

Grassroots leaders urged to focus on residents over activities

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Neighbourhood shops (file picture)

SINGAPORE: Grassroots leaders should be more of a facilitator in their community rather than just event organisers, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Lim Boon Heng. Mr Lim said this on Monday, at the Singapore Perspectives 2011 conference organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

Mr Lim, who is also deputy chairman of the People's Association, said: "How do we know when grassroots leaders have succeeded?"

"When small interest groups are self-sustaining, and do not rely on the Residents' Committees or the Community Club Management Committee (CCMC) to organise activities for them.

Mr Lim painted a scenario where problems in the community can be solved by residents stepping forward and working with one another.

"When residents have become good friends, and look out for one another, where a nurse and a taxi driver are community resources who will help a diabetic neighbour improve his quality of life.

"These are scenarios that we will see, when our grassroots leaders, as Community Facilitators, put the resident — not the activity — at the centre of what they do".

But he said there is no end to this work, as there would be changes in society, and each new decade would bring new issues and challenges.

"Some old trends will continue too, such as the frequency at which Singaporeans change homes, at least in the immediate and medium-term future.

"And we must never take racial and religious harmony for granted," he said.