<u>Project Lumino</u>

7-07

Single-Year

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Project Lumino - Written Report

<u>**Section 1: Overview**</u>

    A. Area of Concern

In Singapore, there is an increasing income divide between families of different socio-economic status (Mohktar, 2018). As a result, children from poorer families are unable to get the most out of their education. Analysts have expressed concern regarding how the lack of education perpetuates other societal problems, due to limited holistic education opportunities (Davie, 2015; Teo, 2018). CNA reported that the "bottom 20 percent receive less access to financial and social resources than their peers from other socio-economic status" (CNA, 2018). The result is a glass ceiling which reduces the social mobility of lower-income children.

Furthermore, inequality in Singapore is not given adequate attention. Author of "This is What Inequality Looks Like" and NUS Sociology Professor Teo You Yenn emphasises that "contrary to popular beliefs in some circles, there are people living in poverty in contemporary Singapore". Some may harbour many stereotypes and incorrect beliefs about lower-income families. Yet the reality is that "their children (face) challenges in school" and "struggle for dignity in our society (Teo, 2017).

    B. Challenges Identified

While these children face obvious financial problems, other influences are much more pernicious, including:

1. Lack of accurate information regarding lower-income families
2. Need for holistic educational opportunities, especially:
   a. Greater exposure to English language and its use
   b. Activities emphasising and honing higher-order critical thinking
3. Lack of educational resources in lower-income families

    C. Underlying Problem

Given that increasing income inequality is widening the gap in holistic educational opportunities for children, coupled with stigmas that are disadvantageous to lower-income children, how might

we reduce misconceptions regarding them, while providing these children with holistic educational opportunities, so as to enhance their soft skills and overcome hurdles in their developmental journey?

D. Plan of Action

We implemented a multi-faceted plan, following COVID-19 restrictions while bolstering the holistic development of the students consisting of:

1. Social Media Campaign
2. Donation Drive
3. Virtual Engagement Programme
4. Pen-Pal Programme

The social media campaign educated the public about the struggles of the children and promoted our programmes which required their participation.

The donation drive provided the children with the tools to initiate their own learning, giving them equal access to such materials as their peers.

Our virtual engagement sessions allowed the team to teach the children new skills and increase their access to holistic education opportunities.

Furthermore, the Pen-Pal programme was a great opportunity for the students to improve their English. Prompts provided to volunteer-child pairs aimed to promote their thinking skills.

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

A. Actions and Outcomes to Date

Month	Action	Objective
2019		
December	Formation of Core Team	Starting the Project
	Goal Setting	
	Research	Gathering Secondary Data Sources
2020		
January	Meeting with Beneficiary	Understanding the Problem
	Conducting a Needs Analysis Survey	Gathering Primary Data
February - March	OT Interviews & Formation of OT	Establishing a Strong Network of Volunteers
	Setting Up an Instagram Page	Raising Awareness
	Instagram Posts	
	General Meeting with Our OT	Goal Setting Outlining the Plan
April - May	Observation Visits	Understanding the Problem Discussing Plans
	Regular Meetings with Our Partner Organisation	

	Applying for Funding & Meeting with Funding Organisation	Obtaining Financial Support for Our Activities
	Instagram Posts	Raising Awareness
May	Regular Meetings with Our Partner Organisation	Discussing Plans
	Instagram Posts	Raising Awareness
	Workshop 1 With VC@BL (Volunteering Etiquette)	Training Volunteers
	Webinar in Partnership with Heartware Network	Raising Awareness Dispelling Stereotypes Sharing Experiences
June - July	Regular Meetings with Our Partner Organisation	Discussing Plans
	Instagram Posts	Raising Awareness
	Workshop 2 With VC@BL (Volunteering Etiquette)	Training Volunteers
	Books, Board Games and Stationery Donation Drive	Increase Access to Resources Facilitating Education
	Virtual Engagement Sessions (Held Weekly with Children in YMCA Centres)	Engagement
	Pen Pal Programme (Held Fortnightly with	To Encourage Students to Write and Read

	Children in YMCA Centres)	Utilising Prompts to Hone Their Thinking
August - September	Collaboration with Project Ecobox	To Expose Children to Gardening Encourage Creativity
	Regular Meetings with Our Partner Organisation	Discussing Plans
	Launching Our Website	To Collate Educational and Interesting Online Resources
	Instagram Posts	Raising Awareness
	Virtual Engagement Sessions (Held Weekly with Children in YMCA Centres)	To Expose the Students to Holistic Educational Opportunities
	Pen Pal Programme (Held Fortnightly with Children in YMCA Centres)	To Encourage Students to Write and Read Utilising Prompts to Hone Their Thinking
	Weekly E-Reading Programme (Held With Students from Corporation Primary School)	To Promote Reading Among Underprivileged Children

Section 3: Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

We created and trained a base of **28 volunteers** to interact with our beneficiaries in a fulfilling manner. Through the course of our project, the Core Team and the Volunteers have clocked **791 hours** of community service.

Additionally, our Volunteer Training Workshops have better equipped volunteers. Volunteers reflected on how it "helped (them) to be mentally prepared for interactions with the children" and aided them in handling "undesirable, spontaneous situations".

Through our regular Virtual Engagement Sessions and Pen Pal Programme, we have impacted **36 children** over **135 hours** of interaction time. Our Pen Pal Programme has been well-received, with **96 letters** collected. The Donation Drive yielded **132 books**, **413 stationery items** and **16 board games**.

Through our social media campaign, we have garnered an estimated **1783 impressions** on Instagram.

B. Reflections on Outcomes

As a first year project and with the implementation of stricter COVID-19 restrictions, we initially experienced teething problems on the administrative and planning side of things. However, our group will look back and relish the challenges that we faced, which forced us to step further out of our comfort zone and think out of the box to adapt our project so as to maintain its relevance. Not only have we learnt how to communicate effectively while being resilient and efficient in our work, we have also learnt to do so with empathy and sensitivity through our experiences with working with our beneficiaries. When the chips were down and all our plans seemingly falling apart, it was our determination to give back to the community that pulled us through the troubles. Hence, we are proud of the impact that we have had on our community.

C. Scope of the Project

Community Impact: Members of the public are educated about the prevalence of poverty in Singapore and challenges that underprivileged children face.

Impact on underprivileged children: Through virtual engagement sessions, which involve activities that inculcate values outside the school curriculum, underprivileged children have a holistic learning experience.

D. Resolution of AOC/UP

Given that we have identified the problem that increasing income inequality is widening the gap in holistic educational opportunities given to children, we have empowered underprivileged children (<12 years of age), providing them with comprehensive holistic learning experiences through virtual engagement sessions. This has allowed them to develop into more versatile and well-rounded individuals by enhancing their soft skills. We have also raised awareness about the challenges these underprivileged children face through Instagram posts to reduce misconceptions about them.

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