

Ee Peng Liang Memorial Fund Regional Social Service Leaders Seminar 2016

SUMMARY

The programme stated objectives were achieved. Overseas and local participants were able to network with each other. The programme targeted experienced social service professionals from the region with the potential of being influential opinion-multipliers in their own community. Workshops and discussions enabled them to give each other insights into their respective country's social development. As a curtain raiser for this inaugural programme, the opening seminar on the first day provided an opportunity for heads of VWOs and senior social workers to come together and hear from their Asian counterparts. Overseas participants started sharing their Singapore experience with their own colleagues and counterparts in their home countries, thus raising awareness of the EPLMF Exchange Programme and different issues faced by social workers in the region.

EVALUATION OF FEEDBACK BY PARTICIPANTS:

Feedback was collated from participants via online survey and some email correspondence. Feedback by participants was generally positive. Participants appreciated the preparation that went into the programme and the opportunity to network and learn from each other. Through the workshops and discussions, participants gained insights from their counterparts from around Asia. Visits to voluntary welfare organisations enabled them to have an understanding of social service delivery in Singapore.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ON LOGISTICS:

- There can be more varieties to meals.
- Breakfast was limited.
- A half day orientation to the university would be useful.
- Great sharing and learning opportunity. Well designed to understand various cultures and practices of different nations.
- Airport pick up was appreciated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ON PROGRAMME /FORMAT:

- There should be more time allocated for discussions. Participants can give meaningful suggestions to each other.
- If any participant has a success story as a result of learning from Singapore, they can be invited again to share their experience and how it changed their community. Evidence-based presentations could be invited.
- Debating about services could bring more ideas to suit regional changes.
- Expand agency visits to include hospital visit, centre for disabled people, counselling agencies, drug rehab and NGOs.
- Visits to agencies were interesting and educational. Some were very theoretical.
- Visits to agencies were too short. Better to spend 2 or 3 days with an agency to understand what they do.
- It would be good to be able to interact and talk to beneficiaries.

KEY LEARNING POINTS FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- Leadership is very important in managing human resource and empowering clients and staff.
- Great ideas on fundraising tips. Leadership to bring required change.
- Advocacy is the responsibility of every social worker.
- Old age is an issue which cannot be solved through money only. It needs more attention and innovative ideas to close gaps.

CONCLUSION

In terms of content and organisation, the programme was generally well received by participants. Many said they enjoyed it professionally and socially. An often heard suggestion given by a few participants was to have more time for participants to hear each other field experiences and to have detailed discussion about them. The next programme can be revised to incorporate more time for interaction with local social workers and clients where appropriate, as well as to involve eldercare and medical issues.

It is recommended that EPLMF continues to organise the programme on an annual basis. There is a need to bring together social service leaders in Asia to exchange their views on social issues of interest to professionals in the region.



Department of Social Work
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

