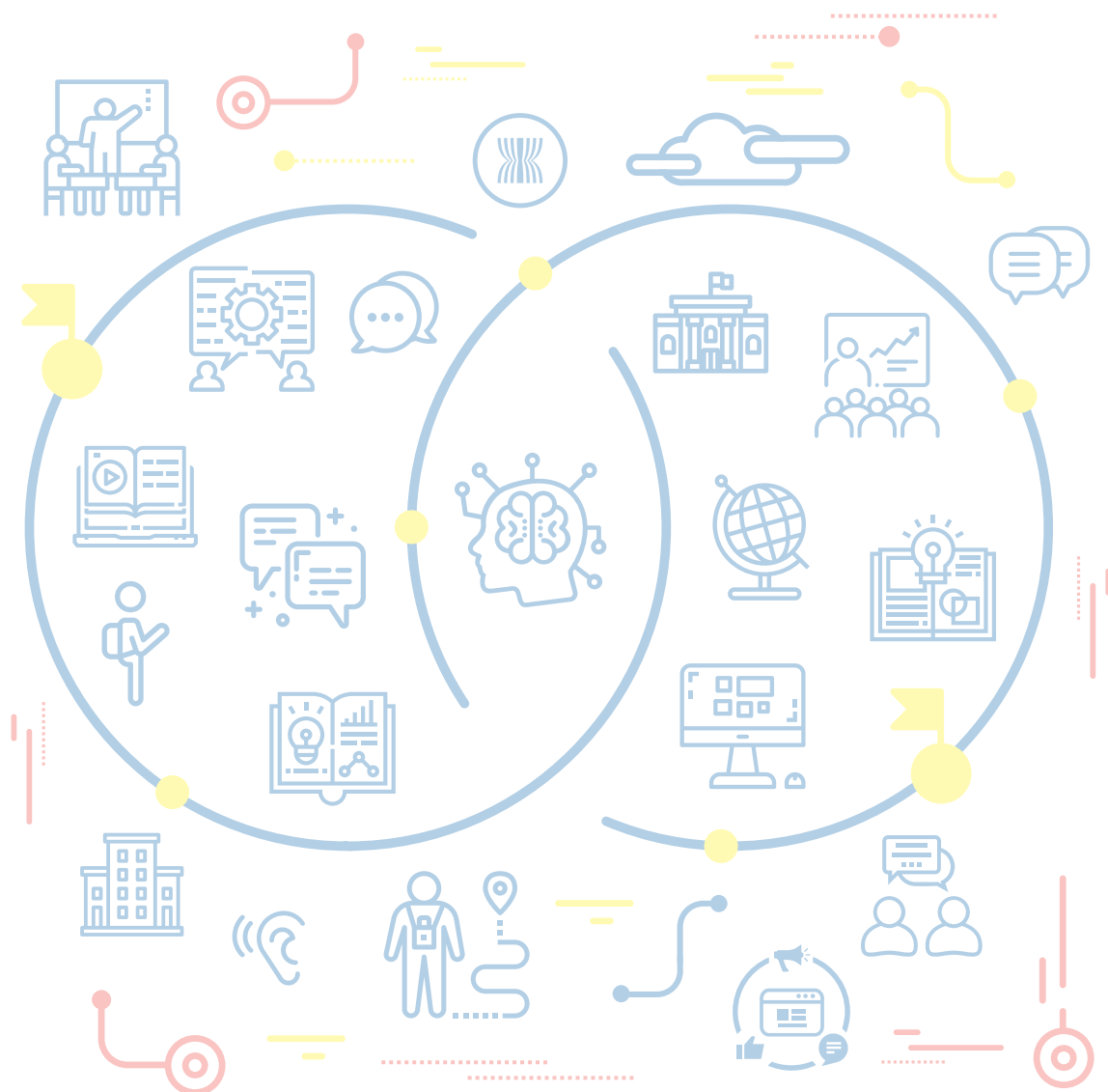








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## Conference Report

# ASEAN-UNICEF Conference on 21st Century Skills and Youth Participation

Singapore, 8–9 November 2018



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# Acknowledgements and Report Overview

This report was produced following the completion of the ASEAN-UNICEF Conference on 21st Century Skills and Youth Participation, and serves to document proceedings and highlight key discussions and conclusions. It is organised according to the individual sessions of the workshop, from Sessions 1 to 8, covering both days of the event.

The report is accompanied by the following Annexes:

Annex I – Concept Note and Agenda of the Conference

Annex II – Participants List

Annex III – Session 5 – Detailed Notes on Research Topics and Ideas

The organisers of the conference extend their gratitude to the participants and hard-working teams who prepared and worked behind the scenes to ensure its smooth implementation. The organisers also wish to express their sincere thanks to all the panellists and delegates who contributed to making this conference a success.

Finally, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific (EAP) Regional Office and the ASEAN Secretariat would like to thank the Government of Singapore for agreeing to host the event, through the generous support and engagement of the Singapore Polytechnic International.



# Executive Summary

ASEAN is an exciting and dynamic region with one of the best resources possible – with nearly half of its 630 million people aged under 35, ASEAN has the human capital to embrace the very real challenges of the 4.0 economy. East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) is home to 277 million adolescents, accounting for 23.1 per cent of the world's adolescent population and 13 per cent of the region's total population.<sup>1</sup> According to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) figures, the youth population (aged 15–34 years) accounts for 213 million young people in ASEAN countries, constituting the largest ever cohort of ASEAN youth. The region is driven to a great extent by a labour-intensive market; technological progress, globalisation, and market-oriented reform have been central to its rapid growth in the past two decades.

The ASEAN-UNICEF Regional Conference on 21st Century Skills and Youth Participation reiterated the tremendous opportunity that the region has in its young people as its brain trust, and acknowledged the importance of working with young girls and boys to prepare for rapid transformations brought about by technology, digitisation, urbanisation and climate change. In supporting ASEAN member countries to harness this potential and seek innovative, connected and home-grown solutions to build opportunities for 21st century skills opportunities with and for young people, this ASEAN-UNICEF conference highlighted the importance of reframing lifelong learning within the context of Industry 4.0 and set out the expected economic and labour market disruptions.

A few of the themes that resonated throughout the conference were:

- i. **Flexible Learning** – 21st century learning takes place through multiple pathways, in and out of formal school settings, and through lifelong learning, which includes “learning, re-learning

and unlearning” while embracing iterative processes of success and failure along the way.

- ii. **Education Reform** – the importance of an evolving model of formal education that is future-focused. To be relevant and serviceable, national education systems need to connect with the realities of their surrounding learning ecosystems, assess and learn about their dynamics and power structures, and prepare with and for youth skills development with a survive-and-thrive mindset.
- iii. **Equitable Learning** – there is an increasing urgency and necessity to recognise the vital role of young people as authors of their own learning – creating and revitalising systems and structures – and the importance of co-creation and the power of young people to learn from each other. This needs to be matched with a focus on training teachers, as their role evolves from agents of knowledge transfer to designers and curators of the learning environment.
- iv. **Private sector engagement** – given the nature of the economic disruptions that are taking place in labour markets, and that will continue in the coming years, the authentic engagement of the education, youth, labour and social welfare actors with partners in the private sector and business community will be a game-changer. The role of the private sector is paramount to helping prepare young people for working life, addressing skills mismatching issues, and enabling the expansion and elaboration of national and regional policies around 21st century skills.

Finally, as delegates and panellists reflected on making positive impacts on the lives of the youth in ASEAN, the conference highlighted the need for evidence generation, knowledge exchange and shared learning that can contribute to effective dialogue and collaboration between a range of partners and stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Adolescents: Demographics. Jun 2016. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/adolescent-demographics/#>



# Introduction

The East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region has around 2 billion people, including 580 million children and young people aged under 18 years. The ASEAN region benefits, among others from its human capital, with 213 million young people aged 15–34 years old – the region’s highest cohort by far, who are creative, digitally connected, and responsive to new information. The ASEAN region has demonstrated impressive successes in improving the lives of children during their first decade; in maternal and newborn health care; early childhood and early cognitive development; and primary education.<sup>2</sup> This represents tremendous opportunity and a flourishing, dynamic resource for the future. To ensure continuity of effort and to build on the gains of the development of its children and adolescents, it is essential that investment by national governments, regional bodies, the private sector and civil society is sustained through the next decade. This requires not only strategic national investment in the education, care, protection and health of children and adolescents, but also strengthened and concerted effort in human capital development to foster adaptive and agile individuals who are prepared for future market and industry needs.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025 serves as guidance for ASEAN’s efforts in striving towards an inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic community that engages and benefits its people. One of the strategic measures put forward by the Blueprint is enhancing the competitiveness of young people by promoting life-long learning, skills development, and promoting use of information and communication technology across age groups. With its rapid expansion of Internet users and smart phone penetration, the ASEAN region is experiencing growth in digital networks and e-commerce. With such transformation and emerging opportunities arising from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (‘Industry 4.0’), the ASEAN Community is bracing for disruptions and changes as well.

Singapore’s theme for the 2018 ASEAN Chairmanship, ‘Resilient and Innovative’<sup>3</sup>, encapsulates its vision for ASEAN to remain vibrant in the age of Industry 4.0. At the beginning of 2018, Singapore introduced a set

of priorities for ASEAN’s 51st year that are consistent with this theme, notably: innovative works focusing on and related to youth development, such as the Singapore-ASEAN Youth Fund and the launch of the ASEAN Youth Fellowship Programme; promotion of digital literacy and cyber wellness among youth in ASEAN; minimising the harmful effects of fake news; and establishing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.

Industry 4.0 has ramifications beyond the ASEAN region. At the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary General launched Generation Unlimited (GenU), a new partnership to get every young person into quality education, training or employment by 2030. UNICEF reiterated its commitment to working with partners to promote the principles and objectives of GenU through regional and national collaborations and solutions and contributing to the UN Youth Strategy 2030. UNICEF recognises that quality learning, the development of 21st century skills, and young peoples’ engagement are crucial; schools must harness academic and non-academics skills, and an education ecosystem must be provided for adolescent girls and boys to further develop their skills within and outside formal education systems. As a leading child rights organization, UNICEF recognises the untapped potential of adolescents that can be unleashed when education opportunities provide a quality, safe and collaborative learning experience for all in and out of school. In the recent past, UNICEF, together with UNESCO, has collaborated with ASEAN in developing the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY). The Declaration was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 28th ASEAN Summit in September 2016. In 2017, UNICEF and UNESCO supported ASEAN to organise a regional workshop on strengthening education for OOSCY in Bangkok. ASEAN’s commitment to strengthen education for OOSCY was reiterated when attending representatives re-affirmed their intent to realise the Declaration in 2019 and beyond.

An integrated and future-ready regional community needs to set up common platforms for policy coherence on young people’s development and contribute to innovative education and skills promotion among ASEAN Member States. It is within this context that ASEAN and UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) brought together representatives of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) with key youth representatives, social entrepreneurs and corporate actors to review and discuss opportunities for advancing 21st century skills and youth participation in the region.

<sup>2</sup> ASCC activities have resulted in a deepening of the sense of ASEAN identity, and collectively accelerating socio-cultural growth and progress by: lowering the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25/ day – from 1 in 2 to 1 in 8 persons over the last two decades; reducing the infant mortality rate from 57/1,000 live births in 1990 to 20/1,000 live births in 2015; reducing maternal mortality per 100,000 live births from 286 in 1990 to 197 in 2015; reducing the proportion of urban slum populations from 40% in 2000 to 31% in 2012; and increasing the net enrolment rate for primary school children from 83% in 1990 to 96% in 2017.

<sup>3</sup> See at: <https://www.asean2018.sg/About/ASEAN-2018>



## Session 1 The Opening Ceremony



### Speakers:



**Mr. Christopher Pragasam,**  
Assistant Chief Executive, National Youth  
Council Singapore



**Mr. Soh Wai Wah,**  
Principal and Chief Executive Officer,  
Singapore Polytechnic



**H.E. Kung Phoak,**  
Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the  
ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community



**Ms. Karin Hulshof,**  
Regional Director, UNICEF EAPRO



Key Note Speech by  
**Ms. Laksameekan Pearly Ingkakul,**  
Global Compact Thailand

*Disruption will be the hallmark of future employment. From 2000–2012, jobs that required non-cognitive skills grew much stronger than those that required skills that can be measured by traditional tests. While many jobs will be lost to technology, many more will be created – while AI and machine learning is good and will only improve, humans will remain much better at creative and open-ended tasks. As we look to the future, we will need more negotiators, motivators, experience designers and skilled people with high levels of different intelligences.*

**Mr. Christopher Pragasam**



Participants were welcomed by the National Youth Council Singapore under the theme of Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship; 'Resilient and Innovative', and by the hosting institution, Singapore Polytechnic. As co-organisers, the ASEAN Secretariat and UNICEF Regional Office were represented by senior levels of their respective institutions, highlighting the centrality of this theme for ASEAN, further contextualised by the new UNICEF-supported *Generation Unlimited* Initiative.<sup>4</sup> The dynamic keynote speech was delivered by a young and successful corporate leader, who gave an inspiring and gritty multi-media presentation. The diverse mix of speakers representing national and regional institutions, academia and young private sector leaders symbolized the essence of partnership proposed and sought by this event.

Setting the tone for the sessions to come, the speakers touched on the dominant themes and critical discussions leading up to the event – 21st century skills and youth participation. All speakers concurred that the nature of work and labour markets will be greatly affected by disruptions. In the context of Industry 4.0, labour-employer relationships are more temporary and fluid, facilitated by the internet and cyberspace, and complicated by the demographic and social issues of migration, urbanisation and globalisation. Technology for communication, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced robotics surge ahead rapidly and broadly. In turn, these changes have been instrumental in transforming social and economic policies, quickly outpacing formal, structured systems currently forming and preparing the youth for the world of work. Speakers in the opening session referenced the mismatch between the reality of this evolving labour market and the traditional approaches to education. Unlike in the past, the option of formal education lasting 20–25 years, with "graduated" individuals prepared for one, linear and lifelong career is no longer attractive for many young people.

In recognising this mismatch, speakers asked participants to consider what this paradigm shift means for government institutions and education systems, private sector, and for young people themselves. As highlighted by Mr. Pragasam, and echoed by several speakers in the opening session, young people are the experts of their own generation and constitute 'digital/tech-natives'; the majority are at home with technology and comfortable with – if not expecting – rapid change in technological advances. Whether learning to use a new app to operate their motorbike-taxi, or playing games on their phones, or ordering

groceries online, young people are accustomed to learning to do everyday things in innovative ways with technology all the time. They live with an awareness and natural acceptance of the need for constant learning to respond to their habitat – assuming lifelong learning as a minimum requirement.

Accordingly, H.E. Mr. Kung Phoak stated that it is the institutions and systems that must internalise the culture of lifelong learning among youth. Youth needs to be adaptive and versatile in meeting the demands of the labour market, while governments and traditional education systems must evolve in partnership towards this end. Ms. Hulshof reinforced this point, stressing the tremendous and untapped potential of young people as active agents in accelerating the necessary changes required to ensure that institutions and systems can be more responsive and relevant. As a concrete example, Mr. Wai Wah's presentation on the Learning Express programme showed how partnerships and self-directed learning by young people can empower other young people to act as agents of social change in vulnerable communities. Likewise, the short video presented by Ms. Ingkakul on the staging of the One Young World Summit in Thailand in 2016 epitomised this energy, magnetism and enormous potential of young people when given a platform and supported by voices of experience.

While several speakers acknowledged the disruptive force of Industry 4.0, and the risk it poses for and to young people, they also referenced the value and potential of existing institutions and systems in guiding young people to adapt to the new, rapidly changing context quickly and appropriately.

UNICEF's Regional Director, Ms. Hulshof focused on the need to seek out and address the learning needs of young people in their own contexts – under intersecting circumstances that often include mental health issues, situations of violence and crisis, child marriage and pregnancy, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion. Speakers called on participants involved to advocate and instil critical thinking among the young people – to identify knowledge in a world awash with information – and to be adaptable and versatile while maintaining core values and principles.

Closing his welcoming remarks, Mr. Pragasam asked participants to consider how state-led institutions and systems for education, training and welfare could evolve together purposefully, and learn to serve as catalysts of change for young people.

<sup>4</sup> For further information please see <http://www.genunlimited.org>

H.E. Kung Phoak urged participants to consider multiple inclusive and cooperative solutions to address the realities of Industry 4.0 in the ASEAN community, placing young people at the centre of future plans and as active agents of change. He further underlined the importance of capacitating ASEAN youth with 21st century skills to address the skills gaps presented by Industry 4.0.

Ms. Hulshof called for all representatives to go beyond 'business-as-usual', reiterating UNICEF's commitment to the UN Secretary General's 2030 Youth Strategy, through the roll out of Generation Unlimited, which aims to find and support new and diverse partnerships to enable transformative ideas, reforms, approaches and solutions across the region.

Lastly, Ms. Ingkakul challenged leaders and the youth present to be inspired, and to become the change they wanted to see in the world.

### Take-home points:

1. The pace of change and disruptive force of technology and modes of work outmatch the speed of reform in institutional contexts and education systems. However, many new jobs will emerge as present jobs become obsolete.
2. Educational institutions and systems should maintain their essential role in society, but also need to learn how to reorient learning outcomes to better prepare young people to be adaptive, versatile, and responsible lifelong learners who are able to embrace constant up-skilling.
3. The learning ecosystem is evolving and the concept of traditional stakeholders in the 'national education system' are changing – young people and the private sector are propelling change in what is learned, why, and how. This reality requires mutual recognition, understanding and exploration of the roles of different stakeholders to leverage strategic resources for the benefit of all.





## Session 2

### Unpacking Skills Development in East Asia Pacific and ASEAN Context for Industry 4.0



#### Speakers:



**Professor Tan Oon Sen,**  
Centre Director, Centre for Research  
in Child Development, Nanyang  
Technological University, Singapore



**Dr. Santitarn Sathirathai,**  
Group Chief Economist, Sea Group,  
Singapore



**Ms. Carmina Bayombong,**  
CEO InvestEd, Philippines



**Mr. Khairul Rusydi,**  
Co-founder and CEO, Reactor,  
Singapore



#### Moderator:



**Ms. Wivina Belmonte,**  
Deputy Director, UNICEF EAPRO

Following a dynamic and thought-provoking opening session, the focus turned to unpacking 21st century skills within the context of the ASEAN Community and the emergence of Industry 4.0. This session perfectly captured the challenge and possibilities of the moment. The speakers came together to emphasise the importance of understanding skills development as it relates to values, foundational skills, digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and the 'C's of critical thinking (creativity, communication, collaboration, curiosity and character). Dr. Oon Sen emphasized the need to frame the discussions around skills development with the requirement that the role of learning systems and institutions is to create layers of opportunity for young people to learn relevant skills.



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*Every child needs the foundation to learn “to learn”: I cannot emphasize heavily enough the importance of equipping every child with the foundation of literacy – to read and to reason, as well as numeracy – reasoning and logical thinking – so that they can then tap on their analytical skills.*

**Dr. Tan Oon Sen**

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He also emphasized the real need to ensure the emotional and social development of all children and young people as the cornerstone of self-awareness and sound decision-making, as well as the bedrock of society’s cooperative capacity and innovation capital. Dr. Sathirathai echoed and built upon several of these ideas, highlighting the imperative that these were not “the skills of the future,” but “the skills of tomorrow,” calling for all participants to break away from their comfort zones and engage actively with the cultural, social, economic and technological skills revolution that is occurring at an unrelenting pace. Ms. Bayombong recounted her own personal and professional story of social entrepreneurship, weaving the skills of complex problem-solving, (calculated) risk-taking, creativity and critical-thinking through her story as sign-posts that guided her path. Similarly, Mr. Rusydi called for increased focus across education and learning systems on the entrepreneurial skills of adaptability, dynamism, big-picture thinking and groundedness, highlighting the centrality of effectual rather than causal reasoning.

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*Skills can become a means to an end. Causal reasoning dominates much of formal education where teachers lead students to understand equations of  $1+1=?$  while in life, all too often we need effectual reasoning that looks more like  $?+?=1$ .*

**Mr. Khairul Rusydi**

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Interestingly, while social-emotional and cognitive skills pervaded much of the discourse in this session on skills development – as was to be expected – the role of values and principles within the context of the ASEAN Community and Industry 4.0 also emerged strongly. All speakers highlighted the importance of a sense of calling among young people today – a mission or sense of purpose that roots them, motivates them and propels them forward. This importance of values and principles emerged further and in more detail through the panel discussions. Dr. Sathirathai spoke about humility as the game-changer in his career, about how being humble made space for openness to curiosity and learning, while also supporting resilience in the face of failure. Both Dr. Sathirathai and Mr. Rusydi stressed the reality that values were relatively defined and practiced, constituting the glue of personal and familial life, as well as the professional network and peers surrounding young people – in both online and offline spaces. Dr. Oon Sen advised that education systems need to ask young people about how they could do good and be useful – to make them agents in their own sense of belonging – stressing the importance of being responsible and respectful while inculcating a sense of volunteerism at community level. Likewise, Ms. Bayombong stated that InvestEd supports young people to focus on two specific values – prudence and integrity. She highlighted the role of prudence in helping young people to understand and practice being careful in their decisions around resources of all kinds. She also emphasized the importance of integrity as the principle of knowing oneself and adhering to one’s principles and values.





*Whenever I would design something to go faster or create something new or better, I felt fulfilled. Figuring this out about myself required emotional intelligence, which is the first soft skill that social entrepreneurs need – knowing who you are, respecting yourself and understanding what your role is in social change.*

**Ms. Carmina Bayombong**

The focus on the interplay between values and skills predicated a deeper discussion around youth identity, and understanding young people in their myriad contexts across ASEAN. All speakers approached the question of “Who are young people in the ASEAN community and what do they want?” in diverse ways. Dr. Oon Sen encouraged participants to reach out and seek understandings of young people within their own contexts, and to make learning relevant to them, with them, in their own environments. Dr. Sathirathai heavily emphasized the need for research, and presented the findings of a 64,000-strong sample survey of young people involved in online gaming through the Sea Group gaming platforms.<sup>5</sup> He emphasized the need to break down the blanket term ‘young people’ and encourage all stakeholders to think and enquire about different localised groups within this

<sup>5</sup> For full details, see <https://www.weforum.org/press/2018/09/survey-asean-youth-bullish-about-impact-of-technology-on-jobs/>

population segment across ASEAN, and to understand their interface and engagement with societies and industries with diverse cultures and policies. Echoing this multiplicity of overlapping youth identities, Mr. Rusydi highlighted that not all young people are born into the same circumstances, nor do they address their lives with the same degree of agency – young girls and boys may well be driven by autonomy, and skills and skills development opportunities can offer them pathways to get where they want to be.

One final theme emerged from the presentations and panel discussion of this particularly rich session – an outline of how to understand and conceptualise the learning ecosystem. This topic evolved naturally from the discussion of understanding and listening to young people – flowing from a redrawing of traditional models around how and where young people are learning new skills, and what virtual and actual spaces are attracting their attention. Dr. Oon Sen asked participants to go beyond traditional education models and reconsider the definition of the curriculum as learning objectives, focusing instead on “an ecology of learning” that appreciates that children and young people are not sitting around unoccupied when not in structured formal learning spaces. Young people seek authenticity from today’s learning systems and want curriculums that are linked to and reflective of the real world they see evolving around them – and they want to be active agents in co-creating curriculums, engaging in active dialogue rather than assuming a passive role. Dr. Sathirathai went further still on expanding the boundaries of the learning ecosystem to demonstrate how virtual spaces as well as actual physical spaces need to be considered, while Ms. Bayombong developed our thinking around who participates in, governs, finances and capitalises from the learning ecosystems. Mr. Rusydi also referenced this concept of a dynamic, localized but globally connected learning ecosystem around young people – where youth look for work with purpose, for leaders not bosses, and engage in different platforms for learning. Across the session, discussions revealed not only the need to recognise the reality of this flourishing learning

*We want to drive actions, make a difference. Our role is to build a bridge between public and private sector. We want to show how powerful partnerships can be in improving the learning ecosystem – we cannot do it alone and we are ready to work with governments and others, to work together to achieve this.*

**Dr. Santitam Sathirathai**



ecosystem available to young people in ASEAN, but also the pressing importance of deepening the engagement of traditional state-led education systems with their broader ecologies.

All speakers sought and advocated for teachers and education leaders to increase their exposure to and understanding of encounters with other stakeholders in the learning ecosystem. Each speaker gave examples of how the formal education system – including ministries of education, schools and teachers – can engage with private sector spaces and activities, such as social enterprise engagement, co-working spaces, gaming contests and incubator initiatives. The session closed with an urgent call for government and state-led education systems to open up and engage with their broader learning ecosystems, building creative partnerships or constellations of partnerships, reconceptualising themselves and their teachers as designers and curators of learning environments.

### Take-home points:

1. '21st century skills' was recognised as the ability to adapt and shift from one skillset to another in a short period of time, and upskilling thus far has primarily been fulfilled out of necessity through alternative and informal learning.
2. Driving an agenda of 21st century skills must start with the core foundation skills of literacy and numeracy, and focus not only on hard skills such as coding or transferable skills such as the famous 'C's, but also values and principles such as prudence, humility and integrity.
3. Young people in ASEAN make up a diverse population influenced by factors including age, gender, geography, ethnicity, and economic background. They live on and visit different actual and virtual planes, accessing and actively seeking opportunities to learn skills far outside the traditional education system.
4. Ministries of education in the region need to understand, map and consider the evolution of the learning ecosystem they and their fellow stakeholders inhabit, and consider their own adaptive strategies accordingly.
5. Ms. Bayombong: *"Pursue, pivot or perish. Either keep pursuing something that shows promise or hit the point where you have enough to pivot or you will have to go to the third option, perish. In formal education – which is so important to every country – we need to pursue, pivot or perish. We are all innovators in a way, and with that mindset we can change the game and change the industry."*



## Session 3

### How Can the Education Systems and Digitalisation Foster Equity, Learning and 21st Century Skills for All ASEAN Young People?



#### Speakers:



**Mr. Somsong Ngamwong,**  
Director, Regional Cooperation Unit, Bureau  
of International Cooperation, Office of the  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,  
Thailand



**Mr. Rath Sara,**  
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport,  
Cambodia



**Mr. San Antonio,**  
Department of Education, Philippines



**Mr. Abri Eko Noerjanto,**  
M.M., Ministry of Youth and Sports,  
Indonesia, representing the Chair of  
ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth



**Ms. Rebecca Paranjothy,**  
Freedom Cups, Singapore



#### Chair:



**Mr. Hee Joh Liang,**  
Deputy Principal of Singapore Polytechnic,  
Chairman of Singapore Polytechnic  
International



#### Moderator:



**Mr. Francisco Benavides,**  
Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF  
EAPRO

This session explored government perspectives on, and structural opportunities and challenges to quality education and skills development for young people. Opening with a succinct presentation by Mr. Ngamwong, who provided an update on the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (2016), this session problematised the task of education leaders. In order to recognise and learn to cohabit with the evolving virtual and actual learning

ecosystems around them, education systems must reform while carefully considering equitable learning.

In addressing the role of government in meeting these two demanding expectations, all speakers referenced the importance of big-picture thinking, and taking advantage of Industry 4.0 and the technological advancements available to ensure more inclusive, flexible and responsive education systems. Mr. Sara and Mr. Noerjanto emphasized the need to actively seek out excluded young people and groups of young people, at national and local level, in working contexts and communities – to learn about their lives and the barriers they face in harnessing real-time technology-supported information systems. In building solutions and standards, both stressed the need to not only cover basics, such as toilets in schools and bilingual education, but also to develop and offer online and offline flexible learning pathways that can be built around and into the lives of young people, especially poor and extremely poor young people living and working in the margins of society in instable and informal labour settings. Particular attention was paid to children and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties, and the importance of learning more about their lives and needs in order to facilitate active participation in learning and the social, political and economic dimensions of life across ASEAN. Ms. Paranjothy similarly encouraged participants to think about how gender norms affect inclusion and access to opportunities for learning, and the need to focus on interconnected social solutions to complex barriers to education, which especially affect young girls in adverse ways. Similarly, Mr. Antonio highlighted the importance of a holistic conceptualisation of young people – that the whole person exists in a dynamic learning ecosystem – and needs to be addressed by leaders holistically and consistently so as to link education-employment-poverty reduction initiatives in national planning, programming and monitoring processes.

The ideas around harnessing the tools of the technological revolution and Industry 4.0 to support ASEAN governments to improve equity in education and learning led speakers to two distinct themes: the centrality of youth participation and leadership in education reform, and the individualisation of education – the emergence of a ‘curriculum for one’. While exploring issues around equity, all speakers emphasized the need for governments and education leaders to reach out and learn more about the learning ecosystem and young people in order to understand what motivates and preoccupies them, what they want and how and where they spend their time. More importantly, speakers reiterated the primacy of listening to and making more space for young people to advise education leaders on skills development processes and requirements, given that social barriers often prevent young girls and boys from being actively engaged and having a real voice.

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*Youth participation is a right, not just a matter of practice. Young people can develop their own capacities and raise their voices – but we need to see them as active partners in delivering better education results for them and their peers.*

**Mr. Abri Eko Noerjanto**

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Mr. Noerjanto demonstrated how the Government of Indonesia is taking steps to embrace the assets of the technological revolution in education reform planning and delivery by using U-Report to learn more about young people, the development of online spaces and platforms for training and mentorship, and the creation of online spaces for informal and individualised learning to stimulate entrepreneurship among youth. He emphasised Indonesia’s perspective that youth should be engaged as active partners and not merely beneficiaries. This spirit of inclusion and youth engagement was echoed by Mr. Sara, who called for education leaders to create youth advisory fora, to hear the ideas of young people about education curricula and service delivery. Mr. Joh Liang linked the topics of harnessing the tools and advantages of the technological age, youth participation and equity concerns to the emerging possibility of individualisation of learning, and the ‘curriculum for one’.

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*If we do not listen to young people, we will not be able to provide what they want and need, and the education services may be or become irrelevant. So far, for most countries, there is a mass curriculum directed at central level. But young people want a tailored individualised education. We worry a lot about this in Singapore, and we know we need to do something about this – otherwise youth will go ahead and do it for themselves. The irony is that the digital platform makes it possible to deliver a ‘curriculum for one’ – we consider this because self-motivation through individual interest makes young people both better learners and highly employable.*

**Mr. Hee Joh Liang**

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Ms. Paranjothy reinforced this idea, stating that even if innovation and entrepreneurship in education are broadly supported, motivation is more individual than systemic. Mr. Noerjanto concurred, highlighting that individualised learning is not new, and that ASEAN education systems have long attempted to incorporate responses to multiple intelligences and learning styles, different instruction methods, individual student career guidance and counselling, as well as different pathways to learning and qualification. With this in mind, Mr. Noerjanto asked participants to consider how best to use technology to make these different aspects of individualised learning more coherent and more equity-focused, especially since girls and boys of different ages have different levels of access to technology. As the session drew to a close, Mr. Joh Liang clarified that for Singapore, this discussion remains ongoing but highly relevant to the role and function of the formal education system in the larger learning ecosystem, emphasizing that the teacher cannot and perhaps does not need to be an expert in subject content, but instead needs to be expert in the facilitation of learning.

### Take-home points:

1. There are emerging examples of how state-led education systems, ASEAN cooperation in youth development and education, and collaboration with development partners are finding opportunities within the learning ecosystem to harness the tools and mechanisms of the technological revolution and Industry 4.0 to serve an equitable education agenda.
2. By seeking and ensuring active diverse youth participation in these outward-looking reform processes, governments can improve the quality of its education services for all young girls and boys, keeping in mind the heterogeneity of the group and the challenges to access they face.
3. Individualisation in large, national education systems is not new – but governments and partners need to think about and engage in dialogue with different stakeholders in the learning ecosystem to identify how best to make individualised learning a more coherent reality using today's (and tomorrow's) resources and opportunities.







## ASEAN-UNICEF CONFERENCE ON 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Towards Resilient Adolescents and Youth through Innovation

8-9 November 2018, Singapore

Aligning the efforts of public sectors and private sector 21st Century Skills development among ASEAN young people

Round table on policy reforms and governance:  
Where are adjustments needed and how other sectors can contribute to these?



## Session 4 Aligning the Efforts of Public Sector and Private Sector 21st Century Skills Development among ASEAN Young People



### Speakers:



**Ms. Tu Ngo,**  
Co-Founder Yola Education, Viet Nam



**Mr. Philip Ling,**  
Head of Sustainability, DiGi  
Telecommunications, Malaysia



**Dr. Win Tun,**  
Director General, Department of  
Education Research, Planning and  
Training, Ministry of Education, Viet Nam



### Moderator:



**Mr. Chandra Putra,**  
Asst. Director and Head of EYSD,  
ASEAN Secretariat

The last session of the day focused on how national education systems and other sectors can work in synergy to meet the future needs of ASEAN young people and build equitable and prosperous societies. The speakers drew on several themes and topics from the earlier sessions of the day to try to understand the tensions between the potential gains and risks of Industry 4.0, and how best to align efforts within the learning ecosystem to meet the challenges ahead. The requirement to 'pursue, pivot or perish' was referenced by all speakers, indicating that this principle applies to the public education systems that struggle to understand and address the challenges accompanying technological advancement and Industry 4.0. Each speaker mentioned how they reach success through failure and innovating older models and ways of thinking. Ms. Ngo described the organic process of innovation and the iterative cycles that accompanied the rise of Yola Education. Like Ms. Bayombong in Session 2, who listed her game-changer in establishing InvestEd as the invaluable support of a preceding, older mentor, Ms. Ngo referenced the well-established Reggio



Emilio and Montessori approaches as inspiration for what she deemed was necessary today – a “visionary philosophy of education”. Mr. Ling explained that maintaining relevance and ensuring industry-ready teams meant that even large corporations such as Digi Telecommunications had espoused a ‘do or die’ approach to adaptability and versatility, with a mandatory 40 hours per year of training required of each employee. Likewise, Mr. Putra of the ASEAN Secretariat stressed that while national education reform efforts are trying to advance, ASEAN continues to advocate for the enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education and Training as well as stakeholder engagement to address the challenges and reap the opportunities of Industry 4.0.

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*Lifelong learning is about learning, relearning and unlearning. In our 4.0 Industry, we need to prepare our students to be more flexible – to be better at learning to learn. Knowledge is changing very quickly – it is not possible even in the private sector to maintain updated – and it is futile to try. Instead our efforts are best spent in improving our agility, our ability to learn and create pathways for learning.*

**Mr. Philip Ling**

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The conversation highlighted the need to focus skills training on embracing the disruptive nature of the new normal, to prepare young people for familiarity while facing constant change and unpredictability and help them to be comfortable with and adaptive to discord and disruption. This notion of embracing disruption, and reconceptualising the iterative processes of trial and error, dominated the inputs from private sector representatives throughout the day – who called for: giving young people the “opportunity to try and fail and try again”; “sandboxes to practice failure and success”; “safety-nets that are not just about money but opportunities where failure is indicative of growth – acceptable and supported”. As an essential and familiar element of work processes in the private sector, the space for iterations and ‘trial and error’ approaches was reflected upon, in terms of how it could be applicable within a learning ecosystem.

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*How do we mobilise other talents within our existing ecosystem? Can we facilitate group learning for young people to come up with a new mobile app? There is a natural tension – we want a one-person curriculum but have a lack of resources and a lack of teachers. We need to drive innovation and technology in affordable school solutions, as well as engage with other actors and platforms that can play the role of the teacher.*

**Ms. Tu Ngo**

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By calling for a movement away from the compartmentalisation of learning, through diversification of learning opportunities that are non-hierarchical, speakers gave valuable insights into how the regional public and private sectors could work together and align themselves to expand access to 21st century skills for youth across ASEAN. Speakers returned to the dynamics of the learning ecosystem, and the roles and mandates of different entities within it. Mr. Ling stated that by virtue of their respective functions, it can be difficult to systematise and structure public-private partnership for learning.

We heard from all representatives that private companies and social enterprise thrive in a high-risk environment where failure and error are embraced and reconstituted iteratively. Conversely, equity sits at the core of government and affords no such accommodation of failure using public funds. Bearing this in mind, speakers emphasized how well-crafted public-private partnerships are vital in order to provide these much-needed sandboxes and safety nets for young people. In light of this, speakers urged ASEAN governments to look with fresh eyes and reframe their perspectives of stakeholders operating in the learning ecosystem – to think about creative win-win partnerships that could exploit the unique added value of each actor in improving and expanding young people’s opportunities for skills development.

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*We lead the facilitation of the learning ecosystem: we promote NGOs and different stakeholders to participate in curriculum design processes, we engage with young people themselves to understand the needs and interests of young people. We work to facilitate processes in order to mobilise varied inputs as national policies address everyone, and so we need everyone to participate.*

**Dr. Win Tun**

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Many speakers offered pragmatic advice about the ‘nuts and bolts’ of aligning public and private stakeholders in the learning ecosystem for skills development. All speakers highlighted the vital importance of traditional principles of partnership – explore stakeholders in the local environment, assess market needs and understand the needs of youth, develop and articulate a clear joint vision with partners, recognise and work from each other’s positions of strength, and promote complementarity and responsiveness. Ms. Ngo stressed the need to seek and create

collaborative virtual and actual spaces and events, while Mr. Ling highlighted the need for education leaders in governments to work directly with business leaders, not with a separate arm of philanthropic interest, as the real substance and value of partnerships lay in the business functionality and model. Dr. Tun stressed the importance of participatory planning with many actors representing different stakeholders – especially young people as collaborators – from across the learning ecosystem, so that each could establish relevant expectations, learn the language and work of the other, and identify practical and meaningful partnerships. These practical points offered useful and thoughtful guidance to all participants in considering next steps for public-private partnerships across ASEAN.

### **Take-home points:**

1. Curriculum development in ASEAN Member States has already taken into account the participation of relevant stakeholders such as the private sector and industry representatives. In spite of this, it was acknowledged that the speed at which industries and technologies advance continue to outpace the time and processes required for curriculum improvement.
2. Successful alignment of public and private sector actors in the learning ecosystem requires learning about the functions, strengths and opportunities of each stakeholder, and finding credible and complementary ways to collaborate. As mentioned by Mr. Ling “I may not know how to code, but I know how to guide you in terms of ethics, privacy and philosophy.”
3. Exploiting opportunities for public-private partnership within the learning ecosystem can create vital failsafe spaces as incubators in which young people can develop critical and valuable skills without impinging on the functionality and parameters of each entity.
4. It would be necessary to introduce digital literacy to students and teachers at an early stage to counter the adverse effects of digitalisation in the ASEAN region.
5. The objectives of a learning agenda could be strengthened through partnerships with the private sector. On skills development for Industry 4.0, young people themselves are governments’ greatest asset and collaborator.





## Session 5

# Research on 21st Century Skills and Youth Participation in ASEAN Countries



### Speakers:



**Mr. Sumana Rajarethnam,**  
Economist Intelligence Unit



**Dr. Helene Leong,**  
Singapore Polytechnic



### Moderator:



**Ms. Roshni Basu,**  
Adolescent and Youth Advisor, UNICEF  
EAPRO

The session focused on discussions and agreements among participants to develop a collaborative research agenda on 21st century skills that can engage public and private sector actors and young people through a process of knowledge generation and dissemination. Participants organised themselves into seven groups, each addressing one of the following topics:

Group 1: Acquiring 21st century skills development through the education system

Group 2: Pathways for girls' empowerment through 21st century skills and innovations

Group 3: Industry, digitalisation and youth engagement

Group 4: Development of typologies for Public Private partnerships for skills development

Group 5: Impact of social and environmental factors on educational attainment of adolescents

Group 6: Investment in skills development for young people with special needs

Group 7: Alternative learning pathways for out-of-school young people

Following the group-work, each group provided a set of research proposals that were discussed in plenary, where academic feedback was provided by Mr. Rajarethnam and Dr. Leong. For full details of each theme, aspects of proposed research topics and potential use of findings and recommendations, please see attached ANNEX III.

Group 1, addressing the theme 'Acquiring 21st century skills development through the education system, proposed five possible research initiatives: 1. Understanding skills demand for the future in the ASEAN context; 2. The need for assessment of 21st century skills and development of metrics to measure results; 3. Analysis of teachers' capacity and skills required to ensure conducive learning for students; 4. Readiness of ASEAN community for mobility and correlating adaptability of learners across countries in the region; and 5. Analysis of how private sector collaborations include the use of digital modules to promote self-paced learning and remote learning. Dr. Leong agreed that these research areas are both required and relevant, and she highlighted that while assessment processes and mechanisms are not fully articulated in most existing literature, this only emphasized the need for further linkages to the real-life societal value of such work. She also confirmed that several companies and research organizations have ongoing initiatives to promote evidence generation that enables better understanding of currently required and emerging skill sets in the context of the ASEAN economy. Similarly, Mr. Rajarethnam urged iterative, rapid and firm-based research highlighting the fact that emerging skill sets are often linked to quite pragmatic cycles in different companies, and can be quite opaque in looking too far into the future.

Group 2 explored 'Pathways for girls' empowerment through 21st-century skills and innovations', and came up with three proposals: 1. Examining gender stereotypes in ASEAN countries that encourage sexism, factors that drive them and approaches to addressing and tackling these through focused policies and interventions; 2. Exploring how 21st century skills in the curricula can be designed to encourage female entrepreneurship, particularly in non-traditional jobs; and 3. Identify job areas and opportunities emerging from technological disruptions and AI where women may have an edge to enter the market. Mr. Rajarethnam highlighted the need for examination of harmful and discriminatory social norms and pathways, and urged participants to understand how such stereotypes are perpetuated, and to unpack the impact of such disruptions not only on girls and women, but also at societal level. Dr. Leong highlighted that while there will be jobs that

favour women in the Industry 4.0 context, there remain gendered aspects within education systems that are biased against young girls. In looking at opportunities for women's growth in the labour sector, she stressed the need to identify the tipping points in areas where women are succeeding and are empowered, and to consider how best to apply those principles to areas where women are not as present. Speakers agreed that overall figures of growth and enrolment of girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes do not automatically translate into their entry and succession within the formal workforce at management and leadership level.

Group 3 discussed and proposed four research topics under the theme of 'Industry, digitalisation and youth engagement': 1. Examining ways of increasing productivity and reduced costs for ASEAN businesses and nations through AI and digitalisation; 2. Feasibility study for providing access to micro-funds and grants to young people through viable platforms; 3. Reviving the digital economy – relearning and recreating through digitalising, facilitating access to services for young people; and 4. Learning from best practices around HR needs and gaps. Mr. Rajarethnam highlighted that productivity is one of the hardest elements to capture in relation to skills acquisition and the job market, and he advised again that individual firms in the region have invested in research interventions and tracking related to work productivity and identification of skills that matter.

Group 4 discussed 'Typologies for Public Private partnerships for skills development', focusing on internship programmes for young people. Participants mentioned that metrics reflecting on the quality control of existing internship programmes offered by private sector companies could help and understanding of how such experiential learning translated into real jobs for young people. Further studies could also shed light on those industries in which the scope for internship programmes is wider. Dr. Leong mentioned the example of Singapore Polytechnic, which has a programme named Learning Express that is central to their curriculum, and focuses heavily on experiential learning and soft skills development. She explained that collectively they had considered this question of partnerships for internships many times – highlighting the importance of working out what we want, what we measure and how we measure. Mr. Rajarethnam echoed this statement and spoke about designing research at the firm level and exploring how training institutes promoting 21st century skills could better partner with private sector companies to promote learning-by-doing, secondment and other opportunities.





Group 5 considered the 'Impact of social and environmental factors on educational attainment of adolescents', and produced two research areas for further consideration: 1. Understanding adolescent girls' and boys' motivations for learning and how to adjust pedagogies to best meet those motivations; and 2. Unpacking the operational definition of 'educational attainment' that is relevant for the 21st century (multi-stakeholder perspectives; beyond the traditional meaning of 'pursuing higher education' or 'obtaining a degree'). Young participants from the group also pointed towards socio-cultural expectations and norms that impact upon young girls in particular and either constrain or support them when acquiring skills and entering the labour market. Dr. Leong agreed that understanding adolescents' aspirations set the stage for best preparing them for their learning and careers, and thus the active engagement of young people in determining the learning agenda is important. She specifically advised focusing on the question of how we develop high-impact teaching and learning activities to engage young learners within this context. Mr. Rajarethnam agreed, stating that motivation is a very important question and provides a vital link to teaching and the assessment of young people. He also advised dividing the factors influencing pre-, during- and post-school motivation to capture what might be most useful at each stage, bearing in mind issues of diversity based on factors including age, gender, ethnicity and geography, which clearly impact upon learning outcomes.

Group 6 discussed and presented research ideas around the 'Investment in skills development for young people with special needs'. The group identified three possible interventions: 1. Situation Analysis and data on adolescents with

disabilities in ASEAN countries, including existing opportunities for them in the areas of learning and skills acquisition; 2. Stocktaking of national education system opportunities and services for young people with disabilities, particularly in relation to their participation in the labour sector; and 3. Market assessment to identify employment opportunities for young people with disabilities. Mr. Rajarethnam stated that the recognition of the double jeopardy faced by adolescents with disabilities who are from minority and ethnic racial groups is important, and recommended that a focus be kept on children with disabilities in situations where structural disparities in societies are large. Dr. Leong agreed that a user-centred approach is paramount, and advised that parents and/or caretakers should be included in the design of any research on young people with disabilities to ensure full scope of vision and understanding.

Lastly, Group 7 examined research ideas for 'Alternative learning pathways for out-of-school young people', identifying the key area of focus on successful alternative models for out-of-school young people in ASEAN countries, which can be costed and scaled up with the establishment of metrics for success. Dr. Leong and Mr. Rajarethnam agreed that this area of focus is highly important, and that alternative ways to provide skill sets to young people and how to make them attractive to employers needs further exploration. As the session came to a close, it was clear that while an outline of a 21st century skills framework is apparent, the region needs to contextualise and individualise it within different national and sub-national settings.

### Take-home points:

1. While a research base exists at global level, and initiatives are underway at national level, there is a need for concerted and focused research to contextualise and individualise 21st century skills development and youth participation in ASEAN.
2. Much of the existing research done by the private sector, academia, governments and development partners considers the economic growth needs of nations, but there is limited active engagement of young people in designing and influencing the discourse.
3. The socio-cultural context of ASEAN countries is diverse, and structural disparities exist and shape how adolescent girls and boys access skills, learn and utilise the same to find jobs. Inequities based on gender, geography, disabilities and ethnicity are some of the constraints pointed out during the discussions.





## Session 6

# Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture among ASEAN Young People



### Speakers:



**Mr. Amarit Charoenphan,**  
CEO and Co-founder, HUBBA and  
Techsauce, Thailand



**Dr. San San Aye,**  
Director General, Department of  
Social Welfare, Myanmar



**Mr. James Caesar A. Ventura,**  
National Youth Commission,  
the Philippines



**Mr. Ehon Chan,**  
Advisor (Digital Economy), Sarawak  
Government and Founder, Ehon  
Chan Consulting, Malaysia



### Moderator:



**Zeth Lee,**  
Co-founder of Packdat

This session expanded upon earlier discussions about the dynamics of local-global learning ecosystems as a way of conceptualising social and structured learning with and by young people in ASEAN today. Highlighting the role of an ecosystems approach, this session considered how different entities, including private sector companies, individual social entrepreneurs and civil society could work together to promote skills, drive innovation and explore new ways of learning. All speakers framed their observations of the shifting modes of education in response to economic and trade patterns with a call for increased and improved cooperation and innovation in partnerships between stakeholders for entrepreneurship. In an era of crisis in third-level education, where degrees and qualifications are beginning to matter less alongside the rise of self-directed/autodidactic learning, companies are increasingly interested in finding and recruiting 'trainable' staff who can be easily transformed according to shifting market requirements.

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*It is predicted that 50 per cent of universities in the USA will be bankrupt in 10–15 years. In Thailand, my home country, of the 150,000 available spaces in universities this year, only around 80,000 are filled... Our skills gap exists in our professors and our learning systems. I went online and learned about how others did what I needed to do. I made things up as I went along.*

**Mr. Amarit Charoenphan**

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*The challenge is that entrepreneurship activities are not sought out by young people, and we need a paradigm shift... Micro, small and medium-sized industries are mushrooming and there is space for more and more young people to create incubators and start-ups. But this challenge remains; entrepreneurship or employment – seek out and grab opportunities or hold tenureship?*

**Mr. James Ventura**

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As Mr. Charoenphan pointed out, it is predicted that 1.8 million jobs in ASEAN will be lost to AI in the coming years, but 2.3 million will also be created – meaning it is not only a question of who will take care of the robots, but also who will design user experiences and make products more satisfying? Going some way to answering this question, Mr. Chan later called for “greater connectedness, with nodes of influence like a network” instead of a focus on top-down or bottom-up power trajectories, and vision in directed and facilitating learning ecosystems to function optimally – where the role of governments and ministries of education in particular is to manage and facilitate services for their citizens. Mr. Chan highlighted how the practicality of traditional approaches to education and schooling is conditioning children and young people to think and behave in limited and limiting ways, diminishing their cognitive and creative capital. This limits and narrows possibilities for engaging young people in entrepreneurial activities as they are not equipped or encouraged to seek out challenges, critically assess existing systems, or work with determination to find meaningful and profitable solutions. To build a genuine culture of entrepreneurship, he and other speakers again stressed the need to reframe ideas of iterative cycles of trial and error, reconceptualising failure and providing young people with failsafe environments in which to practice and develop all kinds of capacities, including entrepreneurship skills.

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In looking to maximise these opportunities and address these challenges to foster an entrepreneurial culture within national education systems, speakers referred again to the importance of recognising and connecting with the broader learning ecosystem and its stakeholders. Dr. Aye presented a broad and sophisticated overview of the complex relationships under construction by the Government of Myanmar to promote a culture of entrepreneurship. Linking carefully to Sustainable Development Goal outcomes, Dr. Aye shared how the Government of Myanmar is maximising opportunities in the learning ecosystem to address the lack of skills in young people as a result of the limitations of formal education. Articulated



through national and sectoral development plans and initiatives with different line ministries, the Government of Myanmar has established formal youth participation and advisory platforms, built linkages between education opportunities in different spaces, and developed and supported trade and economic policies and key partnerships, especially with and for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and with entrepreneur communities and associations. Likewise, Mr. Ventura presented the well-structured and articulated efforts of the National Youth Commission of the Philippines through the Philippines' Youth Development Plan 2017–2022 to promote and support a culture of entrepreneurship by focusing on a modular approach to learning that enables young people to participate in learning opportunities directed towards work, higher education and training, as well as business opportunities. The *Trabaho, Kolehiyo, Negosyo* approach represents systemic participatory reform with and for young people that engages and facilitates youth to try different paths of learning and experiment with entrepreneurship in a failsafe way.

### Take-home points:

1. Connectedness across sectors is a prerequisite for initiatives seeking to boost entrepreneurship: Education and skills opportunities for entrepreneurship must be linked to or contain elements to address poverty and issues of equity within each context (including disability, gender and the rural-urban divide).
2. Understanding the spaces and operating contexts, challenges, opportunities, pressures and interests of young people in entering and thriving in entrepreneurship requires strong youth participation. An integrated and supportive education and policy ecosystem is essential to allow youth to exercise their talent and enter a sustainable career path that suits their passion. Young people need to be central to improving the skills development and entrepreneurship opportunities for and with other young people, as the 'limits of possibilities' could be expanded through technological advancements and synergised support from the government.



3. Governments can best facilitate skills development in the learning ecosystem by understanding and embracing the bigger picture, and then investing strategically in multi-pronged strategies that work through different sectors and services to address the whole-person. The articulation of big-picture thinking divided through different strategies reflects an amplified whole-ecosystem and whole-person approach, where each actor in the learning ecosystem is playing to its strengths to meet the intersecting learning and related needs of the rounded young person – furthering the possibilities of individualised learning within structured formal education systems.





## Session 7

# Partnerships for Scaling-Up: Promising Initiatives on 21st Century Skills



### Speakers:



**Mr. Brian Cotter,**  
UNICEF Innovations Consultant



**Ms. Amanda Simandjuntak,**  
Markoding, Indonesia



**Dato Dr. Wasitah Mohd Yusof,**  
Director General, Youth Skills Development  
Division, Malaysia



**Dato Ahmad Shapawi Ismail,**  
Director-General, Ministry of Youth and  
Sports, Malaysia



**Mr. Matthieu Cognac,**  
Youth Employment Specialist, International  
Labour Organization Regional Office for  
Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok



### Moderator:



**Mr. Philip Ling,**  
DiGi Telecommunications, Malaysia

This session showcased promising regional/national initiatives that have been developed by multiple partners, and have contributed to better learning and skills development for young people in ASEAN countries. In this penultimate session, the speakers shared presentations and discussions that brought together some of the key take-home points and themes that emerged across the two-day event, and provided concrete examples of how private sector actors and governments facilitate and manage partnerships across the learning ecosystem to build meaningful skills development opportunities with and for young people. The models presented in this session demonstrated how young people have harnessed the resources and opportunities in their given education ecosystems to effectively and successfully take

(predominantly learning) initiatives to scale. In each case, speakers highlighted how processes of trial and error ensured that young people's experience of these programmes served as a catalyst or vehicle for developing learning-to-learn skills, and provided a purposeful learning opportunity that served as an end unto itself.

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*We had a group of visually impaired students in one of our boot camps. While they were studying at university, they found most of the learning materials were not available in Braille, which put them at a disadvantage. Through the UPSHIFT programme they set about trying to address this by adapting selected books into Braille. While the project did not succeed, it gave them and their needs exposure and attention – resulting in two of them being subsequently hired as programmers.*

**Mr. Brian Cotter**

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The speakers shared examples of how participation in these innovative learning spaces and initiatives had built matrices of learning-to-learn skills that were mentioned throughout the two-day event and that are supported by a very solid research base. Determination, tenacity, social adaptability, self-motivation and academic self-efficacy are all well-evidenced precursors for academic success, as well as predictors of the socio-emotional development essential for professional success in today's labour market. As such, these models represent precisely the types of learning pathways and spaces that governments across ASEAN want to learn more about, foster, partner with and support.

Speakers specifically stated that the objective of their initiative was to “build transferrable skills and think like an entrepreneur” (UPSHIFT), supporting young people to “have options, to have a portfolio, and to start their own businesses” (MARKODING), and “build life-skills that can be adapted by young people to support career requirements, such as the IT sector” (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia). The successful and up-scaling models offer catalytic opportunities with and for young people that allow youth to identify and direct their

learning interests, consider different community and social challenges from different perspectives, and challenge themselves and their peers to find workable solutions to common difficulties. In many cases, speakers documented starting by researching the learning ecosystem needs and opportunities, and identifying resources and the role of other stakeholders, while engaging in dialogue with young people in their target catchment group about their lives, spaces and interests. Each initiative in this session, and indeed across the two-day event, involved collaboration with government and state-led education services in different ways. Each initiative presented also originated with and maintained a strong component of youth participation, if not youth leadership, as a key element in its success and growth.

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*We want to support young people to be technology developers as well as technology consumers. Why did we focus on coding? Speaking from my own experience, I learned to code in high school – it goes beyond language and taught me to be curious, to not be afraid to make mistakes – to be open to tech or not, and to understand failure.*

**Ms. Amanda Simandjuntak**

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As in to the presentations delivered by the Governments of Myanmar and the Philippines in Session 6, the presentation from the Government of Malaysia in this session bore the hallmarks of big-picture thinking, diversification of pathways for learning linked to real-world employment opportunities and embracing the lateral use of community spaces – in this case sports, sport-services, health and volunteering.





### Take-home points:

1. Models that demonstrate successful exploitation of opportunities in the learning ecosystem exist, and can be valuable case-studies for governments and partners. More importantly, the successful elements of these models – such as human-centred design, project/problem-based learning, track progress, and fun – are often highly portable processes and knowledge-based. This means that while governments may not be interested in the content or specific programming vehicles, they can identify and benefit from knowing how partnerships can be designed to give the best chance of success.
2. Running throughout each of these models is the constant meta-functional awareness of trial and error, a constant cycle of learning inside the initiative itself designed to learn, re-learn and revise the model's approach within its surrounding education ecosystem in order to remain relevant and adaptive.



## Session 8

# Closing Ceremony

In the closing ceremony, Mr. Ko Lay Win, Director General, Department of Basic Education, Ministry of Education, Myanmar, representing the Chair of SOM-ED, presented the following conference recommendations:

### **1. Review existing policies, frameworks and investments around education and skills**

The ASEAN-UNICEF Conference on 21st-Century Skills and Youth Participation provided us with thought-provoking discussions and ideas from a range of speakers representing ASEAN delegates, the UN, social entrepreneurs, the private sector, youth and academia.

A common theme that emerged through the conference, where government and partner engagement and investment is needed, was the need for contextualised understanding of what 21st century skills mean in a national context. The need for ASEAN Member States to elaborate a vision of 21st century skills that is meaningful for adolescents and youth and aligned with the interests of national economies is critical.

Country delegates also expressed the need for design, update and/or reform of national and regional policies addressing 21st century skills, especially focusing on both formal and non-formal education pathways and alternative learning options.

### **2. Invest in research and evidence generation that will inform key policies**

A range of ideas and topics emerged through the conference session. Participants clearly made a unified and articulated call for further research on specific themes:

- i. Understanding 21st century skills development through the education system
- ii. Pathways for girls' empowerment through 21st century skills and innovation
- iii. Industry, digitalisation and youth engagement
- iv. Development of typologies for public-private partnerships for skills development
- v. Impact of social and environmental factors on the educational attainment of adolescents

- vi. Investment in skills development for young people with special needs
- vii. Alternative learning pathways for out-of-school young people



### **3. Seek out and amplify the voice of adolescents and youth in ASEAN**

Discussions through the conference, some of which emerged from the presentations made by private sector representatives and young social entrepreneurs, reiterated the importance of the agency and empowerment of young people – adolescents and youth in ASEAN have an important role to play in defining and designing public policy related to their education, learning, skills acquisition and labour market opportunities. Participants mentioned how meaningful learning can make a difference to their lives and that there is little opportunity for young people to contribute to existing policies, programmes, and curriculums.

### **4. Strengthen stakeholder engagement**

Several solutions and ideas presented during the conference revealed that while the Education sector has been leading some of the policy and programme implementation, a range of partners outside the sector are also present in the current digital ecosystem, and are demanding the prompt evolution of various public sectors including education, labour and the economy. Ideas around co-creating solutions with different partners – government, private sector, development partners, academia and young people – was also emphasized.



# Conclusion

In closing, the ASEAN Secretariat thanked all partners and participants, particularly UNICEF and Singapore Polytechnic, for successfully organizing the Conference, and requested similar active and vibrant partnership to drive forward these recommendations. UNICEF thanked all partners and participants, especially the ASEAN Secretariat and Singapore Polytechnic, and re-confirmed its commitment and engagement at regional and national level to support governments and partners across ASEAN to advance this agenda, particularly within the spirit and frame of the Generation Unlimited initiative.

This joint regional conference provided all participants with the opportunity to look closer at the bigger picture unfolding rapidly across ASEAN and understand the differing, yet mutual,

perspectives in responding to this situation. This was a first attempt between the ASEAN Secretariat and UNICEF to bring SOMY and SOM-ED representatives together, with young thinkers, entrepreneurs, private sector partners and academics to discuss 21st century skills and young people's participation, and to look at different priorities through the lens of each of these constituencies. The crucial element of the learning ecosystem and its partnerships emerged as critical in the present context of rapidly changing digital economies, to ensure that ASEAN countries sustain inclusive growth and prepare young people to transition to work. The different learning ecosystems and the different partnership platforms that were discussed, designed for and with youth, constitute hallmarks for crafting a future-ready ASEAN.





# Annex I – Concept Note and Agenda of the Conference

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Background

1. The East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region is home to over 2 billion people. With around 580 million of them being under 18 years of age and around 277 million young people aged 10–19, the region accounts for more than 13% of the world's adolescent population – which represents a tremendous resource.
2. The ASEAN region has already demonstrated impressive successes in improving the lives of children during their first decade of life; in maternal and newborn health care; early childhood and early cognitive development; and primary education<sup>1</sup>. To ensure continuity of efforts in allowing each child to realise his or her potential during adolescence, towards a smooth transition into adulthood, strategic investments must follow during the second decade of life. It calls for ASEAN's strengthened and concerted efforts in human capital, including necessary cognitive skills to become adaptive and agile individuals who are prepared for future needs.
3. For 2025, ASEAN envisions a resilient Community with enhanced capacity to respond effectively to challenges and ASEAN as an outward-looking region within a global community of nations. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 serves as guidance for ASEAN's efforts in striving towards an open, adaptive, creative, innovative, and responsive community. Enhancement of competitiveness of ASEAN human resources through the promotion of life-long learning, pathways, equivalencies and skills development as well as the use of information and communication technologies across age groups is one of the strategic measures put forward by the ASEAN Socio- Cultural Community Blueprint 2025.
4. ASEAN recognises the importance of keeping its peoples resilient to challenges amidst an increasingly complex global geopolitical landscape prioritises. With its rapid expansion of internet users and smart phone penetration, ASEAN is experiencing growing digital economy and e-commerce. It benefits among others from its 213 million youth population aged 15–34 years old – the region's highest cohort by far, who are techno-savvy and responsive to new information. With this transformation, emerging opportunities and adjustment challenges from Industry 4.0 are obviously ahead of the ASEAN Community. An Open Forum on The ASEAN Dream was conducted at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN on 10 May 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The ASEAN Dream was articulated in the context of youth dividend in a region that is urbanising, industrialising and integrating and its interface with digital connectivity and the expected transformations it will cause in terms of the nature of jobs and skills needs.
5. As a consequence, ASEAN must be agile and forward looking to harness opportunities and surmount challenges and equip their young people with the 21st century skills and other capabilities required in the future. Singapore's theme for the 2018 ASEAN Chairmanship "Resilience and Innovation," encapsulates Singapore's vision for ASEAN to remain vibrant in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0. Consistent with the theme, in the beginning of 2018, Singapore introduced a set of priorities for ASEAN's 51st year, notably: innovative works focusing on and related to youth development are in progress, such as: Singapore-ASEAN Youth Fund (SAYF) and the launch of ASEAN Youth Fellowship Programme; promotion of digital literacy and cyber wellness among youth in ASEAN; minimising the harmful effects of fake news; and the establishment of ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN).

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<sup>1</sup> The ASCC's activities have resulted in a deepening of the sense of ASEAN identity, and collectively accelerating socio-cultural growth and progress by: lowering the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25/ day—from 1 in 2 to 1 in 8 persons over the last two decades; reducing infant mortality rate from 57/1000 live births in 1990 to 20/1000 live births in 2015; reducing maternal mortality per 100,000 live births from 286 in 1990 to 197 in 2015; reducing proportion of urban slum populations from 40% in 2000 to 31% in 2012; increasing net enrolment rate for primary school children from 83% in 1990 to 96% in 2017.

6. As an organisation that embarked on the global initiative Generation Unlimited, together with the UN SG's launch of the Youth Strategy, UNICEF recognises that the 21st century skills are crucial for the future; schools must continue to harness academic and non-academics skills; and alternative opportunities must be provided for adolescents to further develop their skills within and outside of education systems. As a leading child rights organisation, UNICEF recognises the untapped potential which can be unleashed among adolescents if education opportunities, for example, delivered a quality, safe and collaborative learning experience for all. UNICEF, together with the UNESCO have collaborated with ASEAN in developing the Regional Action Plan on the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY). The Declaration was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 28th ASEAN Summit in September 2016.
7. The ASEAN-UNICEF Work Programme 2016–2020 focuses on four (4) overarching priorities, captured under the overall umbrella of “Investing in Children” under both the development as well as humanitarian contexts: (i) Address inequities within and across ASEAN Member States; (ii) Promote universality of rights; (iii) Improve convergence across sectors; (iv) Strengthen data especially in light of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
8. The Work Programme includes a priority area on Collaboration between youth sector and other relevant sectors to promote sustainable development among ASEAN youth, which is relevant with Goal 16 of the SDGs. An activity under the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2016–2020 appears under this priority: “Create spaces for youth engagement to develop solutions to sustainable development issues/challenges.” It is aligned with a corresponding technical support from UNICEF, “Sharing of report and other innovations where young people can participate. Good practices exist within and outside the region.” The content and mapping of priorities under the Work Programme are acknowledged by corresponding sectoral bodies.
9. In forging towards an integrated and future-ready Community, the importance for ASEAN to set common platforms for policy coherence in youth development as well as innovative education and skills development among ASEAN Member States cannot be overlooked. In line with ASEAN's 2018 Chairmanship priorities, and the implementation of ASEAN-UNICEF Work Programme 2016–2020, ASEAN and the UNICEF East Asia-Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) is collaborating to organise a Conference on 21st Century Skills and Young People's Participation.

## Objective and Expected Outcomes

10. The bottom line of this Conference is the development of potentials and 21st century skills to prepare ASEAN young people for Industry 4.0.
11. With participation of both public and private sectors, the objective of this Conference is obtaining a set of recommendations from ASEAN Member States (AMS) and related stakeholders on: (i) best practices in fostering innovative thinking among ASEAN young people through participatory approach; (ii) how to effectively engage the private sector for future skills development process and inclusive investment in human capital development and growth, and (iii) addressing challenges in realising Industry 4.0-ready education systems in ASEAN Member States.
12. The discussions of the Conference are expected to:
  - a. Demonstrate that skills are built across a lifetime and in a myriad of different ways, such as in formal education, entrepreneurship programmes, volunteerism opportunities, and work experiences. This would include showcasing examples of how young people's potentials can be unleashed if and when public and private systems work to support and guide young people to participate in the process.
  - b. Highlight the relevance and significance of 21st century skills from the perspective of employers by hearing feedback from industries/organisations with investments in the ASEAN Member States on labour implications and industry needs/challenges in an environment where automation is taking over. This includes how to capacitate today's students with skills and capabilities are compatible for tomorrow's economy.

- c. Highlight linkages between the ASEAN Work Plans on Education 2016–2020 and ASEAN Work Plans on Youth 2016–2020 and explore potential collaborations among stakeholders in the context of 21st century skills and Industry 4.0.
13. This Conference will involve profile examples of ASEAN young people under the age of 30 from the social, private, public-private sectors who are change makers in their communities, particularly how their experiences have shaped their journey.
14. Expected outcomes to be delivered through this Conference are as follows:

## Immediate

- a. An agreed set of Conference recommendations on:
  - i. identification of areas where technical support is required from the governments and private sectors, as influential stakeholders, to promote sustainable solutions in developing 21st century skills for young people in ASEAN Member States; and
  - ii. minimum two (2) key research topics that will contribute in generating evidence for policy making in adolescent and youth development in the context of 21st century skills for Industry 4.0.
- b. ASEAN context: Recommendations on how the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY) can contribute to 21st century skills development for Industry 4.0.
- c. National context: Individual national focal point of the ASEAN Education Sector will identify at least one (1) priority area of investment on 21st century skills with the engagement of young people, based on which ASEAN can work with UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office on longer term collaboration.

## Long Term

- d. A knowledge product developed through collaboration between ASEAN and the UNICEF, providing information on promising regional initiatives on 21st century skills and learning in the Asia Pacific region, including successful examples of youth engagement and skills building.

## Date and Venue

In conjunction with Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018, the Conference will be held on 8–9 November 2018 in Singapore Polytechnic, 500 Dover Road, Singapore.

Further details related to the event, particularly in terms of the tentative programme of activities and logistical information will be provided in due course.

## Participation

15. Four (4) delegates from each ASEAN Member State will participate in the Conference. The delegation will comprise of:
- a. Two (2) senior officials (Deputy Minister level) from the national focal point of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) who oversee Secondary Education; and
  - b. Two (2) senior officials (Deputy Minister level) from the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) who oversee partnerships and investments related to youth engagement.
  - c. This Conference will involve the Government of Singapore through the Ministry of Education, Singapore, and the National Youth Council, Singapore as the national focal points of SOM-ED and SOMY.
16. In addition to the ASEAN Member States, UNICEF and the ASEAN Secretariat will identify key resource persons and participants from private sector organisations based in the region.

17. Successful young social innovators and entrepreneurs from ASEAN Member States will also participate in the Conference upon clearance from the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) of relevant ASEAN Member States.

## THE PROGRAMME

### THURSDAY 8 November 2018

0830 Registration

#### 0900 **Session 1: Opening Ceremony (45 mins)**

0900 Welcome Remarks by

1. Mr Christopher Pragasam, Assistant Chief Executive, National Youth Council Singapore
2. Mr. Soh Wai Wah, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Polytechnic

0910 Opening Remarks by H.E. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN

0915 Opening Remarks by Ms. Karin Hulshof, Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)

0920 Key Note Speaker by Ms. Laksameekan Pearly Ingkakul, Global Compact Thailand

0935 Group Photo of Opening Session Panelists

0945 Group Photo of all Participants cum Coffee Break

#### 1015 **Session 2: Unpacking Skills Development in East Asia Pacific and ASEAN Context for Industry 4.0 (2.5hrs)**

***The session will explore the concepts and application of 21st century skills in the context of the EAP region and ASEAN, including why such skills are relevant for young people's development and participation. [Moderator: Wivina Belmonte, UNICEF EAPRO Deputy Regional Director]***

1015 Promoting 21st century skills for adolescents: Relevance, approaches, and opportunities in the region, Professor Tan Oon Sen, Centre Director, Centre for Research in Child Development (CRCD), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

1030 Key perspectives on private sector engagement in 21st century skills, Santitarn Sathirathai Group Chief Economist, Sea Group, Singapore

1045 What are the soft skills that contribute to successful entrepreneurship in the region? Carmina Bayombong, Social Entrepreneur, Philippines

1100 Understanding skills acquisition from youth perspective, Mr. Khairul Rusydi, Co-founder and CEO, Reactor

1115 Interactive discussion

1200 Lunch Break



1300 **Session 3: How can the Education systems and digitalization foster equity, learning and 21st Century Skills for all ASEAN young people? (2hrs)**

***This session will explore government's perspectives, structural opportunities and challenges to quality learning and skills developments for young people.***

***[Chair: Mr Hee Joh Liang, Deputy Principal of Singapore Polytechnic, Chairman of Singapore Polytechnic International, PolyMall Steering and Operations Committee and Co-Chairman of Polytechnic-ITE Committee on Educational Technology]***

1330 The Implementation of ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY), Mr. Somsong Ngamwong, Director, Regional Cooperation Unit, Bureau of International Cooperation, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand

1345 Panel Discussion to be moderated by UNICEF RO

1. Inclusive Education Policy: Cambodia's Experience, Mr. Rath Sara, Director of Vocational Orientation, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia
2. Accelerating human capital development through the implementation of inequality reducing transformation: Philippines' Experience, Mr. San Antonio, Regional Director, Department of Education, Philippines
3. How youth engagement can promote innovation in the education system: Indonesia's Experience, Mr. Abri Eko Noerjanto, M.M., Head of Promotion and Youth Achievement, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Indonesia, representing the Chair of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY)
4. How education system shaped my achievement; Ms Rebecca Paranjothy, Freedom Cups, Singapore

1500 Open floor discussions

1530 Coffee Break

1545 **Session 4: Aligning the efforts of public sectors and private sector 21st Century Skills development among ASEAN young people (1hr 15 mins)**

***The last session of the day will focus on how national education systems and other sectors can work in synergy to meet the future needs of ASEAN young people and build equitable and prosperous societies [Moderator: Mr. Chandra Putra, Asst. Director and Head of EYSD, ASEAN Secretariat]***

1545 Round table on policy reforms and governance: Where are adjustments needed and how other sectors can contribute to these?

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sisamone Sithirajvongsa, Director-General, Department of External Relations, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR (TBC)
2. Yang Mulia Datin Paduka Dr. Hajah Norlila Binti Dato Paduka Haji Abdul Jalil, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Brunei Darussalam (TBC)
3. Ms. Tu Ngo, Co-Founder Yola Education, Vietnam Philip Ling, Head of Sustainability, Digi Telecommunications Malaysia

1700 End of Day 1

# THE PROGRAMME

## THURSDAY 8 November 2018

0830 Session Recap : Highlights of Day 1

### 0900 **Session 5: Building a Regional Research Agenda and Evidence Base for Policymaking (1hr 30 mins)**

**The session will focus on discussions and agreements among participants to develop a collaborative research agenda on 21st Century Skills and at the same time, promote the role of private sectors and young people engagement.**

0900 Group Work: Which areas require multiple-country or regional research agenda?

Participants will be divided into groups with maximum 10 members to discuss:

- i. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Development and the Education System;
- ii. Industry, Digitalization and Youth Engagement;
- iii. Innovation in Education system for Industry 4.0.

0945 Public Private Partnerships for Skills Development Reporting back to the plenary and interactive discussion

1015 Feedback from Researchers and Academia  
(invited experts – Sumana Rajarethnam EIU; SP Helene Leong, Singapore)

1045 Coffee Break

### 1100 **Session 6: Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture among ASEAN Young People (2hrs)**

**The session will focus on how different entities including private sector companies, individual social entrepreneurs, and civil society should work together to promote skills, drive innovations and explore new ways of learning.**

**[Moderator: Youth Representative – Zeth Lee, Co-founder of Packdat]**

1100 Learning from AI and EduTech on Job Creation in the ASEAN Context, Amarit Charoenphan, CEO & Co-founder, HUBBA & Techsauce Thailand

1115 Entrepreneurship among Young People in Myanmar, Dr. San San Aye, Director General, Department of Social Welfare, Myanmar

1130 Entrepreneurship among Young Filipinos, Assistant James Caesar A. Ventura, National Youth Commission, Philippines

1145 What creates an entrepreneurial culture? Mr. Ehon Chan, Advisor (Digital Economy), Sarawak Government and Founder, Ehon Chan Consulting

1200 Interactive Discussion

1230 Lunch Break

1330 **Session 7: Partnerships for Scaling-Up: Promising Initiatives on 21st Century Skills (2 hrs)**

***This session will showcase some promising regional/national initiatives that have been developed by multiple partners, to contribute to better learning and skills development for young people in ASEAN countries***

**[Moderator: Philip Ling, DiGi Telecommunications]**

- 1330 UPSHIFT (Brian Cotter, UNICEF Innovations Consultant)
- 1345 Teaching Coding to Young Students in Indonesia, Ms. Amanda Simandjuntak, Markoding (Indonesia)
- 1400 Sports and skills development for social cohesion and healthy lifestyle: Malaysia's experience, Dato Ahmad Shapawi, Director-General of Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia
- 1415 Green Jobs Initiative, Matthieu Cognac, Youth Employment Specialist, ILO Bangkok
- 1430 Interactive Discussions

1515 Coffee Break

**1530 Session 8: Closing Session**

- 1530 Key highlights, decisions and way forward: Mr. Ko Lay Win, Director General, Department of Basic Education, Ministry of Education, Myanmar, representing the Chair of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED)
- 1600 Closing Remarks:
  - 1. ASEAN Secretariat
  - 2. UNICEF

1630 End of Conference

# Annex II – Opening Remarks of H.E. Kung Phoak Deputy Secretary- General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio- Cultural Community

## OPENING REMARKS

H.E. KUNG PHOAK

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN FOR ASEAN SOCIO-  
CULTURAL COMMUNITY FOR THE ASEAN-UNICEF CONFERENCE ON  
21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

**"Towards Resilient Adolescents and Youth through Innovation"**

8–9 November 2018, Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore

- *Mr. Ko Lay Win, Director General, Department of Basic Education, Ministry of Education, Myanmar, representing the Chair of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED)*
- *Mr Christopher Pragasam, Assistant Chief Executive, National Youth Council Singapore*
- *Ms. Karin Hulshof, Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)*
- *Mr. Soh Wai Wah, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Polytechnic*
- *Ms. Laksameekan Pearly Ingkakul, Global Compact Thailand*
- *Representatives of the ASEAN Member States; and*
- *Distinguished guests.*

### **A very good morning to all of you.**

1. It is such a pleasure for me to be here in Singapore Polytechnic and to have the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all the distinguished participants of the *ASEAN-UNICEF Conference on 21st Century Skills and Young People's Participation*.
2. The Fourth Industrial Revolution or *Industry 4.0* is shaping up businesses around the globe – changing the way people study, work, live and communicate. Driven by new technologies such as big data analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), advanced manufacturing, and the Internet of Things (IoT), the world is entering an unprecedented, yet dynamic and maturing integrated economy.
3. With ASEAN's 213 million-strong youth population<sup>6</sup> and a workforce that is highly mobile and adaptive to new technologies, the region is set to witness political-security, economic, and socio-cultural transformation. Hence, to ensure mutually beneficial opportunities and rewards across communities against the backdrop of Industry 4.0, it is important for ASEAN to know how to benefit from the advantages of our demographic dividend.

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<sup>6</sup> First ASEAN Youth Development Index, 2017



4. However, ASEAN's Youth Development Index (2017) noted that the Youth Unemployment Ratio of the ASEAN region is deteriorating. ASEAN's youth are 6.4 times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts in the labour force. The numbers are also likely to increase due to the inevitable changes brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.<sup>7</sup>
5. This is why, in this era of digitalisation and connectivity, ASEAN must continue to address the skills gaps among its workforce to be able to keep up with all the transformation and meet the skills demands of Industry 4.0 and beyond.
6. This notion of 21st century skills should therefore not be narrowly perceived as the capacities that dictate our employability, but rather our ability to adapt and converge in a society no longer bound by time and connected through cyberspace. Education and quality training are critical in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours required to be engaged and to become part of the global community.

## Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. If we are to immerse ourselves in Industry 4.0, our education and training institutions must be tailored in such a way that optimizes productivity. A study conducted by the ILO in 2016 for instance, estimated that countries, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam would, by 2025, lose about half (54%-56%) of their jobs to automation. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, more than 60% of all manufacturing activities can be automated with current automation technology.<sup>8</sup>
8. The *World Bank's Human Capital Index report* further shows that 8 ASEAN Member States are at risk of losing an average of 45% of productivity per country if the education sector does not adapt and answer existing gaps. Investments to synergise basic education, higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are therefore imperative to ensure that the inclusive and gender fair skills development provided will enable our peoples to remain relevant in the shifting demands of the labour market in our region and beyond. **ASEAN's human development must remain productive, innovative and economically resilient.**
9. To understand where the region stands in the dawn of Industry 4.0, ASEAN has embarked on an assessment of ASEAN's Readiness for Industry 4.0. The initial assessment would serve as a baseline and a call to action for Member States to ensure greater cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination to embrace the benefits and opportunities of Industry 4.0. The need for strong infrastructure, improvement of regulatory frameworks, and addressing the skills needed for the future to remain competitive were highlighted in the preliminary findings of the assessment. Even though our assessment allows us to understand where we are in the dawn of Industry 4.0, we welcome the inputs of our youth to guide us on the future direction of ASEAN.
10. I believe that a resilient demography will ensure the preservation of our economic gains and social achievements. While there is no single solution to overcoming the technological gaps among Member States in the region, the Governments of ASEAN continue to look towards leveraging the role of TVET to meet the skills gap of industry 4.0. By developing a framework on ASEAN TVET for Industry 4.0 in ASEAN, we seek to answer and equip the youth with relevant skills that benefit the economy and themselves. Our youth need to be adaptive and versatile in meeting the demands of the labour market.
11. To this end, we must internalise a culture of lifelong learning as key to 21st Century Skills. The youth of ASEAN must embrace Industry 4.0 and find creative

ways to continue to learn and find innovative ways for the participation of youth in the decision-making processes of our region.

<sup>7</sup> Chang J., Huynh P. in the study titled ASEAN in Transformation: The Future of Jobs at Risk of Automation. ILO. July 2016, projected that more than half of the jobs in five ASEAN Member States are at high risk of displacement due to technology over the next 20 years. The five AMS are Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam

<sup>8</sup> [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Technology\\_and\\_Innovation\\_The\\_Next\\_Economic\\_Growth\\_Engine.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Technology_and_Innovation_The_Next_Economic_Growth_Engine.pdf), p 4.

## Distinguished delegates,

12. Taking-off from the good cooperation that has been ongoing for years, I am pleased that this conference “Towards Resilient Adolescents and Youth through Innovation” is yet another excellent collaboration between ASEAN and the UNICEF EAPRO. ***This Conference is a good opportunity to explore potential collaborations between stakeholders, the governments, the private sector and the youth on how to prepare our region for Industry 4.0 and the 21st century skills that it entails.***
13. I would therefore like to further express my sincere appreciation to the representatives of ASEAN Member States, the UNICEF, our delegates, and all stakeholders who are present here for your views and sharing of experiences on the 21st Century Skills and advice on how to foster young people’s participation against the backdrop of *Industry 4.0*. And also to Singapore Polytechnic for hosting this Conference today.
14. I wish you fruitful discussions and a successful Conference. Thank you

# Annex III – Opening Remarks of Ms. Karin Hulshof Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific

## ASEAN-UNICEF CONFERENCE ON 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION

**“Towards Resilient Adolescents and Youth through Innovation”**  
**8–9 November 2018, Singapore**

### OPENING REMARKS OF MS. KARIN HULSHOF Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific

- His Excellency H.E. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN;
- Mr Christopher Pragasam, Director of Youth Engagement, National Youth Council Singapore;
- Mr Soh Wai Wah, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Polytechnic;
- Ms. Pearly Ingkakul, Global Compact Thailand;
- Distinguished guests and delegates, young people, ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning everyone and a warm welcome to all of you.

Let me start by expressing UNICEF’s sincere thanks to the partners who have made this important event possible – the Singaporean government, ASEAN Secretariat and the Singapore Polytechnic. My sincere thanks also to some of our private sector partners including Ms. Pearly Ingkakul, Santitarn Sathirathai, Philip Ling, and Sumana Rajarethram for generously offering their time and resources to be with us at the conference. To all the panelists who have come in from the region, we appreciate your engagement on this critical issue of 21st century skills and young people’s participation in the ASEAN region.

Promoting the rights of adolescent girls and boys in the East Asia and Pacific region towards ‘unleashing their potential’ is a key regional priority for UNICEF. We believe that the gains made by countries in achieving results for infants and children in the early years must be sustained and accelerated through the second decade of life. The important fact is, we will not reach the SDG targets if we don’t support the needs of adolescent girls and boys and address the challenges they face today.

East Asia and the Pacific is home to 277 million adolescents accounting for nearly 25% of the world’s adolescent population and 13% of the region’s total population.<sup>9</sup> According to ASEAN figures, the youth population (15–34 years) accounts for 213 million young people in ASEAN countries, constituting the largest ever cohort of ASEAN youth. We have brilliant potential, aspirations and abilities in all these young girls and boys who are keen to shape the present and future of their economies and societies.

To harness this potential, it is imperative that we commit ourselves to accelerating results on some of the key SDGs that affect young people including promotion of access to secondary or non-formal alternative learning pathways; skills development and training; and empowerment of young people, specifically focusing on girls. I want to take this opportunity to highlight that learning cannot be achieved in isolation, particularly in the context of this region. While addressing SDG4 on Education, we need to tackle challenges such as teenage pregnancies, child marriage, road traffic accidents and mental health issues

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<sup>9</sup> UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Adolescents: Demographics. Jun 2016. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/adolescent-demographics/#>

– all of which affect learning and achievement – if we want to achieve results for adolescents and youth.

The ASEAN region is uniquely placed to make a lasting impact on the lives of its young citizens. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are witnessing rapid transformations in every sphere, be it in economic, civic or social spaces. The regional economies are progressively being driven by a labour intensive market, with technological progress, globalization, and market-oriented reform being central to the region's rapid growth in the past two decades. New technologies and trends present opportunities for ASEAN, but they also come with challenges of disrupting business models, shifts in labour markets, changing job profiles, and skills mismatch.

The recent World Economic Forum publication “The Future of Jobs Report” highlights that by 2022, the skills that will grow in prominence include analytical thinking and innovation, active learning, skills in technology and design, as well as ‘human’ skills such as creativity, critical thinking, persuasion, leadership and emotional intelligence.

Thus, appropriate investments in young people include expanding their access to 21st century skills and promoting their rights to participation and engagement. Finding systematic ways for adolescent voices to be safely expressed and heard is a cornerstone to building inclusive, stable and democratic societies. In a region driven by entrepreneurship and technology, the creativity and self-expression of adolescents and youth are major precursors to innovation. Young people in the ASEAN region are the brain trust, and we must build on this cognitive capital and count on their ideas, creativity, enterprise and innovations.

It is the firm commitment to adolescents and young people that led UNICEF and partners to launch the flagship initiative ‘Generation Unlimited’ at the 73rd session of UN General

Assembly in September 2018. For UNICEF, ‘Generation Unlimited’ is a call to action on tackling the global education and skills crisis that is holding back millions of young girls and boys and threatening progress and stability.

UNICEF believes that the ambitious SDG results we want to achieve for every girl and boy from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood requires new ideas, policy reforms, innovative approaches to financing and programming, diverse partnerships and collaborations that go beyond the realm of business-as-usual. Our understanding of what works to empower young girls and boys with learning pathways and skills must be shaped through collective learning and in the creation of shared ambitions and pathways.

We are here today, with ASEAN, and all of you to move ahead in that spirit and in that direction. We need to do more, with young people, so they are better prepared for their future. I hope that the solutions and recommendations emerging over the next two days will be taken forward through ASEAN, but also put to action at national levels, through your individual engagement.

I wish you all a successful conference. Thank you.











unicef   
for every child

**UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional  
Office (EAPRO)**

19 Phra Athit Road  
Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200

**Tel:** +66 2 356 9499

**Fax:** +66 2 280 3563

**Email:** [eapro@unicef.org](mailto:eapro@unicef.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/unicefeap/](http://www.facebook.com/unicefeap/)

**Twitter:** @UnicefAsiaPac

**Website:** [www.unicef.org/eap/](http://www.unicef.org/eap/)