

National Council of Social Service

FEATURE

WORKING WITH TRUE PURPOSE TO MAKE LIVES COUNT

Words by Li Yuelong & Adeline Leow



Every day, social service professionals serve in a diverse variety of job roles, but they all strive towards a common cause – to empower people to lead lives with dignity. These like-minded individuals come together as one Social Service Tribe, driving positive change through their actions, gestures, and ideas.

With more than 15,000 professionals working in over 450 social service organisations, Social Service Tribe supports people in need across five main social service areas: disabilities & special needs, children & youth, mental health, seniors, and families. No matter where their passion lies, individuals can explore dynamic career possibilities in over 30 different professions, across diverse job roles such as corporate services, counselling, and psychology. We speak to Social Service Scholars Lyon Koh, 27, and Nur Adilah, 30, to learn more about why they chose a career in social service.

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While hard work makes a difference, our heart work changes lives.

Inspiring positive change in people's lives requires a lot more than just effort. It takes empathy.

As social service professionals, we work with both our hearts and minds, empowering people to lead lives that will make their lives better. As the Social Service Tribe, we share values, of empathy, compassion and love, go a long way – and that together, we can go even further.

If you decide to make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable, it's time to look into a career in social services, counselling, therapy, speech language therapy, mental work, or psychology.

Find out more at www.ncss.gov.sg/socialservice

Supported by We are a group of like-minded individuals who share a belief of empowering everyone to live with dignity. Together, we make lives count. www.ncss.gov.sg

What sparked your interest in social service?

Lyon: I decided early on to pursue a career in social service. I like to help people and see them smile, so dedicating myself to giving and helping others seemed to be the most meaningful way to live my life, given that I only live once.

Nur Adilah: I have always been interested in working with children and in the community. Once, I encountered a preschool child with speech and language difficulties. She was lost and confused, but wasn't able to express herself and clung to me in fear. It left a strong impression on me and piqued my interest in helping children with developmental difficulties.



Nur Adilah Binte Basri

Social Service Scholar

Postgraduate

Masters in Applied Psychology (Educational Psychology)

– National Institute of Education

Why did you choose to take up the Social Service Scholarship?

Lyon: The scholarship allows me to have richer interactions with the social service sector prior to work, through various opportunities in connecting with those in the sector. Being in the NCSS Sun Ray Scheme also gives me added exposure to macro-level work through involvement in sector-wide initiatives and workgroups, which has been eye-opening for me.

Nur Adilah: I found it beneficial to receive exposure to various sectors of social service and the opportunity to work directly with other professionals. I believe this close collaboration will help me grow more holistically and that my knowledge will not be limited to just learning from textbooks.



“Take the time to volunteer or try different experiences to decide if you are keen to do ground work.”

Nur Adilah

What drives you to do what you do?

Lyon: My strong belief that people should not be denied hope. If I can play a part, even in the smallest ways, and be a part of the process of co-creating hope for their future – that is what keeps me going every day.

Nur Adilah: When I see that what I do makes an impact on children’s lives. Over the course of my internship, I had the opportunity to gain experience working with students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) such as Dyslexia, ADHD, Autism, and Intellectual Disabilities. I met a Primary 1 student who refused to sit still in class and was distracting his classmates. After implementing some simple behavioural and learning strategies, he was motivated enough to sit through almost the entire lesson!

Besides passion, what other qualities do you think are needed to work in this industry?

Lyon: Resilience and patience are two qualities that are very important. The work is tough and working with people is never easy, so these two qualities will go a long way in helping us to overcome the challenges we face.

Nur Adilah: I think you need to be compassionate and genuine in dealing with children and their families. Often, these families are encountering such challenges for the first time, and they are trying their best in their given circumstances. You need to take into account their perspective and acknowledge their progress. By establishing this strong rapport with them, positive outcomes can be achieved in time.



Lyon Koh
Social Service Scholar
Social Worker
Bachelor of Social Sciences
First Class Honours in Social Work – National University of Singapore

Everyone experiences setbacks. What motivates you to keep going whenever you feel that way?

Lyon: Whenever I feel down, I remind myself of the struggles I faced in joining social service to keep myself grounded. Each time I face challenges and question my ability to cope, I remind myself that this is something that I want in life. That is the most important as other things will just fall into place.

Nur Adilah: Working with children with special needs is an immensely gratifying job. Sometimes it is hard to see the progress on a day-to-day basis, because it is so little or small. But these are important milestones, and when you look back, you will be amazed at how these little steps help them to take big strides in their development. Reflecting on each child's progress and how they gain in confidence drives me to move forward.



“Think about whether you really want to pursue a career in the social service, which particular service area, and why.”

Lyon

How do your colleagues help you in your work?

Lyon: My colleagues are supportive, helpful, and fun – they make work life more enjoyable and bearable in times of stress. I have always appreciated the caring check-ins that I have received from my

peers and managers and how they are willing to go the extra mile to help and support me when I face challenges. The line of work we are in is tough and this further increases our need for social support – both peer and professional.

Nur Adilah: It is easy to experience setbacks when you encounter various challenges in your work. However, having supportive colleagues who are there to spur you on, encourage you, and provide ideas or advice is always a motivating force. When you know you are all in it together, it makes things much easier to cope with.

What advice would you give to those who are considering the social service scholarship?

Lyon: Think about whether you really want to pursue a career in the social service, which particular service area, and why. If you are clear about your decision, just go for the scholarship and get that additional support for your goal. You never know until you try, so do not let other factors affect you from considering this scholarship.

Nur Adilah: Take the time to volunteer or try different experiences to decide if you are keen to do ground work. Take the time to network with people and do your research to know what you are getting yourself into. Working in the community will require a lot of hard and heart work.

We are professionals who are proudly empowering Singapore's people to lead dignified lives. *Discover how our social service professionals help drive positive change and career opportunities in social service at www.socialservicetribe.sg.*

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