

Professor Wei-Jun Jean Yeung, co-director of the Centre for Family and Population Research, and Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee viewing an exhibit featuring the Singapore Longitudinal Early Development Study. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN



BETTER OUTCOMES

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MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT DESMOND LEE

NUS' family research centre marks 5 years

Research dedicated to family and population issues in Asia

Rahimah Rashith

The National University of Singapore's Centre for Family and Population Research (CFPR), which is dedicated to researching family and population issues in Asia, celebrated its fifth anniversary yesterday.

Since it was established, the centre has consulted with various ministries in the Republic on policies relevant to issues on ageing, marriage and fertility, early child development, young adult develop-

ment, and social mobility.

It has secured more than \$11 million in external grants since 2014 and conducted transnational research in areas such as changes in families, ageing, family dynamics, vulnerable population, bilingual practices and social media behaviour.

For instance, an ongoing Singapore Longitudinal Early Development Study – led by the CFPR co-director, Professor Wei-Jun Jean Yeung – is examining the current state of Singaporean children aged six years and below.

The researchers are studying how family, childcare and early education institutions, community and the state interact to shape the children's cognitive and social-emotional development.

Data from 5,000 Singaporean children is currently being collected, with special attention being paid to those from disadvantaged families.

Said Prof Yeung: "Today, Singapore faces the toughest challenges in family and population issues like many other countries in the world.

"Family processes and population dynamics are so intimately intertwined to affect all domains of human life: economic, social, cultural, political.

"Examining both areas together

allows us to most productively appreciate the trends and understand the causes and consequences to a society's development and individual's well-being."

CFPR researchers have also studied the association between family dynamics and behavioural addiction of adolescents in Singapore; older Singaporean adults' labour and financial decisions; and decision-making styles of Singaporeans based on their digital footprints.

Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee, who was guest of honour yesterday, urged more collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

Encouraging further joint studies in the areas of divorces, ageing families and transnational families, he said: "Research plays an important role in helping us formulate better and more informed policies that result in better outcomes for families.

"Policymaking will certainly benefit from an even deeper understanding of demographic and family trends and a more holistic understanding of the challenges that families face," he said.

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