

Institute for Adult Learning launches Five-Year Strategic Roadmap to mark the next chapter for Singapore's Training and Adult Education sector

22 October 2020, Singapore – The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), an autonomous institute of Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), has announced its Five-Year Strategic Roadmap that charts the institute's plans to transform Singapore's Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector in response to current and emerging challenges.

The roadmap, which outlines key areas that will guide IAL's initiatives over the next five years, comes at a critical time when the workforce is tasked with the need to reinvent itself, and when workplaces are required to embrace Continuing Education and Training (CET) and professional development, and drive workplace learning transformation to remain sustainable and resilient.

Announced by Guest of Honour, Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Education and Manpower at iN.LAB's fifth year anniversary event today, the launch of the five-year roadmap is accompanied by a new partnership agreement between IAL and industry partners which will set up an active partnership network to nurture an ecosystem of start-ups, aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs as well as to support the development of sector-leading evidence-based innovations in Singapore.

iN.LAB forms new partnership with eight key players in learning innovation community

As the nexus for learning innovation since its founding as a joint initiative by SkillsFuture Singapore and IAL in 2015, iN.LAB will continue to enable the development of learning innovations and promote the adoption of these innovations among enterprises over the next five years. The entity will continue to bring together enterprises and industry partners across the TAE community to explore, collaborate, and contribute to learning innovation and digitalisation.

Signifying a deepened shared commitment between iN.LAB and industry partners to this cause, the new partnership network welcomes the first eight industry partners. Ranging from start-up incubators to artificial intelligence solution providers, these industry partners will help cultivate a robust technology ecosystem that will advance the development and adoption of learning innovations in Singapore.

iN.LAB will work as a facilitator of the partnership network to help prime start-ups for success. Within the network, selected start-ups from the InnovJAM platform can access mentorship opportunities by industry partners which can help incubate and accelerate new learning innovation ideas, develop industry positioning for their long-term growth and explore the commercialisation of IAL-facilitated prototypes. The network will also provide internship opportunities to develop the capabilities of idea-generating individuals and teams. Together with IAL, iN.LAB plans to expand the partnership network over the next five years.

Key initiatives of the Five-Year Strategic Roadmap

The Five-Year Strategic Roadmap outlines three broad goals that will guide the development of IAL's key initiatives for the next half a decade. These goals are: to nurture a cutting-edge and effective TAE sector, to build and support enterprises in workplace learning; and to encourage and proliferate innovation and digitalisation. With this roadmap, IAL will work closely with SUSS and industry partners to lead the transformation of the TAE sector so as to better prepare our workforce for the future and support enterprise transformation, in line with the SkillsFuture movement.

To nurture a cutting-edge and effective TAE sector

Given IAL's long-standing sectoral expertise in adult education research, the institute plans to deepen its research capabilities and better translate its findings to develop robust and responsive programmes that support the SkillsFuture movement. Studies on lifelong and workplace learning will be a key area of focus in the next five years as findings will be used to assess its impact on TAE skills and jobs and subsequently applied to develop programmes that are dynamic to Singapore's evolving workforce needs. This is in addition to the institute's flagship studies such as its Skills and Learning Survey and its Business Performance and Skills Study.

To ensure that its research focus and output are well aligned with current and emerging national needs, IAL will create, update and maintain a national dataset on the TAE sector that will inform policy-makers of the status of the TAE Industry Transformation Map in relation to innovation, productivity, internationalisation, jobs and skills.

The institute's existing suite of programmes will also be continuously imbued with insights from its latest research projects. New elements of dialogical inquiry will be introduced to IAL's Masters programme, and programmes for curriculum developers and instructional designers within the institute will feature a new learning design framework that was borne from a research project.

IAL will simultaneously continue its work to formalise industry standards for TAE practitioners via professionalisation pathways that promote their continuous learning and upgrading of skills. Building on the existing Work-Learn, Skills, and Qualifications pathways for TAE practitioners, IAL will advance professional standards through an Adult Education Professionalisation (AEP) initiative and henceforth expand its programmes to reach a wider TAE audience in the next half a decade.

To build and support enterprises in workplace learning

To support the building of learning enterprises as part of a more holistic and connected TAE ecosystem, IAL will create new avenues for enterprises seeking to implement workplace learning and transformation practices to access the institute's repository of resources and its network of TAE practitioners.

Over the next five years, IAL will expand its Learning Enterprise Alliance (LEA) - a knowledge network of curated enterprises representing diverse industries which are committed to using workplace learning in the design of work and workplace practices. An expanded network will help facilitate a vibrant culture of knowledge sharing between enterprises and TAE practitioners, and create new touchpoints for collaboration in driving workplace learning among enterprises.

A third new National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE) will also open at IAL (NACE@IAL) this year. NACE@IAL will serve as a centre to develop work-learn capabilities and advance workplace learning in enterprises. NACE@IAL will leverage on IAL's strong network of adult educators to promote workplace learning and lend its expertise in helping companies, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), integrate workplace learning practices and systems to build business resilience for the future.

These developments will complement IAL's Centre for Workplace Learning & Performance (CWLP) - a centre dedicated to transforming enterprises into learning organisations that supports employee development. CWLP is set to deepen its work on the Employee Driven Innovation (EDI) model following consultancy projects on the EDI model with enterprises in Singapore early this year. Moving forward, the CWLP will undertake a research project to understand how the EDI model can be enacted by employees. Research findings will go towards designing a scorecard that audits the innovation health of SMEs in Singapore, and inform the development of a set of principles and practices that will guide SMEs to improve their innovation health score.

To encourage and proliferate innovation and digitalisation

As it celebrates its landmark fifth year anniversary, iN.LAB will look ahead to the next five years to bring the TAE community and enterprises to explore, collaborate, and foster learning innovation more closely than ever. InnovDEV, iN.LAB's latest initiative, is a step in this direction.

An initiative that was announced as part of the Training and Adult Education Industry Digital Plan (IDP), InnovDEV serves as a guide for training providers to transform their programmes for effective online learning. It joins iN.LAB's existing Innov Series which houses two signature innovation development programmes - InnovPLUS and InnovJAM and two knowledge sharing platforms - InnovLOGUE and InnovBITE.

Looking ahead to the next chapter for Singapore's TAE sector

The initiatives under the three broad goals mark the start of IAL's five-year roadmap to realise its long-term vision of creating a resilient and sustainable workforce in Singapore as well as a vibrant ecosystem of learning enterprises that drive innovation and encourage the adoption of workplace learning solutions.

"The next five years is extremely significant for the TAE sector and for Singapore. The sands are shifting globally, and training needs are evolving to keep up with the opportunities and challenges of the future economy. As a champion of the TAE sector, we stand at a critical

juncture to develop a sustainable and competitive workforce at a time when the paradigms of training and learning are moving towards new innovations and greater digital possibilities,” said Professor Lee Wing On, Executive Director of the Institute for Adult Learning.

“Our Five-Year Strategic Roadmap outlines our priorities in response to these challenges, and it underlines our commitment to cater to the needs of a dynamic TAE sector, at both the enterprise and individual level. Supported by robust research and the continued professionalisation of TAE practitioners, we will continue to drive innovation as well as to encourage the adoption of workplace learning in Singapore. More can be done, and we look forward to working closely with industry partners and the TAE community as the roadmap is rolled out,” Professor Lee added.

Enclosure:

Annex A: Factsheet on the IAL Five-Year Strategic Roadmap

For media clarifications, please contact:

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About the Institute for Adult Learning

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. IAL works closely and supports Adult Education professionals, businesses, human resource developers and policy makers through its comprehensive suite of programmes and services on raising capabilities and catalysing innovations in Continuing Education and Training (CET). IAL also champions research in sustaining economic performance through skills, shaping employment as well as CET decisions, and develops innovations through learning technology and pedagogy to heighten adult learning.

For more information, visit: www.ial.edu.sg

Factsheet on the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) Five-Year Strategic Roadmap

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. Over the past decade, IAL has been at the forefront in building capabilities and continuing professional development for the Training and Adult Education (TAE) community.

IAL works closely with and supports Adult Education professionals, businesses, human resource developers and policymakers through its comprehensive suite of programmes and services on raising capabilities and catalysing innovations in Continuing Education and Training (CET). IAL also champions research in sustaining economic performance through skills, shaping employment as well as CET decisions, and develops innovations through learning technology and andragogy to advance adult learning.

The Five-Year Strategic Roadmap (2020-2025)

Global disruptions and tectonic shifts across industries require deep and new thinking, and action at an enterprise level as well as at the level of employers and employees. The next phase of development for the TAE sector in Singapore will be directed by this imperative to support the building of a resilient and adaptive workforce for the new economy.

In response to these emerging challenges and evolving needs, IAL aims to develop a TAE community that is valued and well-respected by industries, with IAL being the 'port of call' for individuals and enterprises looking to grow capabilities, and at the forefront of innovation for the CET landscape at large. The first five-year roadmap (2020 –2025) will therefore guide IAL towards realising three broad goals:

- A. To nurture a cutting-edge and effective TAE sector
- B. To build and support enterprises in workplace learning
- C. To encourage and proliferate innovation and digitalisation

The roadmap is targeted at the workforce, enterprises, TAE practitioners, institutions and policymakers. In targeting the workforce and enterprises, IAL seeks to ensure employability and continued relevance, by supporting and facilitating the need for learning and upskilling of employees through effective CET, while also catalysing and enabling continuous workplace learning to support enterprise growth.

In working with adult educators, educational institutions, training providers and policymakers, IAL seeks to create new paths for TAE professionals to reskill and upskill, further raising the professionalisation of the TAE sector and providing actionable insights on future industry demand which will influence and impact new learning approaches and policies.

A. TO NURTURE A CUTTING-EDGE AND EFFECTIVE TAE SECTOR

There is growing impetus for Singapore to ensure that its workforce is continuously learning and upskilling themselves in the face of changing industry needs. In view of this objective, IAL will focus on developing the following over the next five years:

Translational Research Projects

IAL aims to be a key supporting pillar for the SkillsFuture movement, and will strengthen its capabilities in adult education research. IAL will be undertaking studies on lifelong and workplace learning, and its impact on TAE skills and jobs. This is in addition to the institute's flagship studies such as its Skills and Learning Survey and its Business Performance and Skills Study.

IAL's research will continue to generate knowledge and data to support the development of a responsive and high-quality TAE sector and raise the level and expertise of adult learning design and delivery with research into learning on the ground. Key focus research areas over the next five years will include:

- Changes in TAE business and profile of TAE providers and professionals;
- Andragogical practices in the TAE sector and changes over time;
- Impact of globalisation and technological change on learning and employment outcomes of workers;
- Sciences of learning;
- Digital innovation and its impact on learning; and
- Learning analytics to provide critical data on workplace learning and its contribution to lifelong learning

IAL will also devote more effort to apply and translate research findings to contribute towards better pedagogical and adult learning practices that are in line with future industry demand.

Transforming research into actionable insights

As part the institute's leadership in the TAE sector, IAL will ensure that all research focus and output are set in tandem with current and emerging national needs. One such effort includes the creation, updating and maintenance of a **national dataset on the TAE sector** to inform policy makers of the status of the TAE Industry Transformation Map in relation to innovation, productivity, internationalisation, jobs and skills.

With the very first study on the TAE sector back in 2018/19, IAL has a set of base data to track the changes and developments in the sector. For example, back in 2018, only 24% of training providers offered blended learning which includes a combination of workplace and tech-enabled learning with classroom training. About 77% of adult educators who responded to that survey said they incorporated technology or e-learning in their training delivery.

In view of the disruption caused by COVID-19 compelling the move towards online learning models, IAL has conducted a survey focusing on adult educators and found that a proportion of respondents reported more frequent use of online platform in terms of Learning Management Systems (LMS) for teaching, assessment, and training-related work. This was marked by an increase of more than four times during the COVID-19 pandemic period compared to the pre-COVID-19 period. Synchronous learning platforms, in particular, were highlighted to be used most frequently during the pandemic, compared to the use of LMS and pre-recorded video platforms reported in the 2018 Survey.

Other areas of research include the move to experimentally examine how dialogical inquiry can foster future-orientedness and enable learners to apply their learning across contexts and over time. Another would be to extend IAL's conceptualisation of the **six principles of learning design (6PoLD)** to improve learning outcome attainments for learners and to build pedagogical capability in the sector.

The impact of such research findings will be tracked through recurring projects such as the TAE Landscape study as well as projects on pedagogical practices in the TAE sector. IAL's signature platforms such as its biennial Adult Learning Symposium will also continue to catalyse discussions on research findings and generate ideas that would become potential leverages for enhanced learning and workforce development for industries.

Setting industry standards through pathways for professionalisation

Over the next five years, IAL will continue to provide avenues for the sector to continuously learn and upgrade through three pathways. These are:

- **Work-Learn pathway:** Targeted at TAE practitioners, especially those who are starting out. It recognises formal and non-formal learning, and actual work practice.
- **Skills pathway:** Targeted at skilled TAE practitioners who are keen to stay relevant and current, and gain formal recognition for their competencies and experience.
- **Qualifications pathway:** This consists formal learning programmes which will allow learners to stack modular offerings into full WSQ qualifications, resulting in the possibility of a degree and/or post-graduate qualification(s).

IAL will also work to advance professional standards through the **Adult Education Professionalisation (AEP)** initiative and expand our programmes to reach to a wider TAE audience.

Micro-credentialling will be provided by IAL in recognition of skills and practice through the awarding of badges which would provide a more inclusive and accessible professionalism gateway, especially for industry practitioners who perform TAE functions as a secondary job role. The melding of formal and non-formal learning, micro-credentialling, skills recognition and professionalisation will be facilitated through an AI-driven platform to create personalised pathways for TAE practitioners.

B. TO BUILD AND SUPPORT ENTERPRISES IN WORKPLACE LEARNING

IAL will continue to facilitate a community of learning enterprises as part of its endeavour to develop a more holistic and robust TAE ecosystem in Singapore. It will support organisations as they embed new learning systems and processes into existing business models, and ensure that enterprise learning is effective and less disruptive to their business operations.

Learning Enterprise Alliance (LEA)

IAL plans to expand its Learning Enterprise Alliance (LEA), a knowledge network of curated enterprises representing diverse industries, which are committed to using workplace learning in the design of work and workplace practices.

NACE@IAL

NACE@IAL will serve as a centre to develop work-learn capabilities and advance workplace learning in enterprises. NACE@IAL will leverage on IAL's strong network of adult educators to promote workplace learning and lend its expertise in helping companies, especially Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs), to integrate workplace learning practices to build business resilience for the future.

Centre for Workplace Learning & Performance

To cultivate these practices among enterprises in Singapore, IAL has set up the **Centre for Workplace Learning & Performance (CWLP)** to transform enterprises into learning organisations which can better support employee development through new and improved learning systems and processes.

Employee-Driven Innovation (EDI) will be one of the key outcomes that IAL hopes to advance in workplace learning over the next five years. EDI is the precept that all employees are capable of innovating, irrespective of their position or level of education. As such, there is opportunity to leverage employees' expertise and experience as drivers of innovation for daily improvisations in the workplaces. Innovations may refer to incremental changes that will eventually culminate in radical changes in the long run.

Early this year, **CWLP** embarked on consultancy projects involving employee-driven innovation (EDI) with four enterprises – Deloitte, OCBC, Tim Ho Wan, and a chain of hotels under the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union (FDAWU). Deloitte and the chain of hotels under FDAWU are currently using the EDI model to embark on job redesign.

Moving forward, CWLP will work on a **research project** to understand how EDI can be enacted by employees. Research findings will be used to design a scorecard that audits the innovation health of SMEs in Singapore. IAL will subsequently develop a corresponding set of principles and practices which SMEs may refer to as a guide to improve their innovation health score. While the project is primarily targeted at SMEs, non-SMEs stand to benefit from this too.

C. TO ENCOURAGE AND PROLIFERATE INNOVATION AND DIGITALISATION

iN.LAB is the heart of innovation and digitalisation in the TAE sector in Singapore. iN.LAB runs several programmes within its Innov Series which gathers different stakeholders to develop learning innovation solutions, and enhance adult learning and workforce development in Singapore.

The series currently comprises two signature innovation development initiatives - InnovPLUS and InnovJAM; two knowledge sharing platforms - InnovLOGUE and InnovBITE and a TAE sector development initiative - InnovDEV.

Prototypes developed in InnovPlus and InnovJam span learning technology categories which include Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven autonomous learning and assessment, analytics-driven learning intelligence, micro mobile learning, game-based learning and immersive technology-enabled learning. Some of these prototypes have led to adoption beyond the original enterprise, with some gaining commercial success.

Through its Innov Series, iN.LAB has nurtured a thriving community of innovators, learners and educators who are passionate about learning innovation and its potential. To date, iN.LAB has hosted over 300 events for more than 10,000 participants, facilitated 23 InnovPLUS prototypes and awarded 18 InnovJAM starter grants.

iN.LAB: The next five years

Over the next five years, iN.LAB will contribute to the TAE's innovation and digitalisation movement in the following ways:

- Developing local creative talent and expertise,
- Partnering industry multipliers, progressive enterprises and SMEs,
- Leading the sector in innovative learning practice,
- Leading the sector in trend identification of the latest in technology in global practice to ensure that innovations are relevant,
- Mentoring and nurturing start-ups and aspiring entrepreneurs alongside strategic partners such as venture capitalists and angel investors

iN.LAB will also serve as the lead facility for the CET community as part of the **Training and Adult Education Industry Digital Plan (IDP)**. The IDP is a multi-agency effort to digitalise and develop the TAE ecosystem in Singapore, and is supported by the Singapore Government.

Industry partnership

Moving forward, iN.LAB will focus on developing evidence-informed innovative solutions to lead sector practice, and work to nurture start-ups and aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs through an active partnership network.

iN.LAB has entered a **partnership** comprising industry players, ranging from solutionists, venture capitalists, innovation accelerators to consultancies who are

ready to nurture start-ups and workplace learning innovations alongside iN.LAB. Industry partners within the partnership so far include:

- Spaze Ventures – Seed capital firm and startup incubator
- SUTW Impact Consulting – ‘Pitch Grooming’ Coach
- Ideactio PL – Industry design thinking consultants
- Design Thinkers’ Academy – Design thinking coaching
- VisionarySchoolmen – AI-based solutions provider
- Playware Studios PL – Serious Games and VR solutions provider
- SFX – VR/AR/MR solutions provider
- HiverLab – VR/AR solutions provider