

MEDIA RELEASE

CFS and NVPC Initiate Cross-Sector Collaborative Effort to Help Disadvantaged Young Persons in Singapore

- *Partnership between CFS and NVPC formed Colabs, to drive collaboration among the public, private and social sectors to tackle complex social issues*
- *First series tackles social mobility of disadvantaged young persons in Singapore*

Singapore, July 2, 2018 – The Community Foundation of Singapore (“CFS”) and the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (“NVPC”) have partnered to catalyse collaboration among the public, private and social sectors.

Colabs, an initiative by CFS and NVPC, drives collaboration by bringing together philanthropists, businesses, non-profits and sector experts to share knowledge, exchange ideas and co-create solutions. More than 100 representatives from 56 stakeholders took part in the first Colabs series that focused on the needs of disadvantaged young persons. These comprised government ministries, statutory boards, multi-national corporations, private companies, foundations, individual philanthropists, academics and non-profit organisations.

In addition, CFS and NVPC have released a guide to provide funders from various sectors of society with practical ways to help disadvantaged young persons in Singapore. The guide, titled ‘*A Call for Collaborative Giving: Closing the Gap for Disadvantaged Young Persons*’, captures insights uncovered by the diverse group of stakeholders who met to discuss the issues, and outlines clear recommendations for collective action.

“Collaboration is the way forward, as the scale, scope and complexity of social issues today makes it impossible for a single player or the government to solve alone,” said CFS Deputy Chief Executive Officer Joyce Teo. “By leveraging our shared expertise, skills and resources, collaborative partnerships offer donors opportunities to bring about more impactful social change.”

NVPC Director of Strategic Partnership Darrel Lim elaborated: “While there are numerous programmes by organisations to address current issues, there are still gaps, challenges, and constraints faced by beneficiaries and social services. Colabs is a platform which brings together like-minded stakeholders to learn and share insights, uncover gaps in the current system and collectively devise ways to plug these gaps.”

The Colabs series on disadvantaged young persons focused on whether education is a game changer for improving their social mobility. Over the course of eight months, participants shared and heard from sector experts, beneficiaries, and donors. Through roundtable talks, workshops, as well as a field trip and poverty simulation exercise, participants learnt about the challenges that prevent disadvantaged young persons from doing well in life, and the types of support currently available.

Elaine Loo, Director of Central Youth Guidance Office, Ministry of Social and Family Development, commented, “Colabs connects stakeholders across the various sectors to facilitate the sharing of perspectives and nudge collective efforts to address issues that our children and youth are facing today. Networks such as these are useful platforms that allow public agencies to hear directly from stakeholders, including our private sector partners.”

Colabs participants found that while education can help bridge social gaps, not every child can fully tap into the benefits that education can bring. Economic, social, and cultural differences also contribute to a greater degree of variance in Singaporean students' academic performance compared to students from other countries¹, and social gaps may widen if disadvantaged young persons here are not given the help they need.

Disadvantaged young persons here face multiple challenges. Parents tend to work long hours or hold shift jobs, leaving little time to attend to their children's learning needs. They often shoulder more adult responsibilities². This can result in poorer literacy development and academic performance, and may lead to psychological issues such as depression and other conditions³.

"It is difficult to have a 'one size fits all' solution because circumstances vary from person to person. Instead, harnessing collective expertise towards providing a variety of support structures with the capacity to consider unique individual needs will result in greater, longer lasting impact," noted Benjamin Teo, social worker and Centre Director at SHINE Children & Youth Services.

The Colabs guide outlines three different levels on which aspiring changemakers can make a difference through philanthropy and/or volunteerism. Firstly, there are programme-level initiatives which affect young persons directly. These involve supporting new programmes or enhancing existing ones. Secondly, there are organisational-level initiatives that target to strengthen non-profit organisations' capacity and capabilities; these can significantly impact outcomes across many programmes. Lastly, funders can choose to invest resources on sector-level initiatives that will impact the wider ecosystem, such as the development of multi-stakeholder data sharing platforms. More details can be found on pages 10 to 13 of the guide, which can be downloaded [here](#).

A second Colabs series focusing on persons with disabilities has concluded and a third Colabs series focusing on seniors will commence later this year.

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¹ According to the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment ("PISA") international survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ("OECD"). The latest PISA survey results show that ESCS differences account for 16.8%, 17.0%, 15.1% of the variance in Singapore students' performance in science, reading, and mathematics, compared to the OECD average of 12.9%, 11.9%, and 13.0%, respectively.

² Mathews, M. & Chan, C. (2015). *Empowering Low-income Families: Documenting the Contributions of Family Excellence Circles (FEC)*

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About Colabs

Colabs is a philanthropic initiative by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre and the Community Foundation of Singapore. It drives collaboration by bringing together the public, private and social sectors to tackle complex social issues. It enables philanthropists, businesses, non-profits and sector experts to collectively build insights and co-create solutions for lasting change.

About the Community Foundation of Singapore

The Community Foundation of Singapore ("CFS") is a non-profit organisation founded in 2008 to encourage and enable philanthropy in Singapore. We match donors' interests with causes and offer ways for them to make a greater impact through their charitable funds. We also collaborate with charity partners to identify and develop programmes that support diverse communities. Our purpose is to create real and meaningful change while building a philanthropic culture in Singapore. CFS is a registered charity with Institution of a Public Character status.

About the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre

The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre is an independent not-for-profit organisation that advocates giving in Singapore. Our vision is for Singapore to be a Giving Nation and to cultivate a strong culture of contribution where giving is part of every Singaporean's DNA. We work closely with charities, corporates, public sector agencies, institutions as well as the community to build a robust ecosystem to make giving simple, fun and meaningful.