A missions newsletter by OMF Singapore

GO ASIA

MAY-AUG 2026

Mobilising Singapore for the Urgent Evangelisation of East Asia's Millions



SERVING TOGETHER IN A MULTI-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AT KIDZONE

Lay Ling, Poppy, Olaf and Petra, Serve Asia workers at the KidZone ministry recount their experiences of serving the children of missionaries.

OMF International organises the Orientation Course (OC) for new missionaries and missional workers at its Cluny Road premises in Singapore several times a year and one of the key supporting ministries for OC is the KidZone ministry.

The KidZone ministry is a dedicated programme for the children of missionaries over the 4-week OC period with activities including bible lessons, art and craft sessions and outings to local attractions in Singapore. What is unique about the KidZone ministry is that the children come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, so the KidZone team and their workers have to learn to accommodate and work within this multicultural context.

We hear the stories of four KidZone Serve Asia helpers from the February 2026 OC – they are Lay Ling from Singapore, Poppy from the UK and Olaf and Petra from Germany.

"Initially, I had a culture shock – it's my first time working with children of different cultural backgrounds," explained Lay

Continued on page 02 >>



Ling. This batch of children attending the KidZone are all under 6 years old from different cultural backgrounds and speaking different languages such as Cantonese, German and English.

For Olaf and Petra, a retired couple, helping out at the KidZone was a "special situation" for them since the missionary family they were supporting was from their home church in Germany. They found out from one of the prayer letters of their missionaries who hoped that there would be KidZone workers who could speak German with a bit of English. This was because the missionaries' children could only speak German. After some thinking, Olaf and Petra decided they would serve at KidZone as a couple.

The youngest Poppy, said it was a full circle moment for her as a KidZone helper: "My parents went through OC back in 2011 and I was one of the kids at KidZone." She just completed high school and decided to take a gap year before entering university to explore doing short-term missions. Her church friend also served at KidZone three years ago so Poppy decided to give it a go: "Serving at KidZone also gave me an opportunity to reflect on my growing up years with a missionary family."

Loving the children and taking care of one another

Olaf mentioned that the biggest challenge of helping out at KidZone was learning to work with children from all over the world. All four of them have a heart for serving children.

"(We're) all here to serve the children and we want them to feel God's love and be in a safe environment", said Poppy. Petra also said she was blessed to be able to see the children, working and praying together as the KidZone team.

Loving the children as KidZone helpers is not just one-way as Petra and Poppy could also feel the children's care and concern for them.

"We went to Gardens by the Bay for an outing and one of the kids grabbed me by hand into the waterplay area even though I did not want to get wet," explained Poppy. She realised then, that was when the child was comfortable with her and wanted to include her in their fun activities.

During a stormy evening after the day's activity ended and some of the KidZone helpers were heading home, Petra recalled that one of the children asked if they were okay and safe as they made their way home. She even prayed together with the children and could sense that the children also cared for the safety of the KidZone workers.

Some of the most memorable moments for Olaf during the four-week KidZone period was when the children came to play with him and felt comfortable around him: "The children believe that you can help them".

For Lay Ling, it was fun to see the children enjoying themselves and have the opportunity to visit different corners of Singapore, such as going to Gardens by the Bay and the National Gallery.

Tips for those considering to serve at

the KidZone ministry

"You can't neglect your personal quiet time (with God), even if you feel very tired when serving and preparing (for the KidZone ministry). I need the daily strength from God to serve, so that (quiet time) has allowed me to carry on," said Poppy.

Olaf's advice for those considering to serve at KidZone was to "Love God, love children and be really open to other cultures". He added that living on-site at the Cluny Road compound for a month has allowed him to learn a lot about local culture, which was very different from being a tourist for just a week.

"I think the kids from different cultural backgrounds could behave and express themselves very differently, so it will be good to be open-minded to observe how they are and adapt our ways of interacting with them," concluded Lay Ling.

The author would like to express his thanks to Ying Ying, the OMF OC KidZone Coordinator, for her help with the story.







COLLECTING OUR PAST TODAY AND PRESERVING IT FOR TOMORROW

As an undergraduate in Ontario, Canada, Malaysia-born Au Ka-Neng originally wanted to become a librarian in the corporate sector. He changed his mind when he did his postgraduate studies in the US and eventually became a research librarian at Rutgers University for over three decades (1986-2017).

Au first came in contact with OMF while he was in Canada; he and his wife Eunice began partnering with an OMFer just before they got married. Later, they responded to God's call and became Serve Asia Workers in 2013 and 2015 to understand the work and needs of the library at the OMF International Centre in Singapore.

In 2017, Au took early retirement from his role at Rutgers University in preparation to serve as a librarian and archivist at the International Centre. The couple were accepted as OMF missionaries in 2018 and have been serving in Singapore since then.

We learn more about Au's role and work as Senior Archivist.

Q: Could you tell us more about your role as Senior Archivist at the OMF International Centre?

A: I manage the historical records of the International Centre (the headquarters) of OMF International, including many documents from OMF sending and receiving centres around the world, as well as some materials from the China Inland Mission (the predecessor organisation to OMF International). While curating, organising, and preserving these materials, I also compile summaries of some important events from our organisational history, create brief biographies of missionaries, respond to inquiries from our members as well as external researchers, and maintain an annotated bibliography of books published by or about CIM/OMF and her members.

Q: You mentioned that this particular role did not exist before you took it up, what was the reason behind it?

A: For many years, some OMF retirees and Serve Asia workers volunteered for short periods to help organise portions of the collection. In 2014, the Head of the Mission Research Department and his wife began to actively solicit, collect, and preserve materials from the various departments of the International Centre of OMF International. I joined OMF in 2018 as the first full-time Archivist to focus on this work.

Q: What are the most satisfying and challenging aspects of your role?

A: Our physical materials include books, magazines, minutes of major meetings, ministry surveys and reports, prayer letters, photographs, audio and video recordings, and correspondence. I am very satisfied when I discover connections between disparate sources of information collected from different places over time. For example, learning about the contributions of one missionary to the life and ministry of another person in a distant location. What's challenging is keeping track of the growing collection of materials (text, image, audio, and video) in digital formats.

Q: Why do you think archival work is important?

A: We are "collecting our past today and preserving it for tomorrow." The history of the ministries of OMF also represents the history of the development of the church in many countries of East Asia. The materials which have been archived allow us to remember and celebrate God's faithfulness to establish His church among the unreached peoples of East Asia. We in the Mission Research Department believe that "The archives hold many stories of what God has done. Telling the stories gives God the glory."

Q: Who would be suitable to take on an archivist role like yours?

A: Someone who is comfortable with organising documents and information sources; who is willing to learn about the history and breadth of OMF ministries; who does not mind doing research on our missionaries and their ministries. Someone who is prepared to create order out of apparent chaos.

Q: Are there any adjacent roles or tasks that you need help with?

A: The digitisation of materials is an ongoing responsibility and more volunteers are needed. I would also appreciate help with sorting and documenting our large collection of photographs and slides.





BREAK YOUR HEART FOR **WHAT BREAKS HIS:**

A glimpse of prison ministry in Taiwan

After 10 months of preparation, a 9-member Serve Asia team from Singapore's Antioch Chapel went on a week-long trip to Kaohsiung, Taiwan. This short-term missions exposure trip is not a typical one as the team had the opportunity to visit three local prisons, a half-way house and a local childcare centre.

Origins

Pastor Bob Chia, one of the team members, explained that Antioch Chapel was formed about 20 years ago and the leadership at that time felt led to serve in the prison ministry:
"The initial four founders of the church (including me) went into the local prison weekly to share the Gospel and counsel with brothers and inmates and till today we're still involved in this ministry."

Three of the Serve Asia team members, Simon Ho (team leader), Brandon Neo (assistant team leader) and Charlie Chua are former prison inmates and have been serving as deacons at Antioch Chapel for the past few years.

The idea for this trip came about as Antioch Chapel has been supporting overseas missionaries, such as OMF missionaries Michael and Ruth from Singapore who are serving in Taiwan.

"Michael was also a former prison inmate and he heeded the call to serve the marginalised community in Taiwan. Many years ago, when he approached the church (for help), we took up his request and supported him financially. In the years that passed, we did not have the chance to see first-hand for ourselves, the good work that had been done. When we decided on this short-term trip, we also wanted to bring a team to see what Michael and Ruth have been working on in recent years," said May Lee, one of the team members.

Preparation and Sacrifice

Claudia Chia, one of the younger team members elaborated on the extensive preparation and some of the sacrifices they had to make for the trip:

"We had to practice our songs because in Taiwan, the people speak Hokkien and coming from Singapore, we are mainly an English-speaking (church) congregation, the younger generation *lah*. (laughs) Thankfully, at Antioch we sing Mandarin and Hokkien songs (during church service). We also had to prepare a list of songs we could share with the people there in a language they will understand, because that's ultimately the group we are trying to reach out to.

We also had to prepare our skit and testimony sharing as we were going into prisons. We had to prepare a lot of logistics also because we were there to bless the kids at the child care centre with gifts etc. These are the administrative matters.

Some of my team members are gig workers – they usually work as private hire drivers and because they said yes to joining the trip, it will also mean a loss of income during the period of



the trip. During the months leading up to the trip, they also worked longer hours and took up more shifts to save up more money. This is a form of preparation that most people don't see. We also had to prepare our hearts, pray and support one another."

Experiences and encouragement

As former prison inmates in Singapore, this trip and opportunity to visit local prisons in Taiwan felt special to Simon, Brandon and Charlie.

"I was surprised by how open the prisons in Taiwan were and how warmly they welcomed us, as access to prisons back home in Singapore was more controlled and stricter. I was thankful to be able to see the difference between Taiwan's and Singapore's prisons. In Singapore, we visit the prison once a month and interact with 20-30 inmates in a classroom while in Taiwan, I was a bit surprised to see a hall of 70-80 inmates!

It was such a big crowd I almost did not know how to share my testimony," said Simon (in Mandarin).

Brandon recalled that he was encouraged by a local church elder they met in Taiwan who hosted the Antioch Chapel team well and he felt like a big brother taking care of the team.

"His hospitality touched our hearts – his passionate heart and love for people encouraged us deeply. This gave me greater confidence (back home) as I am also a volunteer with Singapore Prison Fellowship and we visit the local prison once or twice a month. After this trip, I am reminded of this verse – "And when you have turned back, strengthen your brother." (Luke 22:32b). As a former inmate myself, who believed in the Lord when





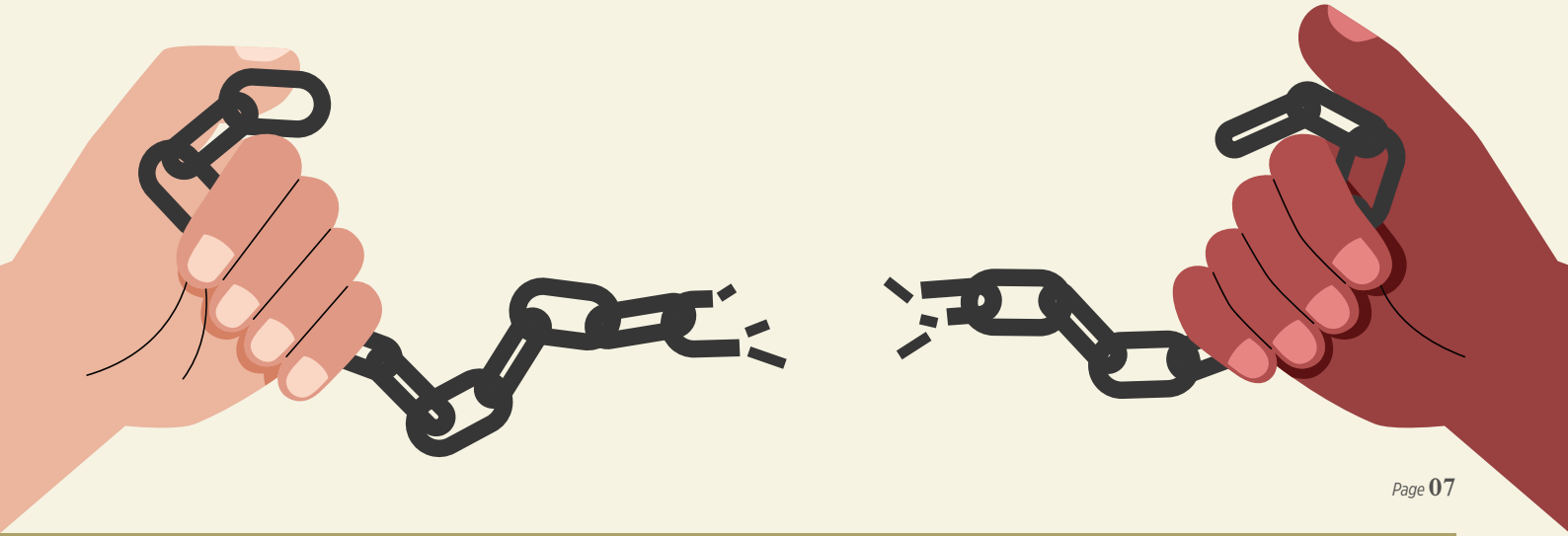
I was in prison – I have now been free for the past 9 years and I see it as my mission to encourage the inmates," Brandon reflected (in Mandarin).

The visit to the half-way house also left a deep impression on Charlie – he said, "I remembered what the director said, whatever they use at the halfway house are items that were unwanted or discarded. It reminded me of my past life, people viewed it as useless or trash, but the Lord picked me up and allowed me to be an encourager to those who had a similar past to mine."

Charlie was also deeply moved after meeting Michael and Ruth in Taiwan during the trip, especially hearing their story and learning about their obedience to follow God's call to serve the marginalised communities there.

"(In Mandarin) They just got married at that time and renovated their new home. Then Ruth said it's time to go to the mission field and Michael followed. What I learnt was that in life we build up many things for ourselves, such as having a nice renovation for our house, but if God calls you to serve (overseas in the field), are you willing to lay it down and heed His call?

We may build up many things in our life but when God calls you, will you hesitate?"





Rainbow after rain in Welfareville

Have a Heart for Missions in East Asia?



Connect with us
(linktr.ee/omf_singapore)

to stay up-to-date on East Asia focused events, prayer meetings, and mission opportunities.

STAY CONNECTED WITH OMF SINGAPORE!

Follow us on social media and subscribe to our E-newsletter for inspiring stories, ministry updates, prayer points, and upcoming events.

Facebook

Instagram

Telegram

Scan this QR Code to access all our channels!

Subscribe to our E-newsletter
Get the latest updates straight to your inbox.
tinyurl.com/SubsOMFSG-Mailchimp

Let's journey together in God's mission!



Published by **OMF Singapore Ltd**, 2 Cluny Road, Singapore 259570 | Co. Reg. No. 198403067N