ANNEX - NEW MODULES OFFERED BY CHUA THIAN POH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CENTRE

(1) Engaging and Building Communities

This module introduces students to the theory and practice of community development, which examines how individuals/organisations can engage communities and help build them up to become empowered agents of positive social change. The module enables students to:

(i)   appreciate the wide range of models and frameworks of community development;
(ii)   critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of these various models and frameworks, particularly in the context of Singapore;
(iii)   develop competence in ground-sensing techniques that can be used to map community aspirations, assets and needs;
(iv)   develop competence in community participation and consensus building techniques that are vital in addressing community challenges.

Students would be exposed to the following community development models and frameworks:

(i)   asset-based community development;
(ii)   community capitals framework;
(iii)   networking approach to community development;
(iv)   community empowerment models;
(v)   sustainable livelihoods models;
(vi)   radical community development.

Students would be introduced to relevant qualitative research techniques that can be adopted to map communities, as well as community participation and consensus building techniques that can be used to implement solutions to community problems. Students will engage in experiential learning of these techniques, as they would be required to map the aspirations, assets and needs of specific communities in Singapore, and then to work with these communities to develop solutions to their needs.

(2) Community Development Practicum

Through this practicum, the student engages in a field research project with a specific social service organisation in Singapore. As social service organisations in Singapore move towards evidence-based practice, they need to conduct field research to better understand the communities that they work with, and to assess the impact of their social interventions. Students can therefore help the organisations to conduct the field research, and in the process, address the organisations' knowledge gap and help the organisations to run more impactful interventions.

This practicum enables students to:

(i)   appreciate the complexities of social issues in Singapore, and the complexities that social service organisations face in addressing these issues effectively;
(ii)   develop competence in interacting meaningfully with social service organisations in Singapore, and the communities that the organisations work with;
(iii)   develop competence in field research techniques (i.e., qualitative and/or quantitative social research methods);

(iv)   develop competence in presenting field research findings, analyses, implications and recommendations to the social service organisations.

Each student enrolled in this practicum would need to attend three research workshops on quantitative research, qualitative research, and social impact assessment. They would then be paired with a social service organisation (i.e. a charity, a social enterprise or a government agency) for three months. The organisation defines its existing knowledge gap and scopes the field research topic for the student. With guidance from the organisation, the student conducts the field research, starting from collecting data to analysing data and then to proposing recommendations. Upon completion of the field research, the student submits a research report that documents the research process, findings, analyses, implications and recommendations.

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