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**Singapore
International
Foundation**
for a better world

28 October 2023

**ASEAN Youth Fellowship:
Growing as the apex of regional youth leadership development programmes**

Applications received for the programme increased by over ten-fold since its inception

The fifth edition of the ASEAN Youth Fellowship (AYF) will be held in Singapore and Hanoi between 28th October to 4th November 2023. Co-organised by the National Youth Council (NYC) and Singapore International Foundation (SIF) annually, about 40 youth leaders are attending the programme this year.

Strong growth of AYF in the region

2. The AYF has seen heightened interest and increased participation since its inception in 2018. As an exclusive regional leadership development programme, the AYF provides leadership development, networking and learning opportunities for youth in the region. Besides forums and dialogues with political office holders and industry thought leaders, participants benefit from learning trips to leading organisations, such as Changi Airport Group in Singapore and National Innovation Centre Hanoi in Viet Nam.

3. Interest in the programme has grown significantly over the years. There is a more than ten-fold increase in applications received for the programme, from over 90 applications in 2018 to over 1,000 applications this year. In particular, applications rose by over 30% from 2022 to 2023.

4. The programme has also seen strong support from various ASEAN countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Viet Nam. The programme started with 12 partners in 2018, and to date, over 85 local and regional organisations and government agencies have participated in the AYF. Similar to 2022, this year's programme will be held in Singapore and also in another ASEAN city, Hanoi, so that AYF Fellows will have a more holistic ASEAN experience.

5. Over the years, AYF Fellows from the programme had opportunities to dialogue with various ASEAN Ministers, including then-Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in 2018, then-Minister of Youth and Sports of Malaysia Syed Saddiq in 2019, and Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia Nadiem Makarim in 2022. This year, AYF Fellows will be engaging Mr Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Singapore, in a dialogue.

A tight knitted community

6. The AYF provides a platform for like-minded young leaders to explore and collaborate on cross-border projects. Edward Lim, an alumnus from the fourth AYF, rallied his friends from Viet Nam and Singapore to form the Singapore-Viet Nam Youth Leaders Network (SVYLN), to foster deep connections among leading young professionals from both countries. In

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collaboration with NYC, the SVYLN organised the inaugural Singapore - Viet Nam Youth Leaders Exchange Programme (SVYLEP) in September this year, the first bilateral youth leadership programme between the Singapore and Viet Nam government, and will continue to collaborate with NYC on next year's iteration of SVYLEP.

7. Tharmelingem Pillai, an AYF 2022 alumnus from Malaysia, spearheaded One ASEAN, a digital platform with the aim of connecting ASEAN youths with relevant organisations such as corporations, non-profits, universities, and Government agencies and providing them with information on jobs, internships, fellowships and exchange programmes.

8. AYF alumni, both local and regional, have regularly returned to contribute to the programme as guest speakers, moderators of panel dialogues or hosts of learning journeys. As part of the programme in Singapore this year, an AYF alumnus, Veerappan Swaminathan, will be hosting a learning journey to Sustainable Living Lab and Repair Kopitiam. As part of strengthening the AYF alumni network, two alumni are taking the initiative to host a dinner cum networking event at their home, to welcome the AYF 2023 delegates to the community.

9. David Chua 蔡大卫, Chief Executive Officer, NYC 全国青年理事会行政总裁 said, "As the apex youth leadership programme in the region, the AYF has been instrumental in promoting cross-border collaboration and growth opportunities among youth leaders. With growing global uncertainties and tensions, it is critical that our youths understand the importance of and work towards maintaining peace and stability, so that we can grow and thrive as a region."

10. Ms Jean Tan 陈丽娟, Executive Director, SIF 新加坡国际基金会执行董事 said: "In an increasingly fractious world, trust becomes the bridge that connects divided shores and mends the bonds of humanity. Programmes like the AYF are vital because they bring our youths from different nationalities together to connect and share their cultures, ideas and experiences. This promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation for diversity, strengthening relationships across borders that make it easier for us to collaborate on common challenges."

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About the National Youth Council

At NYC, we believe in a world where young people are respected and heard and have the ability to influence and make a difference in the world. Together with our partners, we develop future-ready youth who are committed to Singapore by instilling in them a heart for service, resilience and an enterprising spirit.

About the Singapore International Foundation

The Singapore International Foundation makes friends for a better world. We build enduring relationships between Singaporeans and world communities and harness these friendships to enrich lives and effect positive change. Our work is anchored in the belief that cross-cultural interactions provide insights that strengthen understanding. These exchanges inspire action and enable collaborations for good. Our programmes bring people together to share ideas, skills and experiences in areas such as healthcare, education, arts and culture, as well as livelihood and business. We do this because we believe we all can, and should, do our part to build a better world, one we envision as peaceful, inclusive and offering opportunities for all. Find out more at www.sif.org.sg

BACKGROUND OF ASEAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

1. The AYF is an exclusive regional leadership development programme that cultivates and connects established ASEAN young leaders from across diverse sectors.
2. AYF aims to achieve the following objectives:
 - a. To engage youth leaders in ASEAN through an immersive learning experience;
 - b. To build a strong network among youth leaders from diverse sectors; and
 - c. To expose ASEAN youth leaders to opportunities in the region.
3. The target participants are professionals aged between 27 to 35 years old, who are citizens of ASEAN member states. The nominated youth leaders must have established track record in their communities of influence, with high potential to take on prominent leadership positions in the future. Past AYF Fellows included department heads in national government bodies, CEOs and founders of national-level start-ups and civil society organisations, or management of private corporations and businesses.
4. This year's AYF welcomes 40 delegates from all ten ASEAN Member States and will take place from **28 October to 4 November 2023**, with two legs – the first half of the programme will be held in Singapore, followed by the second half of the programme in Hanoi, Viet Nam.
5. In alignment to the theme of Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship 2023, "**ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth**", AYF 2023 focuses on Innovation and Transformation which are the key drivers of growth in the region. The programme will provide opportunities for fellows to explore ASEAN's economic potential and discuss how organisations/sectors can stay competitive by innovating and transforming to adapt to the changing market conditions. In addition, AYF 2023 aims to encourage ASEAN youth leaders to be at the forefront of driving transformation and ASEAN forward as a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous region.

Key Programme Highlights for AYF 2023

Learning Journeys
Learning journey to Centre for Healthcare Innovation <p>AYF Fellows will get to learn how Centre for Healthcare Innovation and its programmes are designed and curated to shape the healthcare sector through innovative collaborations. They will also get to experience some of Centre for Healthcare Innovation's feature facilities designed to spur collaboration and innovation, see innovative ideas translate into implemented solutions that address today's healthcare challenges, and how innovation and collaboration present vast opportunities for strengthening the future of healthcare.</p>
Learning journey to Comcrop <p>The learning journey to Comcrop allows AYF Fellows to learn how Singapore, a small country dependent on other countries for food supplies remains resilient in times of supply and price disruption. They will also get to hear from the ComCrop team on their innovative green journey to produce sustainable food for Singapore on a rooftop.</p>
Learning journey to Changi Airport Group <p>AYF Fellows will get to hear from Mr Lucas Lee, Senior Manager of Airport Operations Development, on how Changi Airport Group navigates this journey of digital transformation and innovation, from organising themselves to pursue innovation, to fostering a culture to do so faster and better, so as to continue to grow as a global aviation hub while ensuring their relevance to the world.</p>
Learning journey to Sustainable Living Lab <p>AYF Fellows will get to hear firsthand from the young founder and director of Sustainable Living Lab, Mr Veerappan Swaminathan, a past AYF alumnus, on the projects that they have done to make a huge impact in the entrepreneurship scene and get to learn more about SL2's their work in promoting AI-Driven Startups.</p>
Learning journey to Repair Kopitiam <p>Repair Kopitiam is an initiative by Sustainable Living Lab that began with a goal to fight the growing waste problem in Singapore by getting residents to fix their broken items, such as torn garments, rickety furniture, and electrical items, instead of just throwing them away. AYF Fellows will get to learn how Repair Kopitiams have grown through the unity of the community, as well as get a hands-on repair experience.</p>
Learning journey to Know One Teach One (KOTO) <p>AYF Fellows will learn how digital acceleration and transformation can empower society, especially the groups of people who are at a disadvantage, by building capacities of organisations and individuals through this learning journey to KOTO, a hospitality training centre in Hanoi that gives at-risk and disadvantaged youth the opportunity to break the poverty cycle by forging a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.</p>

Dialogues and Panel Discussions

Understanding ASEAN and developing Asia-Ready Youth: Opportunities for Growth in ASEAN

This panel discussion will address the pressing questions on challenges and opportunities facing ASEAN as it moves on from the pandemic, how ASEAN should respond to current superpower tensions, and most importantly, how youths can be equipped to be Asia-ready and actively pursue opportunities in the region.

Moderator:

Mr Nicholas Fang, Director, Security and Global Affairs, Singapore Institute of International Affairs

Speakers:

Ms Patricia Quek, Head of UBS Global Wealth Management Singapore and Malaysia and Mr Rajpal Singh, Director-General/ASEAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Innovating towards a greener ASEAN

Through the panel discussion, Fellows will gain insights to innovative solutions and policies that address regional sustainability challenges and engage in conversations which ignite impactful action in environment and social sectors in the ASEAN region.

Moderator:

Ms Farah Sanwari, Head of Partnerships, Spudnik Lab; AYF Alumnus

Speakers:

Mr James Chan, Founder and CEO, Ion Mobility, Ms Oh Chu Xian, Founder, Magorium, Mr Rueban Manokara, Assistant Director, Global Partnerships, National Climate Change Secretariat, and Mr Marcus Lim, Co-Founder And CEO, Ecosoft

Strengthening regional cooperation for the future and growth of ASEAN

The dialogue will discuss the importance of regional growth for international development and emphasise the role of regional cooperation as the accelerator of growth in the ASEAN region. In addition, how youth leaders can play a key role in establishing partnerships and driving the region forward.

Moderator:

Ms Faridah Saad, Deputy Director of People and Culture, Enterprise Singapore; AYF Alumnus

Speaker:

Mr Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Singapore

Empowering society through digital acceleration and transformation

The panel discussion seeks to explore and harness the potential of digital transformation for economic growth, bridging societal divides and empowering society to flourish.

Moderator:

Mr Edward Lim, Senior Assistant, Director of Green Economy Agreements, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), AYF Alumnus

Speakers:

Mr Kevin Tung Nguyen, Founder and CEO, JobHopin, Mr Jason Bay, Director, Group Chief Operating Officer's Office, SEA Limited, and Mr Ngo Minh Hieu, Cyber Threat Hunter, National Cyber Security Center of Vietnam

Youth entrepreneurship and innovation

The AYF Fellows will benefit from engaging speakers and hearing from them on insights on the potential for youth in the areas of enterprise and innovation and to take action to start their own businesses and organisations to benefit the region.

Moderator:

Ms Ha Linh To, Founder and CEO, Outsider

Speakers:

Mr Long D Nguyen, Acting Director, National Innovation Centre (Hanoi), Mr Harry Pham Van Anh

President And Founder, ECO Vietnam Group; AYF Alumnus,

Dialogue on Youth Empowerment and Development in ASEAN

The dialogue aims to engage AYF Delegates on some of the key issues faced by youth in Viet Nam and ASEAN, and how to shape and guide ASEAN youths to be future leaders of the region.

Moderator:

Mr David Chua, Chief Executive Officer, National Youth Council Singapore

Speaker:

Mr Nguyen Tuong Lam, Permanent Vice Chairman, National Committee on Youth of Viet Nam

Leveraging Bilateral Relations with Viet Nam and Opportunities in the ASEAN Region

The dialogue aims to engage AYF delegates and alumni through the insights and projects shared by panellists to inspire and collaborations amongst themselves and/or with Singapore.

Moderator:



Ms Patrina Lim, Regional Director of Singapore Global Network (SGN)

Speakers:



Ambassador Jaya Ratnam, Singapore's Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Mr Khairul Rusydi, CEO and Co-founder, Reactor, and Ms Phan Hoang Lan, Head, Centre for Entrepreneurship



& Innovation, FullBright University Vietnam, AYF Alumni

Profiles of Delegates & Alumni for Interview

Delegates Profiles (Singaporeans)	
 <p>Sherman Ho, 34, Chinese Co-founder, Happiness Initiative</p> <p>English: Eloquent Mandarin: Basic</p>	<p>Sherman co-founded the Happiness Initiative, a social enterprise that focuses on well-being research, working with communities to take an evidence-based approach towards building a culture of well-being. He had also worked with the Singapore Kindness Movement to organise the Singapore Kindness Conference.</p> <p>Regionally, Sherman has ran projects in global teams, where he designed and executed regional programmes for his company, such as the Goldstar Program (across 12 countries), the Graduate Program (across 10 countries), Leadership Program (across 150 headcounts regionally) , to improve retention and increase efficiency within the business.</p>
 <p>Amalina Binte Abdul Nasir, 29 Vice-President, MENDAKI Club</p> <p>English: Eloquent Malay: Eloquent</p>	<p>Amalina graduated from Madrasah Al-Ma'arif Islamiah before continuing her studies at SMU (Bachelor) and RSIS (MSc) and is the Vice President at MENDAKI Club while sitting on the Singapore International Foundation Board of Governor. She is also an active youth leader at NYC and currently holds appointment in the Mosque Management Board, IMDA's Art Consultative Panel and is a member of the Asatizah Youth Network and M3 network.</p> <p>She also has experience in policy enforcement and is a subject matter expert on violent extremism issues and served as the independent speaker/ resource person/youth representative to various MMOs and was also the advisor to NTU Muslim Society in 2020.</p> <p>Professionally, Amalina was previously a Global Intelligence analyst in Meta who supported the expansion of FB operations within the APAC region by carrying out due diligence for acquisition of land leases and partners.</p>

 <p>Delane Foo Wei En, 30, Chinese</p> <p>APAC BD Lead, Blocknative</p> <p>English: Eloquent Mandarin: Basic</p>	<p>Delane was previously a design strategist at Johnson and Johnson and had also managed the Ignition Centre Singapore, part of KPMG's global network of innovation centres.</p> <p>Outside of work, she volunteered as the director of Membership and Special Projects for Kairos ASEAN, a global entrepreneur and mentorship network from 2015 to 2018 and organised the K360 Business Mission, a pan-regional business mission for entrepreneurs to visit startup ecosystems in Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia.</p>
 <p>Yuvan S/O Mohan, 35, Indian Country Head (SG) - Public Policy, Government Relations & ESG, Lalamove</p> <p>English: Eloquent Tamil: Conversational</p>	<p>Yuvan has been an active youth volunteer with NYC since 2013 and is currently a NYC Council Member and the Chief Curator for the Young ChangeMakers.</p> <p>He is also the Chairperson of SINDA Youth Club and leads a team of 10 Indian Youth leaders to organise initiatives and partner other organisations catering to the needs of all Indian youths within Singapore. For his efforts in the youth community space, Yuvan was awarded the NCSS 40 under 40 award in 2021.</p>

Delegates Profiles (Regional)	
 <p>Cambodia</p> <p>Nguyen Thi Thanh Mai, 34</p> <p>Country Manager, Regional Trade for Development (RT4d)</p> <p>English: Conversational</p>	<p>Mai is the Country Manager for RT4d where she supports ASEAN Member States in meeting their commitments to implement two selected Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) across the region, with a particular focus on providing support to the less developed ASEAN countries. As part of her work, she works with the ASEAN Secretariat, peak body and subsidiary bodies under each FTA to support the implementation of the Economic Cooperation Work Program of each FTA.</p> <p>She had also previously volunteered in various international youth and social programmes as a board member responsible for community development projects and international work camps and took part in the “Managing Cross-Border Trade in an Uncertain World”, in Oct 2019, organised by The Hinrich Foundation and National University of Singapore (NUS).</p> <p>She was awarded the Hinrich Global Trade Leader Scholarship.</p>
 <p>Thailand</p> <p>Dr Supatchaya Techachoochert, 33</p> <p>Co-founder, Refill Station Environmental Manager, Mae Fah Luang Foundation</p> <p>English: Conversational</p>	<p>As the environmental manager, Dr Supatchaya currently manages the overall environmental activities in the organisation to meet the environmental standard and increase eco-efficiency of production, analyses carbon credit data and technical support of the Thailand Voluntary Emission Reduction Programme in waste segregation and forest sectors.</p> <p>Outside of her work, she is also the board member at the Green World Foundation and consultant at WWF Thailand, co-founder of Refill Station, the 1st refill shop in Thailand aimed to reduce plastic waste and was part of YSEALI Marine Debris Expedition.</p>

 <p>Indonesia</p> <p>Laksamana Muhammad Sakti, 29</p> <p>Co-founder and Head, Operation Siklus</p> <p>English: Conversational</p>	<p>Laksamana is the Co-founder and COO of Siklus, a clean-tech company focusing on decarbonising the retail industry by tackling the nexus of poverty and plastic waste in Indonesia through mobile delivery refill stations.</p> <p>He was the Technical Advisor for Yogyakarta International Airport and supported the engineering management of the 1st tsunami-resistant airport in Indonesia.</p> <p>With a heart to alleviate poverty through sustainable innovations, Laksamana co-founded Rise-Up Lab, a non-profit organisation which provided innovative sustainable energy solutions to the outermost regions in Indonesia.</p> <p>He was a delegate for Y20 India 2023 and Villars Summit 2023. He graduated from University College London with a Master of Science degree.</p>
 <p>Brunei</p> <p>Md Haziq Hisyam Md Zaki, 32</p> <p>Co-founder, Sukarelawan Belia Content Designer, Al Muyassar Institute, 32</p> <p>English: Conversational</p>	<p>Haziq is a Content Designer at Al Muyassar Institute. He has dedicated more than a decade volunteering to cultivate effective leadership and elevate communities.</p> <p>Awarded Top 10 Nominees for Youth Service Award 2020 and Majlis Belia Brunei's Most Aspiring Youth in 2019, his intrinsic sense of purpose is fuelled through his work in guiding emerging youth leaders. His work at Persatuan Kemajuan Insan "Catalyst" youth mentoring programme has impacted thousands of Brunei youths.</p> <p>In addition, he co-founded Sukarelawan Belia, a volunteering platform dedicated to assisting the Ministry of Health in COVID-related efforts. He also served as the vice president of the Brunei Youth Council in 2019 and 2020, attended the 36th ASEAN Summit as a youth leader and represented Brunei at Faithfully ASEAN and Interfaith Exchange in 2020.</p>