

# Project Hear Me Out

Group 7-08

Multi-year

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## **Introduction**

### **Area of Concern**

In Singapore, an estimated number of 500,000 people suffer from hearing loss. This number is expected to increase in coming years due to increasing prevalence of age-related hearing loss. Around 50% of elderly aged 80 and above are at high risk of suffering from hearing loss. Despite increasing numbers of those suffering from hearing loss, there is a lack of awareness and knowledge of the Deaf community.

### **Challenges Identified**

From a public survey conducted, we concluded that the majority of the public were unaware of the Deaf community, having misconceptions and lacking awareness regarding SADeaf and communication methods. Thus, people have to be educated with the correct knowledge and skills to aid them in interactions with the Deaf. We realised that the community faces a multitude of challenges including discrimination, social exclusion, and the lack of empathy.

#### **a. Underlying Problem**

Given that there is a lack of awareness about the challenges faced by the Deaf in Singapore, arising from a lack of understanding and knowledge, how then can we help the general public gain valuable knowledge and change their perspectives of the deaf community?

#### **d. Final Plan of Action**

With the number of COVID cases spiking at the end of May, many interaction activities cannot be executed. SADeaf is unable to greenlight any of the activities due to SMM, as well as online interactions due to insufficient manpower on their side. Hence, the group shifted its underlying problem to focus on awareness initiatives.

The group utilized social media by creating new series on our Instagram page that highlighted the difficulties deaf people face, and simple sign language educational videos. The group also spread further knowledge gained through discussions with the beneficiary.

The group was unable to carry out the physical sabbatical planned for the end of Term 2, but were able to utilise the materials created to carry out a comprehensive online sign language lesson, conducted with volunteers. An escape room activity, where participants worked together to solve complex puzzles without speaking was carried out in individual classes to simulate deafness and allow participants to empathise with the conditions of the deaf. Physical exhibitions and food sales were further executed to boost awareness for our cause.

Through various online platforms such as Instagram, Padlet, and Google Sites, the group has raised awareness for the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing community to educate youths about the community and SADeaf.

### **Final projected timeline**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Recruitment of Organising Team</b></li> <li>● <b>Needs Analysis</b></li> </ul>	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Social media posts</b></li> <li>● <b>Exhibition</b></li> </ul>	<b>-Raise awareness</b>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bubble tea Sales</b></li> </ul>	

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Sign Language Course</b></li><li>● <b>Interview</b></li></ul>	
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Encouragement board</b></li></ul>	
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Social Media Awareness</b></li></ul>	

## **Project Outcomes**

### **a. Accomplishments**

In total, Project HearMeOut has reached out to over 1000 people from all walks of life, with over 568 new people reached on Instagram alone. As of 8 August 2021, the group has 1026 followers on the platform. Multiple social media campaigns were initiated to educate and inform the project's followers on the Deaf community in Singapore. "Vital Signs" kicked off at the start of this year on January 19, where short sign language videos were filmed and posted, teaching basic sign language to our followers. The awareness series titled "Hear You Out", initiated on June 17, featured interviews from a Deaf staff member working for SADeaf, and got her to share her life experiences, struggles and accomplishments.

The group has also not neglected live activities. Our bubble tea sale amassed 105 orders, bringing our project and the Deaf community to the attention of even more students. An exhibition held in Kong Chian Library over 2 weeks, containing information regarding the Deaf, helped raise awareness for the Deaf community, and what can be done to help them.

We have amassed 11 OT volunteers in 2021, 4 of which helped out in the sale of the bubble tea initiative. Due to the heightened measures implemented, and issues faced by SADeaf's team, the group was unable to conduct any interaction activities with the Deaf community. However, no opportunities were wasted as a more detailed briefing on the Deaf community was conducted to our OTs. Though sabbaticals were ruled out, they were converted to an Online Sign Language Course, where OT members learnt more about Sign Language.

Lastly, a padlet board for students to pen their well wishes to the Deaf community was established. It enabled students to share what they have learnt, how their mindsets and attitudes towards the Deaf community have changed.

### **b. Reflections**

When we first started off, we were unsure of what to expect. Despite the pandemic, we managed to learn much about the Deaf. Realising that the Deaf were

independent and different from our preconceptions, we were motivated to share our experiences with the public so they will approach the Deaf with a proper mindset. Everyone should take initiative to learn about communication methods, and treat the Deaf with care.

However, we were not able to solve the core social issues such as the public's preconceived prejudices against the Deaf, which are deep-rooted. Such prejudices can only be corrected through long-term interaction with the Deaf. The lack of willingness among the public to interact with them still causes the social exclusion of the Deaf in the long term. We hope that future groups will continue our endeavour to help the Deaf integrate into an empathising and inclusive society.

### **c. Scope of the Project**

Community impact: Members of the public learnt about SADeaf, interaction tips with the Deaf community, and have begun to empathise with the deaf. Inspired by the resilience of the deaf, they can spread this awareness to others, clarify common misconceptions, and become more inclusive towards the deaf.

Community involvement: We recruited 11 OT, 4 of which helped with the bubble tea sale. All were involved in an online Sign Language Course, where they became knowledgeable and inspired to spread awareness to others.

Resolution of AOC/UP: We identified a lack of awareness towards the Deaf community, hence we reached out to an estimated 1000 members of the public through our events, and actively cleared misconceptions, shared tips and facts about the Deaf.

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