

CATEGORY 7 SERVICE LEARNING

Group 7-10

Project Concordia

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(Single Year Project)

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction to project

Project Concordia is a four-year running Service Learning project working with ex-offenders and their families to help them reintegrate into society. We are currently partnered with the Industrial and Services Co-operative Society Ltd (ISCOS), a beneficiary engaging with our target audience. Through our efforts, we aim to organize events alongside ISCOS to assist the family members of ex-offenders and their children as well as raise awareness among the general public on issues ex-offenders face after incarceration.

1.2 Area of Concern

The recidivism rate is high in Singapore, with 40% of inmates reoffending within 5 years of their release. According to a landmark study undertaken in 2021, children whose parents have had drug-related offenses are 5.2 times as likely to get into trouble with the law themselves. Furthermore, surveys carried out by the Ministry of Social and Family Development examining close to 94000 parents and 183000 children show that it is 3.74 times more likely for children with exposure to maternal criminality to commit crimes. As such, it can be seen from this data that recidivism and intergenerational crime are pressing issues in Singapore that need to be addressed.

1.3 Challenges identified

The children of ex-offenders may be overlooked and they may not have had someone they could rely on or look to for guidance throughout their educational journey. Our beneficiary ISCOS focuses on projects and initiatives that benefit the ex-offenders themselves to help them reintegrate into society, with projects such as Give a Line Change a Life. Therefore, less emphasis may be placed on the children of ex-offenders with more resources allocated to helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society. We help to bridge the gap by interacting and engaging with the children through our various activities and become friends they can consult and learn with.

1.4 Underlying Problem

Given that intergenerational crime is becoming increasingly prevalent in Singapore, how might we ensure the adequate spread of awareness about this situation and that the children of ex-offenders receive guidance along their educational journey such that the trend of increasing intergenerational crime can be stopped?

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT

2.1 Timeline



2.2 Details of Programmes

Activities	Details
Interaction Sessions	At the start of the year, through these sessions, we were able to familiarise ourselves with the children and formally introduce ourselves. While it was awkward at first, many of them were willing to open up after some icebreakers, a significant step towards building our relationship with them.
Exercise Sessions (with Quiz)	During the pandemic, there were reduced opportunities for us to exercise or even move about in our daily lives. Heightened alert measures resulted in the session moving online. However, we were able to effectively teach the children important exercises and their respective uses. Simultaneously, the session was a good opportunity to interact with the children.
General Knowledge Sessions	General Knowledge Sessions helped the children to appreciate and understand the importance of learning. We were able to make it fun and engaging, all while allowing the children to contribute their knowledge and ideas for a productive session.

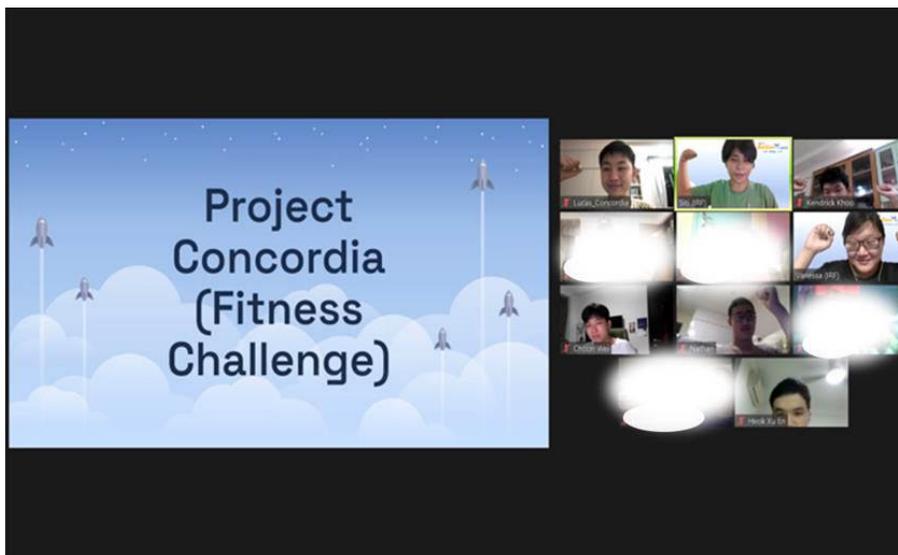
Book Club	<p>We used a specially selected booklist that catered towards the interests of every child. Numerous genres of books were selected after considering their suggestions. We would then meet to discuss the book's plot, themes, and many other features once every 4 months, such that the children had sufficient time to read the book. Both the core and the children would contribute our ideas, and learn more about one another.</p>
ISCOS Family Day	<p>ISCOS Family Day was a one-day event that fostered interactions with ex-offenders and their children. Through unique activities such as the Virtual Amazing Race, our role as facilitators and organizers enabled us to work closely with ISCOS to make the event a success. We also created a video to commemorate this memorable event and serve as a pleasant memory for families that attended the event.</p>

Online Webinar	<p>We organized a Webinar on Facebook and Youtube live with famous podcaster Mr. Vanan “Kopi With Vans” to engage the public in our activities. Mr. Vanan worked closely with us to help the public understand the importance of our project and how everyone must play their part to help ex-offenders and their families. Through a <u>QnA</u> session with Mr. Vanan, and a specialized session with the public through the live comment feature, we were able to clarify doubts and misconceptions the public had of ex-offenders and their families.</p>
“A Good Deed A Day” Initiative	<p>We initiated this initiative among our target audience to bring more positivity into our daily lives, especially amidst the pandemic. By simply doing a good deed every day and recording it, we hope that children of ex-offenders can conscientiously apply the positive values they have learned in their lives in order to cultivate a more positive mindset and attitude towards their lives.</p>

PROJECT OUTCOMES

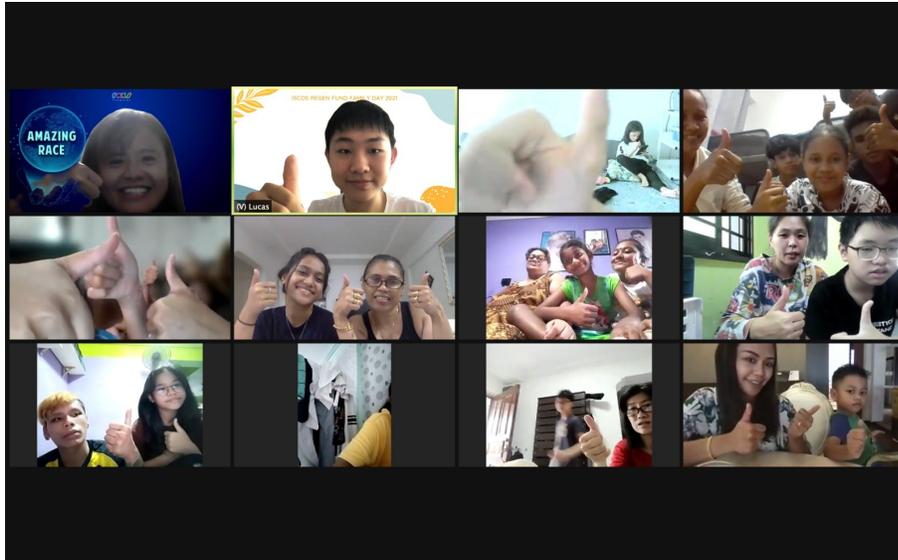
3.1 Accomplishments

There has been a **noticeable and measured change** that has occurred amongst our target audience, with the children of the ex-offenders having **concrete improvements in their behaviors, mindsets, and attitudes** that we believe will be highly beneficial for them in the future. At the beginning of our project, our target audience was afraid to step out of their comfort zones and was often unwilling to engage in dialogue with our core team. After the interaction sessions, the children **warmed up to us** and **had a more enjoyable time** during our bonding sessions.



(Exercise Session)

Furthermore, through our activities, we have **fostered positive values** such as innovation and passion among the children and empowered them to **enrich their lives and pursue their interests** while keeping a **healthy and positive lifestyle**. By acting as both their friends and as their role models, we provided the children with a **safe space to learn from each other** and helped them realize that they are **appreciated and loved**, which helps to **inculcate a positive mindset in life**.



(ISCOS Family Day)

We have also had success generating publicity for the project and its cause, with the general public having a **better understanding of the problems** that are faced by ex-offenders. Our **social media initiatives** (biweekly posts throughout the year), **webinars** (with Kopi With Vans), **website**, and **Family Day** (which was reported in the Straits Times) have allowed us to better publicize the **success stories of various ex-offenders** and change the perception of such individuals as being failures or unsuccessful via providing real-life examples of the contrary. Most crucially, the involvement of the children of ex-offenders in these projects have **developed the leadership abilities** of these children as they take on responsibility for their own project, not to mention **teach them various skills** that will serve them in the future.



(Webinar)

3.2 Reflections on Outcomes

Our team took away a lot from this year-long project. It was very meaningful to be able to tangibly help ex-offenders and their children by organising activities and pushing for initiatives to help them. From the statistics given by surveys, it was shocking to see that they shared the same interests and dreams as us, but yet are condemned to discrimination by the public. We felt fulfilled when we managed to **build a connection** with them and bring smiles of happiness as we know that we have **made a difference in their lives**. During the events that we helped to facilitate, it was fulfilling to be able to hear about the dreams and aspirations of the children and witness firsthand the determination in their efforts to achieve their goals and develop their passion. This has motivated us to push on during such challenging times and go beyond what was planned to provide them with a better chance of realising their dreams and inculcate a positive outlook on life that could benefit them in the long run.

3.3 Scope of Project

Community Impact: Through our interaction sessions, we gained a **deeper understanding** of their problems and ensured that they will not face similar situations which could affect them in the future. Our various publicity efforts have ensured the **spread of awareness about the problems** faced by ex-offenders and their families to members of our society.

Community Involvement: The **5 core team members**, as well as the **50 OTs from various schools** in Singapore, organized and participated in various events. Through these events, we interacted with both the ex-offenders and children to get a **better understanding of who we are working with**, and allowed us to achieve our goals effectively.

Resolution of UP: As we identified a lack of engagement with the children and insufficient awareness was raised about recidivism in Singapore, we have engaged and interacted with the children meaningfully. More importantly, we have laid the **foundation for the future** as we have **raised awareness among the public** who also feel strongly for these families. We hope this project will remain sustainable and be pushed to greater heights to help the children and families of ex-offenders.

Citations (APA)

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