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Asia Pacific's Largest Youth Social Entrepreneurs Gathering Highlights Role of Youth in Climate Action

The Regional Youth Co:Lab Summit, jointly organised by the Citi Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) celebrates 5 years of positioning young people front and center to solve the region's most pressing challenges

Singapore – Close to 250 participants representing 20 countries and territories gathered in Singapore to discuss how they can help tackle the world's most pressing challenges at the Youth Co:Lab Regional Summit 2022. Centered around the themes of *Youth in Climate Action* and *Leaving No Youth Behind*, attendees united behind a common agenda to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Hosted in Singapore the hybrid summit by Citi Foundation and UNDP is being held in partnership with the National Youth Council Singapore (NYC). Over 3,000 people also registered to join us online from more than 100 countries through the Youth Co:Lab virtual platforms.

Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry, **Alvin Tan** kicked off the summit with opening remarks centred around the importance of partnerships in empowering and equipping our youth to take action. (You may contact National Youth Council's media representative for the full copy of MOS Tan's opening address)

During the two-day summit, attendees will engage with private and public stakeholders including governments, investors, incubators, and accelerators, to discuss youth leadership and empowerment for sustainable development, innovative financing solutions, gender inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem, and the future of work.

"If given space and a voice, the youth are powerful actors in addressing some of the world's toughest development challenges and UNDP is committed to supporting and mobilizing young people, especially social entrepreneurs who are driving innovation in communities across the Asia Pacific region," said **Christophe Bahuet** Deputy Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. "This summit is an invaluable opportunity to join with these young determined drivers of social justice and enterprise, to expand our efforts towards building a greener, more inclusive, and sustainable future."

Attending the summit, Citi's Head of South Asia & ASEAN, **Amol Gupte** said, "Citi is pleased to bring together young people and engage them in solving the challenges of tomorrow. With the goal of achieving the UN SDGs by 2030 rapidly approaching, the summit is a crucial platform for youth entrepreneurs from around the region to access the support necessary for their transformative ideas to come to fruition and gain scale."

Over twenty young social entrepreneurs will also pitch their innovative solutions on the themes of Climate Action, Women Empowerment and Leaving No One Behind.



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Representing Singapore at the Summit are the youth teams and past participants of the National Youth Council's Youth Action Challenge¹ Artwave, Stick 'Em, HomePal and SELF.

- Artwave creates meaningful encounters at the intersections of sustainability, mental wellness and the arts through initiatives such as audio dives in locations around Southeast Asia, audio walks at artists enclaves and online (sustainable) reunion dinners.
- Stick 'Em makes STEM education accessible to all by building robots with chopsticks at 1/10th the cost of traditional robotics kits.
- HomePal is a technology startup and social enterprise whose core product is a fall detection system that uses IoT devices and AI-enabled verification to provide swift and accurate detection of any fall or abnormality occurring at nursing homes, while protecting their privacy.
- SELF is a ground-up initiative with the aim to reduce inequalities faced by low-income Singaporean women by bridging opportunities for them to sustain their employability and achieve progressive income growth.

The Summit will also discuss the catalytic role the young social entrepreneurs can play in tackling the climate emergency, with key findings from a Youth Co:Lab research report titled *Climate Concern to Climate Action: The Role of Young Social Entrepreneurs*. Based on responses from 1,085 young entrepreneurs across 25 countries across the region, 74% of young entrepreneurs anticipate climate-related challenges to negatively impact their organisation. 66% of young entrepreneurs surveyed are actively engaged in offering products or services to mitigate the impact of climate change such as through policy, advocacy and education and skilling for green jobs. Findings from the study will be formally launched after the summit.

Implemented in 28 countries and territories, Youth Co:Lab, which was co-created by UNDP and the Citi Foundation in 2017, is the largest youth movement for empowerment, social entrepreneurship, equality, and social inclusion in Asia Pacific. Young people all over the world are responding to present day challenges with innovative approaches and fresh ideas, building bridges and creating the world they want. Youth Co:Lab works closely with multiple stakeholders across the region, including governments, civil society and the private sector, to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem and policy environment to better enable young people to take the lead on new solutions that will help meet the SDGs.

Since its inception, the initiative has reached over 200,000 participants, benefitted over 11,000 young social entrepreneurs and helped launch or improve over 1,240 social enterprises.

The Regional Youth Co:Lab Summit, is another milestone to celebrate Citi's 120th anniversary in Singapore. To mark the occasion and in alignment to the Summit's theme of *Leaving No Youth Behind*, Citi Singapore presented a cheque of S\$152,021 to ChildAid at the opening of the summit to help build brighter futures for underprivileged youth. ChildAid is a charity concert that raises funds for The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund (STSPMF) and The Business Times Budding Artist Fund (BTBAF), to provide students from low-income families a monthly allowance for school-related expenses and to pursue the arts respectively. Since 2002, Citi has raised S\$7.1 million (as of 2021) in support of these two Funds.

¹ Organised by the National Youth Council (NYC), and in partnership with Citi Foundation and UNDP, the Youth Action Challenge (YAC) empowers youth to champion ground-up initiatives in partnership with the government, businesses and community organisations, to achieve youth visions for Singapore in 2025. The YAC provides the opportunity for youth to turn their ideas into reality through curated workshops and guidance from experienced industry professionals. More information at youthactionplan.sg



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Dignitaries and guests-of-honour at the Opening Ceremony of the Youth Co:Lab Summit on 6 July 2022



Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry, Alvin Tan kicked off the summit with opening remarks

High-res photos can be downloaded [here](#).

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About Citi

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services and wealth management

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About Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfil our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

About UNDP

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at [@UNDP](https://twitter.com/UNDP).

About National Youth Council (NYC)

At NYC, we believe in a world where young people are respected and heard and have the ability to influence and make a difference to the world. Together with our partners, we develop future-ready youth who are committed to Singapore by instilling in them a heart for service, resilience and an enterprising spirit.

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