

Project Genesis

7-09

Single-Year

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973 words

Section 1: Overview

A. Area of Concern

According to the Ministry of Social and Family Development, 123 youths were admitted into youth homes in 2019 and they face a multitude of problems (Nagpaul & Chen, 2019), and one of them is the lack of holistic development for the youth, especially during pandemic times. During the pandemic, the youth are unable to adapt to the changes brought about by COVID-19. With increased restrictions and the implementation of the circuit breaker, the children may not be able to enjoy various activities which they used to pre-COVID, therefore depriving them of opportunities to develop themselves holistically. Being unable to cope with these changes, they might feel frustrated or have a sense of despair.

B. Challenges Identified

We have identified three problems we aim to address:

1. A societal stigma towards vulnerable youth
2. Lack of healthy work-life balance in the children's home
3. Lack of recreational learning, holistic development of the youth

C. Underlying Problem

In 2021, when the Pertapis Children might experience a lack of opportunities for holistic growth due to changes brought about by the pandemic, how might we provide more opportunities for the vulnerable youth to develop themselves holistically, such that they can grow into all-rounded individuals?

D. Plan of Action

We formulated a suitable plan of action to address the current underlying problems. Initially, we aimed to engage the youths with interactive games, sports and excursions. However, the heightened measures employed both by the school and Pertapis made our initial plans obsolete. Therefore, we have modified our approach and came up with a few ways to enhance our outreach to the children in Pertapis Children's Home (PCH).

1. Shifting educational campaigns online on social media

2. Organising and facilitating physical interaction sessions (before Phase 2 Heightened Alert) and online interaction sessions
3. Sending wellbeing packages to the Pertapis children

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

A. Action Plan Time Frame

Month	Action	Objectives
2020		
December	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Formation of Core Team2. Goal setting3. Research on Beneficiary4. Liaison with Beneficiary	Awareness Understanding the problem
2021		
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regular meetings with representatives from Pertapis Children's Home2. Setting up of Instagram Account	Interaction Awareness
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trip to Pertapis Children's Home for assessment of facilities for the conduct of programmes2. Start of conceptualizing ideas (theme, suitable events, etc)3. Social Media Campaign: <i>Did You Know</i> Series	Interaction Awareness
March - April	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Social Media Campaign: <i>Breaking Barriers</i> Series	Awareness

<p>May</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1st Physical Interaction Session at PCH 2. Implementation of Phase 2 Heightened Alert → Discussion with Pertapis Representatives on reformulating activities in light of the new restrictions 	<p>Interaction Overcome Restrictions</p>
<p>End May - August</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online Interaction Sessions with Pertapis Children 2. Regular Update of Activities on Social Media 3. Regular Feedback Sessions with Pertapis Children's Home Representative 4. Post-interaction mental wellness survey 	<p>Interaction Awareness Feedback & Evaluation</p>

Section 3: Scope of Impact

A. Accomplishments

We have been able to garner support from over **2400** people in spreading awareness of the challenges and stereotypes vulnerable youth may face, as well as share with the public about our ongoing events and activities. Through our interaction sessions, we have impacted **20 children**, and have shared memorable and enjoyable experiences with them. We have reached over **9000 accounts** on Instagram, sharing how we can make a difference in contributing to a happy and fulfilling childhood of vulnerable youth.

B. Reflections

We are honoured to have this opportunity to interact with the youths and understand the challenges they and their caretakers face. They had a chirpy and cheerful presence while engaging in activities such as learning about various scientific concepts and indulging in the fun of gardening. All of us were in smiles at the end of each session. This was an eye-opening experience for us and we are immensely thankful for the support provided by Pertapis Children's Home and our teacher mentor.

Despite the restrictions brought about by tightened safe measures to counter the virus, we are glad that these challenges proved to be surmountable through adaptability and mission. We cultivated the skills to be able to think outside of the box and conceive new methods of engagement.

C. Scope of Impact

Community Impact:

Impact on the wider community: Youths and members of the public could learn more about the plight of youth from vulnerable youth, as well as what they can do when interacting with such youths; spreading the cause of building an inclusive society.

Community Involvement:

Impact on vulnerable youth: Through the interaction sessions, we made use of fun and interactive activities to help the vulnerable youth relax and take a break from their rigorous academic lifestyle. We aimed to inspire and encourage them, and explore their interests through various scientific workshops and inviting several members of the workforce to share their experiences with the children. From the active participation of the children, they were able to learn more about their dreams and aspirations, as well as forge memories together with their fellow children.

Resolution of UP:

Given that we have identified a lack of awareness for children from vulnerable families, we have raised awareness on how to interact with vulnerable youth to an estimated 9000 members of the public.

Furthermore, our interactive sessions and resources have allowed us to develop the vulnerable youths holistically. We developed the childrens' character and confidence, alleviating their negative emotions through the various meaningful activities that we have conducted during the online engagement sessions so that they can garner experience and life skills that help to develop them into more holistic, all-rounded individuals, as well as achieve a healthy work-life balance amidst the increased stress and anxiety levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A post-interaction mental wellness survey (Adapted from Gao & McLellan, 2018) has proven that the children greatly enjoyed the activities and opportunities provided and gleamed much insight into it. Their happiness levels also rose from an average of 6.4 to 8.6 out of 10, indicating a positive attitude towards our interactions.

References

1. Gao, J., & McLellan, R. (2018). Using Ryff's scales of psychological well-being in adolescents in mainland China. *BMC psychology*, 6(1), 1-8.
2. Nagpaul, T., & Chen, J. (2019, February 8). *Self-determination theory as a framework for understanding needs of youth at-risk: Perspectives of social service professionals and the youth themselves*. *Children and Youth Services Review*.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740919300052>.

Appendix

A. Detailed Report Of Interaction Sessions

Physical Interaction Session

- Before the implementation of Phase 2 Heightened Alert, we were able to organise a few physical interaction sessions at PCH
- We were able to get to know the children better through various icebreaker activities

Online Interaction Sessions

- Due to tightened Covid-19 restrictions, we were forced to shift our interaction sessions with PCH online via Zoom.
- We carried out these interaction sessions every Saturday from end-May to early August, 2 hours every session.
- We were able to implement the following initiatives:
 - Online Icebreakers and Games
 - Movie Screening - Toy Story 4
 - Educative Kahoots on various themes (e.g. learning about being appreciative, knowing more about the Olympics)
 - Awareness Day: Collaboration with the following service learning projects to raise awareness on their various causes
 - Project Mahalo and Project Integrate (migrant workers)
 - Project Aphasia (aphasia patients)
 - Career Fair: Sharing session by guests from different career fields (SPF, NTU Medicine, NUS Computer Science)
 - Terrarium Workshop
 - Introduce Urban Farming to the children
 - Taught children how to plant their own seeds, and care for the plants
 - Science Fair
 - Video demonstration of interesting science experiments (e.g. Elephant Toothpaste)
 - Simple Introduction to the science behind how these experiments work

- Fitness Week
 - Videos of various exercises and sports shown to the children
 - Conduct of simple fitness exercises
- National Day Concert
 - Allows the children to understand more about Singapore's history and culture
 - Have a greater sense of belonging in this country
- Aviation Science Fair
 - Simple Introduction to Physics
 - Appreciation for the applications of sciences

Social Media Campaigns

- *Did You Know* Series
 - Providing some background and insight on the topic of vulnerable youth for our followers
- *Breaking Barriers* Series
 - Dispelling myths about vulnerable youth
 - Presents a better outlook of vulnerable youths
- Regular updates of physical and online interaction sessions