

MEDIA RELEASE



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Social Service Sector Manpower Projected to Grow to 16,000 by 2019 Due to Evolving Social Needs

- ***Number of social service professionals has increased to more than 50% over past 10 years***
- ***NCSS builds capacity and capability through a holistic approach of attracting, developing and retaining talent***

Singapore, 12 April 2017 – 2 in 5 are unaware that the social service sector offers employment, according to a sector perception study led by **National Council of Social Service (NCSS)**, which surveyed over 1,200 students from Institutes of Higher Learning and mid-career professionals.

The sector workforce has grown from 8,400 in 2007, to more than 13,000 today, and is projected to grow to 16,000 by 2019. Social service professionals are key to the capability of every social service organisation in Singapore. NCSS is building capacity and capability for the sector, through its three-pronged holistic approach of Talent Attraction, Talent Development and Talent Retention.

To achieve this, NCSS is rolling out initiatives that include promoting the social service as a career of choice; debunking myths based on the research findings; helping professionals deepen and refresh their skills through Education Innovation 2020; close to 700 courses, including more technology-enabled programmes, for social sector leaders, professionals and volunteers; and a People Practice Consultancy (PPC) that will improve people practices in the sector.

These initiatives were announced at the official opening of the Social Service Institute's (SSI) new premises at Central Plaza in Tiong Bahru this morning by Guest-of-Honour, **Minister for Social & Family Development, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin**. With innovative teaching pedagogies, the new premises include 14 smart technology classrooms and training facilities, and span 1584 square meters. It has the capacity to accommodate at least 425 volunteers and professionals at any one time. 40% of SSI's 15,000 training places will be through online and blended learning by 2020.

NCSS Deputy CEO and Group Director, Human Capital and Development Group, Mr Fermin Diez said: "The social service sector is for those who want to be agents of change. Every one of our more than 13,000 colleagues in the sector today have a true sense of purpose, and share common values and a genuine desire to make a positive difference to the lives of others, and to build a caring and inclusive Singapore. With our ageing population and smaller families, social needs in Singapore are fast evolving. Demand for more manpower is growing. NCSS will be the key enabler to attract, develop and retain social service professionals in the sector."

Talent Attraction

NCSS is championing initiatives to promote social service as a career of choice. In May, it will start with debunking myths of the social service professions. For example, there is a misconception that the sector hires only social workers, when in reality, other specialised, corporate and support roles are available.

- Social workers form 7% of the whole workforce.
- The sector hires Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Special Education (SPED) Teachers, Early Intervention Programme for Infant and Children (EIPIC) Teachers, Counsellors, and Psychologists.
- 28% are in corporate functions, such as Human Resource, Communications, Fundraising, Information Technology, and Administration.
- 39% are in support roles, such as Social Service Assistants, Therapy Aides, Training Officers, and General Workers

Talent Development

The Social Service Institute, under NCSS, has also embarked on **Education Innovation (EI) 2020** to help social sector leaders, professionals and volunteers to continuously deepen and refresh their skills. SSI offers close to 700 courses and is working with different partners to deliver training programmes, via online and innovative blended learning approaches, by leveraging the latest technology, innovative pedagogies, supported by hi-tech facilities at its new premises. In 2016, its training intake was 15,300, up from less than 10,000 in the year 2013.

There are also plans for SSI to partner social service organisations to develop courses, which it can support with the technology, infrastructure, outreach, instructional design and digitisation. This will help bring new areas of practice for professional communities in the sector.

A highlight of **EI 2020** is the **GatherHere** online community portal initiated by SSI as a resource for sector professionals. This connects people and knowledge, and as of March 2017, there are close to 20,600 accounts in the portal. Sector professionals can easily access the latest research resources, participate in network groups and sector events, and stay updated on learning opportunities.

Talent Retention

NCSS has partnered with three consultancy firms, Aon Hewitt, Ernest & Young and Willis Tower Watson to provide customised human resource solutions for social service organisations to better attract, motivate and retain their employees. Some 100 social service organisations have signed up for the People Practices Consultancy (PPC). The 3-year initiative started in 2016 would cover main HR functions in Recruitment and Selection, Compensation and Benefit, Performance Management and Career Planning.

At the end of PPC in 2019, the People Practice Index (PPI) will also be developed to track progress of people practices over time and identify new areas where the sector can improve on.

NCSS publishes the social service sector salary guidelines every year to keep pace with wage movements. This year, the recommended increment for social service professionals is an average of 3.5% based on their individual performance. Organisations such as Rainbow Centre and Care Corner have found the salary guidelines useful to attract and retain talent. NCSS will also be conducting workshops to guide social service organisations on how to implement these performance based increments.

NCSS is also developing the first ever customised psychometric tool for the social service sector to help organisations find talent with a good fit. The **Sector Values Assessment** measures social service values and attributes, such as Passion for Service, Compassion, Resilience, Integrity, and Client-Centricity. NCSS is working with the National University of Singapore to develop the psychometric tool.

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National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450-member social service organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS.

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