

 **'S'PORE NEEDS OFFICIAL
DEFINITION OF POVERTY'**

● Singapore needs to reassess the way in which poverty is acknowledged defined and addressed in order to better identify needs within the population, said a group of researchers, who yesterday released a report calling for an official definition of poverty here.

Monetary-based measures of poverty — such as income levels — may have their limitations, but when combined with various non-monetary measures, they can be useful.

“The process of identifying a poverty line ... will generate greater public support for efforts to address the needs of vulnerable communities ... It will also focus the efforts of the government, social sector and philanthropists according to common indicators arising from locally identified needs,” the researchers said in their report.

The report is by the Singapore Management University's Lien Centre for Social Innovation, SMU political science professor John Donaldson and Mr Yeoh Lam Keong, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies.

The researchers looked at various models of measuring poverty and its suitability for Singapore, such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) developed by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative. The MPI consists of 10 indicators of poverty — such as nutrition, years of schooling and assets — divided into three broad dimensions and can be adapted for different needs.

They also noted the difficulty of ascertaining the level of poverty in Singapore based on current publicly available data. “We believe that most Singaporeans are not aware of the scale and depth of poverty in Singapore.”