

# Govt to double grants for Sinda, Eurasian Association

They can help more families with extra funds; CDAC to get one-off \$10m grant

PUBLISHED ON SEP 1, 2014 12:39 AM



A volunteer helping pupils at a CDAC tuition centre in Sengkang. The one-off \$10 million grant for CDAC will be for 2014 to 2018. -- PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

BY TOH YONG CHUAN

THE self-help groups for the Indian and Eurasian communities will be getting more government funding from this year.

The dollar-for-dollar matching grants for donations raised by the Singapore Indian Development Association (Sinda) and Eurasian Association (EA) will be doubled so that they can help more families.

Sinda will receive up to \$3.4 million this year, up from \$1.7 million previously, while the EA will receive up to \$400,000, up from \$200,000.

The Chinese self-help group, Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), will get a one-off \$10 million grant for 2014 to 2018. It received a similar \$10 million grant for 1992 to 1997.

These grants will help self-help groups run more programmes, said Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong. "We will do our part to support what they are doing and support their good work," he said.

The amounts were based on the sizes of the communities and the programmes proposed by the groups, he told reporters after a visit to a CDAC tuition centre at Rivervale Primary yesterday.

He added that the CDAC does not get an annual matching grant like the rest because the Chinese community, being the largest, is in a "much better position to raise funds on its own".

"We do lean a bit more generously towards the smaller ones," said Mr Wong.

The increases in grants announced yesterday came one day after the self-help groups said they will be raising the contribution rates from next year to cope with rising costs and to pay for new programmes.

The monthly contributions rates go up by between 50 cents and \$23. These donations are deducted from workers' salaries, but workers can opt out of giving.

The matching grant for Malay self-help groups YayasanMendaki, the Association of Muslim Professionals and Malay Muslim organisations was already raised from \$4 million to \$5 million earlier this year.

Self-help groups welcomed the extra government funds.

An EA spokesman said that it will explore running more programmes, without giving details.

Sinda's chief operating officer RavindranNagalingam said the group will expand programmes targeted at Indian families. "We are the only self-help group that runs a family services centre," he said.

CDAC executive director Goh ChimKhim said: "The one-off grant will help us to serve more lower-income families and individuals."

It is also looking at expanding enrichment classes for primary school pupils, on top of basic tuition.

Housewife Wong Y.L., 42, whose two daughters in Primary 4 and 6 attend the CDAC's weekly tuition and enrichment classes, supports the expansion of tuition programmes.

"The CDAC teachers are volunteers and they are passionate about teaching. My daughters' grades have improved," she said.

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