

## **Improve Awareness and Understanding of Aid Schemes**

*The Straits Times Forum Online Story (October 15, 2009)*

I REFER to Ms Radha Basu's commentary on Oct 7, "State help needs flexibility", which offered excellent pointers on how greater efficiency and flexibility in processing applications can improve state help systems.

One problem is that some disadvantaged individuals or households - particularly the elderly and illiterate - often have difficulty understanding the benefits and assistance to which they are entitled.

While there are campaigns and programmes led by community development councils (CDC) to increase awareness, outreach initiatives can be expanded via Reach, Meet-the-People sessions or community activities.

This will also make the plethora of assistance schemes come across as less daunting and confusing to volunteers as well as applicants.

To facilitate greater comprehension, CDCs can consider compiling or summarising programmes by different aid categories, rather than inundate individuals with lengthy brochures. Online portals can also be tapped.

It would be beneficial if the different non-profit and aid agencies could find more room for collaboration and cooperation. This would certainly ensure that no stone is left unturned in terms of providing assistance, and in so doing, strengthen this social safety net for the unfortunate.

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