



Project Elpis

Group 7-12

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1. Area of Concern

The poverty rate among working elderly jumped from 28 percent in 2005 to 41 percent in 2015.¹ Despite our societal aims to be more inclusive towards senior citizens from as early as 2012, when DPM Heng Swee Keat sketched out his vision for Singapore as a society that “cares for all its members” and admitted that “more can be done to meet the needs of older Singaporeans”², problems still exist for the low-income elderly. In light of COVID-19, DPM Heng acknowledged that the lives of many of these low-income elderly have been further worsened due to the pandemic³.

Based on a local research, rental flat residents are lonelier and do less exercise. We found that many of the rental flat residents are elderly and the general problems they face include a lack of community support, lack of social engagement and a general lack of empathy from the public towards their challenges.

2. Challenges Identified

Some of the challenges we have identified are:

1. The low-income elderly lack community support.
2. Many of them live alone in rental blocks, thus lacking social interactions, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Many of them are poorly educated, which poses a challenge for them to adapt and stay in touch with modern society.
4. The general public lacks empathy towards them, with some having a social stigma towards them.

3. Underlying Problem

Given the current situation where the low-income elderly in Singapore lack sufficient resources and interactions with others, how might we raise awareness on this, engage them meaningfully through community efforts and provide community help such that they are able to lead more fulfilling and higher quality lives?

4. Plan of Action

We collaborated with North West CDC and Feiyue Organisation with the goal of enhancing social interaction and improving the welfare of the low-income elderly through community service. We visited Feiyue Senior Activity Centre @ Senja fortnightly, to keep in touch with the elderly. Each visit included at least one activity customised to those living around the area. We also carried out two distribution drives to provide community support. To increase empathy towards low-income elderly and raise awareness on the problems they face, we regularly posted updates on our Instagram page ([@officialprojectelpis](#)), and encouraged the public to sign up as volunteers at our events. Our plan of action is detailed in the table below.

5. Solutions Implemented

Legend	Red = Cancelled / Postponed Black = Already conducted
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Month/2021	Activity
Step 1: Setting the Foundation, Overall Project Planning	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formed an Organising Team ● Researched for Area of Concern ● Set objectives and goals
January - February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communications with North West CDC ● Visiting Feiyue @ Senja for discussions and to better understand the needs of the elderly ● Secured funding from North West CDC (\$6000) ● Preparation of general logistics
Step 2: Implementation of Action Plan	

February - March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chinese New Year celebratory event; calligraphy writing and lantern-making 2. Cleaning of elderly's houses (based on special requests) 3. Taichi sessions with expert 4. Distribution of cleaning items
April - June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gardening session; growing vegetables and flowers together 2. Online scam prevention talk with National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) 3. Tie-dye arts-and-craft session; customise unique tie-dye bags 4. Health talk with doctor 5. Distribution of daily necessities (sponsored by GIC) 6. Distribution of COVID-19 awareness flyers 7. Excursion trip to Gardens by the Bay
August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Day celebration for the elderly; singing, games, bonding sessions between the elderly and young 2. Book Donation Drive for those elderlies taking care of grandchildren. Books donated by our school library, volunteers and team members. 3. Secret Santa gift exchange activities
Step 3: Outreach & Publicity	
January - August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up Instagram page ● Regular posts and stories update ● Recruitment of volunteers through Instagram
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion with Student: Compassion SG on a new collaboration
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passing on the project to juniors

6. Accomplishments

We have been able to...

1. Provide the low-income elderly with some necessities and resources that are useful to them.
2. Provide more social engagement and interactions through a variety of events.
3. Teach basic skills and knowledge needed in our modern society. (eg scam prevention talk, COVID-19 awareness flyers)
4. Conduct most of our planned activities despite tightened COVID-19 restrictions.
5. Benefit around 300 beneficiaries
6. Engage more than 30 student and adult volunteers
7. Post updates of our project on our Instagram page, reaching more than 2100 followers, with an average outreach of more than 1500 accounts per post. ([@officialprojectelpis](#))
8. Achieve our goals and address the underlying problem.

7. Scope of Impact

Community Impact: Our activities, involving the low-income seniors at Senja were filled with much fun and joy. They feedbacked that they enjoyed the activities, and benefitted from the support provided from the distribution drives.

Community Involvement: Together with the core members, we had above 30 contributors from HCI and beyond. They volunteered in our activities, promoting interaction and allowing them to gain valuable knowledge and experience. They now better understand low-income seniors and the problems they face.

Resolution of underlying problem: Through the 2 distribution drives, we provided necessities to help the elderly. The activities were designed to address the challenges identified. Through our activities such as gardening and art-and-craft activities, we helped foster social interaction and the elderly learned new skills. Besides, our social media posts and the volunteering opportunities we created helped increase empathy from the public towards low-income elderly, and allowed us to reach out to a wider audience.

8. Reflections

Through our activities and interactions, we better understood the situation of these elderly. Although the heightened measures put in place due to the worsened COVID-19 situation disrupted many of our plans for the elderly, we managed to find solutions. Many expressed difficulty in using electronic devices, making it impossible for us to maintain contact virtually, but we sent out greeting cards to maintain contact during the heightened alert.

This project has been an enriching journey which has made us see the elderly in a different light. Contrary to initial expectation, they were optimistic towards life despite facing many difficulties in their lives. We understand that such groups of people exist in our everyday lives, and now know to look out for them. We hope we helped others in the community realise that they can play a part in actively engaging the elderly too.

9. References

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