

Project Ignite

07-36

Single-Year

Ong Zhi Jie	4O119
Chow Xing Yu	4I104
Loi Kai Jun	4O21
Ou Wen	4O120
Wong Yee Hern	4I127

Section I: Overview

1. Area of Concern

Muscular Dystrophy (MD) refers to an umbrella term for a specific set of muscular disorders characterised by muscle weakness, wasting and contractures, which are usually progressive in nature and sometimes even life threatening.

The severity of the disorders warrants concern and awareness among the public, in order to better understand the disorders and better develop empathy towards victims diagnosed with the disorder. However, the public has little to no knowledge about the disorder. (refer to Appendix A)

Many Singaporeans with MD are often subject to social stigma due to lack of public knowledge regarding these disorders, and that MD is a highly visible disorder with many people with MD having to use a wheelchair for mobility, which negatively affects public perception of them, especially in public places where it is much more inconvenient for them to move.

MDAS (Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore)) is a non-profit organisation that provides care and support to people with Muscular Dystrophy in Singapore. MDAS is committed to providing health and public education on MD as well as supporting medical research.

2. Challenges Identified

Some challenges identified by the Project in the process of increasing awareness regarding the disorder and interact with members of our Beneficiary include:

- a. Lack of Opportunities for Social Interaction
- b. Reluctance of people with MD to have Social Interaction
- c. Lack of Public Materials regarding the Disorder (refer to Appendix A)

3. Underlying Problem

Given that people diagnosed with muscular dystrophy often face immense social stigmatisation in Singapore's society due to the lack of awareness in society as well as the lack of self-esteem and interpersonal skills.

Thus, how can we raise our beneficiaries' self-esteem and impart in them the necessary interpersonal skills, as well as raise funds to aid our beneficiary, such that they are able to better integrate into society, thus enriching their lives in the year 2021 and beyond?

4. Plan of Action

A three-pronged approach was adopted to tackle the issues.

- a. improve the self-esteem of members of MDAS
- b. raise funds to aid our beneficiary
- c. raise awareness regarding the Disorder

Interacting Sessions and Game Days were held in order to facilitate more social interaction between the Members as well as volunteers. Assistance was offered to the Beneficiary in terms of the organisation and publicity of the annual Flag Day held by the Beneficiary. Social media was utilised to spread information regarding the disorders and increase awareness regarding them.

Section II: Implementation of Action Plan

1. Activities and Outcomes to Date

Month	Activities	Outcomes
January	a. Taking over of Project b. Needs Analysis c. Analysing Survey Data d. Research Phase e. Discussions with Beneficiary and Mentors	Understanding the Problem
February	a. Continuation of Research Phase b. Identifying Underlying Problem c. Research on the Underlying Problem d. Start of Planning Phase e. Discussions with Beneficiary and Mentors	Understanding the Problem
March	a. Interacting Sessions b. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness
April	a. Interacting Sessions b. Physiotherapy Session c. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness
May	a. Interacting Sessions b. Art Jam Session c. Boccia Session d. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness
June	a. e-Games Day b. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness
July	a. e-Games Day b. Flag Day Publicity c. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness Fund-Raising
August	a. e-Games Day b. Flag Day Publicity c. Social Media Publicity	Interaction Awareness Fund-Raising

Section III: Project Outcome

1. Accomplishments

The ongoing pandemic has rendered it hard to let plans come to fruition. However, substantial achievements were made in regard to resolving the Underlying Problem. An estimated outreach of our publicity programmes on social media stands at **600**, and **16** members of MDAS and **7** student volunteers have been directly impacted by the Project. Although it is a small group, strong bonds have been forged between the student volunteers and the members, and many student volunteers are hoping to resume physical social interaction with the Members soon. A total of **900** likes were recorded in our social media posts, with a follow base of **800**.

2. Reflections

Through this service-learning project, we came together to champion for a meaningful cause and understand better our friends with MD. Through our interaction with them, we have better understood them and came to appreciate and admire their optimism and enthusiasm despite the adversity. We have forged amazing friendships with the members that would extend beyond this project.

We are blessed to have been able to meet and interact meaningfully with these wonderful individuals and that changed our perception towards them completely. We came in this project thinking that we would be serving the members, but through our interaction with them, we ourselves have matured as individuals and gained valuable insights into the experiences of the members.

3. Scope of Impact

Impact on Public

5 OT members and an additional 2 student volunteers participated in the interacting sessions and Game Days. Although the public did not interact much with the Members due to the pandemic, publicity through social media has raised awareness regarding MD and assisted in the dispelling of stereotypes and stigma regarding people with the disorder.

Impact on Beneficiary

Over 16 members of MDAS, mostly youth, directly benefitted from our programmes. Group sizes were a constraint due to the pandemic. Nonetheless, the social interaction increased the

self-esteem of the members and allowed them to be more comfortable interacting with the public.

Resolution of Area of Concern / Underlying Problem

Given that people diagnosed with muscular dystrophy often face immense social stigmatisation in Singapore's society due to the lack of awareness in society as well as the lack of self-esteem and interpersonal skills, through an outreach of 600 people and interacting sessions and games, as well as social media campaigns , we raised our beneficiaries' self-esteem a and impart in them the necessary interpersonal skills, as well as raise funds to aid our beneficiary.

References

1. *MDAS Annual Report 2019/2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdas.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-FY2019-2020-Full.pdf>.
2. Y. H. Goh, *61 year old with muscular dystrophy recognised for championing disability causes*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/community/61-year-old-with-muscular-dystrophy-recognised-for-championing-disability-causes>.

Appendix A: Survey Results

As part of our Research Phase, a needs analysis survey was conducted to assess the familiarity of the target audience regarding MD. A total of 60 survey responses was recorded.

In terms of familiarity with the causes and symptoms of Muscular Dystrophy, from a scale of 1 to 5, the average obtained was 1.42. This implies a lack of familiarity with Muscular Dystrophy and the impact it brings on people afflicted with the disorder.

In terms of willingness to understand more regarding Muscular Dystrophy, from a scale of 1 to 5, the average obtained was 4.18. This could imply a lack in public materials and information regarding the disorder, and a general willingness to understand more regarding the disorder so as to reduce the social stigma associated with the disorder.