



Media Release

Youth Corps Singapore celebrates 10 years of championing youth volunteerism while charting its next decade of growth

Saturday, 6 July 2024 – To mark its 10th Anniversary, Youth Corps Singapore (Youth Corps) organised a carnival on 6 July 2024, which featured more than 20 booths led by Youth Corps' cluster networks, partners and affiliates. It has also embarked on a visioning exercise to shape its direction for the next decade so as to better advance the youth volunteerism movement. In addition, Youth Corps appreciated over 60 partners that have been with Youth Corps over the past decade.

Empowering youths over the decade

2 Established in 2014 by then Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Mr Lawrence Wong, Youth Corps has grown into a vibrant youth volunteerism ecosystem offering over 20 programmes, providing a wide range of local and regional volunteering and learning opportunities that cater to diverse interests and youth profiles (please refer to Annex A). To date, more than 30,000 youths have participated in these programmes. Many youth volunteers who journeyed with Youth Corps over the past decade have also gone on to pursue careers in the social sector and start their own ground-up initiatives (please refer to Annex B for profiles).

Advancing the youth volunteerism movement

3 To chart its next phase of growth amidst a more complex volunteering landscape, Youth Corps embarked on a visioning exercise in December 2023 to shape the direction in the next decade and reached out to close to 30,000 youths and partners, through digital surveys, social media activations, and deep-dive discussions.

4 Close to 3,500 visioning statements have been collected over the past six months. Key insights garnered include core values that young volunteers in Singapore should possess, such as empathy, compassion, and dedication, to help them develop into individuals who care about society that aspire to do good and enable others to make a difference.

5 Participants also look forward to having Youth Corps continue to be a safe and nurturing environment that allows young volunteers to learn, experiment, grow, and contribute to society.

6 As the world become more interconnected than ever, our youths expressed hopes for Youth Corps to expand its reach in the region, with the opportunity to serve in overseas communities. This will allow them to better understand different cultures, through the exchange of volunteer practices and ideas and building of friendships with their overseas peers.

7 “We want to develop an aspirational vision together with our youths, to further grow and sustain youth volunteerism in the next decade. The views and responses we collected have provided good ideas to help guide our work ahead. More details will be shared at a later date,” said Mr David Chua, Chief Executive Officer, National Youth Council (蔡大卫, 全国青年理事会行政总裁).

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About the National Youth Council

At NYC, we believe in a world where young people are respected and heard and have the ability to influence and make a difference in the world. Together with our partners, we develop future-ready youth who are committed to Singapore by instilling in them a heart for service, resilience and an enterprising spirit.

About Youth Corps Singapore

Youth Corps Singapore (Youth Corps) is a division of the National Youth Council (NYC). Youth Corps was launched in 2014 to champion youth volunteerism to build active citizenry and a more caring and cohesive society. Youth Corps serves as a collaboration platform between youths, community service organisations, and the wider society to ignite positive change.

About the Youth Corps Carnival

The carnival, which featured booths led by Youth Corps' cluster networks, partners and affiliates, also marks the culmination of the third edition of Youth Corps' Do Good Fest. The campaign stretches from May to July, offering more than 3,000 learning and volunteering opportunities.

The Carnival was graced by Mr Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, who was joined by Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law, and Chairman of the National Youth Council (NYC); Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations and former Chairperson of NYC; and Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Minister of State for Communication and Information & Health, and Chairperson of Youth Corps Singapore's Advisory Committee. Mdm Rahayu and Mr Alvin Tan, Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth & Trade and Industry, and Deputy Chairman of NYC, were at the appreciation ceremony for partners.

About Youth Corps Singapore

Youth Corps Singapore was established in June 2014 and is a division under the National Youth Council. Launched by then Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Mr Lawrence Wong, it is a national institution that empowers and supports youths who are keen to serve the community. As the champion for youth volunteerism to build active citizenry and a caring and cohesive society, it harnesses the energy and passion of youths to ignite positive change. Youth Corps has grown from its first cohort of 90 youth leaders to a wider movement of about 30,000 members, providing a wide range of learning and volunteering opportunities to cater to the diverse interests and commitment levels of the youths, providing opportunities for youths to Learn, Volunteer, Lead, and Connect.

Learn

Set in the heart of Somerset, **The Red Box** was opened as Youth Corps' Social Action Hub in 2016, as a place for youths to congregate, exchange ideas and take action to make Singapore a better home for all. The Red Box draws inspiration from the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew's red briefcase, which contained information and ideas to create a better Singapore for all. It is a representation of Mr Lee's love and conviction towards improving the lives of Singaporeans. Similarly, Youth Corps encourages youth to embody the same spirit and values of our founding generation – dedication, commitment and service to the community.

Youth Corps together with its community partners, regularly organises workshops, learning journeys, and community internships for our volunteers to gain greater insights into various issues so that they can take action through service-learning community projects.

Volunteer

These are broad-based volunteering opportunities for youths to serve the community and make a positive impact. There are two types of volunteering:

- Regular volunteering, where youths commit to volunteer weekly for a period of three to six months. Some examples include (i) **YOLDEN**, a senior befriending programme in partnership with the Moral Home for the Aged Sick, which has been ongoing since 2015, and (ii) **KidsLearn**, a literacy programme for children in partnership with MSF and SSO-Comlink operating at 7 sites.

- Bite-sized volunteering, where youths commit to ad hoc volunteering events that are half or one day. This was developed following COVID-19 to address youths' changing needs and time concerns, allowing them to make a difference amidst their busy schedules. Some examples include (i) **Coding Games for Kids**, where youths teach children in student care centres interactive online coding games during the school holidays, (ii) **Play for All**, where youths help to boost the motor skills of trainees from APSN, and (iii) **Beach-Clean Up or Greenies**, where youths help to clean beaches and waterways in partnership with PAssion Wave.

Beyond local volunteering opportunities, youths have a chance to make an impact through service-learning projects in the region through the **Youth Expedition Project (YEP)**. Prior to COVID-19, over 4,000 youths embarked on YEP through their Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) and partners like YMCA. Following the lifting of travel restrictions in 2023, about 2,300 youths went on YEP trips in ASEAN countries.

Lead

The **Youth Corps Leaders Programme (YCLP)** is a flagship programme to cultivate youth leaders and empower them to lead bold change in the community. Over the course of 9-12 months, the participants (called Aspirants) undergo training, interactive workshops, conduct community needs analysis, and are matched with a community partner to design and deliver a local service-learning project to serve the respective clients or beneficiaries. A mentor is assigned to guide and facilitate their learning throughout the programme. Following the programme, they will be conferred as Youth Corps Leaders, and can choose to contribute by being mentors to subsequent cohorts, join the various Youth Corps Cluster Network or start their own ground up initiatives. To date, Youth Corps has nurtured about 1,500 Youth Leaders or approximately 200 per year.



Youth Corps launched **Programme X** in 2019. It has a shorter duration, comprising **Mission X**, a 3-4 day community service leadership programme bringing student leaders from different IHLs together, providing them with the skills and knowledge to serve the community. Post Mission X, student leaders have the chance to start their own projects in their respective IHLs or continue volunteering with Youth Corps. To date, Programme X has trained close to 4,900 student leaders across the various universities, polytechnics, and ITE.



Connect


Youth Corps' **Cluster Network** was set up in 2016 to provide an avenue for Youth Corps leaders and volunteers to sustain volunteering based on their passion and interests. Presently, there are 12 cause-based and skills-based clusters. Examples include Mental Health, Special Needs, Beyond SG, Eldercare, Sustainability, Ambassadors Team, Facilitators Network, and Project Re:Ground Community Peer Supporters. Similar to CCAs in IHLs, each cluster has an Executive Committee that is empowered to organise volunteering and engagement opportunities for its members and the wider youth audience. Some examples of key signature projects include:

- Special Needs Cluster's **Big Brother Big Sister** has been running for about 6 years focusing on inclusive volunteering, where youth volunteers participate in fun-filled activities over several Saturdays with children with special needs while offering respite for their caregivers.
- **Project Re:Ground** at The Red Box is a Well-Being Circle under the SG Mental Well-Being Network. It provides a safe space where youths can seek respite from their daily routine and ground themselves through conversations and activities such as journaling and painting to support their mental well-being. For the weekly Re:Ground session on Thursday evenings, we have four to five trained peer supporters to engage the participants. In 2023, around 70 active peer supporters were deployed to support Project Re:Ground and related programmes, based on their interest and experience, supporting close to 500 participants.

Youth Profiles available for interview

Name	Profile write-up
 <p>Sheila Manokaran, 29 Head, Project and Outreach, Potato Productions & Founder of River Valley Irregulars</p> <p>English: Fluent Tamil: Basic</p>	<p>Sheila is a Youth Corps Leader from Cohort 1 of the Youth Corps Leaders Programme and has been serving in the 5th Youth Corps Advisory Committee since January 2022.</p> <p>She is a strong advocate for vulnerable youth groups and founded River Valley Irregulars, an experiential learning and talent discovery platform, bringing youths, institutions, and organisations together for meaningful collaboration. In the process of her work, Sheila places emphasis on building a safe space for youths to step out of the box and explore different ways of being and doing.</p> <p>Beyond Youth Corps, Sheila also serves as a Young Changemakers Curator with NYC since 2023.</p>
 <p>Muhammad Syazwan Bin Mohamed Suhri, 35</p> <p>Case Programme Executive/ Caseworker, Singapore Association of Mental Health (SAMH)</p> <p>English: Fluent Malay: Basic</p>	<p>Syazwan is a Youth Corps Leader from Cohort 2 of the Youth Corps Leaders Programme.</p> <p>He is currently a case worker at the Singapore Association of Mental Health (SAMH). Since completing the Leaders Programme, he has been actively serving the various youth-led clusters, planning key volunteering and learning programmes.</p> <p>Over the last 10 years, he has served in Engagement Taskforce (2016 to 2018), Ambassadors Team (2016 to current), Istana Ambassadors (2018 to 2022) as well as a mentor for the Mental Health Cluster (2019 to present).</p>

Name	Profile write-up
 <p>Loy Yong Shin, 30</p> <p>English: Fluent Chinese: Basic</p>	<p>Yong Shin is a Youth Corps Leader from Cohort 7 of the Youth Corps Leaders Programme in 2017. During her time in the programme, she co-led her team in planning and executing a series of intergenerational bonding activities with Lakeside Family Service Centre.</p> <p>In 2021, Yong Shin stepped up to be the chairperson of the Special Needs Cluster in Youth Corps. Motivated to raise awareness of the special needs community, she led a team of 20 members to execute 3 projects for clients with disabilities, caregivers, and volunteers.</p> <p>Yong Shin, along with 4 other youths (Oh Hui Ling, Ong Jing Wei and Jason Lin) was part of a Youth Corps senior befriending programme (EYES) with Lions Befrienders in 2017.</p> <p>After the end of the programme, they continued their relationship with “Uncle Lee” and visited him every month for the last 8 years. They also checked in on him regularly during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep him company.</p>
 <p>Tan Xue Wei, 27</p> <p>Applied Physics student at Nanyang Technological University</p> <p>English: Fluent Chinese: Basic</p>	<p>Xue Wei is a Youth Corps Leader from Cohort 1 of the Youth Corps Leaders Programme and has been actively volunteering for 10 years.</p> <p>Besides volunteering in various programmes in Youth Corps, Xue Wei also joined the Youth Corps Empathy Taskforce between 2016 to 2021, where he worked with over 20 volunteers to plan a series of workshops human libraries for other youth volunteers to learn more about the different segments of society. Through his time in Empathy Taskforce, Xue Wei has formed strong friendships with other likeminded youths that are passionate to serve the community, many of which are his close friends to date.</p>

Name	Profile write-up
	<p>Believing that there is no monopoly of good ideas and excited to exchange ideas with other youths to better society, Xue Wei also took on the role as a Young ChangeMaker curator from 2016 to 2021 where he mentored and provided guidance on project implementation with over 100 youth-led ground up projects. Xue Wei has been promoted to a senior curator since 2021, where he undertook more responsibilities including mentoring and guiding newer curators</p>
 <p>Rachel Soh, 23</p> <p>Student, Singapore University of Social Sciences</p> <p>English: Fluent Chinese: Basic</p>	<p>Rachel is a Youth Corps Leader from Cohort 1 of the Youth Corps Leaders Programme. During her time in the programme, she was the Team Leader for Project Happy Club. A project which aims to engage seniors in Telok Blangah Drive.</p> <p>After graduating from the Youth Corps Leaders Programme, Rachel was an active contributor in community engagement where she was the Emcee for various events under Youth Corps' school outreach and key events.</p> <p>Rachel also founded The Levelled Field, a start-up which aims to serve Persons with Special Needs with her fellow schoolmates from SUSS in 2022, and represented Youth Corps together with her peers in Youth Corps at the International Volunteers Cooperation Organisation (IVCO) in Malaysia in 2023.</p>

Name	Profile write-up
<p>Allinda Chew, 30 Team Lead, Youth Corps Development Team, Care Corner Singapore</p> <p>English: Fluent Chinese: Basic</p>	<p>Allinda is a Team Lead at Care Corner Singapore. Established in 1981, Care Corner is a non-profit organisation providing social and health care services to build hope and promote well-being for those in need. With more than 40 service points across Singapore, we help children with special learning needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds, youths at risk, troubled families, vulnerable seniors, and individuals with counselling and mental health needs. Woven into the fabric of our community, we aim to provide a holistic continuum of care to the marginalised across their life stages and major transitions.</p> <p>She plays a key role in the Youth Corps Development Team an initiative rolled out in partnership with Care Corner, where she and her colleagues look at building and strengthening youth volunteer management capabilities, grow and sustain locale-based youth volunteering opportunities and support the partners in the locale.</p> <p>Some examples of key programmes that she oversees include Coding Game for Kids and KidsLearn for children and Active Life, Active Mind for seniors.</p>