



MEDIA RELEASE

17 October 2013

YOUTH INSIGHT: REACHING OUT TO MALAY YOUTHS A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT NETWORK SEMINAR SERIES

Thursday, 17 October 2013 – The Youth Development Network of the Community Leaders Forum (CLF), in collaboration with Youth Work Association of Singapore (YWAS) embarked on its inaugural seminar series yesterday, 16 October 2013 for youth workers who are working with Malay/Muslim youths.

The theme for the first of the seminar series focusing on working with youths is “Outreach”. The seminar brought together youth work practitioners and experts to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and best practices, with a special focus on reaching out and working with Malay youths. Among the 170 partners involved in the seminar were school counsellors, social workers, youth development officers from various mosques and professional organisations. Participants gained insights on how culture and religion play a significant factor in the daily lives of Malay youths, influencing their behaviours and the choices these youths make.

The half-day seminar was held at the Republic Polytechnic and graced by Members of Parliament, Mr Zaqy Mohamad and Dr Intan Azura, co-chairmen of the Youth Development Network, CLF.

As stated by MP Zaqy in his opening speech, the series of seminars and workshops aims to promote a robust and well-trained group of dedicated youth work practitioners who would serve the youths to the best of their abilities.

Mdm Moliyah Hashim, CEO of MENDAKI expressed, “Our large youth base is a valuable asset in our community's development. It is important for us to effectively reach out and engage our youths and equip them with skills and resources to be contributing members of the community. This seminar builds on our efforts in engaging youths such as the Youth Symposium that MENDAKI organised last year which reached out to about 300 youths in our community”.

Three esteemed speakers shared on outreach skills and best practices that support the practitioner's outreach efforts. Keynote speaker Mr Keswick Chuk, Service Director (Youth Services) at Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, addressed main issues in youth outreach work and elaborated on skills a practitioner should be equipped with to actively and effectively engage youths.

When interviewed, Mr Keswick said, “I appreciate MENDAKI being proactive and arranging the seminar, in response to the new era of the youth work. In the past, Singapore has a good tradition to tackle the youth's needs. Now there is a new service need, and it is a good way to see how we can serve the youths on the streets and those who are at risk. We should respect the particular culture of the Malay youth or family and with the experience of the past, we should develop the most suitable way to respond to the needs of the Malay groups/culture.”

Two other speakers Dr Sharifah Hana Alhadad, Senior Research and Policy Executive from Yayasan MENDAKI and Mr Ahmad Taufiq Muhammad, PhD Candidate, Family Ecology and Youth Studies from University Putra Malaysia were also present to give their views on reaching out to Malay youths.

Dr Sharifah Hana Alhadad presented on the best practices of participatory theatre. Participatory theatre is an approach or method which involves a broad set of practices including drama, music, dance and visual arts. These practices provide a platform that gives people a voice and the confidence to express the issues concerning them that might otherwise remain unaddressed. She stated that this could be adapted within the context of engaging Malay/Muslim youths in Singapore.

Mr Ahmad Taufiq Muhammad elaborated on building an effective working relationship with Malay youths through understanding and reaching out to them from both a theoretical and cultural perspective.

“I have benefitted from the presentation and three panellists. They are quite knowledgeable in terms of doing outreach. One of the things that is quite lacking in the mosque cluster is doing the outreach programme. From the outreach skills shared earlier, there are a lot of things that needs to be improved. The current programmes planned is more developmental than outreach programmes”, said Mr Muhammad Khaider Bin Rohani, Youth Development Officer at Al-Iman Mosque.

Another participant of the seminar, Mr Andrew John Hutcheon, Section Head/Sport Management from ITE College East said, “I felt that the seminar was very interesting. With Singapore being a 24-hour society, this creates unsociable hours and affects the youths’ behaviours. The seminar gives us a lot more understanding on issues that the Malay/Muslim youths may face and we may relay our lessons or classes to suit their needs.”

Mrs Ngoh Wai Fong, School Counsellor from Sembawang Secondary School expressed that the words “empathy” and “be genuinely interested” in the youth is the key to success. The information and skills shared are useful for the youth practitioners.

We appreciate if you could kindly include the event details as above in the coverage. The enclosed photos in Annex A are for your kind reference.

Please kindly contact the officer below should you require further information.

Annex A

Photo 1

(left to right)

Mr Keswick Chuk (Service Director (Youth Services) at Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong), Mr Ahmad Taufiq Muhammad (PhD Candidate Family Ecology and Youth Studies from University Putra Malaysia), Mr Johann Johari (Acting Manager, Community Development (Youth) from Yayasan MENDAKI, MP Dr Intan Azura (Co-Chairperson of the Youth Development Network, Community Leaders Forum), Mdm Moliah Hashim (CEO of Yayasan MENDAKI) & MP Mr Zaqy Mohamad (Co-Chairperson of the Youth Development Network, Community Leaders Forum).



Photo 2

(left to right)

Mdm Moliah Hashim (CEO of Yayasan MENDAKI), MP Mr Zaqy Mohamad (Co-Chairperson of the Youth Development Network, Community Leaders Forum), Dr Sharifah Hana Alhadad (Senior Research and Policy Executive from Yayasan MENDAKI) & Mr Keswick Chuk (Service Director (Youth Services) at Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong).



Photo 3

(left to right)

Mdm Moliyah Hashim (CEO of Yayasan MENDAKI), MP Mr Zaqy Mohamad (Co-Chairperson of the Youth Development Network, Community Leaders Forum), Mr Sazali Abdul Wahid (Director Community Development, Yayasan MENDAKI) & Dr John Tan (Chairman of Youth Work Association (Singapore)).

