

**ADDRESS BY DR JANIL PUTHUCHEARY, SENIOR MINISTER OF  
STATE FOR EDUCATION & COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION  
AT THE IAL GRADUATION CEREMONY 2017, 24 OCTOBER 2017,  
7.00PM, SINGAPORE CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE**

Graduands,

Family of the graduands,

Friends from the Adult Education (AE) Community,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Today we celebrate the start of a new journey for more than 400 graduands across different Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) programmes. You have strived hard and graduation is a key milestone. For you, this may be the start of more hard work because we are at a time in Singapore's history, where we need to tackle adult learning in different ways. We have put in a lot of effort through the different organisations, investments and structures. But ultimately, it boils down to people like you who are going to provide the training and education to drive this lifelong learning effort in Singapore. It is likely to keep changing and we hope it will be a dynamic sector with opportunities for you to find your place, footing, professional pride and calling as adult educators.

**Raising CET Practices and Quality in Singapore to a Higher Level**

2. You will be able to contribute towards our national SkillsFuture movement. We hope you can be innovative, determined and vibrant in your pursuit of this practice in

the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector. As practitioners, you directly impact learners and organisations.

3. IAL was established in 2008 under the former ten-year Continuing Education and Training (CET) Masterplan to support the professionalism of the sector, and to ensure the training provided is of high quality. That high quality rests primarily from a competent pool of adult educators.

4. IAL started with offering solely the WSQ Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) programme, which is an entry level certification for adult educators. It has since grown to offer suite of learning and professional developmental pathways and programmes. As a testament to the provision of quality curricula, the delivery of ACTA and the Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DACE) have been centralised at IAL since January 2016. All these further cement, strengthen and emphasise IAL's central role as the NIE equivalent for TAE.

5. IAL also champions CET research and innovations. IAL have ventured into technology-enabled and workplace learning. IAL have looked at capability development within the industry and evolved with the fast-changing workplace and contributed to the SkillsFuture movement.

### **Moving Upwards to Become an Established Adult Education Professional**

6. IAL's Adult Education Network provides a platform for the TAE community to network, pursue special interest groups, find likeminded individuals within the community, drive professional development, and develop business opportunities. The

network has more than 6,000 members, demonstrating the size and scope within this space.

7. One of the initiatives is the Adult Education Professionalisation (AEP) initiative which create skills leaders for professionals in TAE sector. The pilot began in 2015, with the full rollout early this year. Two recognised tracks for Specialist Adult Educators – Curriculum Development and Facilitation – were developed as refinement, allowing AE professionals to develop further sub-division of expertise and be recognised for this.

8. AEP now has more than 600 AE professionals. This has three significant benefits. First is for AE professionals who benefit from the enhanced recognition of their professional and pedagogical excellence. Second is for the industry. With objective benchmarks, organisations have visibility and assurance in the TAE professionals whom they engage. Third is for Singapore. It raises quality and capabilities of our TAE practitioners, and in turn positively benefit the industry and workforce. This contributes to a better skilled and more vibrant economy.

9. Today, we are also unveiling IAL's first five Adult Education Fellows (AEF), who are at the pinnacle of Adult Education practice. They are: Chef Eric Teo, Associate Professor Lim Swee Hia, Professor Lim Yeow Khee, Professor Christopher Chia and Professor Annie Koh. They deserve another round of applause.

10. This pioneer batch of AEFs embody the spirit we hope to inspire in our TAE community. They are outstanding veteran leaders in their fields, known for their mastery of domain skills and knowledge, passion, dedication and contribution to

industry development through their practices. Whether we confer them the AEF or not, they are well known and held up as mentors and role-models. The AEF is another form of recognition. They have helped many others achieve success by generously sharing their own experiences and insights, and championing initiatives and programmes within their specific industries. We look forward to appointing more such shining beacons as AEFs over time, which demonstrates our commitment to this profession. AEFs will play a leading and inspiring role while setting the benchmark of excellence for the TAE community.

11. Today, we also recognise the inaugural 30 recipients of the SkillsFuture Study Awards for the TAE sector. These recipients are well established in the community. Their pursuit of self-improvement and efforts for growth reflect the spirit of all the graduands and AEPs here, in the dedication to professional development.

### **IAL Supporting the TAE Community to Greater Heights**

12. Please tap on the opportunities and support made available by IAL and stay connected with IAL's Adult Education Network. You are part of a community and become a member once you start your course with IAL. Look to the community to drive your profession forward. We hope this is a stepping stone in your career building and an enhancement in your professional development. We look forward to more of you eventually joining the ranks of Adult Education Fellows one day.

### **Conclusion**

13. TAE sector is in transformation, with new opportunities created for you. New opportunities will also be created by you for the rest of our economy as part of

SkillsFuture. For the sector to become truly dynamic, vibrant and cohesive, your engagement and contribution with each other as a community will be a key component.

14. Finally, we want to thank the AEFs for their contributions in their respective arenas of practice, for being inspiring role-models, for sharing their stories, and for mentoring other fellow professionals. To the graduands, help us deepen the skills of Singapore's workforce. Your future students and beneficiaries from your professionalism will contribute further to the vision that we have of Singapore - a vibrant and dynamic country. It will transform our economy and society, and provide opportunities to each generation of Singaporeans.

15. Congratulations to all of you! Thank you.