

## The Community Engagement Programme (CEP)

The Community Engagement Programme (CEP) is a long-term effort to ensure that we are better equipped to maintain our social cohesion and harmony, should a crisis happen in Singapore. While we think that our good communal relations built up over the years would stand us in good stead, we also realise that this cannot be taken for granted.

2 We know that, in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, it could be difficult for communities to remain calm and avoid knee-jerk reactions. **Communities need to trust each other and know what needs to be done to stay united before any crisis strikes.** Having strong networks of trust and being committed to maintaining good relations is important.

3 **But we need to do more – we also need to be prepared and know what to do and expect in a crisis.**

## The CEP Journey

4 Since the launch of the CEP, there have been many activities and initiatives undertaken in support of the CEP in the areas of:-

- Building Awareness and Understanding
- Developing Capability and Confidence
- Building Networks of Trust

5 The CEP secretariat<sup>1</sup>, together with the five Government agencies<sup>2</sup> under the CEP have facilitated and provided support and resources towards these initiatives. These five clusters, together with their identified CEP Community Leaders, provide the interface between the communities and the Government. The **video** of the CEP Journey, shown at the National CEP Seminar 2008, documents some of these initiatives. At the **exhibition**, we share snapshots of the activities and programmes carried out.

6 The following are just some of these activities and initiatives that mark our progress along the CEP journey.

<sup>1</sup> The CEP Secretariat at the Ministry of Home Affairs is the overall coordinating agency for the CEP.

<sup>2</sup> They are the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports for religious groups, ethnic-based and voluntary welfare organisations, Ministry of Education for the educational institutions, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts for the media and arts cluster, Ministry of Manpower for businesses and unions and People's Association for the grassroots organisations.

## Building Awareness and Understanding

7 The importance of communal harmony, social resilience and cohesion needs to be continually reinforced with each generation. We also need to sustain engagement of the public to keep them involved so that over time, they can internalise the values of communal harmony and resilience.

### **Radio and internet outreach**

To widen the outreach at the national level, the CEP Secretariat launched outreach programmes via radio and the internet which are effective ways to reach out to youths and the IT-savvy.

### **CEP outreach through collaterals and other resources**

CEP related collaterals and resources (e.g. videos, factsheets, posters, information booklets, Ready Bag) serve as outreach tools.

### **Taman Bacaan Youth Conventions**

Taman Bacaan organised several youth conventions which were attended by students of different faiths from schools and madrasahs. The conventions aimed to help youths guard against radicalisation and clear misconceptions about Islam.

### **Promotion of racial harmony in schools**

To promote racial harmony, schools leverage on the potential of Co-Curricular Activities, the Community Involvement Programme (CIP) and all other informal school activities as natural platforms for students of various races and religions to interact and build friendships. Special events such as the Racial Harmony Day and Harmony Cup<sup>3</sup> event are also platforms to facilitate the building of a common identity.

### **DJ Workshop**

A workshop was conducted to engage the MediaCorp deejays for the first time to raise awareness of the CEP and also to explore ways in which the Government and radio deejays can work together during and after a crisis, to facilitate public communications.

<sup>3</sup> To promote friendship and bonding amongst youths of various faiths and ethnic background, Hwa Chong Institution, together with Greenridge Secondary School, Telok Kurau Secondary School, West Spring Secondary School and Zhenghua Secondary School, leveraged on sports as a common platform and organised 'Harmony Cup', a soccer tournament for their students.

## Developing Capability and Confidence

8 A recurring feedback received from our interactions with the CEP Community Leaders is the need for capability development so that they can play their roles effectively and confidently when called upon. We also need to put in place response plans to help deal with the aftermath of a crisis.

### **Community Engagement Executive Development (CEED) Programme**

The CEED Programme is designed to provide Community Leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge, so that they can play their roles effectively when called upon.

### **Safety and Security Watch Group Scheme (SSWG)**

To enhance the safety and security features of buildings in Singapore, the Police, SCDF and the commercial sector have partnered each other under the SSWG Scheme. Members of the SSWG undergo a series of emergency preparedness activities involving all building occupants, regardless of race, language or ethnicity, thus strengthening communal ties and building social resilience against a crisis.

### **Project Unity**

Project Unity is the inaugural emergency response exercise conducted by the Central Police Division with grassroots members of 7 constituencies to assess the community's readiness level in tackling a social crisis. Grassroots volunteers were activated to work with the Police to engage and reassure the residents. This was followed by a public education event at the auditorium of NTUC Centre.

### **Enhancing Emergency Preparedness Capabilities**

To enhance the emergency preparedness of Grassroots Organisations (GROs), PA has helped to develop Constituency Emergency Preparedness Plans and conducted Table Top Exercises and Recall Exercises. Emergency Preparedness Days and Drills are also conducted with MHA's support at the constituencies.

## Building Networks of Trust

9 Through the CEP, we bring together Singaporeans from various communities to forge inter-communal bonds and strengthen the understanding and ties between people of various races and religions.

### **Singapore United**

Singapore United - the portal for the Community Engagement Programme is a simple platform for communication and dialogue within the CEP community as well as a point of contact between the CEP community and the public. It is a shared and common space for us to interact and engage each other via the Internet. Please visit us at [www.SingaporeUnited.sg](http://www.SingaporeUnited.sg)

### **Harmony through Soccer**

Home United Football Club, together with the Harmony Centre and Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, jointly organised the event "Harmony through Soccer". Just as sport unites those of various backgrounds, the event sought to unite those of various faiths for the common goal of fostering understanding and harmony.

### **The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs)**

The IRCCs were re-positioned as local-level inter-faith platforms under the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) to respond quickly to incidents with racial and religious dimensions in Oct 2006. They focus on strengthening the relationships among religious leaders at the local level and organise activities that promote racial and religious understanding.

### **National Steering Committee (NSC) on Racial and Religious Harmony**

The NSC, chaired by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, provides a national platform for ethnic and religious leaders to dialogue, build networks of trust and share views on developments in their respective communities.

**Media Emergency  
Forum (MEF)**

The MEF comprises senior journalists and editors of the local media. It is a platform for exchange of views with the Government on best practices in crisis communication.

**Grassroots CEP  
Initiatives**

The aim is to build a resilient community so that in times of crises, people from various communities can have trust in each other to counter any negative influence that might disrupt the current harmonious communal relations in Singapore. Some initiatives include the Constituency CEP Ready Certification, Constituency CORE Group Teambuilding Programme and Grassroots CEP District Workshops.

**CEP Workshops**

The annual CEP workshops allow Community Leaders from various clusters to interact and share views and ideas on CEP-related issues.

**All of us play an important part in the CEP.  
Our survival as a nation depends on us.**

**Let us continue to work together to  
keep Singapore resilient and united.**



***Dear Community Leaders,***

*We are producing a **publication** that captures the information in the exhibition at the National CEP Seminar 2008. The publication will be in the four official languages, and will be sent to you through the cluster leads.*

*The CEP Journey **Video** will also be dubbed into the other official languages and uploaded onto the SingaporeUnited Web portal.*

***Do keep a look out for them!***