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TAKING HEART

# YWCA raises more than S\$500,000 for key initiatives

The funds will go towards developing Hope Hub, an upcoming shared space for women to collaborate

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[SINGAPORE] Non-profit organisation YWCA of Singapore celebrated its 150th anniversary on Friday (Aug 29) at Conrad Singapore Orchard, and raised more than S\$500,000 for its key programmes.

Most of the funds will go towards developing YWCA's headquarters at Outram Road into Hope Hub, an upcoming shared space for women and families facing diverse challenges to collaborate.

The non-profit said it envisions a "dynamic women's hub" where women-focused organisations, social enterprises and partners can come together to collaborate.

Sandra Leong, executive director at YWCA of Singapore, said: “We see a lot of women – our beneficiaries – wanting to start their own businesses, but they may not have resources. We feel that if we bring them together, we can have shared resources for them as well as a shared space.

“At the same time, communities of support could help them. We can do marketing as a collective together, and we can support them through other shared services.”

At Hope Hub, beneficiaries can also learn from each other – such as how to manage their finances.

“I think this will help them to be able to grow and scale,” added Leong.

Hope Hub is currently in its conceptualisation phase, and is seeking partners and funders.

Besides Hope Hub, the funds will go towards YWCA's key initiatives such as the weaving programme and women's business accelerator programme.

Under the weaving programme, beneficiaries from marginalised communities can generate income under flexible work arrangements by learning how to weave. They create woven merchandise and facilitate workshops, with all proceeds going back to supporting them.

Meanwhile, the business accelerator programme, [which launched in July](#), aims to help female entrepreneurs scale their businesses by providing business training, mentoring opportunities and access to YWCA's network of community and corporate partners.

Leong said YWCA plans to expand its pool of beneficiaries as it redefines who the women in need are in today's landscape.

“We see the shifting needs in terms of how we can serve women in Singapore,” she noted.

Speaking about this shift, Sim Hwee Hoon, president at YWCA of Singapore, added: “Today, she may be navigating single parenthood, caregiving responsibilities, rebuilding after job loss, or striving to keep her business afloat. Tomorrow, she may face challenges we cannot yet imagine.”

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