

# New fund for promoting research to improve social services in Singapore launched

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SINGAPORE - A \$2.37 million fund to promote research for improving the provision and delivery of social services was set up on Monday (April 10).

Called the Mrs Lee Choon Guan Endowed Research Fund, it was established by the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences through a philanthropic gift from the Mrs Lee Choon Guan Trust Fund.

The fund will support research projects in which practising social workers and NUS researchers work together on challenges in the social service sector here, NUS said in a media statement. Social workers could, in the process, build on their ability to handle different local issues.

The research findings could also help improve the accessibility, delivery and design of social services, NUS said. Other potential applications of the research include improving the well-being of service users, and contributing to policy discussions between social service providers and the Government.

NUS' Department of Social Work will administer the new research fund.

Associate Professor Esther Goh, head of NUS' Department of Social Work, said this is a "timely development, as there is a pressing need for more practice research in the social service sector to drive evidence-informed policy-making, resource planning and training of social workers to serve Singapore's multi-cultural population".

Ms Ng Hwee Chin, head of direct services and principal social worker at the Children's Cancer Foundation, said that practice research is an integral part of the provision of effective programmes. "By conducting practice research, the practitioners gain systematic and in-depth understanding of clients' experience as recipients of help."

Mr Keith Chua, trustee of the Mrs Lee Choon Guan Trust Fund, said that by partnering with NUS, "we hope that research emanating from this initiative may also be found helpful in other communities, regionally and internationally".

Successful applicants of the fund can get \$20,000 to \$30,000 for each research project, based on its viability and impact. Each project is expected to be completed within three years. Project proposals also must have the potential to have their findings translated into training or teaching materials.

The first call of applications for the fund will be made in 2018.