

SIM launches social-entrepreneur programme

By Vivien Ang

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BUDDING social entrepreneurs and social service professionals will soon be able to earn a specialist diploma in social entrepreneurship at the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM).

The education institution on Tuesday (Jul 30) launched the Dr Richard K M Eu-SIM Social Entrepreneurship Centre, or Ressec, which will offer postgraduate and professional development courses.

One such course, the six-month Specialist Diploma in Social Entrepreneurship programme, aims to equip its students with practical skills to set up a social enterprise or innovate social services.

It is the first of its kind offered by a tertiary institution and includes modules such as Financial and Cost Management for Social-preneurs, and Innovating for Social Impact: Design Thinking Approach.

The centre is the product of a two-year partnership between SIM and the family of Dr Richard Eu Keng Mun, the founding chairman of SIM.

Social enterprises Dignity Kitchen and Bette Barista were among the partners who reviewed the curriculum of the diploma programme.



At the launch of Ressec at SIM on Jul 30 were (from left) SIM's founding chairman's son Richard Y M Eu, his grandson Jonathan Eu, SIM chairman Euleen Goh, and SIM chief executive Seah Chin Siong. PHOTO: SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

Inputs were sought from non-profits such as Rainbow Centre and Bizlink to design the course, specifically on the support for persons with disabilities. Partners such as The Majoriry Trust and raiSE also helped publicise the programme to their respective networks.

Ressec will fund research on the social landscape, and build thought leadership in the social

service sector. To support centre, the Eu family has donated S\$6 million, and SIM, an additional S\$2 million.

Jonathan Eu, grandson of the late Dr Eu and also chief executive of listed Singapore Land Group, said at the launch of Ressec: "Globally, there are a lot of structural issues... that many countries (and individuals) face. They include eco-

nomic inequality, such as disparities in income and wealth distribution, leading to unequal opportunities for social mobility and a perpetual cycle of poverty for certain groups... However, I do think there is a greater push from the younger generation to try... (and create a) positive social impact."

He added that he hoped that

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Euleen Goh, chairman of SIM

those who seek to make this positive impact by attempting to solve social problems would find some answers through the diploma programme – especially when these budding social entrepreneurs think about how to secure funds for their initiatives.

Euleen Goh, chairman of SIM, agreed and said that Ressec aims to nurture those who want to tackle these social issues.

"The skill sets learnt... can be taken to all kinds of ventures. But more importantly, it is about collaboration," she said. The programme thus homes in on bringing all parties in the ecosystem to the table, and coming up with solutions to social issues, she added.

The inaugural cohort has 18 students from 16 organisations; these range from Fei Yue Community Ser-

vices to Collective Perspectives, a social enterprise set up to create opportunities for disabled artists to professionalise their work and grow artistically.

Anita Fam, president of National Council of Social Service (NCSS), said at the launch: "The social service sector has changed drastically. The traditional ecosystem of the charity, beneficiary and donor has evolved. Now, it is the role of other players in society who are also doing good, and we need to equip them as they are approaching complex issues with the same limitations."

She added that companies also want to go beyond ad-hoc programmes in corporate social responsibility, to be more in line with efforts to improve their environmental, social and governance practices.

The president of NCSS said that more are aiming for more concrete contribution by seeing what they can do, under the Sustainability Philanthropy Framework, which was launched by NCSS late last month. It is also hoped that having more participants in the diploma will spark more innovation in this sector.

The programme costs about S\$16,500 and the inaugural batch received a scholarship valued at S\$15,000 each.