



Group ID 7-33

Project Change 2.0

Ian Lee 4A1 (L)
Samuel Chern 4I4
Asher Tan 4O3
Justus Huan 4P1
Wei Xuan 4P1

Project type: Multi-year

Section 1: Overview

1 AREA OF CONCERN

Our main area of concern is children aged six to 12 from low-income families. We are working with Beyond Social Services (BSS) for this project. We found that children from low-income families are often disadvantaged education-wise and psychologically, not only locally but also in other parts of the world. Our ethos was heavily motivated by a testimony which shared about an 8-year-old child from a low-income family who scored 8 out of 100 for his English examination but was unwilling to talk to the interviewee not because he was shy, but because he couldn't speak much English. (Channel News Asia, 2018). This may affect their ability to apply for higher-income jobs in the future. Psychologically, children of lower social-economic status (SES) experience higher rates of parent-reported mental health problems and higher rates of unmet mental health needs (Hodgkinson, Godoy, Beers, & Lewin, 2017). Moreover, children who grow up poor seem to be more prone to antisocial and aggressive behavior, such as bullying (Dallas, 2017). These will certainly have an adverse impact on their growth and most possibly their adulthood.

2 CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Although an OECD report titled Excellence and Equity in Education had shown nearly 50% of Singaporean students from poorer families still perform well in their studies, it acknowledged that there remains a significant correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and low performance in all Pisa-participating economies (Teng, 2017), showing much work remains in mitigating educational inequity locally. Furthermore, due to the inability to afford educational resources, there stands a higher chance that children from lower SES cannot receive the adequate education one needs for their future as compared to other children (Ng, 2018), and hence may be unable to break free of the poverty cycle. Moreover, though there is proof that there is a presence of poverty in Singapore, many Singaporeans do not think that poverty exists in our nation (Ng, n.d.). Therefore, there is a need to spread awareness to the public about the existence of poverty locally and how they could play a part in mitigating its damaging effects.

3 UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Given the negative educational and psychological impacts that children from low-income families face and the lack of attention towards this issue, how can we raise awareness amongst

the general public on the difficulties these children face in Singapore, so that they can empathize and better understand them in the future, while fostering personal and meaningful relationships with them?

4 PLAN OF ACTION

Due to COVID-19, we decided to focus more on initiatives that raise awareness and educate the public about the difficulties children from low-income families face. This is accomplished through visiting past initiatives while introducing new ones after lengthy discussions with BSS over the children's needs. All events were implemented after BSS green-lighted our activities. The timeline and initiatives planned, including those that were cancelled, are shown in the table below, with details of the activities included as well.

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

Date	Initiative / Action	Description
Feb 21'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Zoom meeting with Beyond Services	-
March 21'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruitment of Organising Team members	-
April - July '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Planning of Popular Drive (Stationary List)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drafting proposal list for Popular drive as well as calculating expected expenditure
April '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Orientation for weekly tutoring by Beyond Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To ensure the Organising Team is prepared for the tutoringExpose the Organising Team to possible scenarios that might occur during tutoring

June '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AMK June Holiday Online activity planned by SUSS in conjunction with Beyond Social Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To engage in a learning activity with the youths at the centre, as well as keep them up to date on current affairs such as the Covid-19 pandemic and global warming issues.
July '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online Pledge board in conjunction with Youth Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To educate the public on the detriments of classism in Singapore ● Encourage the public to show their support to the children ● Raise further awareness of our cause
July '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchasing stationery for our Popular Drive for Beyond Social Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gifting of stationery to the children being tutored at Beyond Social Services ● Stationery was purchased online ● Stationery set for upper primary and secondary school includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 Pens ○ 1 Pencil ○ 1 Eraser ○ 1 Box of pencil lead ○ 1 Highlighter ○ 1 12m Correction tape ○ 1 Stapler

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Box of Stapler bullet ○ 1 Glue stick ○ 1 Ruler ○ 1 Whiteboard marker ● Stationery set for lower pri includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Pencil ○ 1 Eraser ○ 1 Box of pencil lead ○ 1 Highlighter ○ 1 Stapler ○ 1 Box of Stapler bullet ○ 1 Glue stick ○ 1 Ruler ○ 1 Whiteboard marker ○ 1 box of 12 colour pencils
May - Nov '21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 to 1 weekly tutoring with children from Beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total of >160h of tutoring hours

Section 3: Project Outcomes

1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We held 3 main initiatives: Stationery Drive, the Pledge Board and our weekly tutoring sessions with the children under BSS's tutoring programme. The initial plan for our weekly tutoring sessions was to have our volunteers go down to the centre to tutor the children but it was shifted online due to Covid 19. For our stationery drive, we purchased stationery items online and packed them into goodie bags before gifting them to the children we tutored from our

beneficiary. Furthermore, we prepared a pledge board and a testimony by a child from a low-income family on how he was ostracized in his childhood, hoping to touch the hearts of our audience. This pledge board initiative, which was carried out via Instagram, reached more than 400 people; more than 35 reposted and signed the pledge. The people are of different age groups, ranging from primary school students to adults in their late 50s.

2 REFLECTIONS

Through the added challenges caused by COVID-19, important values like unity and teamwork were instilled in us as we steered this project forward. As we brainstormed new initiatives, we realised the importance of 21st century competencies such as creative and critical thinking especially in rapidly changing times. Mentally, we were reminded to remain calm and resilient when facing difficulties like differences in mindsets among group members. Nevertheless, we feel like we managed to create personal relationships with the children at Beyond Social Services and have subconsciously become an essential part of each other's lives. Personally, we overcame personal biases against our beneficiaries and understood the importance of empathy instead of judgement towards people, especially the less fortunate. Finally, we realised the significance of Service Learning: spreading compassion to our communities and applying the skills learnt to serve the people around us.

3 SCOPE OF IMPACT

Community Impact: Members of the public understand and learn more about the situation surrounding children from low-income families in Singapore as well as how BSS impacts their lives. They are now more well-versed in how we can help and empathise with them.

Community Involvement: Fortunately, we were able to involve our 15 organising team members for our weekly tutoring sessions. This allowed them to truly understand our AOC as well as foster deep and personal relationships with them. Through this, we hope that each of them, as well as the five of us, has been impacted in a unique way and have also learnt more about the struggles of our AOC.

4 RESOLUTION OF UP/AOC

Our underlying problem has evolved since last year. Instead of focusing solely on raising awareness about disadvantaged children in the community, we have widened our scope to nurturing stronger bonds and personal relationships with the children at the beneficiary. This

move was made along with the suggestion from BSS to forge closer bonds with them. Indeed, this was the right move to make as forging personal relationships with the children via tuition sessions allowed us to understand their familial backgrounds as well as the experiences and emotions that they have daily.

References

Dallas, M. E. (2017, January 10). The toll poverty takes on children's mental health.

Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poverty-children-mental-health/>

Hodgkinson, S., Godoy, L., Beers, L. S., & Lewin, A. (2017, January). Improving Mental Health Access for Low-Income Children and Families in the Primary Care Setting. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5192088/#B13>

Ng, C. (2018, November 10). Commentary: A wake-up call, when a disadvantaged child gets 8 out of 100 for an exam. Retrieved from

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/singapore-inequality-helping-disadvantaged-children-task-force-10905470>

Ng, I. Y. H. (n.d.). Definitions and Measurements of Poverty. Retrieved from

http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/ssr/PDF Format/SSR Snippets/Vol 2/Snippet 2_final.pdf

Taylor, K. (2019, July 25). Poverty's Long-Lasting Effects on Students' Education and Success. Retrieved from <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/povertys-long-lasting-effects-on-students-education-and-success/>

Teng, A. (2017, November 24). Poorer kids more likely to underperform, but Singapore has many resilient students, global test finds. Retrieved from

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/poorer-kids-more-likely-to-underperform-but-singapore-has-many-resilient>