

Disability Community Network Meeting IV: Inclusion

Presenters:

Dr Justin Lee
Mr Andrew Lim
Mr Francis Tan
Ms Debra Ng
Mr Ryan Ng
Ms Bernice Lim
Mr John See Toh
Ms Tan Beng Tian
Mr Alvan Yap
Mr Ian Leo
Mr Kuansong Victor, Zhuang

Date: 27 March 2019

Time: 1pm - 6pm (*Registration starts at 12.30pm*)

Venue: Sports Auditorium

Address: 3 Stadium Drive, Singapore 397630

Abstract:

The inclusion of people with disabilities has become an area of proliferating discussion in Singapore. Nominated Member of Parliament Yip Pin Xiu has called for greater inclusion and integration in sport. Elsewhere, tickets to local production *Not In My Lifetime?*, an inclusive theatre experience, sold out days after it was announced. Charities are thinking about more dialogues and training sessions on sexual issues, while the Land Transport Authority has begun to test a new mobile app for commuters with special needs. The word “inclusive” is also a buzzword in talking about disability, and there is an impulse to include as much as possible, along all dimensions, in all areas, and sometimes at all costs. Yet, what does it mean, and take, to be “inclusive”? The fourth meeting of the Disability Community Network (DCN) spotlights the issue of Inclusion, focusing on sport, the arts, sex and physical accessibility. It comprises two sections: • Section I features various speakers and presentations from individuals in the community on inclusion in areas of sport, the arts, sex and physical accessibility. • Section II spotlights the notion of disability-led practice, in a seminar and conversation with disability studies researcher Victor Zhuang. Section I: Community Initiatives on Inclusion This section spotlights initiatives by individuals, organisations and groups in the disability community, and their thoughts on inclusion in sport, the arts, sex and physical accessibility. Section II: Seminar on “Disability-led norms: How we can help build inclusive societies as individuals” by Victor Zhuang, PhD Student in Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago Synopsis: Norms are a powerful and pervasive aspect of our modern world, affecting the ways we act, think and function in society. Within disability studies, there has also been a parallel movement to think about how society can be more inclusive to take into account differences. As Singapore seeks to include different body-minds in our quest to build an inclusive society, how can we use disability experiences as a base to build upon and to rethink normative practices that we ourselves might hold to? Combining research and theory, Victor reflects on his years of work in the disability sector, and analyse them with insights from disability studies. He will discuss practical examples of how disability-led norms can be achieved. This talk is thus an invitation to rethink our own assumptions about norms, even as we do work to include disabled people across settings such as policy-making, social services and our everyday lives. It reflects on how we can begin to change the ways we work or function so as to contribute to the development of an inclusive society. By focusing on the self, it asks that we contribute in our own meaningful ways to develop a society more tolerant and accepting of differences

Presenters' profile:

Justin LEE is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. He has substantive interests in issues related to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, and has done research on the social inclusion of people with disabilities, proper end-of-life planning for vulnerable seniors and the re-integration of ex-offenders. He is also interested in the non-profit sector at large, specifically on developments that affect the state of philanthropy, social services and various other community assets in Singapore. He is paying keen attention to the role and strengths of new and untapped resources—such as game designers, community artists and other social innovators—that can be harnessed to address complex social problems. Justin is also Chairman of ArtsWok Collaborative, a non-profit organisation engaged in arts-based community development projects that seeks to build the capacity of socially-engaged arts groups through creative producing, training, research and advocacy. He has a PhD in Sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Andrew Lim is a Research Assistant at the Institute of Policy Studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science in Sociology and Psychology from the National University of Singapore, where he was exposed to social work and its challenges. Since then, he has developed a keen interest in the social service sector and a keener eye on issues relating to mental health, children-at-risk as well as low income families in Singapore. He has worked to consolidate data on social services and translate research into practitioner-centred publications. He is interested in the sociology of everyday life, interpersonal intimacies and secrets, and how the Social manifests in the deepest recesses of the Mind.

Francis Tan is the Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Trampoline Limited. He has been involved in product innovations, mentoring start-ups, translating and commercialising technologies in a career spanning over 20 years. He is highly inspired and greatly touched by the selfless devotion and commitment of people he encountered working and volunteering in social sector. He is fortunate to be part of a team of humble and passionate innovators at Trampoline, who seeks to drive the hard science of innovating for economic goods with the social science of impacting and touching lives. His team strives to develop sustainable social service model for the unprivileged, disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Debra Ng is the #girlboss of Society Staples, a social enterprise that is working towards being an enabler for the disability sector and getting stakeholders to put inclusion at the forefront of their agenda. She is responsible for all things branding and marketing related and handles the less fancy but absolutely important aspects of the business like operations and finance. Her work has gained recognition on both local and regional fronts, and she is one of the youngest nominees on the 2018 Generation T-lister, Asia Tatler's platform for extraordinary individuals with the potential to become the leaders of tomorrow. She is also the youngest Singapore representative for the 2018 Young Societal Leaders Programme, an exclusive by-invitationonly programme designed for ASEAN leaders aged 40 and under to have a voice on a global stage to convey their perspective, passion and purpose. Debra was also appointed as a fellow under the Philip Yeo Innovation Fellows Programme in 2018, a network by the National University of Singapore that present recipients with a unique and transformative educational opportunity for personal and professional enrichment and are personally mentored by board and management members in public and private sectors. She holds a degree with merit in Psychology and Sociology.

Ryan Ng is Society Staples' #bigboss and visionary, a social enterprise that focuses on improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and creating more equal access to opportunities in society. He is also the head of programmes and is responsible for all the innovative and "challenge the status quo" programmes that are rolled out. His fierce passion and deep dedication in the disability sector has garnered attention within ASEAN, and he was invited to speak and give inputs on advancing inclusion and disability in events such as ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017 and 2018, and also the 16th Informal Asia-Europe Meeting Seminar on Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities in 2016. Under his leadership, Society Staples has won prestigious awards

like the 2015 President's Challenge Social Enterprise Start-up of the Year, was nominated by the Young Business Leaders Alliance (led by the Singapore Business Federation) to receive the 2015 ASEAN-China Outstanding Young Startup Entrepreneur Award and also clinched the 2018 Spirit of Enterprise-NEO start-up awards.

Bernice LIM's first foray in the social enterprise sector was not by choice nor instinct, but made possible following the results of a 'Which Course Is Best For You' quiz when choosing a diploma programme in Ngee Ann Polytechnic. In her supposed gap year before university, she interned at Society Staples, a social enterprise that enables and supports corporations, government agencies and individuals to build a more inclusive Singapore for persons with disabilities. Starting from ground zero with no passion nor knowledge about persons with disabilities, she has since turned into a full-time staff leading the sales and partnerships arm of Society Staples. She is also the team manager of Different Dragons, a weekly Sunday dragon boat club for persons with all kinds of disabilities. On a non-professional front, Bernice has a pet dog named Ocean and loves him to bits. She also has a jelly bean shaped scar on her elbow!

John See Toh is the Chairman and Co-Founder of Runninghour, a sports co-operative that promotes integration of persons with special needs through running.

TAN Beng Tian is Artistic Director of and co-founded The Finger Players, one of Singapore's leading theatre companies with a focus on both adult and young audiences using a fusion of puppet theatre and other art disciplines. The company's innovative theatre style is widely recognised in the local arts scene, having staged over 35 multidisciplinary productions for adults since 2004. A 2005 recipient of the JCCI Singapore Foundation Culture Award and a member of the Singapore Drama Educators Association, Beng Tian is the Director of Not In My Lifetime?, an inclusive theatre production which explores the special education system in Singapore as experienced by teachers working within the sector.

Alvan YAP is a freelance writer and editor. He has worked in the social services, special education and publishing fields, and has also worked on publications and articles covering a wide range of topics from literary fiction, politics, history, IT to finance. He was in the social service sector before and took on various roles, including that of a special education teacher. He is the playwright of Not In My Lifetime?, an inclusive theatre production which stems from his teaching experiences.

Ian Leo is the Founder and Partner at Insight N Access Pte Ltd, a philanthropy advisory and diversity training consultancy that aims to provide personal philanthropic advice, guidance and support to individuals, corporations and foundations looking to engage in the next generation of philanthropy, community engagement and impact investing. Ian was the Executive Director of the International Rice Research Institute, the oldest and largest international agricultural research institute in Asia. He has also spent more than a decade in the charity sector, being the former president of the Disabled People's Association, and championing disability issues in the Asian region through his work in both international as well as local NGOs. Ian is a fervent kayaker, a scuba diver as well as a sailor, and represented Singapore in sailing for the Athens Paralympics in 2004. Before joining the charity sector, he also spent 5 years in academia specialising in the life sciences (Molecular Developmental Biology). He is a Biological Sciences graduate from the National University of Singapore.

Victor Zhuang Kuansong is currently pursuing a PhD in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, focusing on a cultural-studies led analysis of the construction of normalcy and inclusion, and the experience of disability in Singapore. His first MA was in History from the National University of Singapore where his research focused on the history of disability in Singapore, tracing the emergence of various discourses of disability and how these were performed, understood and embodied in disabled people. He was awarded the Chevening Scholarship in 2013 to pursue a second MA in Disability Studies at the University of Leeds where his research focused on a social model analysis of disability policy. He has worked in SG Enable for 6 years before embarking on his PhD and has also served as a grassroots volunteer for over 10 years.

Programme Booklet

For enquiries, please contact **Mr Andrew Lim.**