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## **CONNECTING LEARNING TO REAL-WORLD NEEDS**

**In 2025, SUSS strengthened its commitment to applied, industry-relevant learning that delivered meaningful real-world impact. From addressing sustainability challenges to tackling social issues overseas, students translated knowledge into action, generating tangible outcomes and making positive differences in communities.**

## SOLVING SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Keeping goods cold without wasting energy. Meeting delivery timelines while reducing emissions. Staying compliant without driving up costs. These are the kinds of pressures logistics companies navigate every day. From August to October 2025, six interdisciplinary undergraduate teams from SUSS stepped into these real-world challenges through the inaugural SUSS Sustainability Hackathon 2025.

Co-organised by the SUSS Behavioural Insights Centre of Excellence, Sustainability Committee and Supply Chain Management Programme, the hackathon brought students together with five industry partners: Alliance 21, Commonwealth Kokubu Logistics, Logwin Air + Ocean Singapore, SAAA@Singapore, and SFS Pharma Logistics.

The challenges were drawn directly from the partners' day-to-day operations, ranging from cold-chain efficiency and time-critical shipments to regulatory compliance and sustainable distribution practices. Working closely with industry mentors, students engaged with real datasets, operational requirements, and business constraints to develop solutions that could realistically be implemented within existing workflows.

Applying data-driven and analytics-based approaches learnt in the classroom, including optimisation models and scenario analysis, students explored practical ways to improve efficiency and reduce waste. Along the way, they were supported through sustainability workshops, mentoring sessions, and guest lectures that helped deepen both their technical understanding and industry awareness.

The collaboration continued even after the hackathon ended. Several industry partners invited teams to present their ideas internally, with some expressing interest in piloting the students' proposed solutions.

More than a competition, the hackathon gave students the opportunity to see how classroom learning can translate into meaningful real-world impact. At the same time, companies gained fresh perspectives and practical ideas from students approaching these challenges with curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to experiment.



### SUSS SETS THE AGENDA FOR REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ACTION



As sustainability challenges become increasingly urgent across Asia, conversations around climate resilience, green development, and regional collaboration are taking on greater importance. These issues shaped the inaugural Sustainable Asia Conference 2025 (SAC2025), held at the Suntec Convention Centre in Singapore on 29 and 30 October 2025. The conference brought together 272 delegates from 19 countries, including scholars, sustainability practitioners, and members from the sustainability community.

The SAC2025 conference offered a unique blend of insights into sustainability by integrating thought leaders and experts from academic institutions and industry to combine scientific rigour with industrial relevance on the most pressing issues across Asia. Jointly organised by the SUSS School of Business and the University's Sustainability Committee, the conference explored how Asia can pursue more resilient and inclusive growth through innovation in infrastructure, finance, and workforce capabilities.

Through a programme featuring 32 speakers, four keynote speeches, a plenary address, 12 panel discussions, and 10 invited presentations, SAC2025 created opportunities for participants to exchange ideas, share research, and discuss practical approaches to sustainability challenges across the region. The conference also introduced an academic-practitioner co-review process to strengthen both academic rigour and industry relevance.

The programme further featured the World Economic Forum Hoffmann Showcase, which highlighted emerging research and fresh perspectives on sustainability, innovation, and global policy.

## ROBOTICS MEETS COMMUNITY CARE

As Singapore explores technology-enabled ways to support an ageing population, service robots are increasingly finding their way into community and care settings. Yet making these technologies truly useful requires more than technical capability alone.

Equally important are the everyday realities of care environments – how older adults interact with technology, how staff work, and how these tools can fit naturally into daily routines.

In 2025, postgraduate students from SUSS' MGT570 Service Robotics course had the opportunity to work on these challenges at the Yong-en Active Hub, an active ageing centre. Rather than developing solutions in isolation, students tested and demonstrated service robot applications within a real community setting.

Each team was assigned a service robot to deploy, drawing on skills in service design,

technology management, and hands-on natural language programming. Working closely with the centre's staff and members, students developed a better understanding of areas where support was needed before designing robotic solutions that can be meaningfully integrated into existing workflows.

The experience pushed students to think beyond the technology itself. They had to navigate practical and human considerations, from spatial limitations within the centre to how older adults and staff might respond and adapt to the robots in everyday use.

These real-world experiences informed the second run of the course, which continued to use a community-service context as the basis for student projects. Each team developed a consultancy-style proposal supported by live demonstrations of their robots in action, with projects assessed based on feasibility, service fit, and user experience.

More importantly, the project gave students the opportunity to work directly with people whose needs and experiences shaped the solutions they were building. In the process, they learnt not only how technology can be applied, but also how empathy, adaptability, and practical understanding are essential to making innovation work in real-world settings.



## 2025: THE YEAR SUSS STUDENTS LED THE CHANGE ON THE GROUND



Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong (centre) with MKT367 Social Marketing students as they share how they apply discipline-based skills through caregiving support activities.

In 2025, student-led community initiatives at SUSS became less about one-off volunteering activities and more about building longer-term relationships with the communities involved. Students took the lead in designing initiatives that responded more directly to the realities faced by different groups in society.

Across the year, 28 initiatives reached 857 beneficiaries, including migrant workers, seniors, youths-at-risk, and persons with disabilities. Developed in partnership with organisations such as Ray of Hope, MINDS, and other social service agencies, these projects emerged from competition, interest, and advocacy groups focused on inclusion, support, and community connection.

Some initiatives created opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together through shared experiences. Through Striking Unity: SUSS & Ray of Hope Celebrate Community at SG60, migrant workers and local youths connected through sport and interaction. Other projects focused on sustained engagement. In Project MINDSCraft, students designed and

facilitated activities for persons with disabilities, fostering inclusion, active participation, and meaningful social connections.

Classroom learning also became more closely connected to community needs. Through the MKT367 Social Marketing Community Project, 53 Marketing students worked with SG Assist and Ang Mo Kio Community Centre to develop and implement 11 caregiving support initiatives for Caregivers Day. From interactive booths to awareness activities and public pledges, the initiatives supported caregivers while encouraging broader community conversations around caregiving.

Through these experiences, students saw how ideas developed in the classroom could take shape in real settings and affect real lives. More importantly, they learnt that meaningful social impact often begins with listening, building trust, and staying engaged with communities over time.

## FROM SINGAPORE TO BANGALORE — CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS ACROSS BORDERS

What happens when students from Singapore and India come together to tackle real sustainability challenges in the same classroom? That question shaped NIE351 Interdisciplinary Global Learning, a credit-bearing course jointly delivered by SUSS and India's CHRIST University in 2025. Set in Bangalore, the programme brought students from both institutions into a shared learning environment centred on collaboration, cultural exchange, and applied problem-solving.

Rather than following a traditional study-visit format, participants worked in interdisciplinary teams made up of students from social work, psychology, early childhood education, business, supply chain management, and business analytics. Together, they explored sustainability challenges from multiple perspectives and developed grounded understandings of complex real-world issues.

Working alongside community partners such as Bahaku Millet Adda, Sunbird Straws, Adanya Chetana Foundation, Hasiru Dala, and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, students were exposed to a wide range of interconnected issues, from food systems and mental health to sustainable consumption and livelihoods.

Much of the learning took place on the ground. Through site visits and direct engagement with organisations, students examined how programmes operated in practice, from large-scale meal distribution systems to social enterprises balancing sustainability goals with community livelihoods. These experiences encouraged them to think beyond textbook solutions and better understand the realities and trade-offs involved in addressing social and sustainability challenges.



Beyond the classroom, the programme also created space for meaningful relationships and exchange. Students learnt from one another's perspectives, engaged practitioners from policy and industry, and experienced firsthand how interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration can deepen both learning and problem-solving.

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING THROUGH RESEARCH

Understanding how social issues are experienced within Singapore's Malay/Muslim community remains an important area of local research, particularly in areas such as family life, education, and counselling.

In 2025, SUSS took a step towards strengthening this area of scholarship by launching three inaugural PhD scholarships for Malay/Muslim doctoral candidates researching issues affecting their own community in Singapore. Supported by three donor groups who share a belief in the power of education and research to strengthen communities, the scholarships were established to encourage more culturally grounded local research, while supporting scholarship shaped by lived experience and community context.

The scholars' research focuses on a range of issues affecting the Malay/Muslim community, including parenting and children's literacy development, the socio-economic and policy factors influencing academic outcomes among lower-income

students, and culturally grounded counselling approaches that support Muslim couples and families. Together with earlier studies conducted by SUSS, including research undertaken in collaboration with Yayasan MENDAKI, these projects contribute to a deeper understanding of the family, educational, and socio-economic circumstances shaping outcomes within the Malay/Muslim community.

By examining how these issues are experienced within homes, schools, and the wider community, the research seeks to offer deeper insight into the realities faced by Malay/Muslim families and children in Singapore. At the same time, the scholarships support the development of researchers who can contribute across academia, policy, and practice. In doing so, the initiative hopes to strengthen how educators, social service organisations, and policymakers design support that is more responsive to the lived experiences and cultural contexts of the communities they serve.

*SUSS PhD scholarship recipient and lecturer Ms Nur Riduan explores how parenting practices shape early reading development in the Malay-Muslim community to support more inclusive early childhood education and policies.*



## TURNING DATA INTO IMPACT FOR NON-PROFITS

Non-profit organisations today increasingly rely on websites and social media to connect with donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries. Yet turning digital data into meaningful insights – and using those insights to make practical decisions – remains a challenge for many organisations operating with limited time and resources.

Launched by the SUSS Business Analytics Programme in 2024, the Google Analytics Project Initiative was created to help bridge this gap. In 2025, the initiative expanded through collaborations with seven non-profit organisations and social enterprises, including Action for Change in Southeast Asia Limited, Calvary Community Care, Care Corner Singapore, Halogen (Singapore), Social Gifting, Starfish Singapore, and Thy Hua Kwan Moral Charities.

Each organisation brought real outreach and engagement challenges to the project. Some wanted to better understand why website traffic was not translating into sign-ups, while others were looking for clearer insights into the kinds of content that resonated most with their audiences.

As part of their final-year coursework, SUSS students worked closely with these organisations to analyse website and social media data using Google Analytics and related tools.

Beyond interpreting numbers, they also spent time understanding each organisation's goals, outreach efforts, and operational realities before developing recommendations that could realistically be implemented.

Their recommendations ranged from improving website navigation and refining calls to action to restructuring content and developing more targeted social media strategies. Through the analysis, organisations gained deeper insight into how audiences interacted with their platforms, which channels were most effective, and what kinds of content encouraged sustained engagement over time. This gave them a stronger basis for planning outreach efforts and making better use of limited resources.

For many organisations, the initiative marked a shift away from relying mainly on surface-level metrics such as page views or follower counts, towards more thoughtful and systematic ways of understanding digital engagement and impact.

The partnerships also continued beyond the classroom. Several organisations chose to work with the programme across multiple semesters, while in one instance, a student continued contributing to a partner organisation as a volunteer even after the project had concluded.

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