

# Making Poverty History

**Michael Switow** reveals what makes ONE (SINGAPORE) such a special charity.



Supporters in Dhaka show their White Band at their first rally

Photograph courtesy of ONE SINGAPORE

When Will Smith took the stage at the Live8 Concert in Philadelphia he snapped his fingers. SNAP — a child is dead — SNAP — another child is dead. A worldwide television audience estimated at three billion viewers snapped their fingers as well. In Singapore, Peter Chow was moved to make a stand. Chow, one of the very first XL Results Foundation Life Members launched ONE (SINGAPORE) a society dedicated to promoting public awareness and taking concrete actions to Make Poverty History.

“The world shouts out for an extraordinary way of being,” states Chow, “that will create a clearing for making a profound difference in an unprecedented way. Let’s acknowledge the existence of resignation and indifference, but not be stopped by it. Together we can make a difference — and inspire others to do the same.”

Chow recruited 10 founding members, including XL Results Foundation Chairman, Roger Hamilton, to support the growth of this new organisation.

“Singapore has proven that it has the power to shape international trade, define world class customer service quality and pioneer 21st century urban development,” says Hamilton. “It is only fitting that we believe that from Singapore we have the power to influence and accelerate the top agenda item in the United Nations Millennium Declaration — to halve world poverty by 2015 and put an end to it altogether by 2025.”

Hamilton immediately saw a fit between ONE (SINGAPORE)’s goals and XL Results Foundation’s World Wide Wealth initiative that encourages members to donate at least 10 per cent of their earnings to charity.

ONE (SINGAPORE) was registered as a society in October and it is already making a difference by supporting projects such as Aid Niger. Thanks to the support of XL Results’ Life Members, over S\$5000 was sent to the West African country of Niger to help famine victims. The donation funded the purchase of 10 tons of food, enough for more than 1000 families to eat for a week. ONE (SINGAPORE) is exploring other avenues for extending assistance to Niger, including funding a cottage industry to make mosquito nets, a crucial tool in the fight against malaria.

ONE (SINGAPORE) also supports SUPERSEED which fills a critical gap by redistributing high-quality goods from corporate and public sector donors to organisations that work with needy groups in Singapore and the region. SUPERSEED accepts donations of computers, office equipment, medical supplies and more and then finds grassroots groups that can use the goods and arranges for their delivery. With a soft launch and minimal publicity, SUPERSEED has already been approached by private and public sector donors to distribute some 200 computers, 50 fire extinguishers, 1200 brand new T-shirts and more. Beneficiaries have included children’s homes, homes for the aged, centres for the disabled, Special Olympics Singapore and the Singapore Association for the Deaf. The computers are being refurbished by inmates at Changi Prison — providing the prisoners with the opportunity to learn new




Delivering fire extinguishers to a home for the aged

Photograph courtesy of ONE SINGAPORE

skills and contribute to the community — before being donated to volunteer welfare organisations.

To raise public awareness of global poverty issues, ONE (SINGAPORE) is selling White Bands, the international symbol of the campaign to Make Poverty History. It is believed that more than 150 million people

own White Bands. The Campaign to Make Poverty History, together with the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the UN Millennium Campaign, projected a giant white band on the side of the UN General Assembly building to highlight a message of hope and activism in the fight against extreme poverty.

“Everyday,” says Peter Chow, “every three seconds, in the time it takes to snap your fingers, a child dies from extreme poverty. It doesn’t have to be this way. ONE by ONE, we can make a difference. What part would you like to play?” 

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# Cinderella Has a Ball



Guests at Cinderella’s Ball had an evening of entertainment and an opportunity to contribute to worthy causes

In the fairy tale Cinderella is guided by a fairy godmother who sets her on her way to success. In Singapore there are real life godmothers who are also looking to help young ladies make their way in this world. At a recent fund raising ball the Women’s Business Connection (WBC) combined a fund raising event with the launch of their newly initiated ‘Project Godmother,’ a long-term mentoring project for selected high-potential girls from less privileged backgrounds. Each girl is assigned a mentor or ‘godmother’ who will act as a life and career guide.

The WBC connected with 300 entrepreneurs, professionals and women of Singapore to raise more than \$40,000 for their Project Godmother and Timor Leste Foundation that strives to be an enduring partner in the social progress of Timor-Leste.

“We are all godmothers tonight,” said Dr Jannie Tay, WBC President, “here to make dreams and wishes come true. Today’s Cinderella not only goes to the ball, she also can host a ball as well! We’re about making a difference!” 