

**ADDRESS BY MR NG CHER PONG,
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AT IAL GRADUATION CEREMONY 2016, NTUC AUDITORIUM
15 APRIL 2016, 7.15PM**

Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening to all of you

1. I am delighted to join you at the Institute for Adult Learning Graduation Ceremony 2016. My heartiest congratulations to all of you who have worked hard to deepen your skills as a CET professional – whether it is for your certificate, diploma or master’s degree. The investment of your time and effort, particularly the many sacrifices all of you have made in the course of this journey, deserve due recognition. It is not easy to balance the workplace demands and your family commitments, and I applaud you on your achievement.

2. Equally important is the support of your family and friends – in their own way, they are a key pillar of strength in your quest to acquire deeper professional knowledge and skills. In this regard, I would like to thank the families and friends of our graduands for encouraging their loved ones on their lifelong learning journey.

3. IAL is committed to continuing to support all of you in your career, particularly in enabling you to put your newly gained knowledge and skills to good use, and in raising the professionalism of adult educators. The national SkillsFuture movement is now in full swing, with a slew of initiatives being rolled out to empower and open opportunities for all Singaporeans to continuously deepen their skills and build good careers based upon their skills. As a result, the education and training industry is experiencing significant changes in order to support SkillsFuture, with many new opportunities available for professionals like yourselves. The key will be how we can effectively respond to and meet the needs of the wide spectrum of individual learners and enterprises.

Raising the Bar in CET Landscape

4. IAL is expanding its role to support SkillsFuture, with two new areas of focus. First, IAL will create a system to accredit and provide professional recognition for adult educators. Since its inception in 2008, IAL has been expanding the range of professional development programmes made available to CET professionals. It now offers four Master's degrees, two Diplomas, four WSQ courses and a range of other programmes, with more in the pipeline. IAL has also set up the Adult Educators Network, which now has close to 7,000 members. This Network serves as a professional community of practice, offering many platforms for continuous professional sharing and learning. There is now one activity every day.

5. To further professionalise the industry, we will create a skills ladder for adult educators, which will clearly articulate the professional standards expected at three different levels – “Associates”, “Specialists” and “Fellows”. IAL will set up an accreditation system that provides professional recognition for individuals who have built up a portfolio of skills and experiences at different levels. The system will also enable individuals to work towards and progress to higher levels. As the first step, we launched the Adult Educators' Professionalisation or AEP initiative in May last year, which accredits established professionals in the field with the titles of “Associate” and “Specialist”, depending on their standing and experience. But it was limited to adult educators who were involved in training other adult educators.

6. To date, we have 112 CET professionals who have successfully been accredited under this initiative, 66 of them as Associate Adult Educators and 46 of them as Specialist Adult Educators. We are pleased that among them are those who have been nominated by training providers and others have voluntarily enrolled under the initiative. This is testament to the fact that the professional recognition of adult educators is valued by the community.

7. This year, we will extend the AEP to include the category of Fellows, to recognise adult educators who have made significant contributions in the CET arena. We will also open up the AEP to all adult educators – regardless of the sectors they are in.

Enhancing Career Development Facilitation in Singapore

8. Second, one of the key thrusts under SkillsFuture is to help individuals make informed choices in education, training and careers. To do so, we need to build up a pool of professional counsellors, who are deployed in schools, tertiary education institutions, private training providers and career centres. IAL has therefore collaborated with the US-based Center for Credentialing and Education or CCE to introduce a new programme in July last year, called Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications Advanced Certificate in Career Development Facilitation.

9. Known as WSQ ACCDF in short, this new programme aims to equip CET professionals with the skills and knowledge to provide effective career guidance to adult workers and students. This is the first WSQ programme to receive dual certifications – the WSQ ACCDF qualification from WDA, and the Global Career Development Facilitator-Singapore certificate from CCE. Graduates of this programme can also be recognised globally as career development facilitators if they apply for and fulfil the requirements for CCE's Global Career Development Facilitator-Singapore Credential. This professional credential will be offered by IAL in partnership with CCE in October this year.

10. I am proud to share that among us today are the pioneer batch of more than 90 graduands of WSQ ACCDF. Ms Chin Kai Fang, is one of the graduands today. Until two years ago, she was a teacher from a mainstream primary school. Inspired to be a beacon for young people with special needs, she took a leap and decided to make a career switch. Today, she is a Job Coach at SG Enable, an organisation dedicated to enabling people with disabilities. Kai Fang took on the WSQ ACCDF programme so that she could gain more professional insights and knowledge. I am sure that as she is more equipped now, she will be able to better steer her wards in making informed job choices. Kai Fang's story is an inspiration for us to live out our passion and apply our skills and knowledge to enable others.

11. Besides WSQ ACCDF, I am also pleased to share that IAL is currently working with career practitioners from both the public and private sectors to establish a National Skills Framework for Career Development Practitioners. This framework will identify the common set of skills and training required for raising the capability of career guidance service providers. There will be associated programmes to facilitate baseline training, advancement and ensure continuing progress of Singapore's career development practitioners. In time to come, I believe that this framework will bring our CET professionals to a higher level of professional standard, and that in turn, will positively impact our workforce.

12. In closing, I would strongly encourage all our graduands to continue to engage with IAL. Stay connected with us through our different platforms, join our Adult Education Network and keep up with the latest news and trends in the industry. You can also look forward to the Adult Learning Symposium 2016 to be held on 3rd and 4th November this year. This is IAL's anchor biennial conference for the CET community to learn about the latest training practice, design and delivery. This year, spotlight is on the theme of "Future of Work, Future of Learning", to share insights on where CET is heading towards and steer our CET professionals towards knowing how to strengthen their careers in the long term.

13. I am confident that every one of you will be a valuable asset in deepening the skills of Singapore's workforce and strengthening our competitiveness. I look forward to your contributions and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you.