

Event Summary

Chinese Women's Association Social Service Leaders Exchange Program 2018 (18-29 June)

15 social service leaders from Asia and in particular ASEAN, were selected to come to Singapore to learn and to share their experiences from their own communities with Singapore social work and service practitioners. This programme provides opportunities for professionals in our social service field to learn about current issues faced by their counterparts in different countries in the region and how they manage to deliver services with limited resources.

This year is the 3rd run of this program and each year it has evolved in terms of changes to the structure of the program and also an expansion of the organising committee. Some of the highlights of this year's program are

- 1 day Family Service Centre attachment,
- 1 day Specialised Agency attachment,
- Workshops by experts on topics such as Leadership in non-profit organisations, Alternative Care of children, System Change, Fundraising, Strategic Planning
- Visits to various type of social organisations: Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home, YMCA, Daughters of Tomorrow, National Kidney Foundation
- Joining in National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's 'A Good Day' event, where the participants carry various activities to experience different social issues in Singapore
- Sharing by program participants

For the Opening Ceremony, Mrs Betty Chen, patron of the Chinese Women's Association was invited as the guest of honour. We are grateful for the support that the Chinese Women's Association has been giving to this program, this is currently the 2nd year that they are supporting the program. This year's opening saw the 15 participants presenting an overview of the social issues faced in their community. The Opening cum seminar was attended by about 30 people, mainly students and social service practitioners from the field.

This year we managed to invite the President and other committee members of the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW) to come down to give an overview of the Singapore social service sector and also on the accreditation system for Social Workers. Half of the program participants were interested to visit SASW to find out more about their work as Social Workers are still not recognised in many Asian countries. They actually made the trip down to SASW themselves outside of the official program.

At the end of the intense 2 weeks, the participants gained knowledge and were exposed to the Social Work Policies and Issues in Singapore. They admired the highly developed systems and frameworks in place here, especially the use of technology such as in keeping digital records. They saw the importance of collaboration between different agencies and how the convergence of services help families in need. Also through the various sharing, both formally and informally, they also gained awareness of issues and practices in other Asian countries. All felt a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment when they received their certificate from Mr Richard Eu at the Closing Ceremony. The 2 weeks was an amazing learning experience and the participants were also excited about the work to

be done when they go back to their countries as shared during their concluding presentations of their takeaways, having been equipped with the amount of knowledge gained, their exposure and context broadened and networks expanded. Ronald from the Philippines summed it up nicely “Everyone started as strangers and ended the program as one true family of social service leaders”.



visit to Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home



Debrief sessions



Group Discussions during seminars



NVPC's A Good Day programme



Closing Ceremony



Agency Visits