

IAL ADVANCE

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Partnerships: The Key to a Vibrant TAE sector

To build an effective, cutting-edge TAE sector, a vibrant eco-system of stakeholders from diverse sectors and roles is crucial. Find out how IAL's strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders enable it to help realise such an eco-system.

In today's highly connected world, leveraging synergies is key to innovation. The pandemic has also further intensified the need for organisations and people to tap on one another's strengths and collaborate during these challenging times.

Likewise, IAL has recognised the importance of such synergies in its efforts to attain its key goals of building a cutting-edge and effective TAE sector, building learning enterprises, and encouraging innovation and digitalisation. By building strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders, IAL ensures a high-quality Adult Educators pool who will contribute to skills development and improving the employability of Singaporeans.

Deepening national-level TAE research

Given the TAE sector's pivotal role in Singapore's drive to build a culture of continuous learning and skills upgrading, having current data and deep research insights is crucial to ensure a dynamic and effective sector.

IAL's research and strategic partnerships are formed to support national-level TAE research and focus on four key research areas—digital futures and skills; work and lifelong learning; career, employment and labour market; and adult learning pedagogy, technology and TAE ecosystem.

The institute's strategic partners range from local and international

universities to institutes of higher learning and industry partners across sectors. This diversity allows a strong knowledge base to be built and constantly updated with local and international best practices. In turn, the data provides the backbone for national policymaking for the digital economy, evolving labour markets, and futures of work and learning.

On top of that, these partnerships connect IAL with the larger research community, and enable the further proliferation of the institute's research work, allowing IAL's findings to benefit multiple stakeholders, including institutes of higher learning, enterprises, TAE professionals, training providers, and policymakers.

IAL'S FOUR KEY RESEARCH AREAS



Raising capabilities of TAE professionals

Since its founding, IAL consistently has been raising the capabilities of TAE professionals through a range of high-quality programmes. These programmes, both developed in-house and in collaboration with external partners, are constantly reviewed and improved to ensure the delivery of the latest and most effective learning.

From accredited programmes to short just-in-time professional development courses, IAL's diverse offerings strive to meet the skills upgrading needs of TAE professionals. IAL's accredited programmes, for instance, are offered in collaboration with established institutions such as the Singapore University of Social Sciences and Griffith University.

Short courses are regularly curated to address current learning trends and needs. For example, with the ageing population a growing national trend, IAL recently partnered Council for Third Age to offer a workshop on geragogy guidelines, so as to equip adult educators to understand the different learning needs of seniors and appropriate teaching techniques.

Embedding innovation

Technological advancement, in particular digitalisation, has brought about significant disruption in manifold ways. While this has fundamentally changed the way we work and learn, technology and digitalisation have also created exciting opportunities for TAE to be far more innovative.

IAL's dedicated innovation arm, inlab, is set up to catalyse learning innovation in the sector. Partnership is central to inlab's work, as it works closely with EdTech companies, training providers, and enterprises to advance the adoption of learning innovations.

Such partnerships enable IAL to cultivate a robust technology ecosystem as it brings together enterprises and industry partners to explore, collaborate, experiment, and develop innovative learning solutions. In 2020, inlab established the Partnership Network to bring such collaboration to another level. Comprising eight key players in the learning innovation industry, including start-up incubators and artificial intelligence solution providers, the network provides mentorship and internship opportunities to start-ups and help them incubate and accelerate new learning innovations.

Fostering a culture of workplace learning in enterprises

Workplace learning has distinct benefits in that learning is highly contextualised and relevant, and its impact is significant as workers are able to apply learning immediately. IAL's Centre for Workplace Learning and Performance (CWLP) leads the institute's efforts to embed a culture of workplace learning in enterprises.

Through its Learning Enterprise Alliance initiative, CWLP works closely with enterprises to advance workplace learning. To date, it has helped about 80 enterprises undertake workplace transformation projects to enhance their business processes in areas including employee professionalisation, operational efficiency, job redesign and automation, and digitalisation. Such projects also have an effect of nurturing a culture of continuous workplace learning.

In 2021, to create an ecosystem that supports the use of workplace learning to drive enterprise transformation, IAL signed MOUs with eight enterprise partners to bolster their capabilities in this area. These partners span multiple industry sectors, from healthcare and security to engineering and community and facility management. Every partnership agreement was tailored to the enterprise's specific needs and development plan.

As an appointed National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE@IAL) provider, CWLP also provides business consultancy services to help enterprises embark on workplace transformation initiatives, partnering such organisations closely to achieve optimal results.

Representing Singapore on an international level

Aside from its ongoing international partnerships in accredited programmes and sectoral events for Singapore's TAE community, IAL is also active in contributing to furthering continuous education and training internationally as well.

The institute represents Singapore on the regional and international stage in prestigious research networks such as UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Asia-Pacific Centre for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELL), ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub), and the International Expert Monitoring Panel on work-based learning in vocational education and training (VET) by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Germany.



Taking Best Practices from around the World



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Staying current with international best practices and latest developments in Continuing Education and Training is crucial to IAL's mission to nurture thought leadership in Singapore's Training and Adult Education sector. This article highlights the institute's international partnerships to strengthen this aspect.

To strengthen thought leadership in the field of adult learning and jobs, skills, and careers, the IAL Research Division has forged strong collaborative partnerships with international entities renowned for their work in their respective fields.

From international networks to established institutes of higher learning, IAL has formed strategic partnerships over time to further our work. Such international

partnerships allow for knowledge creation that not only impacts Continuing Education and Training policymaking in Singapore, but also creates possibilities to translate into practice a range of ideas gleaned from best practices worldwide.

These have also allowed our researchers to take part in collaborative inquiry into global issues of interest, such as the future

of work and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on adult education and training. Aside from providing important and unique opportunities for IAL to contribute to Continuing Education and Training research as a whole, the partnerships also help IAL gain an understanding of and apply the lessons learnt from our international counterparts to the Singaporean context.

Understanding the digital futures of work

In collaboration with Cardiff University, the University of Bristol, and Oxford University's SKOPE

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the futures of jobs, skills, and education have become increasingly uncertain. The *Digital Futures of Work Research Programme: Reimagining Jobs, Skills and Education in the Fourth Industrial Revolution* is an international research programme hosted by Cardiff University and IAL, with University of Bristol and the University of Oxford's Centre of Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) as programme partners. Running from 2019-2023, the programme is dedicated to understanding the prospects for human augmentation, social inclusion, and shared prosperity in the fourth industrial revolution.

A global team of 20 researchers from the United Kingdom, Singapore, Denmark, and Vietnam, together with research affiliates in China,

Germany, South Korea, and North America, is undertaking a systematic analysis across different national contexts using a range of methods including the use of 'big data'. Burning Glass Technologies and AMPLYFI are data partners of the research programme, contributing real-time labour market analytics, data-harvesting, and visualisation solutions for a more responsive and comprehensive evidence base.

The research programme focused on Singapore in the first year and has now extended comparative investigation to a number of countries, including China, Finland, Germany, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam. The comparative dimension of the research programme is aimed at enabling a contextualised understanding of digital innovation

as it relates to skills, employability, and employment in different national contexts, reflecting the fact that there are no universal laws determining the relationship between skills, jobs, and incomes (Brown et al., 2021).

"Our path-breaking studies on the digital futures of work build on a rich collaboration on research, policy, and practice between IAL and Cardiff University. Its international focus and innovative approach is establishing IAL as a global player in the study of education, skills and lifelong learning in the fourth industrial revolution," says Professor Phillip Brown, Distinguished Research Professor at Cardiff University, and Programme Director of the *Digital Futures of Work Research Programme*.



Digital Futures Team Photo, 2019

“The study of the digital futures of work is complex and multi-faceted, so that it cannot be taken up by any single institution. The international partnership allows IAL to put the experiences of Singapore alongside those of other countries for a robust analysis of the best prospects for societies to achieve an augmented future,” says Sahara Sadik, Assistant Director of Research, IAL and Deputy Director of the *Digital Futures of Work Research Programme*.

Key achievements

Close to 200 stakeholders—ranging from corporate leaders, heads of education and training, policymakers, and professionals—have been interviewed for their views on the future of work. The first roundtable series was successfully organised in November 2021, with a total of 60 participants from Asia, Europe and the US coming together to discuss key themes emerging from the research programme. A website has also been set up at <https://digitalfuturesofwork.com/> to share the findings with the wider global audience. Five working papers have been published on the website to date, alongside a blog where researchers and stakeholders discuss ongoing issues.

Tapping on and contributing to ASEM networks

In collaboration with ASEM LLL Hub



ASEM LLL Hub Symposium in Glasgow, 2016

The ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub) is an official network for university cooperation in lifelong learning research between Asia and Europe. Partners of the ASEM research networks work together to achieve excellence in comparative research on lifelong learning, to offer research-based education policy recommendations, and to develop mutual understanding between Asia and Europe.

Recognising the value of these networks, IAL's key personnel—Associate Professor Renee Tan, Director of Research, Associate Professor Helen Bound, Deputy Director of Research, Associate Professor Sim Soo Kheng, Director of Innovation Centre, and Sahara Sadik, Assistant Director of Research—are part of various ASEM LLL Hub research networks, where

they propel knowledge sharing initiatives and engage in mutual learning of best practices from researchers around the world.

“The international collaboration that ASEM provides allows for exposure not only to different disciplines within the group, but also to different cultural ways of thinking, which added richness to the interactions of the researchers, as well as the outcomes,” says Associate Professor Helen Bound.

“ASEM is an interesting network to be part of as it not only allows for international project work, but also exposure to the different vocational education and training systems (equivalent to CET) around the world, and their policy makers. When we researchers get together, like any collaborative work, we strive hard to develop a

shared understanding. This is not straightforward as there are diverse disciplines, cultural and political experiences that mean sometimes widely different interpretations and valuing of what is important. However, it is in working this through that we all gain new insights,” she continues.

“For example, in the project on the global learning spaces, we were working with a transdisciplinary team, meaning that we all had to step into the perspectives of our team members and make sense of the whole. It is only when you have strong working relations and respect for each other that this works. It was great practice for the possible transdisciplinary collaboratory we have proposed for Singapore in the science of adult learning.”

Key achievements

Asian and European researchers collaborated to produce an edited book on workplace learning that was awarded the Bernd Rode award for project excellence in 2019. Associate Professor Helen Bound and Dr Arthur Chia from IAL's Research Division contributed a chapter to the book, titled “Ways in which Learning Spaces Mediate Learning and Assessment”. The Bernd Rode award is granted by the ASEAN-European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET) to outstanding scientific and higher education collaborations between its Austrian and South-East-Asian or Pakistani member universities.

Associate Professor Helen Bound, Sahara Sadik, and researchers from Finland, Austria and France, also helped to lead the development of an original conceptual framework on global learning spaces that was published in the highly esteemed *Journal of Workplace Learning* in 2021. A nine-country longitudinal research project on Vocational Education and Training (VET) resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic is currently ongoing, covering Singapore, Germany, Austria, France, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Thailand, and United Kingdom.

Deepening thought leadership in lifelong learning

In collaboration with UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL)

Key achievements

The extensive sharing of experiences and findings by the experts during the roundtable has broadened our understanding and deepened our insights to our own efforts to evaluate and monitor lifelong learning. Through this roundtable, IAL has also deepened its collaboration with UIL to be one of

our key partners in the organisation of the Global Lifelong Learning Summit, with the objective to further establish Singapore's thought leadership in bringing policy, practice, and academic research together to advance new thinking and directions for lifelong learning.



Int Expert Roundtable-UIL, Jul 2019

In 2018, IAL developed a Lifelong Learning Index for the monitoring of Lifelong Learning participation in Singapore. This index caught the attention of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and led to IAL and UIL jointly organising a Lifelong Learning Expert Roundtable in 2019. With the objective to initiate an international dialogue on the monitoring and evaluation of lifelong learning, 12 international speakers from reputable universities, international organisations, and government agencies shared their experience and research findings during the roundtable.

Mapping experiences of educators during COVID-19 pandemic

In collaboration with the University of Bristol

IAL and the University of Bristol jointly conducted the COVID-19 Educator Survey in 2020, to capture educators' perspectives on moving all learning, teaching, assessment, and training-related work online in higher education and adult learning.

Key achievements

We have produced a total of ten publications and conference papers from the Covid-19 Educator Survey, including four co-publications and conference co-presentations between researchers from IAL and the University of Bristol. Responses from the large-scale, international surveys in 2020-2021 reveal different experiences of those working within the higher education and training sectors in different countries during COVID-19, as well as the short- and long-term effects of the pandemic on online delivery and assessment and well-being of educators and learners.



Going Behind the Scenes With ByteDance



Ivan Lee

Senior Learning Innovation Advocate,
inlab, Innovation Centre, IAL



How would adult learning look like when TikTok cross CET? In a closed-door roundtable held by IAL's inlab in November 2021, ByteDance, the company behind the social media app TikTok, shared their insights with invited participants on how their video-based technologies could enhance current learning tech solutions.

In today's digitally connected world, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are handy applications that have become second nature to how we run our lives. The latest social media kid-on-the-block that has taken millennials and Gen-Zs by storm is TikTok, an app which allows users to create short videos and share them across the community. The app's algorithms enable highly personalised feeds and the production of viral videos. Recognising the algorithms' potential for applications, ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok, has set up subsidiary BytePlus Pte Ltd to offer its technology capabilities for third-party users.

With the advent of digital and blended learning, videos have become a mainstream format and channel in enabling online learning. As one of IAL's key thrusts is to encourage innovation and digitalisation, the

institute saw that bringing in BytePlus would be aligned to the very kind of work IAL is positioned to do for the TAE sector.

Through inlab's partnerships brokering, inlab and BytePlus agreed that it would be mutually beneficial to explore how BytePlus' video-based technologies could be leveraged to enhance current learning tech solutions, and in turn impact CET learning and raise learning quality and outcomes. This exciting exploration was then facilitated through a closed-door technology sharing roundtable with invited inlab's solutionists partners, held on 22 November 2021.

Going behind the scenes

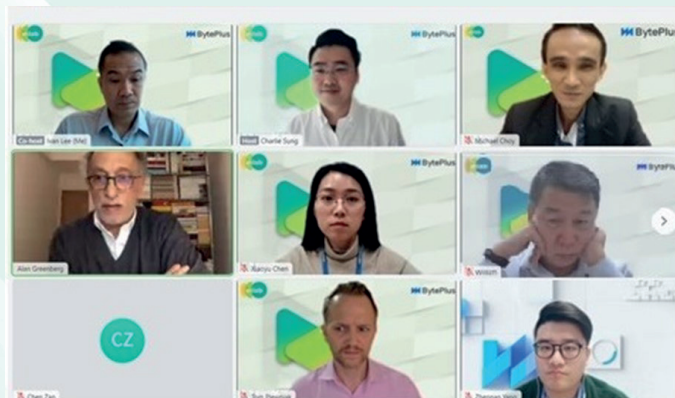
Much thought and preparation work went into ensuring the roundtable was a success. For example, as BytePlus was going to reveal some of their latest proprietary technologies, all invited partners

to the event had to sign a Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA) with BytePlus. Coordinated by inlab, the NDA signing provided BytePlus and our partners a protected space to facilitate and encourage a more open exploration and discussion. inlab also published a paper titled "Video-based Learning: The Future of Adult Education?" before the event as preparatory reading for all invited participants.

In all, 49 participants from 26 organisations attended the roundtable. They included local technology solution partners like Playware, Visionary Schoolmen, and Zil-Learn, as well as adult educators and training providers like NTUC Learning Hub and Bootstrap. Through our Australian network partner EduGrowth, we also have representation from the Australian educational technology scene at the roundtable.

BytePlus presented a slew of impressive technologies centring around video algorithms and processing for Video-based Learning (VBL), and their Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) capabilities that have applications for content recommendation and augmentation. In the breakout sessions, BytePlus specialists demonstrated to our partners the use of their technologies with education-related case-studies coming from within China. The AI and ML technologies shared included facial recognition, highly accurate live transcription of speech-to-text, live translation of text to 55 other languages, eye movement tracking for gauging users' online engagement, user concentration and sentiment analyses, content recommendation engines, and content augmentation tools; among many other functionalities the company has built.

Rounding off the session was a lively, thought-leadership discussion by four panellists— Associate Professor Sim Soo Kheng, Director Innovation Centre, IAL; Charlie Sung, Regional Head for APAC, BytePlus; Assoc Prof. Shanti Divaharan, National Institute of Education; and Alan Greenberg, Venture Partner with EDT&Partners (former Director, Apple Education for Asia and EMEA regions). The discussion, which focused on the sticky problems that plague TAE and how technology could potentially solve these challenges, explored these topics: (1) Shortening of e-learning content development – Faster go-to-market for new courses, hastening skills development; (2) E-Assessment and proctoring of skills and competencies – Going beyond assessing



ByteDance Photo

for knowledge; (3) Learner engagement and learner analytics – Finding the right approach, and building capabilities and capacities for it; and (4) Unifying learning and learner data across learning platforms, while simplifying learners' experience and onboarding.

The event was very well received as cutting-edge technology was introduced that could benefit the invited solutions partners, with some of them expressing that there are valuable takeaways from panel discussions that will help shape the thinking behind some of their future developments. Of the 26 participating organisations, there are at least 10 that have indicated that they are following up with BytePlus for further explorations, and inlab is following through to nurture these developments that could benefit TAE.

Exciting Times Ahead

One of inlab's solutions partners is taking on the challenge on shortening course and content development head-on. Together with BytePlus, this partner is going to trial marrying their existing capabilities developed through inlab-facilitated prototypes with BytePlus' technologies. They will be looking at creating AI engines to automate the entire course development process.

This will include identify learning needs from a given scenario, establishing the necessary learning outcomes and building the required assessment rubrics automatically, then moving on to using AI, video augmentation and language processing technologies to auto-create on-demand learning content. This AI concept and development is disruptive, as what would typically take a few weeks or months to design

and build a course from scratch, could potentially be completed by machines in minutes!

Such interesting and exciting developments demonstrate the value inlab brings as the innovation centre for the TAE sector through our continued seeding and catalysing efforts.

Join Us!

If you would like to participate in inlab's activities or be kept abreast of learning innovation developments coming from inlab, please sign up to our mailing list at <https://tinyurl.com/ICmailing-IALA>



Transforming Workplaces Hand in Hand



Mary Tan
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The relevance of IAL's work is most clearly seen in its workplace transformation projects through partnership with enterprises. By bringing together proficient consultants and creating a network of enterprises committed to bettering their workplaces, IAL is helping to build a stronger, more productive workforce in Singapore.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." As the world changes, often unexpectedly, we can no longer rely only on ourselves to move forward. IAL's Centre for Workplace Learning and Performance (CWLP) thus commits to building strong links across multiple industries, with a pool of proficient consultants and an outcome-based approach to workplace learning consultancy. This serves not only to raise IAL's profile within the learning and development sector, but also benefits our partners as the workforce becomes stronger and more productive through the partnerships.

In a milestone, CWLP signed Memoranda of Understanding with eight enterprises in 2021, and added another 19 new members to its Learning Enterprise Alliance. To achieve its mandate to drive,

proliferate and sustain workplace learning in enterprises, CWLP is also promoting several workplace learning consultancy initiatives with the support of SkillsFuture Singapore. One such initiative is the Learning Enterprise Alliance grant, a yearly competitive 100-hour consultancy that enterprises can embark on if they meet the necessary criteria. Another grant

that enterprises can tap on is the NACE@IAL grant, which covers a consultancy project of 40 hours.

To date, more than 100 enterprises have embarked on workplace learning consultancy learning projects with IAL. Apart from these staple projects, partners have the opportunity to engage with the centre through curated



Project Team



Learning Enterprise Alliance 2021 Member - Anderco Pte Ltd

programmes and events such as corporate Continuing Professional Development workshops, speaker series, and learning journeys.

Anderco Pte Ltd is one example of an enterprise that has gone through a successful transformation. A leading supplier of containers in Singapore, Anderco embarked on a workplace learning project with CWLP seeking to improve the efficiency of their operations. Its project managers were focused on completing projects on time and did not realise the importance of filing fast and accurate claims, resulting in man-hours spent correcting the errors. Through the workplace learning project,

they were able to identify the origin of the errors and develop strategies to prevent them. At the end of the project, the accuracy of their claims had increased to a whopping 95%.

Certis, a brand synonymous with security, is another enterprise that embarked on a workplace learning project with CWLP. Their journey had the specific intention of creating a functional competency roadmap for a particular business unit. Through the careful process of identifying the critical functional proficiencies within the unit and their levelled proficiency requirements, their objectives were fully met by the end of the

project. The consultant also transferred the skills necessary for them to embark on their own workplace transformation project with other business units.

The partnership with Certis extends beyond the workplace learning project as the company worked with CWLP to organise contextualised corporate continuing professional development (CPD) workshops run during lunchtime, focusing on communication for the executive assistants. The workshops had an encouraging sign-up of 28 participants and were well-received. When surveyed if they felt confident to handle scheduling conflicts using their



Learning Enterprise Alliance 2021 Member and MOU Partner with IAL - Certis

newly acquired communication skills, 40% replied with “strongly agree” compared to 10% before the sessions. When asked if their new skills helped them to achieve results collaboratively, 33% replied

“strongly agree” as compared to 10% before the sessions.

Such success is proof of the importance of partnerships. CWLP will continue to engage

with enterprises to build a wider network, including strategically selected partners for inclusion into 2022’s MOUs.

Five pillars of workplace transformation

To optimise the benefits of the consultancy partnerships, CWLP has catalogued the outcomes of the consultancy into five pillars to help enterprises frame their projects with clarity. The five pillars are Operational Efficiency, Employee Professionalism, Digitalisation and Automation, Job Redesign and Employee Driven Innovation (EDI); with Operational Efficiency and Employee Professionalisation being the most prevalent outcomes.



When Innovation is Driven by Employees



Abdul Subhan Shamsul Hussein
Assistant Engineer,
Royal Plaza on Scotts



Juliana Ong
Director of Human Capital,
Royal Plaza on Scotts

Employees as a source of innovation to improve work processes are often under tapped by enterprises. In a pilot project with Royal Plaza on Scotts, IAL's Centre for Workplace Learning & Performance (CWLP) worked with the hotel's engineering employees to equip them with security skills, and in the process, empower them to design the necessary training programmes.

Being on the ground gives employees home advantage when it comes to improving work processes, given their intimate understanding of operational realities and challenges. Knowing how to tap on this rich resource of insights, however, takes experience and know-how, especially since the concept of employee-driven innovation is relatively new for many enterprises.

Tasked with the mission to build a culture of learning across enterprises in Singapore, CWLP

is also promoting employee-driven innovation in its projects. A common challenge faced lies in excavating inputs and insights from employees. Co-creation hence is critical to the success of such projects, as CWLP's skilled consultants work closely with employees to excavate their knowledge and transform it into data that enterprises can act on.

This process is well-demonstrated in a CWLP project, supported by SkillsFuture Singapore, with the hotel Royal Plaza on

Scotts. Recognising that there was job redesign potential and opportunities to upskill its employees, Royal Plaza on Scotts embarked on the CWLP project in January 2020 to cross-train its engineering employees in security functions. Completed in January 2021, the project not only successfully equipped the hotel's engineering team to perform security roles, but also heavily involved the team in designing the training programme.

We speak with Ms Juliana Ong, Director of Human Capital and Mr Abdul Subhan Bin Shamsul Hussein, Assistant Chief Engineer, both from Royal Plaza on Scotts to find out more about their workplace learning endeavours.

1 What led the hotel to embark on the CWLP project?

Royal Plaza on Scotts (RPS):

The opportunity for the project actually came through our union—Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union. We have always worked closely with them to upskill our employees, so when we discovered about CWLP's work, we were keen to be part of it. This aligns with our employee engagement strategy to constantly nurture and develop our staff, and expand their competencies across functions and departments so that they remain ready, relevant, and resilient at all times.

2 What was the objective of the project?

RPS:

We set out to cross train engineering employees in security functions. The hotel has always been aware that there is a possibility of job redesign for our security and technician roles for higher productivity. Given the overall manpower crunch in the industry, being able to combine the two roles would also mean that we can reduce job stress and create more opportunities for staff to upskill.

3 What was the process like for the hotel?

RPS:

The consultant from IAL worked closely with our Assistant Chief Engineer and Assistant Fire Safety & Security Manager to better understand the job scopes and required skills of a Technician and Security Officer. They also documented the challenges faced by the two roles.

From there, an on-the-job training blueprint combining both roles was developed and we began piloting the job redesign with two engineering employees. For example, IAL's consultant discovered that certain maintenance tasks could be carried out by security officers while on patrol, and that they could also respond to maintenance incidents while in the security control room.

Our employees welcomed the project as they could acquire new skills and knowledge, while enjoying the increased interaction with other colleagues. It was also a chance to safeguard their careers during the pandemic.

4 Employee-driven innovation is a key pillar in this project. What would you say were the employees' contributions?

RPS:

Firstly, our employees' trust and support were crucial to the success of the project. Our employees from both functions worked closely with IAL's consultant to identify the work tasks and challenges. They also gave their inputs on tasks and scope of the new cross-designed job as they have the experience to identify key areas of work and relevant skills. Following that, our employees were also involved in designing the training programme to equip engineering employees with security skills.

5 Has the hotel seen benefits arising from the project so far?

RPS:

Since the project commenced, close to 50% of our engineering team members have obtained their security licence. We have also extended this cross-learning to employees from other teams, sending them for security certification and on-the-job training at security.

Now, our employees can be cross deployed to fill in manpower gaps where needed. Stronger camaraderie and synergy have been built across teams with deeper understanding and appreciation of one another's duties. This also in a way gives a more positive experience for our hotel guests as our employees are more engaged with a greater sense of achievement.

6 What are some of the learning points in the course of the project?

RPS:

We appreciate having the consultant from IAL to guide us through the transformation. The consultant kept us on track and provided helpful insights and recommendations. Having team leaders to upskill and develop together with their teams was also key to success as it was assuring and encouraging for team members to see their leaders going through the process with them.

Developing an effective reporting structure, rostering, and performance evaluation for the new combined role is also needed to optimise the experience for both the hotel and the employees.

The success of the project and the positive response from our employees affirm that developing an agile workforce is the right strategy moving forward.



Be Authentic,
Open, and Generous



Kris Loy
Specialist Adult Educator,
Certified Workplace Learning Specialist,
Adult Educator Mentor

With over 20 years of experience working in Human Resource Development (HRD) at national and industry levels, Kris Loy specialises in HRD, business process management, business development, and marketing. She brings her experience and skills to the roles she plays as an accredited Specialist Adult Educator, certified Workplace Learning Specialist and Adult Educator Mentor with IAL. She is also a Certified Career Practitioner conferred by Workforce Singapore and an IHRP Certified Professional, as well as being appointed previously as a SkillsFuture Mentor and Business Advisor to SMEs with Enterprise Singapore.

1 As a veteran AE, your career has revolved around working with companies and learners from diverse backgrounds. What are your thoughts on partnership in your work, and the role of partnerships in ensuring successful learning and workplace transformation?

Partnership is the key to a collaborative relationship with companies and learners. When working with companies, it is important to understand the

business dynamics and culture of the companies.

When we are involved in learning and workplace transformation, learners are at the heart of the journey. One should be comfortable in interacting with the people, listening to them, understanding the nature of their work, and be interested in their work. By involving them in the process of gathering data, developing and designing the learning solution, and implementing it, there would be greater chance of success when you get the buy-in and support of the learners.

2 You take time out of your schedule to be an AE mentor under IAL's AE Mentorship Plus initiative. What are your thoughts on being a mentor?

My approach to mentorship would be a collaborative one with the mentee in mind. We would have a conversation, discuss the areas that I could add value to, and support the mentee in the journey of exploration and development. In any relationship, there is a place for partnership. It takes both parties to make it meaningful and purposeful.

One thing to note is that relationships evolve over time, and as more experienced professionals, there is always room to mentor someone less experienced. For example, during the course of training, I found out that one of my learners in course was interested in curriculum development. Subsequently, when she completed her course, I approached her to consider supporting some curriculum work. We tapped on IAL's AE Mentorship Plus initiative and crafted a learning project on Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) curriculum. I guided her on the development work and at the same time she contributed her ideas. After the completion of the project, I provided additional opportunities for her exposure, and currently she is still involved in these projects. Reflecting on this, from a learner-facilitator relationship to a mentee-mentor relationship, it has now evolved to a working relationship over a two-year period; I see this journey as a partnership in making.

3 **As a Certified Workplace Learning Specialist, you have partnered multiple enterprises and helped them in their workplace transformation journeys. Could you share with us some of your more memorable partnerships?**

I have enjoyed the workplace transformation journeys with my clients. Every project is uniquely memorable as every client is at a different state of their business and learning needs.

For example, a chance encounter with an F&B client at a networking

session in 2017 led to a series of projects over a four-year period leveraging on the available support from the different agencies. Over the four years, I have built a good working relationship with the management and staff. I enjoyed spending my time with them—servers, supervisors, managers—listening to their challenges and aspirations. I recalled one occasion when I was at the restaurant working on a Learning Enterprise Alliance (LEA) project. It was lunch hour and there was a crowd with limited manpower to manage it. The Country Manager, being open, asked me if I would like support them by taking orders and I gladly did it. It gave me a sense of inclusivity as part of the team and working alongside with them. It also gave me an opportunity to gain insights into the needs of the customers and the work of the servers, which led to a better consideration in the design of the learning solution.

Another memorable partnership was with a company who embarked on a LEA journey to employ persons with disabilities in 2018. It was also a new experience for me to design learning aids for the persons with disabilities who are employed as tradesmen to perform maintenance tasks. It gave me an opportunity to design learning aids such as pictorial guides and videos and I was willing to explore, learn and understand about working with persons with disabilities. Little did I know that this experience would lead to an opportunity to work with an agency that advocates employment of persons with disabilities at the workplace. Now I am involved in introducing disability management to companies on a regular basis.

4 **What tips would you give to AEs to build successful, transformative partnerships in their work?**

Some ingredients in a partnership approach include working together, respect, exchange of ideas, seeking alignment and problem solving. I akin my role in partnership as a service to others and use my strengths and resources to support them in their journey of learning, professionalism and excellence.

Firstly, be authentic in your engagement with the stakeholders and work collaboratively with different levels in the company.

Secondly, do not make presumptions based on your past experience. Every engagement with the company or mentee or learner is a new experience, so keep an open mind. We need to make an effort to understand their needs and challenges, and also be humble and open to their contributions.

Thirdly, co-creation is a form of partnership and it is key to involve the stakeholders actively as the learning solution is designed to be sustained and followed through by the company for a longer term.

Lastly, have an “abundance” mentality—be generous in sharing your information, time and clients.

At a Glance

Who's Who Representing IAL and Singapore Internationally



Professor Lee Wing On
Executive Director, IAL

Professor Lee Wing On, serves on the Governing Board of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU). Set up under the auspices of UNESCO, APCEIU aims to strengthen regional and sub-regional capacities in planning and implementing best practices, encourage and facilitate collaboration between Asia-Pacific initiatives and other regional and international efforts in education, and to carry out relevant research and development. He is also a member of the International Expert Monitoring Panel on work-based learning in vocational education and training by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), Germany. BIBB is a recognised centre of excellence for vocational research and progressive development of vocational education and training in Germany.

In 2021, Professor Lee has been offered admission to the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (IACEHOF), Class 2021, in America. He has also been conferred the Overseas Outstanding Contribution Award for Chinese Educational Research in the 5th Mingyuan Education Award Exercise 2021, organised by Beijing Normal University to recognise exemplary individuals who have made outstanding contributions in the areas of Chinese education and research.



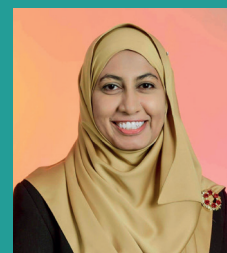
Associate Professor Renee Tan
Director,
Research Division, IAL



Associate Professor Sim Soo Kheng
Director,
Innovation Centre, IAL



Associate Professor Helen Bound
Deputy Director,
Research Division, IAL



Sahara Sadik
Assistant Director,
Research Division, IAL

Associate Professor Renee Tan, Associate Professor Sim Soo Kheng, Associate Professor Helen Bound and Ms Sahara Sadik are part of various research networks of the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub), an official network for university cooperation in Lifelong Learning Research between Asia and Europe. Partners of the ASEM research networks work together to achieve excellence in comparative research on lifelong learning, to offer research-based education policy recommendations, and to develop mutual understanding between Asia and Europe.

Associate Professor Sim Soo Kheng also sits on the Governing Board of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO) based in Vietnam. The centre acts as a regional forum for educational policy development on lifelong learning and a focal point for connecting Southeast Asian, Asian, and European countries to promote cooperation, sharing of good practices and joint research and comparative studies on lifelong learning in SEAMEO member countries.



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