

## \$250k fund helps youth start social enterprises

YOUNG Singaporeans who aspire to create social enterprises can now follow their ambitions with the help of a new fund.

The scheme – which has a \$250,000 annual budget – was launched yesterday by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

It aims to help people aged 18 to 35 who want to develop businesses that promote social causes.

Each start-up can receive a grant of up to \$50,000.

Acting MSF Minister Chan Chun Sing said: “We believe there are many passionate young Singaporeans who want to do good for society, and we want to be able to do our best to support them.”

Named the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme for Start-Ups, the scheme provides a new tier of funding under the ComCare Enterprise Fund.

It came about after the MSF teamed up with two organisations – the National University of Singapore’s Entrepreneurship Centre and Singapore Management University Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Both will provide mentorship and support to help students and graduates start their social enterprises.

Young people who want to tap into the fund should apply to the MSF through either organisation.

Mr Mohammad Shahri, 23, is the first person to receive a grant through the programme.

The ITE College East graduate will get \$50,000 to build his social enterprise. Called Pauwer, it supplies buns – or “pau” – with unique fillings such as chocolate or rendang instead of the typical red bean paste or barbecued pork.

Ex-offenders, single parents or handicapped people will be trained to make the delicacy.

Mr Shahri said: “My stepfather is an ex-offender. He’s now 40 and still can’t find a job. I wanted to set up a social enterprise to help people like him.”

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