

Project Invicta

Group 7-30

Project Type: Single-Year

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Word count (excluding annexes, diagrams, charts, pictures, headers, footers,
hyperlinks, cover page and references): 1000

Section I: Overview

1. Areas of Concern

(#1) We are looking at the social stigma that persons with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs) face in contemporary Singaporean society.

Singaporeans 'don't walk the talk' on special needs kids

Poll findings show they are tolerant towards, rather than accepting of, these children

Key findings

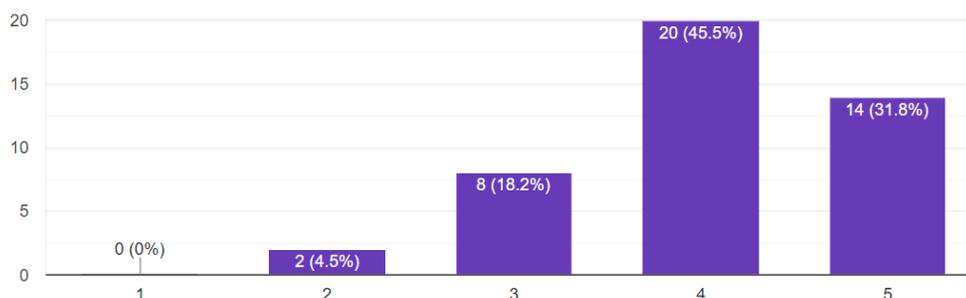
- 30 per cent agree that Singapore is an inclusive society.
- 64 per cent believe Singaporeans are willing to share public spaces but not interact with the special needs community.
- 50 per cent of parents are comfortable with having a child with special needs sit next to their own child in class.
- 49 per cent believe new laws are necessary to better promote the rights of children with special needs.
- 10 per cent are confident of interacting with children with special needs.

Local polls show that Singaporeans are tolerant towards, rather than accepting of, PWIDs (Tai, 2016). Social stigma targeted towards PWIDs is still prevalent among Singaporeans - some perceive PWIDs as “crazy” and “weird”. In fact, 44.5% of teenage students polled attached negative and pejorative labels to PWIDs (Ng, 2018).

(#2) We are also looking at the lack of interaction between PWIDs and Singaporeans. On one hand, PWIDs find it challenging to communicate with others owing to their hindered cognitive development. On the other hand, this can deter Singaporeans from interacting with them, for fear that it would be too difficult or time-consuming. Online surveys that we have conducted on Singaporeans reflect this:

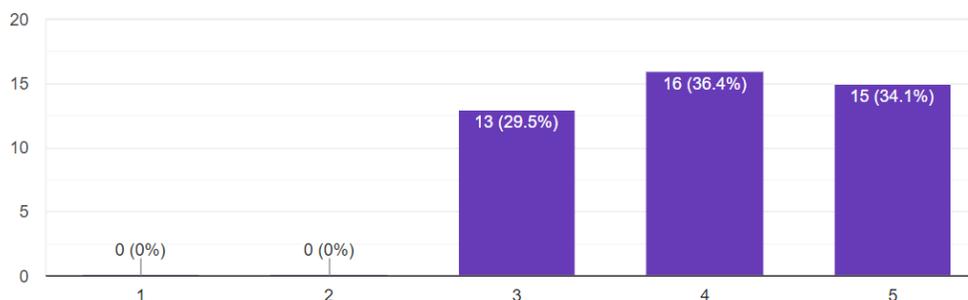
On a scale of 1 to 5, how challenging do you find / think communicating with persons with intellextual disabilities to / would be?

44 responses



On a scale of 1 to 5, how time-consuming do you find / think communicating with persons with intellectual disabilities to / would be?

44 responses



*“1” represents the least extent, “5” represents the greatest extent

(#3) We are looking at the difficulty that PWIDs have with understanding, processing and learning information and abstract concepts (e.g time) due to their hindered intellectual development.

2. Underlying Problem

Given the lack of understanding of the conditions and needs of PWIDs in contemporary Singapore and the lack of interaction between PWIDs and Singaporeans, how can we raise public awareness for this group of people as well as equip PWIDs with the adequate social skills and knowledge so that they can better integrate into society?

3. Plan of Action

We have thought of several solutions to combat this problem. Due to the second outbreak of COVID-19 this year, we shifted our focus online and adopted a three-pronged approach, adapting our plans to circumvent the restrictions imposed:

(#1) Raising awareness:

We hope that through raising awareness about the challenges faced by the PWID community in Singapore, we will be able to correct negative attitudes and stereotypes targeted towards PWIDs as well as educate Singaporeans on how to communicate appropriately with PWIDs.

(#2) Fundraising:

Currently, there are specialised education schools in Singapore which pledge themselves to equipping students with IDs with the necessary skills for societal integration. We hope that through our fundraising efforts, we will be able to support their operations such that these schools have more resources to aid PWIDs with.

(#3) Online lesson packages:

We hope that through our comprehensive yet simple subject-based lesson packages, the students with IDs in these schools will be able to enjoy a more enriching learning experience. Through the micro-interactions in such lesson packages, we aim to provide a platform for PWIDs to express themselves in an academic setting, thus fostering social skills for their societal integration.

Section II: Implement Solutions

1. Actions and Outcomes To Date

Month	Action	Objectives
2020		
December	Set project's goals	-
	Conduct preliminary research	Identify our beneficiaries
2021		
January	Confirm beneficiary partnership	-
	Set up project's Instagram account	Build an online audience
	Conduct needs analysis	Understand our beneficiaries' needs and challenges
February	Liase with beneficiary	Create a work plan for future initiatives
	Plan programmes based our beneficiaries' needs	Benefit our beneficiaries
March - April	Publicise the project on social media	Raise awareness about PWIDs
	Conduct volunteering sessions with our beneficiaries	Interact and empathise with PWIDs
May - June <i>*Second COVID-19 outbreak</i>	Formulate new plans	Overcome new COVID-19 restrictions
	Continue social media outreach	Educate Singaporeans on issues regarding PWIDs
	Create project's website	

July - August	Conduct more online volunteering sessions and lessons	Help PWIDs learn and grasp academic topics
	Organise MINDS eShop sale	Raise funds for MINDS
	iSpark consortium assembly	To raise awareness for PWIDs within Hwa Chong Institution (HCI) students
	Create documentary video	Document our reflections from interacting with PWIDs and raise awareness through this
	Continue social media outreach	Raise awareness about PWIDs
After August	Reflect on project's journey	Identify areas for improvement
	Hand project down to juniors	Ensure continuity of project

Section III: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

(#1) Raising awareness:

Our Instagram account (@project.invicta) was successful in raising awareness for PWIDs, as each post was able to reach an average of 120 accounts and garner an average of 25 interactions per post. To date, our Instagram account has 140 followers and 10 posts.

The infographic consists of four panels, each with a title in a blue box and text in a white cloud shape. The panels are: 1. Social Skills: A woman with a speech bubble icon. 2. Employment: A woman with a laptop and a bar chart icon. 3. Stereotypes: A red octagonal stop sign with a white hand icon. 4. Communication: A colorful background with a white cloud and a list of footnotes.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Owing to their **hindered cognitive development**, people with intellectual disabilities find it challenging to communicate with others. This can **deter** Singaporeans from interacting with them, for fear that it would be **too challenging** or **time-consuming**.

EMPLOYMENT

In today's **increasingly competitive** world, a prerequisite for securing employment would be **high skills** and **educational qualifications**. People with intellectual disabilities often lack these and thus find it **difficult to be employed**.

STEREOTYPES

Cynical remarks about people with intellectual disabilities **perpetuate harmful stereotypes** of them. If you do happen to hear such comments, be brave and stand up against them!

COMMUNICATION

PWIDs are likely to have some degree of **RECEPTIVE** communication difficulty ¹, or **EXPRESSIVE** language difficulty ²

1. have difficulty understanding
2. difficulty being understood

Our presentation during the iSpark consortium assembly, as well as our website (link: <https://sites.google.com/student.hci.edu.sg/projectinvicta/home>) helped to raise awareness about PWIDs among HCI students.



(#2) Fundraising:

We managed to raise more than \$150 through our MINDS eShop fundraising initiative, which will go directly to MINDS so as to better the lives of PWIDs there.



(#3) Online lesson packages:

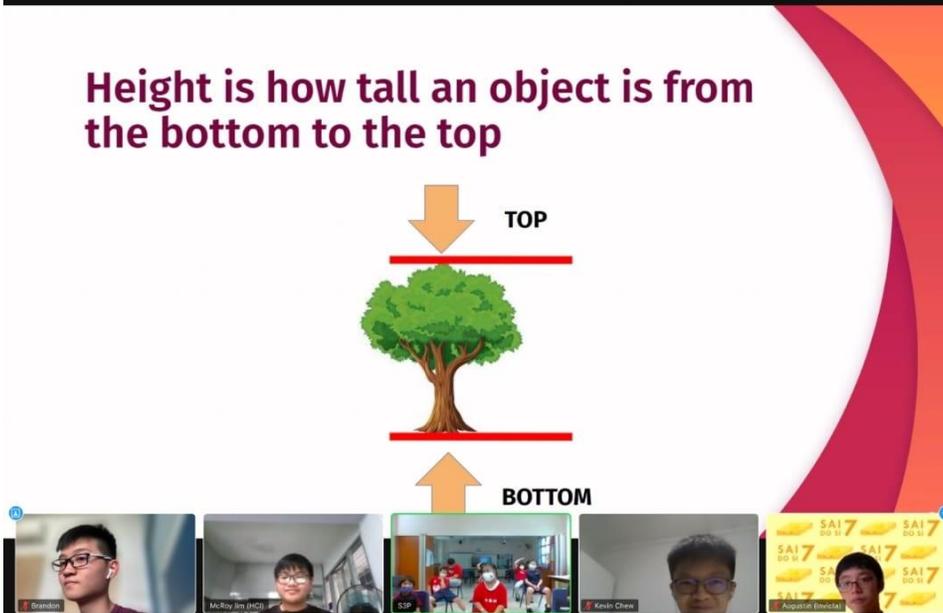
The teachers at MINDS Fernvale Gardens School gave us positive feedback on our lessons, commenting that they were “engaging and easy-to-follow”. The students (about 10) attending each session were rather enthusiastic during the lessons, taking turns to answer our questions and eagerly dancing along to the music.



ADULT PLANT

- Flowers become fruits
- Fruits have seeds
- Seeds grow into new plants!

The slide features a photograph of a plant with green leaves and purple flowers. Below the slide, there are five video thumbnails from participants: Brandon Ho, McRoy Jey (HCl), Lima, Kevin Chew, and Anuprat.



Height is how tall an object is from the bottom to the top

The diagram shows a tree with a red horizontal line at its base labeled 'BOTTOM' and an orange arrow pointing up. Another red horizontal line is at the top of the tree canopy, labeled 'TOP', with an orange arrow pointing down.

Below the slide, there are six video thumbnails from participants: Brandon, McRoy Jey (HCl), SJP, Kevin Chew, and Anuprat (twice).

2. Reflections

Project Invicta has been an insightful service-learning endeavour which has left an indelible mark on our lives. We are immensely grateful for this learning opportunity, and we have all grown to become more empathetic individuals who are now able to better understand the daily challenges that PWIDs face.

At times, Invicta ran into some problems, like miscommunication, which sometimes led to a disorganised activity plan. This, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, led to the cancellation of many projected activities as restrictions hampered our efforts to organise physical interaction sessions and reach out to target beneficiaries. Though this was discouraging, our group persevered in our mission to improve the lives of PWIDs and raise awareness for their ordeal, which ultimately enabled us to see this project to fruition.

3. Scope of Impact

(#1) Community impact:

Students and members of the public learnt more about PWIDs' condition, the challenges they face in everyday life, as well as the proper methods of communication with PWIDs. Our efforts have contributed to creating a more inclusive society for PWIDs.

(#2) Impact on students with IDs:

Through our online lessons, we helped students with IDs better understand science and mathematics topics taught in their school. The interactive nature of our lessons meant that the students were able to stay engaged and practice expressing themselves and communicating with others.

(#3) Resolution of underlying problem:

As such, we have successfully raised public awareness for PWIDs, improved the social skills of the students with IDs, and helped them understand academic concepts, thus solving the aforementioned underlying problem.

Section IV: References

Ng, K. (2018, March 12). 'Crazy, weird, scary': Survey unveils negative labels youths associate with mental illness. *Today*.

Tai, J. (2016, May 31). Singaporeans 'don't walk the talk' on special needs kids. *The Straits Times*.