



## The Helping Hands Project

**Aim:** Millions of Filipino families are regarded as “subsistence poor” or food poor, based on the latest available data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The Helping Hands Project aims to contribute to hitting the no poverty and zero hunger target in the Philippines by providing aid to local less fortunate communities through the distribution of essential commodities, nutritious food and opening avenues to make them financially independent and employable.



### Targeted UN goals



\*We chose these goals because it greatly pains us to see children who have to suffer and want to make it a better place for them to live in

#### Task distribution

- Saira- video editing, social media, posters, website & blog design
- Tanasha- website design,
- Kate- social media, selling merch, translation
- Kelsey- social media, video editing, communication with locals, sourcing materials, selling merch, treasury
- Christiana- social media, video editing, posters, selling merch
- Chantelle- t-shirt sourcing, social media, selling merch
- Alexi- communication with locals, sourcing of medicine for the health mission, selling merch
- Common tasks: donation sorting and packing, maintaining logs of activities, inventory management, documentation, event planning & participation.

#### Impact:

- Number of hours spent on the project collectively by the group: 900
- Number of volunteers recruited: 55 Number of donors: 290
- Number of people helped through feeding programs, distribution drive & health mission: 3,600 (Tondo 200 x 4, 3rd district 350 families with avg 4 members x 2)
- Number of people impacted through raising awareness about the targeted SDGs: Through Presentations to the School community: 550; Through Flyers: 400 families
- Communities helped: 2; Collaborations/Partnerships: Thrive Global, Giving Hope Foundation (non-profit organisations providing nutritious meals, hygiene education)
- Donation collection locations secured through members and volunteers: 15 Metro Manila; Inventory locations secured: 2
- Feeding programs: 4 ; Health and hygiene mission at the 3rd district of Manila: 1 ; Distribution Drive at the 3rd district of Manila: 2
- Facebook: 1,084 followers, Audience engaged on FB: 3,000 highest post likes, 13 shares
- Instagram: 214 followers, Audience engaged on Instagram: 255 highest post likes
- Funds Raised through garage sales, coin drive and merc sale: GBP 1,400; Funds raised through donations: GBP 150;
- Donations raised: 104 Cartons (18 x 18 x 24 inches) of clothes, toys, books, household items
- For Goal 12: Minimizing waste/Reducing clutter at homes/Recycling; Reused old boxes for packing the donated items; used old plastic bottles (recycling of trash) to make a sample furniture item.

**Skills developed:** Leadership skills, team skills, project management skills, people skills, communication skills, event planning, social media, time management skills to name a few.

**Learning gained and Highlights from the experience:** We have learnt that everyone can contribute to making a positive change in society irrespective of their age or background; all you need is a will to do. This project



taught us that change truly begins with us! Every small action counts and makes a difference. Small actions consistently carried over a period of time lead to big positive changes. We gained immense confidence in our capabilities through this project. We managed our challenges well by setting SMART goals and breaking down each big goal into smaller achievable/doable steps. We prepared our timeline at the start of the project and worked accordingly. At times it was difficult and exhausting to manage our school assignments along with this project but we didn't give up and sustained through our efforts. It was very challenging to go to our chosen community for a full-blown medical mission due to ongoing elections; there were safety concerns and hence we decided to something on a smaller scale. We are very thankful for the learnings in the process and the relationships built. We interacted with the kids in the community and were happy to see them smiling and enjoying despite their conditions. We were able to get a lot of volunteers from our school and friend circle which enabled us to accomplish a lot in a short span of time. We also realised the value of money through this project, GBP 80 could feed 200 kids a nutritious meal. This project also awakened us to the realities of the world, it showed us what it is like to be poor and how we should be grateful for what we have.

**Knowledge gained about the community:** Partnering with Thrive and Giving Hope Foundation helped us achieve greater impact. Thrive connects global donors and volunteers to children living in poorest areas. Through these organisations, we could reach out to more people, connect with communities really in need of aid. In the same way, talking to **community chairpersons & heads** of these organisations helped us gain insights into living conditions (houses are mere poor structures defenceless against typhoons & other calamities) & backgrounds of the residents. We also used their help to distribute donations hence we could ensure our donations reached to people who truly needed those. We were also able to assess their needs by interacting with a number of residents. We learned their means of sustaining themselves, which includes how they get income (no stable source) and what jobs they usually pursue. Food scarcity or insecurity is the reality of these people; their needs are immediate. We planned the Health and Hygiene mission based on the needs communicated to us by the residents and community councillor. Residents of Tondo are garbage scavengers, their lungs are impacted due to the burning of garbage, most children have distended stomachs due to hunger, most children don't have slippers or clothes and only some go to school. Our upcoming missions will be based on these identified needs in collaboration with the above-mentioned organisations and more.

**Understanding of the SDGs:** We invited the founder of Giving Hope Foundation to give a talk on how to prevent poverty, ways to help the poor and contribute to zero hunger. We felt that it would be more interesting for our students to learn through her engaging talk, rather than us presenting. Hence, we **collaborated** with her. She shared valuable information from her experience in tackling these goals. In appreciation, we sponsored the meal of 250 children of her organisation. We also made flyers for the whole student body and our community to raise awareness about our targeted UN SDGs. We also used our social media accounts to raise awareness.

**Sustainability:** The main premise behind our project is that we provide means to people to use their unwanted, pre-loved personal and household items and spare coins to help the needy. This idea itself makes the project sustainable as most middle to upper-class people always have items (which add clutter to their homes) to give away. We will enable people to actualise their kind intentions and help them put their extra things to good use. We have been giving personalised thank you cards and sharing pics of our feeding programs and drives to let our donors know how their donations were utilised. We believe this will reinforce their trust in us and encourage them to support more our cause knowing that their money went for a good cause.

We can train other students/volunteers as well to continue the project once we move on/to make the project sustainable. We just designed a comfortable and durable 'stool' reusing old plastic bottles and plastic waste (eco bricks). This doesn't cost much and a variety of things can be designed using eco bricks and sold thereafter. This is one of our ideas to generate funds in addition to our existing fundraising means (garage sale, merch sale and coin drive). This idea can also be used as a business idea for the poor people especially those staying in Tondo (as they are garbage scavengers) so that they are not always dependent on aid. Diversifying into different ideas as we grow can also make this project sustainable, eg. holding educational seminars for the poor so their employment options grow.

As a Filipino, hospitality, and compassion are values that my culture always sought to enforce. By volunteering for The Helping Hands Project, it gave me the opportunity to showcase these said traits and characteristics.

I learned a multitude of things when I volunteered. Such as, realising that help is always very much appreciated, even though it's not that much. Helping each other is what makes us humans. Since we are all people, we have to showcase humanity, and help each other, so that we can all be better people.

Volunteering also helped cultivate my sense of responsibility, made me want to help people in need more often, and also made me feel happy, because I knew I helped people.

I would like to thank THHP for giving me this opportunity, as it truly was a wholesome experience, and left me wanting to volunteer. For more experiences such as this.

- Joseph Ting

