Impact Report For Senior Activity Centres

Overview and Desired Outcome of Programme

Senior Activity Centres (SACs) are drop-in centres for poor/needy and vulnerable seniors staying in one- and two-room HDB rental flats in identified service cluster. They form the hub for activities that provide a warm, receptive and familiar environment for the seniors to drop by during their opening hours. Besides providing socio-recreational programmes and activities, SACs also provide support services such as monitoring of frail and/or homebound elderly, befriending, emergency alert response calls, guidance, advice, and information & referral. Through the SACs, seniors are engaged and enabled to age-in-place in the community.

Emerging Trends

Singapore will witness a profound age shift in population, particularly with the baby boomers reaching age 65 from 2012 onwards. The number of residents aged 65 years or older would multiply threefold to 900,000 in 2030. By then, one out of every five residents would be a senior in Singapore¹.

An emerging trend (evidenced from the preliminary results of MSF Social Isolation Survey done in 2009) showed that the number of socially-isolated elderly would increase from 31,000 to 42,000 seniors by 2015. In a bid to meet the needs of the ageing population in Singapore, additional new SACs would be built, serving 13,170 (43%) of the projected 31,000² socially-isolated seniors in the community.

Going forward, the Ministerial Committee on Ageing (MCA) plans to increase the number of SACs so as to reach out to a growing population of vulnerable seniors living in both rental and non-rental flats. As according to the Committee of Supply 2012 Budget Debate, planning for SACs would increase to 58 SACs by 2016 to serve 39,000 elderly³.

From the MCA, the government has plans to improve the capability and capacity of the eldercare sector by investing in resources to provide better services to the elderly. To do this, the government will increase manpower resources to SACs for

² The projected number of socially-isolated seniors includes seniors from all housing types and thus, not all of them will require or be eligible to receive services from the SACs.

SAC Impact Report started March 2012 & updated as of June 2013
them to serve up to 48,000 vulnerable seniors across all income strata by 2020\textsuperscript{4}. The set-up of 16 SACs (Cluster Support) out of the 58 SACs by FY2016, along with a network of SACs in their designated service clusters, would provide closer monitoring capabilities and case management\textsuperscript{5} of vulnerable seniors. SACs would continue with their outreach, befriending services, and social engagement of the seniors. The SACs (Cluster Support) would function as a social node with trained volunteers to provide closer monitoring of vulnerable seniors residing beyond rental flats. As of June 2013, 5 SACs (Cluster Support) were set up.

**Key Services Offered**

Currently, the 52 VWO-run SACs (please refer to Annex 1 for the list of SACs) look after the well-being of the poor/needy and vulnerable seniors living in the rental flat clusters through the provision of a range of services. These services include maintaining a register of seniors, providing information and referrals for elderly for needed services, organising social recreational activities, conducting home visits to frail seniors and managing the alert alarm system that enables the SACs to render immediate assistance to seniors in distress.

**Profile of Clients**

The seniors served by the SACs fall mainly under the following categories:

- Low-income or recipients of Public Assistance;
- Living alone or with an elderly spouse;
- Without caregiver;
- At risk of social isolation;
- Vulnerable due to physical, health and/or psychosocial problems (e.g. depression).

**Benefits of Programme**

Without the SACs, seniors will not be socially engaged and linked to needed services. As a consequence, seniors may be at risk of social isolation, which in turn puts them at a higher level of vulnerability due to deteriorating health and psychosocial well-being, leading to premature admission to institutional care. Frail and vulnerable seniors, with the support of SACs, are enabled to live in the community for as long as possible. This delays their needs for healthcare services and institutional care. Lonely, isolated seniors also gain access to activities that

\textsuperscript{4} Speech by Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health, at the MCA Aged Care Sector Stakeholders’ Dialogue on 20 January 2012, Concorde Hotel.

\textsuperscript{5} Case management services are provided by trained social workers, employed by the SACs (Cluster Support), to evaluate the needs of the seniors, recommend services and help the seniors to make decisions to resolve their variety of personal, social and emotional difficulties, and life challenges.

*SAC Impact Report started March 2012 & updated as of June 2013*
promote social interaction, friendship, mutual help and neighbourliness in the community.

An SAC story - COMNET @ Sin Ming SAC is a new SAC set up by the Ang Mo Kio FSC. As a new SAC, it has established extensive networks and collaboration with other key community partners and stakeholder. In order to meet the mental health needs of seniors living in the area, the SAC works closely with Silver Ribbon Singapore and Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment and Treatment (APCATS) of the Institute of Mental Health to provide essential support services for the seniors. Besides leveraging on existing volunteers, the SAC also collaborates with other community partners, VWOs, CDCs and grassroots organisations to reach out and bridge the needs of isolated seniors in the community.

**Number of Clients Served**

In FY12, the SACs served 8,073 poor and vulnerable seniors residing in the identified HDB rental flats.

In FY12, staff and volunteers of the SACs made weekly home visits to 692 frail and homebound seniors, which helped to reduce social isolation of these seniors. All clients are also able to access the SACs for assistance with information and referral, support (e.g. rations, distress calls via the alert alarm system, befriending) and volunteer their time for meaningful engagement (e.g. organise activities for other seniors or participate in visitation to frail and/or homebound seniors).

**Level of Client Satisfaction**

In FY12, 95% of the 669 frail and/or homebound seniors who were surveyed expressed satisfaction with the services and activities offered by the SACs.

**Key Stakeholder Views**

The former Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and current Minister for Environment and Water Resources, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, commented in his speech (on 26 November 2005), during his visit to TOUCH SAC that:

---

6 Source: NCSS Annual Report FY12.
7 Source: FY12 SAC EPES report of 52 SACs, NCSS, Membership & Service Management Division.
8 Source: FY12 SAC EPES report of 52 SACs, NCSS, Membership & Service Management Division.
Excerpts from his speech:
“TOUCH SAC served as a focal meeting place for many seniors in the Geylang Bahru for more than 5 years now. Through your hard work and dedication, the Centre is a thriving hub of activities for seniors in the neighbourhood. You have successfully created an atmosphere that is vibrant and lively... I am very encouraged and heartened to hear that about 13 of the seniors have found a new role serving as active volunteers in the centre.”

The former Minister in charge of Ageing Issues, Mr Lim Boon Heng, commented on the importance of SACs in his Committee of Supply 2011, budget debate speech (on 2 March 2011) that:

“Let me now turn to our final thrust to enable ageing-in-place. We are on track on the hardware side in terms of barrier free accessibility and the lift upgrading programme. As important is the software. What we are doing to expand at-home and community care will help seniors age-in-place successfully. However, there is a vulnerable group of poor seniors with weak family support who face the risk of social isolation. SACs serve as a first touch-point where these seniors can receive social support, participate in activities and meet other seniors.”

Clients’ Impact Stories

**Touch SAC**

77 year old Mdm Cheong Siew Keng stays in a one-room rental flat in Geylang Bahru. She became a member of TOUCH SAC in 1999. As she had to care for her husband, Mdm Cheong was unable to participate in the Centre’s activities. After her husband passed away, Mdm Cheong felt isolated and lonely. She was later admitted to the hospital for depression. After her discharge, Touch SAC staff visited her and encouraged her to come to the Centre to participate in the activities more regularly. With her new friends and learning new hobbies from the SAC, Mdm Cheong is now more joyful and her life is filled with excitement and laughter. She is lonely no more!
**Touch SAC**
Mr Kong Yew Wah spent most of his life with his wife in a small but cosy one-room rented flat in Geylang Bahru. In his early days, Mr Kong earned a living as a lorry driver. He retired at the age of 70 as a taxi driver. His wife participated actively at TOUCH SAC while he busied himself with work.

Two years after his retirement, Mr Kong lost his wife to sickness. With the loss of his lifelong companion, the 72 year old retiree suddenly lost his sense of purpose in life. At this point SAC staff visited him regularly and made efforts to take care of his needs. Staff also encouraged him to participate in the Centre’s activities. Through participation in the activities organised by the TOUCH SAC, Mr Kong made new friends. With the support from staff and new friends, Mr Kong regained his confidence and overcame his depression. He is now a volunteer with the SAC to support the activities in the centre.

**Moral SAC (Indus Road)**
As part of the morning exercise, Granny Yang, 91, makes her way slowly downstairs, to the THKMS Moral SAC (Indus Road), holding on to 53 years old Siew Hua, her intellectually-challenged daughter with one hand while clutching a walking stick with another. As if orchestrated, other frail elderly neighbours will also gather there. The SAC is well patronised. It remains a blissful oasis of warmth and laughter for these elderly. Granny Yang is at peace with her present lot knowing that when she passes on, the SAC would help to link Siew Hua with needed services.
Best Practices of SAC

TOUCH SAC was appointed as a Centre of Specialisation for SACs in 2011. As a Centre of Specialisation, TOUCH SAC developed a guidebook on effective programmes for better client outcomes and training other SACs on using the guidebook to improve their programmes/services and engage the seniors more effectively.

Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited (THKMCL) SACs was appointed as the second Centre of Specialisation for SACs in April 2012. For their project, THKMCL will be developing a guidebook on effective collaboration and partnership for SACs. The guidebook will enable SAC staff to be more effective in engaging and partnering community organisations. This will allow the SACs to tap on available community partnerships to supplement their resources and enhance programmes for seniors.

Strategic Priorities

The SACs have been identified as a key programme for expansion over the next 3 years, with the aim of serving more needy and at-risk seniors as the population ages.

Moving forward, it will be important to track seniors-centric outcomes to study the impact of SACs serving seniors in Singapore. Suggestions for seniors-centric outcomes can include:

a. Percentage of ambulant seniors who feel engaged by SAC;
b. Percentage of frail/homebound seniors who feel engaged by SAC;
c. Percentage of ambulant seniors who feel supported within the community; and
d. Percentage of frail and homebound seniors who feel supported within the community.

NCSS has developed an e-Schoolbag of resources (https://www.ncssapp.org.sg/), available on the NCSS website, to help SACs that faced challenges in resourcing and manpower.
Annex 1

SACs Service Providers
The 52 SACs are:
1. AWWA SAC
2. Care Corner SAC (TP5)
3. Care Corner SAC (TP170)
4. Care Corner SAC (TP62B)
5. Care Corner SAC (TP149)
6. CARElderly SAC
7. CCN SAC@ Teck Ghee 420
8. Chong Hua Tong SAC
9. COMNET@ Sin Ming SAC
10. Fei Yue SAC (Holland Close)
11. Fei Yue SAC (Teck Whye)
12. Goodlife!
13. Harmony SAC
14. Henderson SAC
15. Indus-Moral Care SAC
16. Joylink
17. Kembangan- Chai Chee SAC
18. King George’s Ave SAC
19. Kreta Ayer SAC (Banda)
20. Kreta Ayer SAC (Chin Swee)
21. Kreta Ayer SAC (Jalan Kukoh)
22. LBSA Mei Ling SAC
23. LBSA Ang Mo Kio SAC
24. LBSA Bendemeer SAC
25. LBSA Tampines SAC
26. LBSA Ghim Moh SAC
27. LBSA Clementi SAC
28. Moral SAC (Kaki Bukit)
29. Peace Connect SAC
30. Redhill Moral SAC
31. Sarah SAC
32. Silver Ace @ Telok Blangah
33. Silver Ace @ Redhill
34. Silver Ace @ Lengkok Bahru
35. Silver Ace @ Whampoa
36. Silver Ace @ Taman Jurong
37. Sunlove SAC- Marsiling
38. Sunlove SAC- Chai Chee
39. Thong Kheng SAC (Queenstown)
40. Thong Kheng SAC (Tanglin-Cairnhill)
41. THK Bedok Radiance SAC
42. THK SAC @ AMK 645
43. THK SAC @ AMK 257
44. THK SAC @ Boon Lay
45. THK SAC @ Bukit Merah View
46. THK SAC @ Macpherson
47. THK SAC @ Telok Blangah Crescent
48. THK SAC @ Toa Payoh 15
49. THK SAC @ Toa Payoh 31
50. Tembusu SAC
51. TOUCH SAC
52. Wesley SAC