



## Foreword

By Karen Fernandez

As we round up fiscal year 2013-14, two words mark the Aidha year: *growth* and *change*.

Aidha has had an exciting and eventful year, thanks to the continued support of our generous and inspiring community of students, mentors, donors and partners.

Student and mentor numbers reached a record high - 600 new students, an impressive increase of 57% over last year, and 130 new volunteers, up 41% from last year.

Corporate partners *Goldman Sachs*, *Kadence International* and *Alexander Mann Solutions* initiated various projects for students and mentors. You can read more about these stories and other exciting developments in the **Partnership section**.

As in the last three years, we were again very thankful to have the unwavering support of *Barclays*, whose assistance - on so many levels - has allowed us to grow and gain stability. Another long-time friend of Aidha, *MasterCard*, who has supported Aidha previously with donations, laptops and volunteers, generously enabled 75 students to proceed on to Module 2.

New friends also came onboard this year. We are pleased indeed to welcome Coutts, British Private Bank to our community with a generous pledge. The Wharton Alumni / UPenn group has opened doors for us in their well-connected network; Googlers have engaged with Aidha as one of their six charities for this year; and in PayPal's recent 'hackathon', we were one of the selected charities to benefit from the organisation's online and digital marketing experience.

With growth comes changes. Change both in the physical spaces that Aidha operates, from the Sunday campus, to our move to new office space in a converted shop house in North Bridge Road, right in the heart of the hip enclave of Haji Lane! We have also had several changes in our management team. Our much loved Operations Manager, Marjo Kurkela, returned home to Finland, after more than a year of efficiently running our campus on Sundays. Her calm demeanor and leadership will definitely be missed. Other members of our staff, including HR Manager, Marigold Duncan, Fundraising Manager, Priya Mendon, and Head of Research, Citlalic Gonzales, all said their goodbyes as well due to growing family commitments. These farewells have been sad for us but they also bring the opportunity to welcome new faces and new ideas, and to undertake a staff re-structuring which will further Aidha's move to professionalise and strengthen the organisation.

Our next fiscal year promises to be one of even more robust growth, exciting partnerships and increased initiatives for our students, who continue to inspire us every day, with their hunger to learn and their grace and cheerfulness despite having to juggle long working hours, coursework, and being so far away from the people they love.

Also, watch out for upcoming activities as Aidha celebrates its 8th year on 19th of July! Major events are being planned as we commemorate this wonderful occasion.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. Please keep us in your inbox to stay updated. If you have any comments or suggestions, we would love to hear from you - reach our Communications Team at [communications@aidha.org](mailto:communications@aidha.org).



### Aidha has moved office!

We are now located at 734 North Bridge Road #02-01 Singapore 198702

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# Main Feature

## Community TeamWorks by Goldman Sachs at Aidha

By Jocelyn West

Photos by Karan Bhardwaj

Aidha partnered with Goldman Sachs (GS) for their *Community TeamWorks* (CTW) global volunteer initiative, which brought GS volunteers and Aidha graduates and Module 2 graduates together for three full days to network and review the students' business plans. This event also served as a pilot for an alumni program that Aidha hopes to introduce in the near future. Aidha was honored to be chosen as a non-profit Community Partner for this year's CTW, and as one student put it, "When they told us Goldman Sachs was coming in, I was so excited!"

After the morning icebreaker and introductions on Day 1, positive energy filled the air as students and volunteers broke off into groups to discuss the details of their business plans. Selina, both a GS employee and mentor with Aidha, described how the CTW event builds on Aidha's typical operations: "It gives us time to go in depth on the business plan in a way that we don't normally get to do as mentors. We only have 15 minutes after class on Sundays, so today is a great opportunity for students to get the individual feedback they need."



GS volunteers and Aidha students reviewing Business Plans

As the afternoon progressed, conversations within the groups focused on helping students effectively pitch their business plans. Since volunteers had reviewed the business plans before the event, the conversation allowed them to learn the "why" behind the business plans — what drew students to a specific type of business. One volunteer noted, "It's nice to see what makes these projects so deeply personal." For students, it was a chance to have individual questions answered and practice talking about their ideas.



Group shot after the CTW

After a relaxing lunch, groups comprising two volunteers and two students reconvened to go into more detail on the business plans. Volunteers encouraged students to do market research on their competition and how to best meet demand for their product or service. For example, one student's pharmacy proposal would become the most convenient option for a village that otherwise had to travel one hour to pick up prescriptions; the volunteer added that the student could build positive relationships with all the nearby doctors to ensure a sustainable customer base. Overall, volunteers helped students consider less obvious yet important options for strengthening their plans. Volunteers often pulled out paper on the spot to calculate startup expenses, map out inputs and outputs, or create a timeline of actions leading up to the business opening.

The process helped make the business concepts more real for the students. As one student said, "This is just what I needed! To be able to calculate exactly how much profit I can generate per kilo of rice." However, students were not the only ones to benefit. When asked what they learned that day, one volunteer joked, "I've learned a lot about rice! And hairdressing!" and added more seriously, "It's useful to consider the details of such different businesses side-by-side." Another volunteer promised, "It's been super useful for me to become more familiar with the culture and education system of Indonesia and the Philippines. I guarantee you that I'll use that in my own work by next week!"



Students and volunteers conducting the workshop

We are grateful to the volunteers from Goldman Sachs for sharing their time and expertise to make this day such a success. We look forward to future opportunities for our organisations to work together.

# Student Feature

## JuvyLyn Porras starts rice farm

By Jackie Winstanley

*“Aidha really means a lot to me. I learned how to start a business and it helped me develop more self-confidence. Aidha changed my vision of the future and my mindset about starting a business.” – JuvyLyn Porras*

JuvyLyn’s original plan was to work only for two years in Singapore to earn enough money to continue her education. Unfortunately, as it often happens in life, tragedy strikes. Her father passed away after she left to work overseas, leaving her to support her entire family.

That was eight years ago. Today, JuvyLyn possesses an Aidha Certificate in Entrepreneurship which she earned after completing the 18-month programme in September 2013.

Under her current employer, JuvyLyn was able to study at Aidha where she learned about saving and developed the leadership and business skills needed to be an entrepreneur. Armed with the business plan she wrote as part her Venture Club requirement and savings of \$600, JuvyLyn started a small rice selling business in her home town of Koronadal, Philippines.

Launched early this year in February, JuvyLyn employed her friend to help her run the business while she finishes her employment contract in Singapore. “I taught her what I learned from my Aidha courses about running a business,” JuvyLyn shared. Their store has a steady clientele and earns more than \$30 a month. She started small, but dreams of eventually expanding her product selection and moving from retail to wholesale. To facilitate this expansion, JuvyLyn plans on moving home in November 2014.

JuvyLyn is an inspiration to other FDWs and shares her story because, “I hope I can inspire others to think about their future and find a way to make their dreams come true.”

Having achieved some measure of financial sustainability for herself and her family while at the same time creating jobs for others with her rice business, JuvyLyn is certainly an inspiration to other domestic helpers. We wish her all the success in the world!



JuvyLyn posing at the Aidha graduation



# Employer Testimonial

## Employer praises benefits of Aidha education

By Jackie Winstanley, Tia Sutresna and Ting Claravall

Mr Sayana first employed Diyah Supeni in 2009 and almost immediately encouraged her to enroll at Aidha. Having witnessed her natural positive attitude and strong work ethic, he believed that Diyah would greatly benefit from going to school and perhaps, even surpass his expectations.

He was right. After graduating from the Aidha programme in 2011, Diyah continued at the school as a student trainee and has been volunteering to help run the campus on Sundays ever since.

When asked what was the biggest improvement he had seen in Diyah, Mr Sayana says, "Association with Aidha has not only encouraged self-reliance and planning, but also a spirit of giving back."



Mr. Sayana sharing his thoughts on Diyah

He confesses that his supportiveness of Diyah is not completely selfless. "If you treat people well, they will want to do the same for you. So supporting Diyah in her involvement with Aidha is not purely altruistic. If she feels supported and happy, she will want to be better at her job. And hopefully that will also inspire her to stay with us."

It was this kind of employer support that has helped Diyah achieve some of her goals. Earlier this year, she opened a furniture business back in her home country of Indonesia which her sister is helping her manage while she continues to work here in Singapore. She plans on opening another business in her village of Kendal, "so that the women will not need to leave their loved ones to work abroad and they can earn money and still be with their family." Diyah herself is still supporting her two sons through university and hopes that the income generated by her business will be enough to enable her to go home and be with them for good.

"Domestic helpers should be seen as people with families and goals," Mr Sayana says. "They should be given the opportunity to achieve them."

## Research

### Financial capability grows the longer students study

#### Preliminary research findings by Kadence International reveal impact of Aidha curriculum

By Jackie Winstanley and Tia Sutresna

Aidha began an Impact Research Initiative at the start of the year with corporate partner, Kadence International. The project seeks to obtain feedback directly from students on financial and business capability, ICT literacy, confidence and social capital. These findings will be used to effectively measure the impact of the Aidha curriculum on our students. The research is still ongoing, but here are some preliminary results we'd like to share with our community following a survey of 154 students in the first quarter. Some of the key indicators include:

1. **FINANCIAL CAPABILITY:** Progression through modules leads to a rise in the number of students who save each month, an increase in the amounts saved, and more 'stable' avenues of saving (i.e.: opening up savings accounts in Singapore).
2. **BUSINESS CAPABILITY:** 53% of students purchased some form of productive investment back home; 12% own businesses; 9% started a business after joining Aidha; and 36% have helped a family member or friend start or open a business.
3. **ICT LITERACY:** At Aidha, students are given the tools to become literate in **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**. It is more than computer skills: it is a **vehicle of digital inclusion**. 3 out of 4 students have access to a mobile phone with applications and internet. Use of applications like Skype and email results in savings on calling cards.
4. **CONFIDENCE:** Students in later modules feel they are 'very much' making progress towards increased personal confidence, managing money and finding solutions to monetary problems.
5. **SOCIAL CAPITAL:** More than just a school, Aidha is a community of learning where students establish networks of mutual support. Encouragingly, there is increased kinship in later module stages, indicating the bond and social capital fostered between students.



# Corporate Partnership and Fundraising

## PayPal provides technical support

By Jackie Winstanley

As part of a pilot initiative to engage more with the community, PayPal Singapore (an international e-commerce business allowing payments and money transfers to be made through the Internet) decided to partner with a few NGOs in Singapore for a 'Hackathon event' and Aidha was fortunate enough to be one of these lucky partners!

On 13 June, an all day event was conducted at the PayPal office as a group of Paypal employees came together to work on projects submitted by several organisations. The team working on Aidha's project comprised of Surendra Babu Thota, Vinay Kamath, Phoram Mehta, Patrick Phua and Lenny Markus.



Participants at the Paypal 'Hackathon'

The purpose of the project was to modify the student enrollment piece on the website to make it more accessible and manageable for users. Not only did they establish an online registration platform for enrollment payments, they also added Enroll, Volunteer and Donate buttons so they appear as a header and footer on all pages of the site. The team then went on to make some SEO recommendations, added several 'call-to-action' buttons and installed a plug-in for student enrollment.

Volunteer Vinay Kamath says, 'Hope all the changes are OK and work well. Do let us know if you need any more help with any of these changes. It was wonderful working with Aidha and the team enjoyed themselves. Thanks.' A huge thank-you to PayPal for this 'Hackathon' and we hope to partner again with you in the near future!



Paypal employees at work

## Scholarship Fund by Asia Works

By Jackie Winstanley

Amanda Blum, Angie Koh and Yu Ngai Wong are shining examples of how the support of donors can change, inspire and improve the lives of Aidha students. These women are generous members of LP 122 Leadership Group at Asia Works, Asia's foremost experiential training company, who have undertaken a number of initiatives on behalf of Aidha.



Laptops from representatives of Asia Works

These initiatives include Domestic Helpers Appreciation Day at Yishun, a video for Singapore Unsung Heroes and a fundraising drive on Give.SG which raised \$31,000 in just 3 weeks! It was agreed that this money would provide **scholarship opportunities** for Module 1 students aspiring to enroll in Module 2. Of the 60 applicants, 35 deserving Module 1 students were chosen by way of an examination. These bright and enthusiastic women will begin their Module 2 journeys in July, thus bringing them closer to fulfilling their dreams.

Aidha would like to thank supporters like Amanda, Angie and Yu, whose enterprising initiatives have truly made dreams come true. We want to highlight the importance of higher education for FDWs and wish to encourage other donors to help support these hard-working women. You too can make a difference, and what better way than providing scholarships to industrious, driven and deserving candidates!



Maridel Tagalog being handed the scholarship certificate



Siti Ma' rufah being handed the scholarship certificate



# HR Initiatives

## Alexander Mann Solutions shares why Aidha appeals to volunteers

Findings of MVP study presented during A-Listers Event

By Ting Claravall and Te-Anne Robles

Alexander Mann Solutions, the world's leading provider of talent acquisition and management services, conducted a Mentor Value Proposition (MVP) workshop for Aidha to find out what entices mentors to join the organisation, their motivations for volunteering, as well as their perceptions of the Aidha brand. A focus group discussion with 12-15 mentors was organised to complement in-depth discussions with management and key stakeholders.

The findings were presented during the latest A-Listers drinks night held on 15 May 2014 at ME@OUE at OUE Bayfront. With over 46 mentors in attendance, volunteers, staff, and friends of Aidha alike all enjoyed happy hour drinks, friendly conversation, and an amazing view of the Marina Bay skyline for this rare opportunity to meet and mingle outside the campus.



AMS Team comprising of Sally, Kara and Ben with Karen Fernandez and Neha Parikh



Aidha volunteers mingling and exchanging experiences at A-listers night

Kara Keough of Alexander Mann Solutions highlighted some key findings from the FGD discussions. For the mentors involved in the workshop, personal experience, the opportunity to make a tangible difference, and Aidha's core mission of women empowerment, were among the top reasons that inspired them to volunteer. In contrast to most other volunteering opportunities in Singapore, Aidha also gives its mentors the chance to leverage existing professional skills and build both personal and professional networks. These unique features of skills-based volunteering and mentoring also helps foster a strong sense of loyalty and longevity since volunteers are able to see the results of their efforts in class and witness the transformation of students right before their eyes.

Participants agreed that Aidha's strength is in its unique and accessible product and ability to create sustainable futures. Alexander Mann Solutions is keen to continue their involvement with Aidha in this area. As Kara pointed out, "One of the findings that really wowed me is that Aidha has an amazing story. What's even better than that is you have such willing and passionate storytellers. We can't wait to continue to help you guys get the message out."

Aidha CEO Karen Fernandez extended her gratitude to the Alexander Mann Solutions team for their generosity and insightful work on the MVP. She voiced her enthusiasm for the implications of the findings and its value in recruiting more mentors. "We have ambitious plans for growing our student base which means we must be equally ambitious in recruiting mentors. So I'm asking all of you, mentors and volunteers, to please spread the word! Tell them what an amazing experience you've had volunteering at Aidha, so that together we can enable more domestic helpers achieve their dreams of a financially sustainable future!"



Volunteers listening to the AMS presentation

# Outreach

## Aidha joins first-ever Foreign Domestic Worker Education Fair

By Jackie Winstanley

On 9 March 2014, Aidha had an opportunity to present and reach out to approximately 500 Foreign Domestic Workers at the FAST (Foreign Domestic Workers Association for Social Support and Training) Education Fair. This much anticipated career event exposed FDWs to an array of courses available in the business, culinary, computer and craft fields.

Mentor Sarah Druce was kind enough to present on behalf of Aidha and highlighted the numerous benefits enrollment in the Modules could offer. Sarah described the two course modules, stressed the free courses offered at Sunday Fundays and emphasized the fun, supportive environment that Aidha provides.

Thus far, this Education Fair has led to four enrollments and through word of mouth and friend referrals, registration numbers can only go up!



Volunteers at the Aidha booth



## Money and movie-making at Sunday Funday

By Jackie Winstanley



Aidha had its quarterly Sunday Funday workshop last 11 May 2014. These one-day events, that have been offering free workshops to foreign domestic workers since October 2012, is one of Aidha's most popular events. The workshop welcomes Aidha alumni and students. This month, the workshops featured a Financial Awareness Presentation by Western Union and a 'making an iMovie' course given by volunteer Leslie Swanson.

The Financial Awareness Presentation by Western Union complemented the Module 1 Compass Club, Aidha's flagship financial course on savings and budgeting. Students learned to differentiate 'wants' from 'needs' and were taught the sound rule of setting aside

50% of their salary for needs, 30% for wants and 20% for savings. Other topics such as listing assets and liabilities, and generating short- and long-term goals were also discussed. The mentors emphasized the importance of having self-discipline and enlisting their family's commitment in the process of financial planning.

Following this session, long-time Aidha mentor and trainer Leslie Swanson demonstrated the basics of creating personal home movies using Apple iMovie, a very easy, user-friendly software that runs on both desktop and iPad tablets. Students were given 45 minutes to produce a 2-minute movie about the value of Aidha in their lives. Staff and volunteers were asked to vote for the best film clip, a task that proved difficult as the ladies all produced top-notch work! The winning video entitled "Having fun at Aidha" was picked by CEO Karen Fernandez and will be used for future publicity efforts. The winning team comprised of Aidha students Anie, Rondiyah, Lyn Camba, Juwariyah and Ida Widaningsih.



Participants of the Sunday Funday Workshop



# Outreach

## Volunteers give new FDWs sample of Module 1

By Ting Claravall

Sixty Filipino domestic helpers placed by the Eden Grace Employment Agency were given a brief sampling of the Aidha experience by our volunteers on Sunday 22 June.

The short workshop was part of marketing efforts to partner with organisations, churches and employment agencies and their community of domestic helpers.

Volunteer mentors, Madonna Riley and Ting Claravall facilitated the hour-long workshop. Ting opened the activity with a short exercise based on Session 5 of the Compass Club, 'How to do a Budget', which also emphasized the importance of savings. The ladies were grouped into 5 to 6-member teams and were asked to create a 'household' budget that reflected their realistic expenses per month, such as remittances, mobile phone credits and personal toiletries. Afterwards, Madonna gave the ladies a sampling of the Leadership Club session on teamwork. Using the same groups they had for the budgeting exercise, the ladies had to come up with a song performance with each member playing the part of an 'instrument'. The objective was to help them realise the importance of working together as a team.

In between these two activities, alumni Flordeliza Hafalla shared her story about life before and after studying at Aidha. Flordeliza graduated in 2012 and has since opened up a condiments shop ('sari-sari') store back in the Philippines. The shop is now run by her daughter, and aside from the fact that Flordeliza shares her Aidha learnings with her, she also now doesn't need to send money home because the store now serves as an income generator for her daughter. She also impressed upon the ladies the importance of having the benefit of an education this early in their stay in Singapore. Flordeliza had already been working in Singapore for 16 years before she walked through Aidha's doors.



New domestic helpers at the Aidha workshop



The ladies doing a group activity

After the group activities, Ratri Maria from the marketing team explained the registration procedures and announced that Aidha was willing to open a special batch exclusively for the ladies from Eden Grace Employment Agency. She also gave away promotional vouchers to the attendees that they could use for enrollment.

Despite the short period, the ladies were excited by the preview of the Aidha programme that they received. Thanks to generous individuals like Sunny Wong Chow Sun, proprietor of Eden Grace Employment Agency, domestic helpers can get the support they need to create sustainable futures for themselves a lot sooner.



# Join Us Volunteer Make a difference

## Volunteering Opportunities

For all those who are interested in volunteering with Aidha, below are the upcoming Volunteer Orientation details:

13<sup>th</sup> July 2014 - 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm  
10<sup>th</sup> August 2014 - 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm  
14<sup>th</sup> September 2014 - 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

You can sign up for one of these sessions by visiting our website or click on the link here:

[Volunteer Orientation Sign-up Form](#) or you can go to our website: [www.aidha.org](http://www.aidha.org) and sign up for the next session on 'Become a volunteer' page

Our Module 1 Compass Club and Computer Workshop are in need of Mentors to adopt them. Please find the upcoming batches that will soon start and are in need of Mentors:

Upcoming Module 1 batches available for adoption			
Club Name	Batch	Sunday	Batch Start Date
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1AUG14A	1st & 3rd (AM)	August 3, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1AUG14B	1st & 3rd (AM)	August 3, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1SEP14A	1st & 3rd (PM)	September 7, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1SEP14B	1st & 3rd (PM)	September 7, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1SEP14C	1st & 3rd (AM)	September 7, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1OCT14A	2nd & 4th (AM)	October 12, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1OCT14B	2nd & 4th (AM)	October 12, 2014
Computer Workshop / Compass Club	M1OCT14C	2nd & 4th (PM)	October 12, 2014

You can email us on [volunteer@aidha.org](mailto:volunteer@aidha.org) if you are interested in adopting any of the above batches.

Like us on Facebook:

Office Hours: 9am-5pm, Mon – Fri

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**Thank you for reading!**

Warm Regards,

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