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Dorms mull measures to cope with organising weekend activities for residents

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SINGAPORE - Some dormitories for foreign workers in Singapore are considering increasing its staff or partnering with the community and volunteers.

This is to cope with the increased cost and manpower needs of organising more recreational activities for its residents on weekends.

Bakurdeen A Majid, group dormitory manager at Westlite Dormitory (Toh Guan), said: "We had to organise the activities at very short notice. So there were some manpower constraints. What we did was we recalled some of the staff and they took it in their stride. But in the long run we are looking into employing a full-time activities officer who will be dedicated to organising such activities for residents."

Channel NewsAsia understands that many dormitories and recreation centres are organising activities like movie screenings and sporting competitions to engage their residents.

Westlite Dormitory in Toh Guan organised a karaoke session for its residents on Sunday evening. It said it will now be offering activities every weekend. They could include variety shows, excursions and workshops.

The dormitory said it has noticed more residents staying in on weekends, especially with some employers encouraging their workers to stay away from Little India.

The dormitory hopes the activities will give residents something more meaningful to do during their free time. Some foreign workers told Channel NewsAsia they have gone to Little India to shop and remit money home, two weeks after a riot broke out there.

But others said they would rather stay away for now, preferring to gather near where they live. Some workers whom Channel NewsAsia spoke with also said they could save some money by staying in their dormitories during the weekend.

An open field near Chinese Garden MRT station has become a convenient hangout for workers who enjoy a game of cricket. In Boon Lay, there is a park where foreign workers of different nationalities spend their Sunday afternoon with friends.

Most of the workers who were at those locations on Sunday live a few streets away.

With many shops in the vicinity, many workers said they can buy most of the things they need in their neighbourhood and did not need to go to Little India. CHANNEL NEWSASIA

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