

# **Government Response to Recommendations from the Citizens' Panel on Contribution**



**As part of the Refresh of the Action  
Plan for Successful Ageing**



**By the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Manpower,  
and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth**

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# Foreword

The Ministerial Committee on Ageing (MCA) first launched the Action Plan for Successful Ageing in 2015 to serve as the national blueprint for all Singaporeans to age gracefully and confidently. As our population ages, the profile of our seniors has also evolved to become more diverse, with a wider range of shared experiences, lifestyles and education levels. Yet, one characteristic remains universal – seniors aspire to contribute their wealth of knowledge and experience. To ensure that the Action Plan remains relevant and meaningful to all seniors, the MCA is embarking on a refresh exercise, with a special focus on a Whole-of-Society approach to co-create new initiatives.

The refresh exercise will focus on 3Cs – Care, Contribution and Connectedness. Under Care, we will empower seniors to take charge of their physical and mental well-being through preventive health, active ageing programmes and care services to stay healthy and pursue their aspirations. For Contribution, we will enable seniors to continue to contribute their knowledge and expertise and remain resilient, through an enhanced learning, volunteerism and employment landscape. Lastly, on Connectedness, we will support seniors to age-in-place within an inclusive built environment, while staying connected to their loved ones and society through digital platforms and support networks that embody the “kampung spirit”.

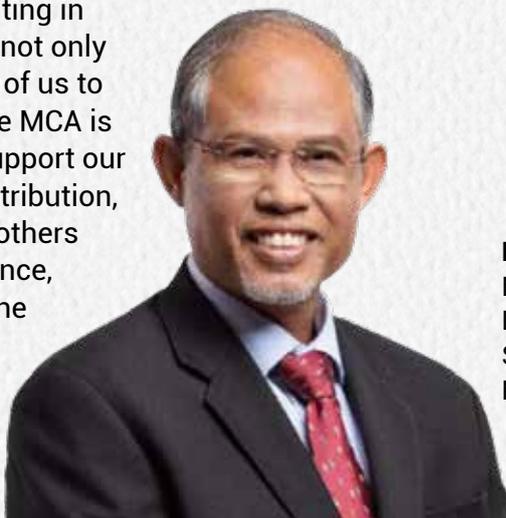
We often hear from seniors that they value being engaged at the workplace or in the community. We recognise that such engagements help them to stay socially connected, active and purposeful. Enabling seniors to continue contributing in the form of work and volunteerism is not only beneficial to them, but also allows all of us to learn from them. With this in mind, the MCA is keen to explore innovative ideas to support our seniors in meaningful pursuits of contribution, by involving seniors themselves and others who are passionate to play a part. Hence, we organised the Citizens' Panel on the theme of 'Contribution', as part of the SGTogether movement and lead up

to the refresh of the Action Plan. A diverse group of Singaporeans came together to brainstorm and propose new ideas and opportunities in partnership with the Government.

Ultimately, ageing well matters to us all because it is a journey that we will all go through. It takes the commitment and engagement of every Singaporean to build an inclusive society where age does not determine how well we live. This has been the key driver for our concerted efforts to bring together Singaporeans of all ages to participate in the Panel, and I was heartened by the way the participants worked together and built on each other's strengths.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to members of the Panel, who have all generously devoted their time and energy to come up with ways for seniors to contribute and age with purpose. The Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) have studied each recommendation carefully and hope to support the Panel as it implements its ideas.

I would also like to sincerely thank all resource persons and speakers who have unreservedly shared their wealth of experience and helped the Panel shape its eventual proposals. Age should not affect our ability and desire to contribute, even as it may change the nature of how we contribute. We look forward to seeing more Singaporeans join us in our efforts to make Singapore a great place to age in!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Masagos Zulkifli'.

**Masagos Zulkifli**  
Minister for Social and Family  
Development,  
Second Minister for Health &  
Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs

# Introduction: Citizens' Panel on Contribution

Jointly organised by MOH, MOM and MCCY, the Citizens' Panel is part of the MCA's efforts to co-create new initiatives as part of the refreshed Action Plan for Successful Ageing.

To ensure diversity in ideas and views, we put out an open call for Singaporeans to join the Citizens' Panel. The response was very encouraging, with hundreds of sign-ups received. Eventually, 46 participants of various ages and backgrounds were selected to form the Citizens' Panel. They were empowered to conceptualise and lead ground-up solutions as a key part of our efforts to enable seniors to age meaningfully.

The Citizens' Panel on Contribution commenced virtually on 25 September 2021 and spanned a total of four weeks in September and October. Participants deliberated on the challenge statement: **"As a community, how can we come together to enable our seniors to continue to contribute their knowledge and expertise in their golden years?"**

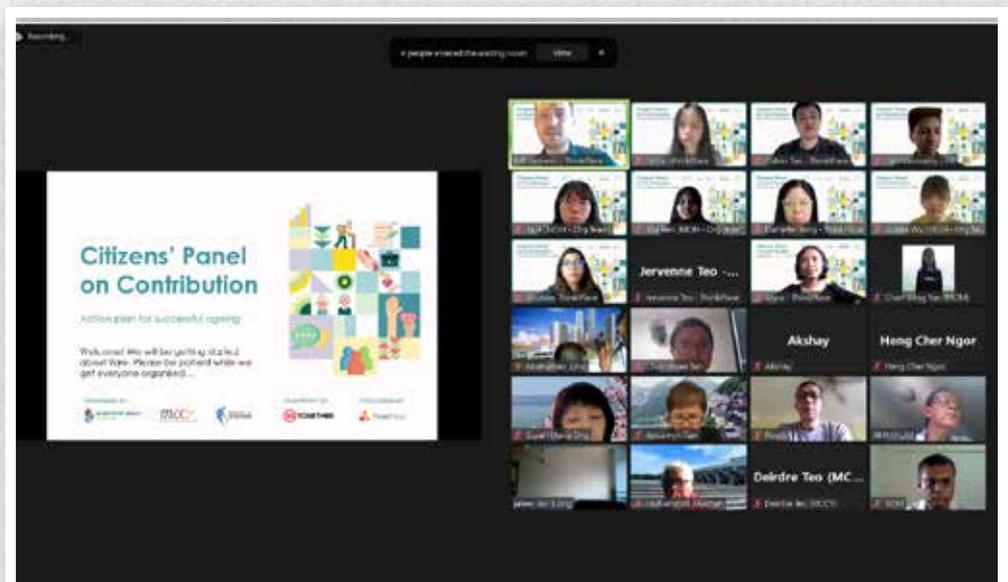
Through a curated journey, participants went from understanding the issues – through first-hand sharing by seniors and stakeholders – to brainstorming solutions to address gaps in the senior contribution landscape.

They further developed and refined their ideas before arriving at holistic, inclusive and feasible solutions to drive change.

At the last session, each team presented its final recommendations to Second Minister for Health Masagos Zulkifli, Dr Ang Hak Seng, then Deputy Secretary (Special Duties, MCCY); Ms Charlene Chang, Group Director of the Ageing Planning Office (MOH); and Mr Tan Wei Long, Director of the Workplace Policy and Strategy Division (Employment Standards and International Relations, MOM).

Following the Citizens' Panel, many participants have committed to developing their proposed ideas further and championing them into implementation, with the support of the Government.

The Citizens' Panel underscores the value and importance of harnessing a Whole-of-Society approach, where Singaporeans of all age groups, with a myriad of lived experiences, come together with a common passion to co-create opportunities for meaningful contributions as we age.



“

**As a community, how can we come together to enable our seniors to continue to contribute their knowledge and expertise in their golden years?**

”



Photos were taken in pre-COVID times



# Summary of Recommendations from the Citizens' Panel and Government Response

In response to the challenge statement, "As a community, how can we come together to enable our seniors to continue to contribute their knowledge and expertise in their golden years?" the Panel developed a total of nine recommendations – four on senior employment and five on senior volunteerism. MOH, MOM and MCCY have carefully studied each recommendation and this report details the Government's response to each proposed initiative.

Panel Recommendations for Senior Employment	Government Response
<b>Social media campaign (#whynotseniors)</b> to shift ageist mindsets and promote job redesign to encourage flexible work arrangements to cater to seniors	MOH and MOM will partner the Panel to implement this initiative.
<b>Initiatives to improve age-friendly workplaces:</b> Increasing saliency of Tripartite Standards; a best practices guide for companies; and appointing age-friendly ambassador in firms	MOH and MOM will partner the Panel to implement this initiative.
<b>Buddy programme</b> to ease new senior employees into the workplace	MOH and MOM will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.
<b>My Job Kaki:</b> A dedicated senior job portal	While MOH and MOM are currently unable to support the implementation of this initiative, we have suggested partners whom the Panel can work with to further develop the idea.

Panel Recommendations for Senior Volunteerism	Government Response
<b>Stories from Our Seniors:</b> A storytelling programme by seniors to serve as a bridge between ages	MOH and MCCY will partner the Panel to implement this recommendation.
<b>Local Connectors:</b> A community incubator for ground-up initiatives and volunteer activities that are easily accessible to seniors	MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.
<b>All-Comers Café:</b> A café for people of different ages to socialise, connect and form interest groups	MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.
<b>Care2Share:</b> A platform to link seniors with a group of learners looking for mentors and informal teachers	MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.
<b>A Friend for Every Elderly:</b> A network of befrienders to look out for seniors in the neighbourhood	While MOH and MCCY are currently unable to support the implementation of this initiative, we have suggested partners whom the Panel can work with to further develop the idea.

# Responses from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Manpower, and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth



Photos were taken in pre-COVID times

# RECOMMENDATIONS ON SENIOR EMPLOYMENT

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

### **Social media campaign (#whynotseniors) to shift ageist mindsets and promote job redesign to encourage flexible work arrangements to cater to seniors**

The Panel proposed a social media outreach campaign, with the hashtag #whynotseniors, to promote the value of senior workers and flexible work arrangements. It also suggested piloting a job redesign programme with a progressive employer to demonstrate how flexible work arrangements (e.g. part-time work, ad-hoc work opportunities) can make sense for the company.

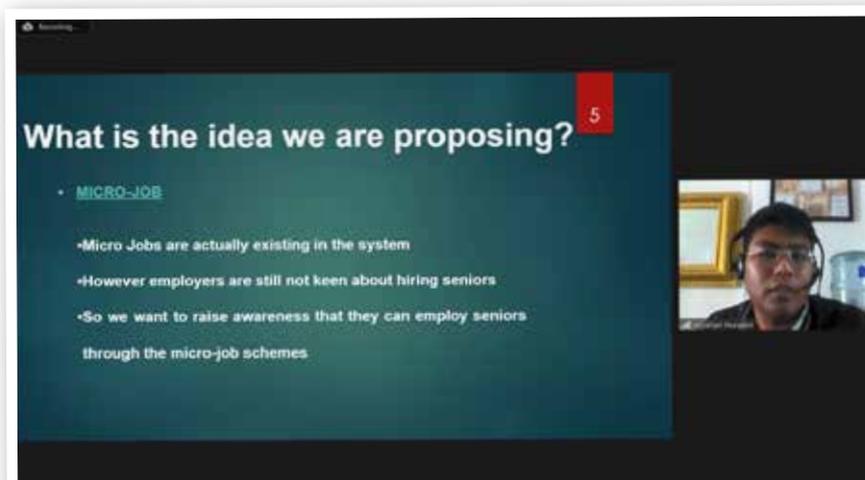
## MOH and MOM will partner the Panel to implement this initiative.

The recommendation has potential to contribute towards a broader movement of reducing the stigma against seniors in the workplace. This is in line with the focus of the Refresh of the Action Plan for Successful Ageing, which is to redefine ageing as a positive force. Given our ageing demographic, leveraging the experience of seniors in our workforce is increasingly important for employers to stay relevant in tomorrow's economy. Hence, we agree that encouraging employers to shift towards more age-friendly workplace practices will allow them to better tap on the potential of senior workers in win-win arrangements for both employers and employees.

## Next Steps

- MOM and the Tripartite Alliance on Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) could help amplify content developed by the Panel, through their respective social media platforms.
- The Panel could further detail plans to engage progressive employers to pilot flexible work arrangements, and MOM/TAFEP could then support, for example, by connecting the Panel with progressive employers.
- MOH will work with the Panel through the **I Feel Young SG** campaign on curating, interviewing and featuring senior employees and age-friendly employers as model examples to drive mindset change and encourage other employers to invest in senior employees.
- The Panel has been linked up with the Centre for Seniors\* (CFS) to explore a potential collaboration.

*\*Centre for Seniors (CFS) is a Social Service Agency with Charity status, dedicated to helping seniors remain meaningfully engaged in work and in life.*



## RECOMMENDATION 2

### **Initiatives to improve age-friendly workplaces - Increasing saliency of Tripartite Standards; a best practices guide for companies; and appointing age-friendly ambassador in firms**

The Panel proposed making resources on age-friendly workplace practices more readily available and comprehensive for companies interested in creating age-inclusive workplaces, including compiling guides on age-friendly best practices and having industry-specific guides to address different contexts and workplace environments. The Panel also recommended redesigning the existing Tripartite Standards (TS) such that the accreditation of companies for age-friendly workplace practices is clearly distinguished from other progressive workplace practices. In addition, the Panel suggested regular audits and the provision of incentives for companies who obtained these age-friendly accreditations. The Panel also felt that there is a lack of awareness from employers, employees and the general public on the existing accreditation, and proposed the role of age-friendly ambassadors who can conduct outreach and information sessions to interested organisations.

### **MOH and MOM will partner the Panel to implement this initiative.**

We agree that increasing the prominence of the Tripartite Standards would encourage more employers to adopt senior-friendly employment practices. Currently, the Tripartite Standard on Age-Friendly Workplace Practices (TS-AWP) specifies a set of age-friendly workplace practices that employers should adopt. Adopters of the TS-AWP are expected to abide by these best practices and put them into action, and would subsequently benefit from consistent TS branding as a progressive employer. More than 530,000 employees have benefitted from the TS-AWP, but there is room to further encourage employers to adopt the TS and mount a more concerted effort towards inclusivity and age-friendliness in senior employment. The Panel could engage employers to identify barriers to adoption of the TS and develop sustainable solutions.



### **Next Steps**

- MOM will work with TAFEP and partners to see how to improve the prominence of the existing TS, and invite the Panel to share its ideas with TAFEP.
- With industry-specific guides on age-friendly best practices and age-friendly ambassadors, the Panel can continue to develop a roadmap for implementation. MOM will then assess how best to support it.
- The Panel is exploring the possibility of establishing a social enterprise that would hire senior workers, train them and create a senior-friendly workplace, modelling South Korea's EverYoung enterprise\*. The Panel has been referred to the Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise (raiSE) for help on establishing a social enterprise.
  - The Panel can flesh out a concrete proposal for its intended social enterprise, including its business model, recruitment approach as well as intended job scope for senior employees.
- The Panel has been linked up with CFS to explore a potential collaboration.

\* A South Korean-based content monitoring company founded in 2013, which only employs workers above 55 years old.

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

#### **Buddy programme to ease new senior employees into the workplace**

To overcome the difficulties that senior employees face in adapting and transitioning to new workplaces, the Panel suggested a programme that would match new senior employees with current staff members who could then help them better assimilate and make a smooth transition. The Panel also recommended developing a staff lifecycle handbook for companies which would include details of the buddy programme, a checklist and a guide that companies can reference.

#### **MOH and MOM will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.**

We agree that this recommendation will complement other age-friendly practices and efforts by TAFEP to promote more inclusive workplaces. It will enable companies to drive efforts to enhance manpower retention and encourage greater intergenerational interaction and mutual respect at the workplace, with younger and older employees learning from each other. However, such a programme would have to be closely tailored to each industry, and also get the buy-in from existing employees as well as employers who recognise the value of this programme and are committed to implementing it.

#### **Next Steps**

- MOM has introduced the Panel to Human Capital Partners (HCPartners), a community of exemplary employers in Singapore who have progressive employment practices in their organisations and are committed to developing their human capital.
- The Panel can develop detailed implementation plans with HCPartners.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

### **My Job Kaki – A dedicated senior job portal**

The Panel suggested a one-stop hybrid job matching platform (with both a digital portal and physical office) to help senior jobseekers. The job matching platform would be the central hub where seniors can easily access resources, career coaching, job listings and consultations. The Panel also proposed having career coaches – seniors who have been successfully employed through this platform – to guide their peers in their job search, on a voluntary basis.

**While MOH and MOM are currently unable to support the implementation of this initiative, we have suggested partners for the Panel to work with.**

We agree that an accessible and comprehensive central job matching platform would be a helpful resource to senior jobseekers. However, there are existing efforts to help senior jobseekers identify and be matched to suitable job opportunities, such as the MyCareersFuture (MCF) portal. The number of seniors actively using MCF has grown from 8,000 in 2018 to 24,000 in 2021. Jobseekers who require assistance to navigate the MCF portal or prefer to talk to a career ambassador or coach can approach Workforce Singapore's Careers Connect and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute.

The Panel can consider engaging with specialised online job portals, such as the SilverJobs Portal (a job matching digital platform for seniors which is a collaboration between CFS and the digital recruitment platform, FastJobs) to further develop what a dedicated senior jobseekers' portal could look like and how it will add value in the current environment.

### **Next Steps**

- The Panel is in discussion with FastJobs and MOH can connect the Panel with CFS to explore how SilverJobs can be enhanced.
- MOH could also link the Panel up with potential non-government partners (e.g. Institutes of Higher Learning) who may be interested in collaborating with the Panel to study how the existing job portals can be further enhanced.



# RECOMMENDATIONS ON SENIOR VOLUNTEERISM

## RECOMMENDATION 5

### Stories from Our Seniors – A storytelling programme by seniors to serve as a bridge between ages

The Panel recommended providing seniors with volunteer opportunities to tell stories and read storybooks using their mother tongue languages. They recognised storytelling as a good way to encourage intergenerational bonding and for seniors to creatively use their time and skills to contribute. Seniors would receive training on effective storytelling skills and have opportunities to translate these skills and conduct storytelling sessions at various community venues. Storytelling by seniors could be done either through the reading of books or the sharing and recounting of personal experiences, history and heritage. While doing so, the seniors would also be able to teach their respective mother tongue languages to the younger generation.

### MOH and MCCY will partner the Panel to implement this recommendation.

We agree that the programme would be a good platform to encourage intergenerational bonding, foster an exchange of knowledge between seniors and younger age groups, as well as empower seniors to contribute in a creative and meaningful way. There is also scope for synergies with existing initiatives conducted by the National Library Board (NLB). In the longer term, the Panel can consider establishing partnerships with volunteer organisations such as RSVP Singapore The Organisation of Senior Volunteers or People's Association (PA) for better sustainability in the recruitment of senior volunteers.

### Next Steps

- The Panel has been linked up with NLB as a potential partner to explore synergies with existing programmes such as kidsREAD.
- MCCY can connect the Panel with other partners who may be able to provide a platform for a pilot programme. These include the PA Community Centres, Singapore Book Council, the National Arts Council and self-help groups.
- In line with efforts to digitalise volunteering opportunities, the Panel can consider online storytelling sessions. In addition, the Panel can consider exploring with NLB to record selected stories as part of the National Archives, and share them through relevant exhibitions/programmes with the support of the National Heritage Board's museum network.
- The Panel has been linked up with PA, which has agreed to help with publicity and recruitment for the programme.
- The Panel is working with Kolam Ayer CC to pilot its project in the middle of 2022.



## RECOMMENDATION 6

### **Local Connectors – A community incubator for ground-up initiatives and volunteer activities that are easily accessible to seniors**

The Panel suggested setting up a "community incubator" as an easily accessible venue in different neighbourhoods equipped with relevant facilities and resources (such as administrative/logistics support) for seniors and other residents. This would enable seniors and residents to ideate, discuss and plan community-driven initiatives for their neighbourhood.

### **MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.**

We agree that there is potential for the community to activate existing spaces to support community-driven initiatives to bring neighbours closer. However, as the success of the initiative would be highly dependent on the personalities in the local community, the Panel should work through how each community incubator can be tailored to the unique resources and needs of each distinct community. Additionally, the sustainability of ground-up initiatives would depend on the consistent commitment of members in the community to drive them.

### **Next Steps**

- The Panel can consider tapping on existing infrastructure and programmes by working with HDB's **Friends of Our Heartlands**, PA and **SG Cares Volunteer Centres** to run neighbourhood-specific pilots before considering scaling to other neighbourhoods.
- The Panel can further detail how the incubator would look like and determine the steps or elements that would be necessary.



## RECOMMENDATION 7:

### All-Comers Café – A café for people of different ages to socialise, connect and form interest groups

The Panel recommends the setup of an inclusive intergenerational café where people from all walks of life and age groups could come together to bond over common interests and socialise. The café would also run programmes to facilitate conversations and bonding.

### MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.

Similar concepts have been trialed with success overseas and we agree that such a project can create useful opportunities for seniors and younger people to bond and interact with each other. Similar to recommendation 6, the success of the proposal will depend heavily on local champions, and the Panel can consider an operating model and resourcing approach that optimises sustainability and relies on community-driven efforts in the longer term. The Panel can also consider merging recommendations 6 and 7 in implementation, given the synergies between the two ideas.

### Next Steps

- MOH and MCCY are linking the Panel up with relevant stakeholders to explore tapping on existing infrastructure, including: (i) PA: To connect with community/commercial cafes located in the constituency; and (ii) Agency for Integrated Care: To connect with Active Ageing Centres/Active Ageing Care Hubs to explore running a pilot at existing community spaces.
- MOH will also connect the Panel with Montfort Care, an organisation that provides community-based social services, to learn from its experience of running an intergenerational café at Marine Parade.
- The Panel can also get different generations to come on board the project to identify the value proposition for visitors, as well as firm up details on the proposal and programmes expected to be run at the café.

**Once upon a time..**  
It was rare for generations to meet with meaning. They didn't understand each other, and it caused **conflict**.

**Until one day..**  
They found out about the **all-comers cafe**.

A totally **unique social experience** where they could make a friend from a another generation, and learn something new

**Because of that..**  
They built **relationships** and learnt **empathy**: something useful for work and for life. And it made them **happy!**

all 4c - Loh Wai Poon

## RECOMMENDATION 8:

### Care2Share – A platform to link seniors with a group of learners looking for mentors and informal teachers

The Panel suggested creating a platform for seniors from any background, ranging from retired cobblers to finance executives, to share their unique skill sets with interested learners. The Panel hopes to reach out to seniors who are keen to volunteer on an ad-hoc basis and not as a formal member of any organisation. The intention is to empower seniors to teach and guide others, as well as to instill a sense of value and purpose in seniors through their contribution. It also offers opportunities for seniors to build intergenerational connections.

### MOH and MCCY will work with the Panel to explore how this initiative may be developed further.

Given that seniors possess a wide variety of skills, we agree that there is significant potential to leverage the professional experience of seniors in the volunteerism space. It would also be a good avenue to recognise and appreciate the contribution and value of seniors. As the idea is still in the inception stage, it would be important for the Panel to focus on certain niche skills for a start. Subsequently, the Panel can consider a sandbox to develop and refine a suitable operating model for this platform to succeed.

### Next Steps

- The Panel can firm up its approach to implementing this recommendation, including identifying a platform, the target segment and how to engage with them (e.g. engaging seniors who have not volunteered before), skills that are in demand, and how seniors would be matched to teaching opportunities.
- The Panel can also consider how such arrangements would compare against short-term teaching opportunities that are considered as employment (gig, contract work and adjunct teaching).
- The Panel has been linked up with a group of youths from the **Youth Action Challenge Season 3** organised by MCCY and the National Youth Council, given the potential synergies of ideas from both groups.
- The Panel is exploring to pilot the concept at Sembawang GRC.
- MCCY and MOH will link the Panel up with existing learner groups through SG Cares Volunteer Centres, the Council for Third Age, PA, NLB, the Institute of Technical Education and Polytechnics, as well as the **Mentoring Alliance for Action**, to explore a pilot of the concept.



## RECOMMENDATION 9:

### **A Friend for Every Elderly – A network of befrienders to look out for seniors in the neighbourhood**

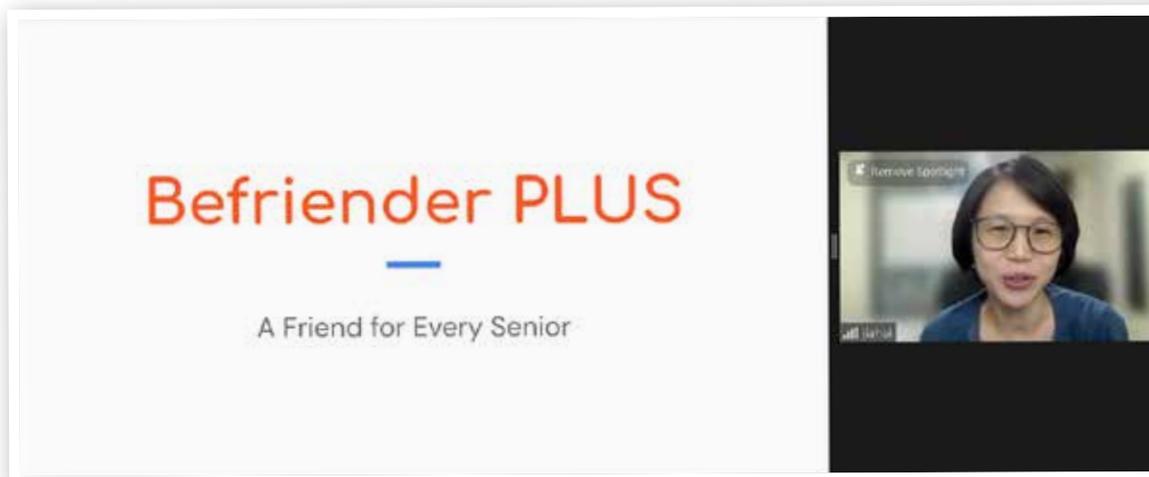
The Panel suggested the formation of a befriender network to reach out to every senior in the community and encourage them to take up volunteering and job opportunities.

**While MOH and MCCY are currently unable to support the implementation of this initiative, we have suggested partners whom the Panel can work with to further develop the idea.**

While we recognise the benefits of increasing the awareness of volunteering and job opportunities among seniors through befriending, the idea is similar to various efforts in the eldercare landscape today. Some examples of existing initiatives include senior volunteer networks and community befriending programmes run by grassroots volunteers under PA, Silver Generation Ambassadors, Active Ageing Centres/Active Ageing Care Hubs and SG Cares Volunteer Centres. Further study is necessary to identify the gap that the recommendation seeks to meet, to avoid duplication with other programmes and ensure sustainability. Increasing awareness of available volunteer and job opportunities is also a shared objective of other recommendations that the Panel has raised, and the Panel could consider how this recommendation could synergise with others.

### Next Steps

- The Panel can further refine the distinguishing aspects of its proposal.
- The Panel has linked up with the SG Cares Volunteer Centre @ Toa Payoh to gauge its interest in the idea.



# Conclusion

The MCA, MOH, MOM and MCCY are heartened and encouraged by the creativity and rigour of the recommendations by the Panel. We will continue to partner each team according to the Next Steps that have been proposed. We will also explore how to further support each recommendation through the Our SG Fund and encourage the Panel in actualising its ideas to enable and empower our seniors to age with confidence and purpose. We invite passionate Singaporeans who are inspired by the Panel to lead their own community projects and make a difference to the seniors around them.

## Annex: Special Thanks to Invited Speakers, Interviewees and Resource Persons

### **George Ong**

Team Nila Silver Champion,  
SportSG

### **Chan Pit Seng**

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RSVP Singapore

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### **Rebecca Tan**

2nd Vice Chairman,  
PA Active Ageing Council

### **David Soh**

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### **Teo Beng Choo**

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### **S Gopala Krishnan**

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### **Sheela Parakkal**

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Prudential Singapore

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