

# Dealing with the ur

NCSS scholar  
Muhammad Sufian  
finds fulfilment in  
his vocation as a  
social worker

## Susan Chen

MR MUHAMMAD Abu Sufian caught criminals as a police officer during his national service (NS) days, but he wanted to do more to prevent crime recurrence.

So he applied for the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Social Work Training Scholarship during his second year at the National University of Singapore (NUS) where he majored in social work at the arts and social sciences faculty.

The 27-year-old recalls: "When I was serving my NS,

I always wondered why people committed crime and what would happen to them after the process of law had taken place and the policeman had done his job. I felt that there must be more than just putting people behind bars. What would happen to them after that? How does society prevent a cycle of crime from taking place?"

As the social services industry is a sunrise industry where opportunities abound, he decided to pursue his interest in this field.

"I learnt that male and Malay social workers were in great de-

mand, and I was enamoured by this idea of a job looking for me instead of me looking for a job. A bonus came along when NCSS came down to NUS to introduce the Social Work Training Scholarship. I grabbed it with open arms," he adds.

Upon graduation in 2008, Mr Muhammad served his one-year bond at Serangoon Moral Family Service Centre under the Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society. He is now working as a social worker at PPIS Vista Sakinah, Centre for Remarriages and Stepfamilies. PPIS stands for Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura, which



Mr Muhammad provides support to couples who are remarrying.  
PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

# Unexpected

means Singapore Muslim Women's Association.

As a social service agency, PPIS Vista specialises in remarriages and stepfamilies within the Malay-Muslim community. It caters to couples who are marrying again, and where either one or both parties had previously been married. It also works with couples who have remarried and have formed step-families, providing counselling services and programmes to support such couples and families as they experience the challenges of adjusting to their new family structures, dynamics and roles.

graduated," says Mr Muhammad, who works a five-day week alternating between Monday to Friday and Tuesday to Saturday work weeks. His main duties include providing counselling, casework, training, supervising the coordination and contents of the Remarriage Preparation Course and conducting the course.

There is never a dull moment in the life of a social worker. He says: "I think we are wired to prepare for the unexpected. Being a social worker forces me to deal with uncertainties."

Being a social worker has its ups and downs. It is satisfying for me to stay when the going gets tough, because not many will say that they are up for such a challenge. I find that this job challenges me, and I would like to say that I have come out of it successfully at the end.

— Mr Muhammad Abu Sufian

Under the NCSS Social Work Training Scholarship, the bond a scholar has to serve under this scholarship is proportional to the number of years of funding support he received. The scholarship is open to undergraduates in their second, third or final year of study who are majoring in social work at NUS or SIM University and have strong passion and commitment to pursue a career in the social service sector.

Even before they graduate, the scholarship arranges for its scholars to meet potential employers and matches jobs for them.

"I sat through more than one interview by social service agencies who were interested in hiring me. This was an experience because I saw how much in demand social workers were, and this was before I had even

For example, in a family violence case, he helped to retrieve and pack clothes for a client's children from a house which had turned into a bloodied crime scene. Another time, he provided support to a grieving client and helped him fold and arrange his missing spouse's clothes in his home.

"Yet another memorable experience was chasing a mentally challenged child around the office. They definitely do not prepare you for this in university," quips Mr Muhammad, who thrives on overcoming the challenges his job brings.

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