



# Considered measures to ensure donations benefit many

Non-profit organisations now tend to channel more donations to rehabilitation, physiotherapy or equipment

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TECITY'S philosophy of maximising yields in any form of investment is unsurprisingly evident in how the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF) goes about evaluating the effectiveness of its donations. By raising the efficiency of its donations or the so-called "yield in good", each dollar is stretched to reach a larger group of people.

Ms Chew Gek Khim, who is also deputy chairman of TCTF, shares that when TCTF first started requiring beneficiaries to submit a plan when requesting for donations, "some beneficiaries were put off". This followed a review in 2006 on the way the Foundation makes donations to keep it relevant in the changing social landscape.

"The argument is this: If you are going to ask for a S\$100, you need to ask yourself what you are going to do with that S\$100, how many people are you going to help with the hundred.

"The resources are limited, so at the end of the day, I have to make a decision. If I were to put in a S\$100, do I put it in A or B? Which one will help society more? Of course, there is no real right or wrong answer but you try to contextualise and present it in such a way that you make a considered decision."

Soon, the non-profit groups realised that by presenting a case stating their objectives and plans, it became easier to raise funds. Having a plan also aids their execution, Ms Chew says. The Foundation has also sought to bring non-profit organisations to work together to create synergies.

Set up in 1976 by the late Tan Chin Tuan to help the poor and needy, TCTF helps more than 200 beneficiaries in Singapore and Malaysia. It has also extended its philanthropic giving to the Asean region through the Tan Chin Tuan Charitable Trust. About 50 charities in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam received its funding support in 2012 and 2013.

"The challenge today is to see what else we can do to remain relevant because the Singapore government today is giving out so much, so the question is how do you plug the gaps? I think the social setting and backdrop have changed," she adds.

"Singapore has become a very affluent society, we are not talking about just putting food on the table, we are talking about improving the quality of life."

Previously, most donations in Singapore would go towards meeting the daily necessities of food and lodging. Now, non-profit organisations seem to channel more donations to rehabilitation, physiotherapy or equipment, Ms Chew observes.

This is why TCTF deepened its niche by giving more towards education and community service.

According to its latest biennial report, some 67 per cent of its donations goes towards education and 20 per cent to community, while the rest goes towards health care, the elderly, children and youth and the disabled.

At the Social Service Institute here, for instance, TCTF has supported the educational aspirations of counsellors and social work practitioners by either fully funding their social work degrees or offering grants to offset their fees.

Besides awarding scholarships through schools, it also partners with charities such as the Eurasian Association and Lembaga Basiswa Kenangan Maulud (LBKM) to identify less privileged students in secondary schools, institutions of technical education and polytechnics. Through education bursaries, TCTF's donations have alleviated the financial strain on families.

TCTF also gave seed funding to help establish the Community Justice Centre, a charity that serves those in need of legal and emotional support. In 2013, some 6,000 members of the public sought assistance at the Centre, according to TCTF's report.

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