

# More support for students keen on service learning



A panel discussion at the 7th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for Service-Learning yesterday. The panellists are (from left) Ms Cynthia Chang, head of service learning and community engagement at the Singapore University of Social Sciences; Ms Ang Bee Lian, senior director and director of social welfare at the Ministry of Social and Family Development; Dr Tan Chi Chiu, chairman of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation at Singapore Management University; Professor Maria Nieves Tapia, founder of the Latin American Centre for Service-Learning; and Ms Yap Su-Yin, chief executive of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation. PHOTO: SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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## Digital library by SUSS will offer resources to help schools plan community-minded activities

[Jeanell Kiew](#)

A new digital library will be launched by the end of this month, offering materials that assist service learning - when students take part in activities that advance their studies while also helping the community and acquiring values.

The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse will be the first resource of its kind in Singapore, offering videos, reports, fact sheets and other information to education institutions to help them organise activities such as fund-raising events and overseas community trips.

It is being set up by the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). Local institutions and members of the public can access the library and contribute materials.

SUSS president Cheong Hee Kiat said service learning helps students "pursue life choices that will be socially responsible".

He was speaking yesterday at the launch of the 7th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for Service-Learning, which is being held at SUSS until tomorrow.

It is the first time the conference is being held in Singapore, with 300 local and international representatives from institutes and welfare organisations coming together over three days to discuss and exchange ideas on service learning.

Panel speakers include professors from Stanford University, the University of South Australia and China's Shantou University.

Speaking at the conference's launch, Social and Family Development Minister Desmond Lee said: "Growing up, I believe many of us here in Singapore have experienced the value of service learning ourselves. By interacting with people from different backgrounds - ethnicities, lifestyles and culture - we broaden our horizons and gain a deeper appreciation of our unique differences."

He cited Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) as an example of an institution that emphasises service learning.

From September, 700 NP final-year students will go on a six-month internship placement in social and health service areas, which will help them grow to become more responsible and civic-minded.

Mr Lee added: "I hope that this rich emphasis on service learning will inculcate a strong spirit of giving back to the community, that lasts beyond your schooling years."