

■ THE MULTI-DOOR COURTHOUSE *ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY TO JUSTICE*

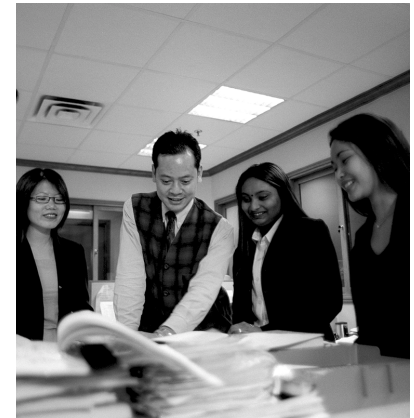
The Multi-Door Courthouse (MDC) enhances accessibility to justice. As a one-stop information centre for court users, the MDC provides a broad range of services to members of the public. The MDC seeks to channel the public to appropriate dispute-resolution avenues or, alternatively, to consider dispute-prevention measures. The MDC has also initiated many programmes to create greater awareness of the law and the justice system.

'Justice @ Subordinate Courts' Project

The Subordinate Courts collaborated with the South-East Community Development Council to produce CD-ROMs and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) pamphlets containing brief and concise legal information to cater to enquiries frequently made by members of the public. The CD-ROMs and pamphlets provide information on when, how and where legal disputes can be resolved and legal redress and remedies can be sought. These enable Members of Parliament to provide relevant information to their constituents to help them make informed choices.

Vulnerable Witness Support Programme

Launched in 1998, this programme provides non-evidentiary, practical and emotional support to vulnerable witnesses, and to their families and caregivers in appropriate cases. Under this programme, vulnerable witnesses refer to victims or witnesses of crime under the age of 16 years or those having an intellectual capacity below the age of 16 years. Referrals from the Singapore Police Force are made to the Singapore Children's Society for state-prosecuted criminal cases. Volunteer Support Persons are assigned by the Singapore Children's Society to build rapport with the vulnerable witnesses. The Vulnerable Support Persons sit in Court with the vulnerable witness while he or she testifies. Prior to the trial, the MDC conducts a visit to the Court to familiarise the vulnerable witness with the physical structure and layout of the Court and the video-link facilities. Procedural matters relating to the conduct of a trial are also explained to the vulnerable witness.



*Multi-Door Courthouse:
(from left)*

*Ms Marilyn Lee
Senior Assistant Case
Administrator*

*Mr Steven Chiang
Case Administrator*

*Ms Sandra Kadir
Intake Officer*

*Ms Noorashikin Suradi
Intake Officer*

Project Concern

The MDC represents the Subordinate Courts on the Golden Life Workgroup on elder abuse prevention chaired by the Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) Counselling Centre. This Workgroup seeks to enhance awareness of elder abuse and possible ways to deal with it. It will also explore the ambit of assistance rendered to victims and perpetrators. The Workgroup is working towards producing a manual on elder abuse prevention.

e-Citizen Portal

The e-Citizen Portal aims to provide members of the public with a convenient means to locate pertinent legal information of interest. It provides hyperlinks to the websites of the relevant organisations, including the Subordinate Courts websites. A committee has been formed and tasked to monitor how information and e-services on legal matters may best be posted on this Portal. The MDC, representing the Subordinate Courts, participates and contributes to this national initiative.