

# Work, Family and Financial Assistance: A Symposium on Low-Income Families in Singapore

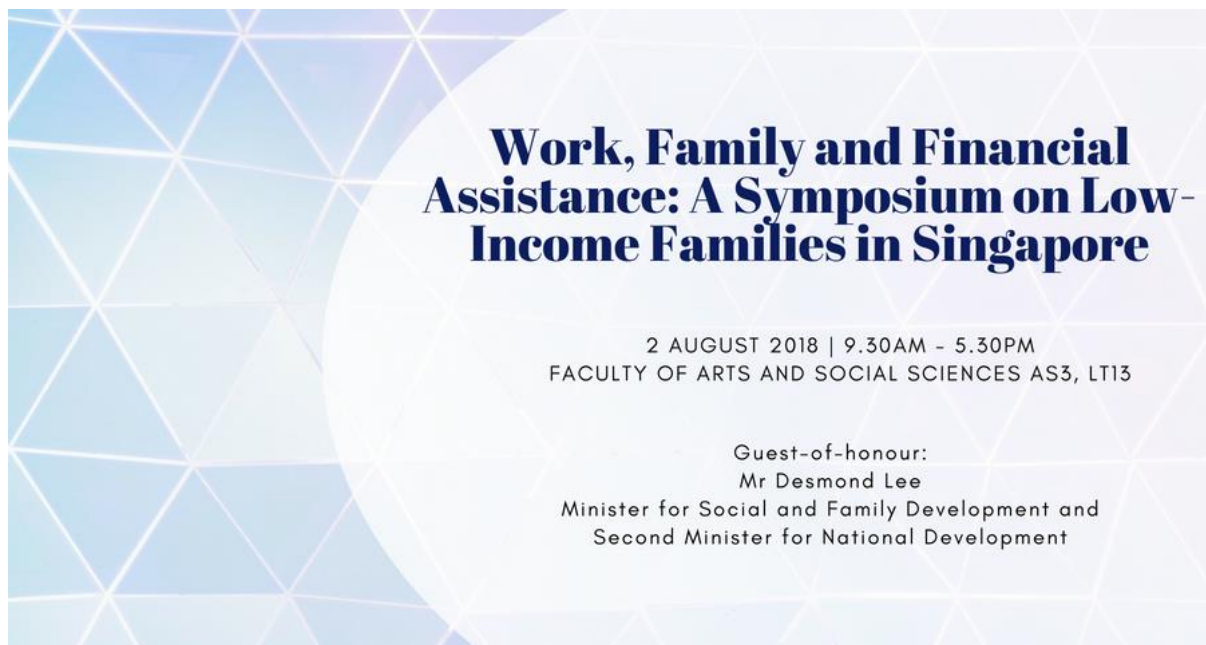
Date: 2 August 2018, Thursday

Time: 9.30am to 5.30pm

Venue: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Blk AS3 , 3 Arts Link Singapore 117570

Room: Lecture Theatre 13

In 2009, National University of Singapore was commissioned to study families placed on the Work Support Program (WSP). A total of 459 families (830 in the beginning) were followed for five waves, providing probably the only longitudinal study of low-income families in Singapore. As the study wraps up, the symposium will share findings from this long-term study and engage practitioners, policy makers and academics in discussing how to better help low-income families as a sector. Registration is free of charge. Please join us!



**Work, Family and Financial Assistance: A Symposium on Low-Income Families in Singapore**

2 AUGUST 2018 | 9.30AM - 5.30PM  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AS3, LT13

Guest-of-honour:  
Mr Desmond Lee  
Minister for Social and Family Development and  
Second Minister for National Development

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## A/P HO KONG WENG



Dr Ho Kong Weng is an Associate Professor (Education) of the Singapore Management University. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Chicago. His current research interest are commitment and subjective well-being, identity and happiness, inequality and social mobility, and economic and non-economic well-being of low-income families under the Work Support Programme in Singapore. He has participated in consultation projects with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), and the National Youth Council (NYC). He also serves as a Research Advisor to MSF.

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**DR MATHEW MATHEWS**



Dr Mathew Mathews is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. He has worked on more than 40 research projects examining social policy issues revolving around race, religion, immigrant integration, family, ageing and poverty. Mathews has taught courses on social policy, published in a range of academic and media outlets and often appears on panels locally and internationally. He is currently President of Alive Community Network and sits on the advisory boards of OnePeople.sg and Hua Mei Centre for Successful Ageing. He is a Research Advisor to the Ministry of Social and Family Development and is part of the VWOs-Charities Capability Fund Panel and Families for Life Council.

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**A/P IRENE Y.H NG**



Dr Irene Y.H. Ng is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Director of the Social Service Research Centre in the National University of Singapore. She holds a joint Ph.D. in Social Work and Economics from the University of Michigan. Her research areas include poverty and inequality, intergenerational mobility, youth crime, and social welfare policy. Her research projects include an evaluation of a national Work Support program; National Youth Surveys 2010, 2013 and 2017; a study of low-income households with debt; and an evaluation of Social Service Offices. She is active in the community, serving or having served in committees in the Ministry of Social and Family Development, National Council of Social Service, Ministry of Manpower, and various voluntary welfare organizations. Her teaching areas include poverty, policy, welfare economics, youth work, and program planning.

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**MS KONG KUM PECK**



Kum Peck is the Director of the ComCare and Social Support Division in the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Her portfolio covers the policies for low-income and vulnerable groups, including operational policies, and development of sector capability. Policy areas include financial assistance (ComCare), strengthening the family unit, and social support for the homeless and destitute persons. She has experience in

strategic planning, policy research, voluntary sector and community relations policy, and has worked in the Public Service Division, the Ministry of Health, and the former Ministry of Information and the Arts.

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**MS NG BEE LENG**

Ng Bee Leng is a social worker by training. Helping families and their children out of intergenerational poverty is a social issue close to her heart. 2 questions disturb her deeply: What contribute to the reproduction of poverty across generations in Singapore today? What does it take for families to get out of poverty today?

Experience has brought her to believe in asset-based community-led development that focuses on strengths rather than deficits. Attention on “what is wrong” leads to an emphasis on deficits which is followed by a reliance on others to solve their problems. Low income families are the experts of their lives; when they come together as a community to participate in resolving their problems, they take ownership and collectively improve their own lives and the lives of others. She hopes to see a Singapore where communities are like homes; where issues like poverty and social inequality are owned by communities and solutions are co-created WITH rather than prescribed FOR.

Journeying with disadvantaged communities for the past 25 years has been a privilege for Bee Leng, both personally and professionally. She was the Executive Director of South Central Community FSC and MILK (Mainly I Love Kids Fund) and Deputy Executive Director of Beyond Social Services and volunteered in various capacities with Caritas Singapore, Healthy Start Child Development Centre and the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

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**DR ONG QIYAN**

Qiyang is a research fellow with the Social Service Research Centre. She specializes in using behavioral and applied economics to study individual decision-making and the effects and performances of different policy designs. Her research spans a range of behavioral domains. Her recent research includes studies on cognitive reasons for debt in low-income households, performance of transnational marriage support programs and social service office models, as well as performance of different types of incentives on motivating prosocial behavior.

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**DR NEO YU WEI**



Yu Wei is a research fellow with the Social Service Research Centre. A sociologist by training, Yu Wei is primarily interested in how the social construction of poverty, childhoods and families influence social policy designs, as well as service delivery. She conducted her doctoral study on how social inclusion policies are framed by policymakers, service providers and children from low-income families in Australia. Recently, she is involved in a research project examining the experiences of families living in rental housing in Singapore.

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#### DR ROBYN TAN HWEE TENG



Robyn Tan Hwee Teng is a Research Fellow with the Social Service Research Centre. Her research interests include studying the implementation of programmes, policies and interventions in real world policy and service settings. She is also interested in applying theory-driven evaluation to social interventions to understand what works, for whom, and under what conditions.

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#### Programme

Time	Programme
9:30am	<b>Welcome and introductions by Emcee</b>
9:35am	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> A/P Esther Goh <i>Head of Social Work Department</i> <i>National University of Singapore</i>
9:40am	<b>Introduction to the WSP Study</b> A/P Irene Y.H. Ng <i>Principal Investigator</i> <i>Director of Social Service Research Centre , National University of Singapore</i>
9.50am	<b>Presentation of Key Findings</b> A/P Ho Kong Weng <i>Associate Professor, Singapore Management University</i>  Dr Mathew Mathews <i>Senior Research Fellow, National University of Singapore</i>  A/P Irene Y.H. Ng <i>Director of Social Service Research Centre, National University of Singapore</i>

10:30am **Opening Speech by Guest of Honour**  
Mr Desmond Lee  
*Minister, Ministry of Social and Family Development*  
*Second Minister, Ministry of National Development*

10.45am **Tea Break**

11.15am **Panel Discussion of WSP Findings**

Presenters:  
A/P Ho Kong Weng  
*Associate Professor, Singapore Management University*

Dr Mathew Mathews  
*Senior Research Fellow, National University of Singapore*

A/P Irene Y.H. Ng  
*Director of Social Service Research Centre, National University of Singapore*

Panellists:  
Ms Kong Kum Peck  
*Director of Comcare and Social Support Division, Ministry of Social and Family Development*

Ms Ng Bee Leng  
*Former Executive Director, South Central FSC and Mainly I Love Kids Fund*

12.45pm **Lunch**

1.45pm **[Concurrent Workshops](#)**

3.15pm **Tea break**

3.45pm **[Concurrent Workshops](#)**

5:15pm **End**