

Paper Proposal:  
**Empowering youth with these-abilities: towards an inclusive Singapore tomorrow, today**

Wilson CHAN<sup>1</sup>, Rachel LOH<sup>2</sup>, Yi Shien SIM<sup>3</sup>, Dennis LEE<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Skillseed, Singapore  
[wilson@skillseed.sg](mailto:wilson@skillseed.sg)

<sup>2</sup>SPD, Singapore  
[rachel\\_loh@spd.org.sg](mailto:rachel_loh@spd.org.sg)

<sup>3</sup>Yale-NUS College, Singapore  
[sim.yishien@u.yale-NUS.edu.sg](mailto:sim.yishien@u.yale-NUS.edu.sg)

<sup>2</sup>Shantou Business School, Shantou University, China  
[dennislee@stu.edu.cn](mailto:dennislee@stu.edu.cn)

## **ABSTRACT**

### *Introduction*

Brimming with passions and gifts, youth with disabilities have much to offer beyond the traditional label as beneficiaries of aid.

The *SPD<sup>1</sup> Youth Development Program* seeks to reverse this deficiency paradigm, by equipping youth with disabilities with social innovation skills and empowering them to catalyse inclusive change. This paper shares insights gleaned from a two-year experimental program that tries to change perspectives on disabilities and engender greater inclusion in Singapore. In particular, we focus on an inclusive edition undertaken in 2018, where youths with (a variety of) and without disabilities partnered on a spectrum of projects to foster greater disability inclusion over a 6-month period.

### *Theoretical Framework & Methods*

We used the *Head, Heart and Hands* model for transformational learning (Orr, 1992 in Singleton, 2015) as the program structure and basis for impact measurement. We designed the program into a three-phase experience comprising *Discovery* (uncovering participants' gifts, values and motivations for the program), *Equipping* (training participants in social innovation - Design Thinking, the Social Business Model Canvas and more - through experiential learning), and *Execution* (implementation supported by consultation / trouble shooting clinics). To assess the effectiveness of learning and application, we measured participants' pre and post responses

---

<sup>1</sup> SPD is a disability services and support charity based in Singapore. They have served persons with disabilities since 1964.

on the transformational learning dimensions, for individual sessions, as well as at the program level. We combined these semi-quantitative data with qualitative information derived from participant interviews undertaken throughout the program duration. As the program has just drawn to a close and the data is being analysed, we will share our findings during the Conference.

### *Conclusion*

In closure, we will further examine the program in light of Kendall et al.'s (1990) framework for service and learning, and propose the addition of an asset-based mindset and methodology as the eleventh principle to this foundational model. As the first inclusive program of its kind that leverages the strengths of youth with disabilities, and structures inclusiveness within a multi-ability setting, we hope the lessons shared here will set the foundation for similar disability inclusion efforts, glocally.

### *Keywords*

Social innovation, disability inclusion, asset-based community development.

---

## **References**

1. Singleton, J. (2015). Head, heart and hands model for transformative learning: Place as context for changing sustainability values. *Journal of Sustainability Education* 9. ISSN: 2151-7452
  2. Jane C. Kendall and Associates, "Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, Raleigh, North Carolina: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 1990, ISBN 0-937883-08-5. Part I: Essential Principles in Combining Service and Learning - Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning, pp37-55.
- 

## **Biographical Sketch**

### *Presenter 1*

1. CHAN Wilson
2. Director, Skillseed
3. Wilson graduated from QMUL with 1st Class Honours in Marine & Freshwater Biology and received the G.E Fogg Prize for outstanding passion in the field. He also earned a Masters Degree in Environmental Management from Yale University, during which he co-founded a social enterprise serving international students. As a public servant in the

National Parks Board of Singapore, Wilson played a pivotal role in developing Singapore's Integrated Coastal Management program. He now apprentices in Singapore's social space.

4. **Email:** [wilson@skillseed.sg](mailto:wilson@skillseed.sg)
5. **Website:** [www.skillseed.sg](http://www.skillseed.sg)
6. **Address:** 1B Tyrwhitt Road, Singapore 207 522

*Presenter 2*

1. LOH Rachel (TBC)

*Presenter 3*

2. LEE Dennis
3. Associate Professor, Shantou Business School, Shantou University
4. Currently an Associate Professor in Shantou University Business School, Dennis is an Editor of the Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability; and is the Regional Chairman (Asia) for the International Quality Education Foundation (IQEF). He teaches Non-Profit Organisation Management, International Business, International Strategic Management, Global Enterprise Management, Principles of Management, and Doing Business in China, serving as faculty advisor to STU Enactus. Dennis is also a Visiting Professor at Copenhagen Business School (CBE) and teaches "Managing Strategically in a Globalized World" and "Managing Non-Profit Organizations – Principles & Practices". His passion lies in Social Enterprise Development and he is an expert in consumer behaviour in China, having served as a consultant with the China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE). He served as Regional Vice President, Asia, for Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE), now known as ENACTUS, and also served as Deputy Executive Director at Singapore International Foundation (SIF) and as a Board member of the YMCA of Singapore
5. **Email:** [dennislee@stu.edu.cn](mailto:dennislee@stu.edu.cn)
6. **Website:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dennis-lee-3931462>
7. **Address:** 243, Da Xue Road, Shantou, Guangdong, China. 515063