SINGAPORE: Singaporeans should move away from the word 'retirement', says Minister of State for Community Development, Youths and Sports Yu-Foo Yee Shoon.

She said her ministry is working closely with the Manpower Ministry to redesign jobs and retrain older Singaporeans.

Her concern was not so much on employment, but rather on active ageing.

Just last week, MCYS released the report by the Committee on Ageing Issues, and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has accepted the recommendations, including making housing estates and public transport barrier-free and elder-friendly.

Speaking to reporters after opening a Social Entrepreneur Forum, Mrs Yu-Foo mooted the idea of 'modular employment' for old folks; for example, getting former language teachers to take up jobs in translation work.

That way, older Singaporeans' huge reservoir of work experience would not go to waste, but instead be turned into a meaningful resource to keep those in their sunset years engaged.

Said Mrs Yu-Foo, "Today we should move away from the word 'retirement'. So maybe we should think about modular employment for old people. Identify their strengths and their resources and their experiences and you can assign some part of the job for them. We hope that more people will come forward, like NTUC, to get them to rethink about how to re-employ some of them."

Mr Yu-Foo said her ministry is also looking into how to get families involved in inter-generational bonding.

The aim is to encourage people to support and take care of each other, not just financially, but emotionally as well.

She suggested young couples could take their parents out for a meal, a movie; even simple gestures like doing the laundry could go a long way in building bonds. - CNA /ct