

S\$1.9m boost for youth community projects

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SINGAPORE – Youths at Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) who want to do more for the community will be able to tap into a S\$1.9-million fund by the National Youth Council (NYC), said Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong yesterday.

Over the next three years, the fund will support overseas and local community projects, leadership training, workshops and conferences.

The NYC is partnering six IHLs: Republic Polytechnic, Singapore Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Nanyang Polytechnic, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University.

Mr Wong, who is also the NYC Chairman, said: "Part of the idea of having these partnerships early in life is so that you create a habit and hopefully continue on at a working age."

It will also support youth-initiated projects, research and existing programmes, such as the Youth Expedition Project. For example, at the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, support will be provided to researchers who wish to conduct youth-related research. In March, the Government started a S\$100-million National Youth Fund to support ground-up youth initiatives, which support community and social causes.

Last month, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the Ministry of Education announced that they had forged a partnership to help schools promote youth volunteerism.

Mr Wong hopes that such efforts will give youths "a sense of empowerment" to "shape" society and "the future of Singapore".

When asked about the challenges young people face in trying to do so, he noted that youths face a lot of "compression in terms of time", from "the pressure ... to do well to pursue a certain path that they themselves may not want to do but feel compelled to".

Asked how to overcome these challenges, Mr Wong said that mindsets cannot be changed "overnight". "It's important to look at my school experience, in the larger context ... in terms of how I can be a better person... but it will take time to change," he added.



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