

INSTITUTE FOR ADULT LEARNING MARKS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY WITH OFFICIAL OPENING OF SINGAPORE'S ADULT LEARNING COLLABORATORY

The Adult Learning Collaboratory draws more than 20 organisations to co-create and jointly experiment future-focused adult learning solutions for the diverse workforce, including digital marketeers, hawkers, junior lawyers and more

SINGAPORE, 1 AUGUST 2024 – The Institute for Adult Learning ([IAL](#)) celebrated its fifth anniversary as an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) today. IAL was set up to raise the standards of adult education in Singapore, and drive research and innovation in this space.

This milestone event was marked by the official unveiling of the 3,500-square-foot physical space of the Adult Learning Collaboratory (ALC), a joint initiative between IAL and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). Minister of State for Education, Ms Gan Siow Huang graced the event to witness the official opening of the Collaboratory.

The Collaboratory is a first-of-its-kind initiative which combines the concepts of both 'collaboration' and 'laboratory'. It seeks to unite ecosystem players to tackle complex challenges in adult learning through a dynamic process of testing, experimentation, and iteration. IAL's extensive research in jobs, skills and learning over the years will provide a strong foundation of knowledge to generate new solutions.

More than 20 ecosystem players have joined as collaboratory partners to innovate and test new solutions at distributed experiment sites¹ across Singapore. These early collaborators include large and small enterprises, Institutes of Higher Learning, training providers, adult educators and technologists. Their experiments will focus on three critical domains: *future-oriented pedagogies*, *digital capability development for an AI-augmented future*, and *new-age business transformation*. These collaborative efforts seek to benefit adult learners working in diverse sectors (see **Annex A**).

As a start, Singapore Polytechnic's School of Business, Fei Siong Group and the Singapore Academy of Law are experimenting with future-oriented pedagogies tailored to their different

¹ Distributed experiment sites: Experimental research conducted across multiple locations in order to test prototypes in different contexts to ensure use-centricity and scalability.

contexts. ALC aims to share the preliminary results of the experimentation and innovation by December 2025.

Associate Professor (Practice) Yeo Li Pheow, Executive Director of IAL, said the overwhelming response by industry partners to IAL’s initiatives was an encouraging indication of widespread acknowledgement of the power of adult learning to drive enterprise and societal outcomes. “The past five years coincided with a period of digital and AI transformation at work, which has shifted the adult learning landscape in Singapore, elevating the impetus for adult learning to be harnessed meaningfully. We have not only adapted to challenges but have also seized new opportunities to innovate and grow. Today, as we celebrate our fifth anniversary and the opening of the ALC, we reaffirm our commitment to excellence in adult education. This dual milestone represents both IAL’s progress and vision for the future. Through strategic partnerships, cutting-edge programmes, rigorous research, and continuous innovation, IAL is dedicated to equipping Singapore’s workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving global economy. The new injection of experimentation capabilities into the adult learning ecosystem through the ALC is timely.”

Housed within the Lifelong Learning Institute, the Collaboratory features an experimental theatre equipped to generate learning analytics, Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS) equipment for brain-level monitoring of adult learning, and collaborative spaces for joint ideation, to provide essential technological support for the community (see **Annex B**).

Enterprises, organisations and researchers keen to advance the practice of adult learning in Singapore via the Adult Learning Collaboratory may visit <https://www.ial.edu.sg/alc> or email alc@ial.edu.sg for more information.

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About the Institute for Adult Learning

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is the National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning (NCAL) and an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. As NCAL, IAL closely collaborates with and supports Adult Education professionals, enterprises, human resource developers, and policymakers through its comprehensive suite of programmes and services aimed at enhancing capabilities and catalysing innovations in Continuing Education and Training (CET). IAL also champions research to sustain economic performance through skills development, shapes employment and CET policies, and fosters innovations through learning technology and pedagogy to enhance adult learning experiences. For more information, please visit www.ial.edu.sg.

Annex A: The Adult Learning Collaborators Tackling Adult Learning Solutions

Ecosystem of Collaboratory's partners engaged in co-innovation and distributed experimentation across three future-focused domains



Our partners provide the distributed experiment sites with different contexts. Their commitment to trial new solutions in the selected domains are driven by the various workplace and adult learning challenges.

A brief description of the three key domains for distributed experimentation:

1. Future-Oriented Pedagogies

The Collaboratory seeks to equip the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector and beyond with pedagogies to adapt to the evolving complexities of the workforce. The distributed experimentation aims to test future-oriented pedagogies that cultivate learners who are able to work with the emergent, unknown and complex.

2. Digital Capability Development for an AI-augmented future

The Collaboratory aims to empower workers in the digital age by addressing the challenges they face in evolving their occupational practice using digital tools. We will co-develop a digital capability development approach that incorporates skills and the broader capabilities of an individual's participation in the development of digital technologies, ensuring that workers are upskilled rather than deskilled and organisations' capacity and productivity are enhanced.

3. New-age Business Transformation

The Collaboratory’s effort to rejuvenate businesses through employee empowerment and bottom-up innovation. The focus is on the approaches that can be taken to activate their workforce to grow the business in new ways while demanding higher skills, thereby growing the pipeline of strong businesses and quality jobs in the economy.

Real-world experimentation across three domains is underway, beginning with three sites—Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore Academy of Law, and Fei Siong Group. Drawing from IAL's research and leveraging the expertise of professionals in these institutions, new approaches are being trialled to empower digital marketers, junior lawyers, and hawkers to thrive in dynamic and complex environments.

Partner	Description
Singapore Polytechnic	<p>Singapore Polytechnic puts its Specialist Diploma in Digital Marketing and Analytics up for co-experimentation. Its educators walk alongside IAL researchers to create and test how future-oriented pedagogies can support its digital marketers to stay ahead in an industry characterised by rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer behaviours. The aim is to nurture digital marketers who can be more confident to anticipate and adapt to future trends, harness new technologies such as AI and machine learning, and engage with diverse and global audiences in meaningful ways. This approach will prepare learners to lead and innovate in the future of marketing, strengthening their employability in an age of AI. The goal is to expand and scale successful practices to more programmes across the School of Business and beyond.</p> <p>Quote from Mr Lucas Tok, Acting Director of the School of Business, Singapore Polytechnic: "We are excited to partner with the Adult Learning Collaboratory to leverage forward-thinking teaching methods that enhance our learners' sense of identity, agency, and connection. By integrating these innovative approaches across diverse contexts and collaboratively designing assessments with industry partners, we ensure that our students not only acquire relevant knowledge but also develop</p>

	<p>the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the evolving workforce of the future."</p>
<p>Singapore Academy of Law</p>	<p>The Singapore Academy of Law aims to boost lawyer training by enacting future-oriented pedagogies in their training programmes to equip lawyers with the dispositions and skills needed to navigate the complexities of modern legal practice.</p> <p>By emphasising collaborative approaches and exploring digital tools training, this initiative aims to equip the current generation of junior lawyers with enhanced skills for an AI-impacted future. This will not only advance their professional development but also elevate the quality of legal services provided to the community.</p> <p>IAL hopes to expand and scale these successful teaching methods across SAL and beyond.</p> <p>Quote from Mrs Delphine Loo, Chief Legal Officer and Senior Director of Learning & Development (Singapore Academy of Law): "The ALC's unique approach of joint experimentation on future-oriented pedagogies at different sites is a productive approach to help our trainers deliver their lessons in a more effective and impactful manner. This transformative approach to adult learning will shorten the learning runway for our young lawyers, and ease the pressure to balance family, work, leisure and continuing professional development."</p>
<p>Fei Siong Group</p>	<p>Fei Siong Group is driving forward its vision of a thriving hawker trade, collaborating with the IAL research team and industry specialists to strengthen its Hawkerpreneur programme.</p> <p>This innovative initiative empowers aspiring young hawkers to embrace a new era of entrepreneurship by equipping them with vital skills such as digital literacy, market analysis, and customer engagement – with most skills picked up through work.</p> <p>By mastering these cutting-edge techniques, participants not only enhance their operational efficiency and profitability but also make the hawker trade a viable alternative pathway of success for Singaporeans,</p>

ensuring they thrive as essential contributors to Singapore's vibrant culinary landscape.

Quote from Joe Sng, Associate Director, Fei Siong Group: “In nurturing younger hawkerpreneurs, we focus on more than just business skills. We emphasise the importance of innovation, adaptability, and continuous learning. Our goal is to work with the ecosystem to test strategies for young entrepreneurs to thrive, blending tradition with modern practices for sustained success.”

Annex B: ALC's Collaboration and Experimentation Infrastructure

