

Hidden Heroes

In Swiss International School Qatar, we believe in F.I.P. (Fulfilled, Inspired and Prepared) but how can we feel fulfilled if people are throwing rubbish everywhere? And are we prepared to do something about the fact that some people are being treated more respectfully than others?

In our school, we want everyone to be fulfilled. But what does it mean to feel fulfilled? Fulfilled is when you feel you have worked so hard on something and you achieved something. You won't feel fulfilled if no one greets you or leaves trash for you to pick up just because of where you come from.

This is why we chose the goal : Reduce inequalities (10) because people were being treated unfairly because of where they came from and we were inspired to change this.

So first we did some research such as observations, surveys and interviews.

We discovered more discrimination against the cleaners than the security guards. Security guards were from Africa and well educated. They were more confident to greet students and better respected but not as respected as teachers. Cleaners were often illiterate and came from Nepal, India and the Philippines. They felt ignored. The research we found in surveys showed that most people said that they clean up their own litter but our observations showed a lot of litter.

We also proved that most people knew the teachers' names but very few people knew the security guards' names or the cleaners' names.

To take action in our school we decided to present our school leaders with our interviews and surveys and we even told them that some people lied in the surveys as we showed photos of torn paper on the ground, plastic, food wrappers and even spilled juice. The worst part about it is that these pictures were all taken on the same day.



After, we told them about how we could show more respect and over 85% of our ideas got approved by our school leaders and now we are working on continuing to complete our ideas.

In our school, we have three gardens. A Quranic garden, A plant hospital and a garden for the little kids. We wanted to make the cleaners their own garden but we decided they would feel more respected and equal if they were sharing the garden *with* the kids so they can grow food and medical plants. They feel more equal because they are working *with* the kids and they are teaching them, then kids respect them like teachers, not just cleaners. The cleaners used their own money to buy trees and soil for the garden and we planted potatoes *with* them.

Our school just invested mangoes, bananas, papayas, guavas and other nutritious foods to grow. Initially we thought we could gift these to the cleaners but this is not equality. Instead, we need them to teach us how to keep the plants alive so we can share the fruits as equals. When we got insect infestations, we protected our plants and their plants and during holidays they water our plants and their plants. This is equality in action.

We also have an after school GSL activity for gardening. Early in the morning, little kids come to water the plants. They love the plants and we are glad they are taught how to take care of them at such a young age. There is one little boy in particular, his name is Theo. One day, he and his mom came inside our class at the start of the lesson. Theo wasn't able to water his friends; the plants in the garden. We got the water for him and simply stood there, watching. He was talking to them like old friends. This caring and gentle act taught us that anyone can help achieve our goal.



We had an idea to teach the kids in our school Swahili and Tagalog. We think this is a good idea because it would make the cleaners and security guards happy and feel respected in our school's environment. Our group wants to teach phrases like "hello, thank you and goodbye.". This would improve the bond of cultures at our school and strengthen our community because they shouldn't just be speaking English. Inequality was clear as some languages were respected above others.

Our team arranged FULL ACCESS for the guards to the MYP library as they really like the National Geographic books based on different species of birds. They really appreciate the things that we have done

for them and we love to help them and greet them whenever they pass by.

Last year, our head of SEN taught the cleaners how to read and write. Communication is very important at our school and is a big limitation when it comes to not understanding one another. The school was after hours and had multiple classrooms with 6 to 7 teachers. The cleaners enjoyed this as it was found in an interview done by our GSL group. This is a big target for next year.

Another target is educational videos that will teach students about the support staff's names and personal interests.

One of the biggest challenges we faced while doing this project is that we are very young compared to the other people on the GSL zoom sessions. This made us feel a bit nervous to be in such a big project. Also this is the first time we have used different types of data tools and we sometimes struggled to get together as a group which made it hard to collaborate..

I think, throughout this project we learned many things but there is one thing that stood out to us. We learned what equality actually means. We learned what it means to be equal. At first, we kept on doing things for the cleaners. But only when the cleaners started doing things for us, like buying trees for the garden it brought us together. Together, we planted potatoes and they taught us new ways to plant them. So, to be equal means to do things together. When you do things for somebody, you are helping them but you are still saying that they aren't good enough to do it with you. When you do things *with* someone, they can also teach you something new and you help each other.

That is what we learned in the 3371 hours that we spent on a GSL project that involved over 200 people.

