ABSTRACT

With the outbreak of the old National Kidney Foundation (NKF) scandal back in 2005 and the recent Ren Ci Hospital saga, there has been much debates and reports on fund management of charities in the media. However, many are ignorant of the challenges faced by charities especially the small ones. At times, we lament the existence of too many small charities on flag days. Is there something in particular that sets them apart from governments’ relief schemes, big charities and a central fundraising body?

Though there are many works on voluntarism and charity, there has not been one which examines small charities in Singapore, and Kwan-In Welfare Society of Singapore in particular. The objective of this thesis is to examine the functions and challenges of small charities in Singapore, with Kwan-In Welfare Society of Singapore as a case study. I feel that the importance of such free clinics have surfaced amidst raising health care costs and bad economy. Kwan-In Welfare Society of Singapore is chosen because the organization accepts patients with no limit on their financial status and not a single cent of nominal fee charged. As patients come from all works of life, views
collected would be more objective than a charity which is targeted at certain groups of non-privileged.

This study would be based on primary sources such as reports and reviews in different forms and past studies on charities or voluntarism. Information collected from interviews and field work on Kwan-In Welfare society will also be extensively used.

Chapter One presents the aim, scope and method of research of my study. Chapter Two introduces the history and development of Kwan-In Welfare Society of Singapore while chapter Three and Four analyze the social functions and challenges of the organization respectively. The final chapter examines whether the situation is representative of Singapore’s small charities in general and the future of such organizations while looking for possible solutions to the problems.

In all, this study hopes to show that the existence of small charities is still relevant in Singapore. Not only can these organizations cater to more specific needs, if only a few large charities or a central fundraising body is in place, charities may ultimately be seen as
bureaucracies. This may in turn, hinder the development of a civic society in Singapore.