

PRESS RELEASE

\$1 million raised to launch first-ever partnership for business families to empower grassroots enterprises in ASEAN

WE-Empower and SUSS to equip business families and grassroots enterprises with practical knowledge to develop innovative sustainability initiatives

Singapore, 27 July 2023 – WE-Empower, a non-profit organisation connecting business families and grassroots enterprises in inter-related industries to build inclusive economic growth, and the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) have today inked an agreement to seal a first-of-its-kind partnership towards enabling business-driven, greater good in the region.

Former Senior Minister of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam gave the keynote speech to mark WE-Empower's first strategic partnership with a higher education partner. Its innovative approach brings together traditionally competitive business families and grassroots enterprises into a collaborative ecosystem, and will focus on creating environmental, social and governance (ESG) sustainability impact across villages and underserved urban areas in ASEAN. This initiative was kickstarted by a S\$1 million donation secured by WE-Empower from the Menaro family.

The partnership between WE-Empower and SUSS:

- Marks SUSS as WE-Empower's selected education partner. Together, they will spearhead programmes focused on social entrepreneurship and innovation in communities across ASEAN, potentially starting with a first bamboo-to-factory nursery project that empowers small-scale bamboo farmers earmarked to start in Indonesia.
- Will see both partners bringing their expertise to bear with:
 - WE-Empower matching business families and grassroots enterprises together and bringing in expert partners such as SUSS;
 - SUSS acting as the conduit for applied knowledge and a provider of interdisciplinary learning laboratories. Faculty and students will also conduct research to help WE-Empower develop innovative solutions for implementation at the grassroots level.
- Builds on the earlier exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SUSS and WE-Empower in June.

The signing event concluded with a closing remarks by WE-Empower Chief Programme Officer Leng Lim, who shared how younger members of business families, as well as Family Offices new to Singapore and ASEAN, can become engaged with the grassroots, and thus contribute to a civil society in which every member has a stake in each other's future. WE-Empower had also earlier convened a private luncheon for potential partners that included former president of the United Nations Security Council Kishore Mahbubani, investor Jim Rogers and members of business families to discuss additional initiatives for business families and grassroots enterprises that can positively impact ESG concerns in the region.

Professor Tan Tai Yong, President of SUSS, said, “SUSS values and pursues such strategic partnerships to bring far-reaching benefits to our industry and society through our academic and research strengths. We are pleased to be WE-Empower’s chosen education partner, connected by our shared vision of creating social good. This collaboration will gather much-needed resources and expertise to engender sustainable development and climate conservation in the region. Our students will also gain valuable work and internship opportunities with the business families and grassroots enterprises, and be equipped and inspired to become future social advocates and entrepreneurs for an inclusive world.”

Mr Melvyn Goh, Co-founder, and CEO of WE-Empower, said, “Radical, complex problems require radical, innovative solutions. It may sound counterintuitive, but big businesses need small, grassroots enterprises to thrive to continue succeeding. That is why we are taking a multi-disciplinary approach to creating innovative programmes that pull together seemingly disparate players – be it business families and their ‘natural’ competitors, their grassroots counterparts or knowledge partners. This way, we hope to empower business families to amplify their influence and resources to make a real, lasting impact for both humanity and our planet. In Singapore and ASEAN, as true in the world, we all need to become stakeholders in each other’s future.”

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About WE-Empower

WE-Empower Ltd, a CSR initiative of Succession Advisory Partners, is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to empower grassroots enterprises in Singapore and ASEAN by involving business families, philanthropies, universities and other segments of society to champion restorative economics and regenerative ecology. WE-Empower acts as a convener and brings different groups of people together to become stakeholders in each other’s future: Business families work to empower grassroots enterprises engaging in restorative economics and environmental regeneration, while universities provide a platform for harnessing research and providing knowledge.

About Singapore University of Social Sciences

SUSS is a university with a rich heritage in inspiring lifelong education and transforming society through applied social sciences. We develop work-ready graduates and work-adaptive alumni to their fullest potential through our 3H’s education philosophy – ‘Head’ for professional competency with applied knowledge, ‘Heart’ for social awareness to meet the needs of the society, and ‘Habit’ for passion towards lifelong learning. We offer over 90 undergraduate and graduate programmes, available in full- and part-time study modes, which are flexible, modular, and inter-disciplinary, catering to both fresh school leavers and adult learners.

SUSS also offers a broad range of continuing education and training modular courses for the professional skills upgrading of Singapore’s workforce.

Our programmes and courses are offered by our five schools:

- S R Nathan School of Human Development
- School of Business
- School of Humanities and Behavioural Sciences
- School of Law
- School of Science and Technology

To date, over 44,000 graduates have experienced our unique brand of education, and each year, over 21,000 students are pursuing their full- and part-time studies with us.

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), as part of SUSS, leads in the field of research on adult learning to build capabilities of the training and adult education sector in Singapore and beyond.

For more information on SUSS, please visit suss.edu.sg.

PHOTOS FOR MEDIA STORIES

Please click [here](#).

(Kindly note that the photos will be available for download from 1.30pm on 27 July).

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APPENDIX

English – Chinese Translation Glossary

| English | Chinese |
|--|-------------------|
| Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) | 新跃社科大学 |
| Professor Tan Tai Yong, SUSS President | 陈大荣教授, 新跃社科大学校长 |
| WE-Empower Ltd | WE-Empower Ltd |
| Melvyn Goh, Co-founder, and CEO | 吴文贵, 管理合伙人, 首席执行官 |
| Menaro Family | Menaro Family |