[2] Frankenfield, G. (2000, June 22). Chronic Illness May Affect a Child's Social Development. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/children/news/20000622/chronic-illness-social-development#1>

[3] Story, O. G. (2020, February 27). *Living with Epilepsy and Angelman Syndrome*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c2Z6-TXA0E&feature=youtu.be>

Children with Chronic Illness: Dealing with Emotional Problems and Depression. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Children-with-Chronic-Illness-Dealing-with-Emotional-Problems-and-Depression.aspx>

Who We Are. (n.d.). Club Rainbow (Singapore). Retrieved July 23, 2021, from <https://www.clubrainbow.org/howweare>

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