

## BEYOND OPEN HOUSE

Especially for a small country like Singapore, it is so important to understand the dynamic nature of social issues. This is so that we can find sustainable and effective multi-disciplinary approaches to prevent, respond to, and mitigate existing, emerging and unforeseen threats.

MS LEE ZI XIN, public safety and security undergraduate, Singapore University of Social Sciences



## Helping to strengthen the ties that bind

Ms Lee Zi Xin feels that public safety and security is an interesting area to study and that it could be highly applicable to building a resilient society that can withstand future shocks. PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Through understanding the issues and threats society is facing, as well as serving the community, public safety and security undergraduate Lee Zi Xin wants to help enhance Singapore's safety, security and well-being

BY ASTER TAN

Sometimes, a talk can change your worldview and set you on a course for good.

That is what happened to Ms Lee Zi Xin, 20. When she was a Year 1 student at Nanyang Junior College, she attended a Geography lecture where she learnt about the Resource Curse theory.

The term describes a paradoxical situation in which a country possesses plenty of resources but is plagued with poverty, social implications, and even violent conflicts.

These countries often rely on humanitarian aid from external stakeholders, which makes it easier for the recipient to be exploited. In the long run, the community becomes crippled and unable to fend for itself.

That day, Ms Lee remembers being deeply struck by the importance of building a resilient, self-reliant society; one that has its own safety nets, and can withstand or bounce back from shocks.

"It made me realise that there is a pressing need for individuals in a community to be empowered to work together towards addressing social issues in a value-adding way," she says.

Wanting to develop a deeper understanding of these social issues and threats, as well as how to help mitigate them, she enrolled in the Singapore University of Social Sciences' (SUSS) Bachelor of Public Safety and Security (PSS) with Crisis Management Minor programme last year.

Under the School of Humanities and Behavioural Sciences, the four-year direct honours programme aims to train professionals in the emerging field of public safety and security. It provides not only theoretical knowledge, but also training in intervention strategies in the areas of policing, emergency

management, investigation, rehabilitation, crime reduction and terrorism.

Ms Lee feels that PSS and crisis management are interesting and complementary areas to study, and that the knowledge and skills gleaned could be highly applicable in the future. She says: "Even as we reap the benefits of modernisation and become more interconnected due to globalisation, society is facing increasingly destructive threats that are evolving and manifesting in different forms.

"Especially for a small country like Singapore, it is so important to understand the dynamic nature of social issues and needs. This is so that we can find sustainable, targeted, and effective multi-disciplinary approaches to prevent, respond to, and mitigate existing, emerging and unforeseen threats."

### Putting service into practice

Another mark of a resilient society is the ability of its members to come together to solve the community's problems, and to lift one another up.

Ms Lee has been actively involved in community service since junior college. In line with SUSS' vision to be the leading university for social good, she has also had ample opportunities to be involved in many service learning initiatives.

One of the areas she is most concerned about is the building of strong community ties, especially on campus. This led her to join Project ReKnew, a student-initiated project by her fellow PSS coursemates in collaboration with Lutheran Community Care Services. The project aims to advocate for the building of respectful and constructive relationships in the community, specifically in institutes of higher learning,

through restorative processes.

Another related project she participated in was Let Our Voice Run - a virtual coast-to-coast charity run also organised by Lutheran Community Care Services. The campaign focuses on raising awareness and addressing sexual harm and dating violence experienced by young adults in tertiary institutions. It aims to raise funds to train student leaders to facilitate restorative conversations on building respectful relationships and safe campus communities.

The 327km coast-to-coast run that extended across the island from Jurong to Punggol was so physically and psychologically demanding that Ms Lee almost gave up halfway.

However, her friends provided her with endless encouragement, and they ended up finishing the long trek together in just seven hours.

The test in endurance taught her a hard truth. "I learnt that the road to challenging existing systems that perpetuate violence in society is tough. Halfway, we might be tempted to give up especially when we face limitations or when we incur costs for advocating change."

Such enriching experiences at SUSS have strengthened her resolve to never give up and to continue striving towards her goal of helping to build a more resilient society.

Ms Lee, who graduates in 2024, says: "I want to use the skills I have learnt and values that have moulded me to work for the public sector and contribute to Singapore's safety, security and well-being."

Find out more about SUSS' Bachelor of Public Safety and Security with Minor at [www.suss.edu.sg/programmes/detail/bachelor-of-public-safety-and-security-ftpps](http://www.suss.edu.sg/programmes/detail/bachelor-of-public-safety-and-security-ftpps)