

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR (PRACTICE) YEO LI
PHEOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR ADULT LEARNING AT ADULT
EDUCATORS' DAY 2024, 12 JUL 2024, NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING**

Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chief Executive, SkillsFuture Singapore & Chairman, Institute for Adult Learning Council

Mr Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive Officer, National Library Board

Adult Educators

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good morning and a warm welcome to all of you here. Thank you for joining the celebration of Adult Educators' Day, an occasion that brings together individuals who share a common purpose – the advancement of adult education scene in Singapore.
2. As the world economy undergoes a significant shift, Singapore's landscape will inevitably transform. In this dynamic environment, adult educators (AEs) remain crucial agents of change. Your dedication ensures our workforce possesses the necessary skills to navigate these coming changes, whether driven by economic trends, climate change, or advancements in artificial intelligence. That, to a large extent, changed the education scene quite a fair bit. Those of you who are very much involved in some of our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses will know that we are trying to upskill all adult educators on this space. If you have not signed up, please sign up for these CPD programmes.
3. The adult education space in Singapore boasts a wide range of players. We have prestigious institutes of higher learning (IHLs), dedicated in-house academies, the learning & development teams, independent freelance educators, and skilled training & consultancy providers. They are all here in our audience. I must say this, all of you contribute significantly to the overall ecosystem, bringing the much valued vibrancy and perspective with the diversity.

4. I hope is not just about an AE Day where you meet old friends. It should be an AE Day where you connect with new friends. This is where you build your whole spectrum of engagement. I like to say that the Institute for Adult Learning and its Adult Education Network (AEN) hopes to serve as a unifying force bringing all of you together. AEN currently comprises mainly of members who are in their individual capacity. There are over 2000 of you who are actually very active on this AEN space.

5. However, we realised that increasingly, organisations are placing higher emphasis in the learning and development of its staff. More and more enlightened leaders see staff training as important for a very simple reason and that is the business can only go as far as the employees can bring them. That is why training is crucial. As we look at the changes, training and upskilling is the only way forward to bring and make organisations grow. In response to the needs of our industry partners, we recently launched the AEN Corporate Membership scheme, specifically catering to the needs of adult educators within organisations and in-house academies. To date, 10 IHLs and corporates have signed up under the scheme, and more will come on board.

6. Within the network, we want to connect those who are freelance to corporations, to the IHLs. Some of you are very in touch of industry development. I think that is where corporations will benefit from your engagement with them. Similarly, for the IHLs. To the IHLs who always tell me you lack trainers, I have a lot of trainers here and they are all certified by IAL and all qualified to draw down WSQ funding. So, don't just get to know your neighbour, get to know each other right across the whole spectrum.

7. With that, this network should only grow and I hope to see growth. To me, some members of corporations can take courses because they come on board, while the adult educators who are freelance can also take the CPD courses. The best way is you get to know each other better even in the classroom, or the online platform.

8. In addition to annual events like the AE Day, the AEN also organises monthly activities including Special Interest Groups sessions, and lunch time talks to share IAL's offerings of CPDs are relevant for AEs. We also hold Career Advisory conversations for AEs new to the sector. Members can look forward to collaboration opportunities and knowledge exchange, and learn about the science behind learning. IAL is doing a lot of research in the background. If you want to know more about what's happening, get connected and we will share. It is no secret. In fact, the more of you understand the science behind learning, the better it is, because then we can better train our learners. And that's the intention of why we are creating all these.

9. In the long run, some of you may realise that they have a wider career path within the company as they are ready to explore other tracks within the TAE space. In the meantime, I would like to say this, learning will enhance the capability of each individual who are educated. You should, to a large extent, get involved on this space where possible. I know that to the freelance educators, time is money but you should not be neglect your own development. The only way that you can stay sharp is to keep upgrading yourself as well.

10. My colleagues from the adult educators network will continue to hear from you and create new platforms and connection opportunities that you will find relevant. In fact, take for example, the network special interest group. It is from your feedback and responses that we learn that our adult educators would like more discussion on designing and implementing industry relevant workplace learning programs, at the same time, enhance the critical core skills to adapt to change and manage. Hence, we created two new special interest groups, the workplace learning and the critical core skills. So on this topic, I like to say that actually, we can only accomplish so much because of our special interest group chair who volunteer their time, experience and passion to run this special interest group. I would like to invite all the SIG Chairs to stand. Let's give them a round of applause.

11. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to

- a) National Library Board for sponsoring today's venue;
- b) Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chairman of IAL Council & Chief Executive, SkillsFuture Singapore, and Ms Elina Goh, Director of Operations, Netatech, for joining me in the panel discussion later this morning; and
- c) All of you for taking time to join us today. Don't walk away without knowing people. That is creating the network. And that's what the ACN network is all about. Alright, and I like to say that by working together, we can ensure a thriving adult educators sector that will empower both educators and learners alike.

Enjoy the morning. Thank you.