



CHILDAID SYMPOSIUM: FRIENDSHIP BEYOND BORDERS

POST CONFERENCE REPORT

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Inaugural ChildAid Symposium: Friendship Beyond Borders conference was held on 19th November 2016 at the Create Space– Suntec City, Singapore. This conference brought together an interdisciplinary group of working professionals working in the field of the Arts and Non Profit Organizations.

The tone of the main conference was set during the opening remarks by Ms. Aminah Hussien, Head of Arts and Community Development at the Little Arts Academy. Throughout the conference, four key speakers who are experts in the field shared their knowledge with the 31 attendees of the conference.

The main learning objective for conference delegates were the following:

- The growth of the ChildAid movement in neighbouring Asian countries
- Acknowledge that the ChildAid movement has transformed lives and forged many friendships
- Recognise the multifactorial determinants i.e. political and socio-economical factors affecting the movement and fundraising efforts
- Recognise beneficiaries who have benefited from the movement
- Share knowledge and experiences with others in the working field

Bringing together leading experts and practitioners from Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia, the conference proved to an excellent opportunity for networking and sharing experiences with a view to grow the movement beyond Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Indonesia.

Overall, it provided informative updates on the Childaid movement in Singapore, Japan, Malaysia and Jakarta and showcase how the model differs within each country. Specifically, the conference focused on the new developments to the movement across Asian countries and the contributing factors affecting the fundraising efforts. The symposium engaged many professionals from the Arts and Non profit Industry in knowledge transfer. The format included a discussion by the key speakers and a light refreshments for the guests and speakers.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME IN SUMMARY



The symposium opened with a welcome address by Ms Aminah Hussien, Head of the Arts and Community Development who welcome the guests and shared the objective of the symposium. It was also highlighted that the symposium in Singapore was the first ever to be organised. The four key speakers were then introduced and began with a presentation by Mr Colin Goh, CEO of Millet Holdings Pte Ltd.



Mr Colin Goh, CEO, Millet Holdings Pte Ltd shared the origins of ChildAid which has ran for 10 years and raised an estimated \$15 million dollars. Over the period, the movement has spread across Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia and has touched and benefited many children. The future plan was to expand the movement to other Asean countries namely Vietnam, Hong Kong, India & China to name a few.



Ms Kyoko Hasegawa, Director, Little Creators Japan shared in her presentation on the beginning of the Non-Profit Organisation Budding Artiste Fund Japan in 2007 which aimed to raise fund for the needy children in Japan. The humble beginning of started from a portal site called “Kodomo Chikyu Channel” which promoted the works of visual artists whose proceeds from the sales and handling charges were donated to the cause. However, the channel was given up after a year and the focus switched to the original idea which was to provide workshops for children. During this period, 20 children from Japan were brought to Singapore to participate in the International Children’s Art Festival. These children were invited to watch ChildAid concert and it was during this visit that the children expressed wanting to be recognized on stage performing. Hence, the origin of ChildAid Japan started in 2011.

The ChildAid Model Japan model differs from ChildAid Singapore in which exhibits of visual artists would be displayed at the concert venue to encourage everyone to view. At the end of the concert, all performers will visit a foster home which would be an experiential learning experience for performers.

The future of ChildAid Japan aims at collaborations between artists from Japan and participating ChildAid partners. It is hoped that the model would extend to provide education and support of the inclusive society.



Mr Ralph Lim, founder of ChildAid Malaysia conveyed that the movement began from a discussion in Kluang, Johor Bahru in 2006 but eventually took off only in 2011. The actual show for ChildAid Malaysia was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2013 and subsequent years in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Success in the ChildAid Malaysia model resulted from the improvement in financial situation and capability to start sustainable programs. The future directions for the movement in Malaysia is to collaborate further with other partnering countries and take into consideration both internal and external factors involved in fund raising for needy children. Mr Ralph Lim also shared the interest by Philippines to start a movement in the country as well.



Mr Ferdinand Marsa, Director of Cadenza Music School indicated that the first inaugural ChildAid concert in Jakarta was held in July 2016. It received a total of USD\$7500 and the fund raised has supported two funding Yayasan Asa Sehati & CCE. These funds has continued to fund two beneficiaries. ChildAid Jakarta hopes to organize a second concert in 2017. Likewise, it was shared that Cadenza Music School will continue to deploy music teachers to several areas to continue its mission to reach out to the disadvantage children by providing them with the opportunity to learn music.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion started after the individual presentations by the key speakers and was moderated by Ms Clara Lim Tan, Principal from Yu Neng Primary School.



In summary, a few pointers have been raised and discussed by the panel of speakers and attendees.

Transforming Lives and Forging Friendships

The ChildAid movement has benefited many children across the region. Through the ChildAid concerts, many friendships and heartening stories have been formed amongst both the performers and partners alike. In this session, respective speakers shared their journey and courage to overcome obstacles despite the difficulties they face due to external and internal factors. Inspiring stories about the children and the strong purpose to help the disadvantage children has lead the organizers to continue transforming lives.

Political & Economical Factors

Due to threats from terrorism and the likes, parents have voiced concerns to sending their children to perform overseas. The fear of terror attacks and political upheavals revolves around many parents and organizers and such factors have thought to deter children from participating and key partners to organize the concert in their country. It was discussed that while the arts aid people and children to heal and perceive beyond the glass box, organizers must ensure the safety of the children.

Technology

With the new emerging economy, technology has become a vital role in every individual. It was shared that the movement should be disseminated through technology. An online portal sharing the works and practices would tap into the tech savvy generation and inspire them to continue this movement. Likewise, with the use of technology, factors such as terrorism will not hinder the movement and continue to reach out more.

Social

While technology may be important, the take away point is that through ChildAid, children gain the opportunity to interact with one another and form friendships. This is a vital element as they would learn invaluable lessons through the friendships formed and concerts participated. While technology will reach out to more people, it never beats the experience of human touch they experience.

Beneficiary who have benefited from ChildAid

Asami Wada, one beneficiary who has benefited through ChildAid after the demise of the father. Today, she is studying at NUS school of conservatory and chaperoned the Japanese participant at ChildAid Singapore 2016. Past ChildAid participants have benefited from the 8 funding and many talented children were given platform to showcase their talents. Besides providing underprivileged children with continued funding, ChildAid gives opportunity to children to realize their dreams.

Future Directions

ChildAid should continue to transform and touch many lives and the movement should evolve further to helping many children realize their dreams. In fact, countries such as India, China and Phillipines have indicated the interest in organizing ChildAid concerts. This movement should lead those to have a meaningful life and could also promote peace amongst countries.



Conclusion

The discussion concluded with a presentation of memento by Mrs Jennie Tien, Board Member of TRCL to the keyspeakers respectively to Ms Kyoko Hasegawa, Mr Ralph Lim, Mr Ferdinand Marsa and moderator Ms Clara Lim Tan. This is followed by a group phototaking and a lunch reception for the guests and keyspeakers.

