



## WEALTH OF COMPASSION

*Banker Pearlyn Phau leads the charge in the Onefor10 campaign, which enables and encourages the affluent to give in impactful and sustainable ways*

FOR A TEAM building event one year, Pearlyn Phau and her colleagues went to Chiang Mai — not to live it up at a luxury resort, but to drive for hours to orphanages near the Myanmar border as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts. The group raised funds to build gutters and install water filters for migrant camps; brought with them some 30 boxes of clothes and supplies; visited facilities for stateless and displaced youths that depended entirely on private donations for their operating costs; and constructed a library for an orphanage and stocked it with books.

That trip opened Phau's eyes to the plight of children who live from day to day, without harbouring any expectations of a bright future. "They don't even own the clothes on their backs. The phrase, 'The early bird catches the worm', is literally played out each morning, as the child who wakes up the earliest gets to grab the T-shirt and shorts hanging outside the dorm to wear for the day," recounts the DBS Bank

Managing Director and Deputy Group Head of Consumer Banking & Wealth Management. "That experience led me to reflect on the never-ending supply of goodies our children enjoy today."

Upon returning to Singapore from Hong Kong, where she had been Managing Director and Head of Consumer Banking from 2012 to 2015, Phau made up her mind to become more actively involved in charity in a structured way. "My experience in Chiang Mai reinforced the message that sustainability and predictability of gifting are critical to efficiently and effectively provide adequate care and planning for the needy."

Phau reached out to the Community Chest (ComChest), becoming a committee member in 2016. The following year, she served as Chairman of the fundraiser's High Net Worth and Legacy Giving sub-committee, which spearheads the Onefor10 campaign. The initiative connects

high net worth individuals and family offices with the vulnerable and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Onefor10 encourages the privileged to build giving into their legacy and contribute in a targeted, effective manner, Phau explains. It also nurtures reliable, consistent donation, which is vital to the health of ComChest. Born out of a gathering of venture philanthropy partners, who shared information on the social services landscape and the approaches required to help various groups in need, Onefor10 has soft-launched with its steering team already reaching out to foundations and private banks with local presence.

"Success for Onefor10 will be seeing ComChest engage high net worth individuals in a significant way and in so doing see them influence their peers and the wider spheres they impact to also participate in giving," Phau says.

Tailoring a donation programme for high net worth individuals presented unique challenges to the High Net Worth and Legacy Giving sub-committee, Phau explains. For one, ComChest is perceived as open to all who are underprivileged, whether children, elderly or low-income families.

"From a donor's point of view, this poses challenges when appealing to the high net worth segment," she adds. "The philanthropic behaviour of this segment is that they will

donate large amounts to make a significant difference, but when told the donation goes into a variety of projects, it's hard for them to visualise what that means, or to get a sense of how they have made an impact."

Onefor10 not only advises on the specific causes, platforms and key projects that donors are able to commit to, but also ensures that donors are kept apprised on the outcome of their giving. For example, a donor interested in education may consider sponsoring the education needs of a disadvantaged child, whose progress will be shared with the donor, Phau shares.

Besides a strategy based on more emotive storytelling, the sub-committee has also pushed for a significant social media and digital element to leverage the peer-to-peer influence of the high net worth segment.

From her early memories of seeing secondary school students raising funds on Flag Day, to many weekends during her undergrad studies at NUS she spent paying \$5 for a \$1 stick of malt candy from an old lady at Holland Village ("It struck me how, even though she was in need, she refused to beg but insisted on giving the candy in exchange."), Phau has made charity a defining feature of her work. She has made four trips to the orphanages on the Thailand-Myanmar border, the last with her son, a Primary 6 pupil who was tasked with organising his own donations.

As for getting people in positions of privilege to lend a hand to those in need, Phau says: "You have to believe in karma and paying it forward, that good will come from doing good. You have to recognise that it's your duty to help those who are not as fortunate as you."

"My view is that the more successful you are, the more you should be aware of this and, more importantly, do something about it."