

DEAL SHARE LIVE: Innovating Towards Inclusive and Creative Economies

About the Session

On 26th June 2019, AVPN hosted six Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs) to pitch during the [Deal Share Live](#) session at the conference. All six entrepreneurs were working on creative solutions that foster diversity and inclusion for marginalised communities. Their work spans app and technology development, crafts, leisure industries, fashion and education. The World Café format brought SPOs and conference delegates together in an intimate setting to share insights and network, facilitating funding and collaboration opportunities.

90 delegates comprising grantmakers, trusts and foundations, corporates and impact investors attended the session. For the second year, the session was produced in partnership with the British Council, as part of their [Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies \(DICE\) programme](#). Tristan Ace, Global Lead – Partnerships and Development, gave an introductory speech to share what the British Council is doing to support the creative economies. This included initiatives to empower women and girls, foster youth employment and support people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.



This year the AVPN team added a new concept to the live pitches, which was the introduction of 'champions'. The champions were representatives from AVPN's membership who had previously supported the SPOs either financially or with non-financial resources. This created an additional level of credibility to the pitches and reflected how the Deal Share Platform works, where all eligible Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs) are required to have an endorser from the membership.

The session was split into 3 rounds, each round consisting of a 5 minute presentation from SPO, up to 3 minutes endorsement from the champion and then 7 minutes of discussion and Q&A from the delegates. Before the rounds started delegates were able to watch a 1 minute introductory video from all of the SPOs to decide which 3 pitches they wanted to hear in full.

After the three rounds were completed all 6 entrepreneurs were invited up to share some of their key takeaways from the session.



The session was closed with comments from Katelijn Verstraete, Director Arts & Creative Industries East Asia at the British Council.

Key Takeaways

The 6 entrepreneurs noted that the session was useful as they were asked questions that they were not expecting and this was useful to help them frame answers going forward. Entrepreneurs also noted that they had been offered resources that they did not initially ask for but did require (e.g. legal resources).

We asked the entrepreneurs separately for their feedback and they liked the intimate discussions with delegates, which created a much nicer atmosphere than a boardroom pitch environment, and appreciated the support they were given in the lead up to the conference. They also saw the conference as a great way to make connections. One participant commented that: "I like this DS set up because the audience can ask directly to us [sic] and has intimate conversation or go in deep with possible collaborations." Another noted "*I like the intimate sharing sessions as the audience is also less afraid to speak up and discuss*". A third when asked about their interactions with the audience stated that it was a "*captive audience, [who] came to understand and ready to make a deal / offer*".



The Deal Share team have asked participants to let us know specific connections that they had made at the conference and we will be working to track the success of these going forward.

We invite members who are interested in finding out more about Deal Share or the Social Purpose Organisations that pitched in this session to visit www.avpn.asia/dealshare or to click on the title of the enterprise listed below.

Summaries of Discussions

[Journey of the Senses](#)

Presenter: Germ Doornbos, Founding Partner



Project outline: Creating jobs and financial independence for the blind/visually impaired through a sensory experience for guests by combining touch, smell and sound in an elegant and professional service.

Champion: Anna Kang from MYSC.

Champion's Endorsement: MYSC as a social venture accelerator and impact investor based in Seoul, that has been operating Vietnamese social venture accelerating program funded by KOICA (South Korean aid agency). Journey of the Senses (JOS) is one of participant social ventures in their programme. MYSC had provided JOS with offering financial support, trainings and coaching for business acceleration during the program. MYSC is discussing with JOS about

investment and will try to introduce more networking chances to JOS for their growth starting with this AVPN conference. Through their program, MYSC was able to clearly verify JOS's business capacity and consequently is planning to move on with an investment round towards JOS.

Anna recommended JOS for others to fund due to their strong expertise, deep understanding of the hospitality business, and remarkable business sense: Founders Germ and Tu have been working in the hospitality business for more than 10 years, and they clearly know how to run and scale their business. Since 2017, MYSC has supported seven social ventures in Vietnam. Out of the seven teams, JOS is the most professional and outstanding in terms of their smooth communication, business attitude and responsiveness. It is always very easy and comfortable working with them.

Discussions:

Q: What is JOS's competitive advantage?

A: There are a limited number of organisations that provide experiences like Dining in the Dark; the business focus is very much on the quality of service and food, highly motivated staff that provide a very high level of service. For the spa, the disabled staff are their competitive advantage in addition to combining smell and touch to enhance senses.

Q: The majority of customers are international, but in terms of reducing stigma, what are you doing to ensure that Vietnamese locals are coming?

A: 30-40% of clientele are local (returning customers) because the middle class is growing. They also want to focus on medical massages (e.g. back pain) because these will be recurring customers which will probably be locals.

Q: How are you measuring awareness of your organisation and the success of what you do?

A: General awareness can be seen through TripAdvisor and online review sites, as well as new customers. They also measure how many jobs are created as a means to evaluate their success.

Solve Education!

Presenter: Janine Teo

Project outline: Solve Education!'s core platform is Dawn of Civilization, a mobile game where users can learn or improve their Math and English skills. It was specifically designed for low-end smartphones with intermittent internet connectivity, making it accessible and useful for students of all socio-economic backgrounds.



Champion: Boon Chong, Optus

Champion's Endorsement: Optus provided Solve Education! with \$50k of local (20k) and regional grants (30k) in 2017, and mobile phones loan for them to do a POC with local charities in SG and beyond. They received 1-1 mentoring by Singtel Sustainability team and business staff, workshops, networking opportunities during 2017 programme and beyond. Solve Education was part of the

Singtel Group Regional Forum 2018 – for them to share their solutions with their regional Associates and Optus sponsored them a booth at the Sustainable Solutions Expo in 2018 by GCNS which is also at the same location at Temasek Ecosperity 2018.

Boon Chong noted that there has been a good working dynamic working with Solve Education!. They have been incredibly supportive and have a spirit of giving back to the community as mentors and speaker such as the Singtel Group Future Makers 2018 .

Discussions:

Q: Can you talk us through the process through which the game was developed?

A: Techno-education ecosystem currently has a low completion rate. During the development period they used youths to vote for what they like or dislike - realised that current education games are “chocolate coated broccoli” and needed to create games that are attractive to young people. Thus, bite-sized educational games were built into the whole game with progressive learning. For example, there is a success story where a 7 year old boy learnt 1 year worth of literacy in 3 months because he really liked the game.

Q: Do the students pay for the fees?

A: The students do not pay for it as we do not want to make another barrier to learning for them. We charge the hiring company a fee when we link them up to the jobs they eventually join. The jobs they obtain are much higher paying as english-speaking employees are less abundant.

Q: What is the level or statistics of the education level they achieve?

A: Over 60% will reach CEFR Level in terms of level of English that they achieve.

Equal Reality

Presenter: Allison Reid

Project outline: Diversity and Inclusion training in Virtual Reality (VR). Their VR experiences allows you to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes” enabling you to feel what it can be like to be discriminated against or treated inappropriately.

Champion: Kirstyn Chan, Optus

Champion’s Endorsement: OPTus provided a \$30,000 grant was provided during the Optus Future Makers program. A small tech grant was also provided in addition during the four month accelerator program. Equal Reality also Participation in Optus’ four month accelerator program which included SME coaching and guidance. Optus also provided mentoring support. Finally, they also participated in Optus’ shared value workshops, giving Equal Reality the opportunity to engage with their business and explore opportunities to work together and collaborate.



Equal Reality offer a product that truly makes a difference in addressing diversity and inclusion issues. Their work is backed by extensive research that proves learning through virtual reality (VR) methods is a powerful and effective way towards increasing empathy and diversity of thought in individuals. With opportunities to scale their product globally and the expansion of their product line to include

off-the-shelf training, Equal Reality have strong potential to scale and grow their reach across the Asia Pacific region.

Discussions:

Q: How are potential clients incentivised to pay?

A: they are already paying much for traditional solutions - real actors for role-playing or time away from work - but it is not working. They need to see change as it affects their performance from earnings, client retention, employee retention. Ours are effective.

Q: What type of financing is Equal Reality looking for?

A: Equal Reality is open to combination to debt, loans, equity financing and blended solutions. We have equity funding commitments now in DC, and we are still exploring other sources.

Q: What are some of the clients you are working for?

A: We have worked with the government, the navy, army, schools and many more.

[Haus Kch](#)



Presenter: John-Paul Davis

Project outline: The project aims to better the learning experience of primary school students in rural schools through digital technology and art.

Champion: Daniel Donnelly, British Council

Champion's Endorsement:

Haus Kch was one of three Malaysian creative hubs that the British Council supported to go to the UK on a hubs exchange visit. In addition, John-Paul Davis is part of the Hubs for Good programme and has taken part in capacity building workshops, IFACCA (an international conference on culture) and a regional creative hubs forum. The British Council chose to support Haus Kch as they saw creative hubs as being able to have social economic and cultural impact.

The British Council found the working relationship with Haus Kch very productive, noting they were responsive and responsible, but mostly very dedicated and passionate about the community and the mission of the hub. Especially given the fact that Haus Kch operates in the context where there is less support and access from/to the policy makers, government that Malaysian peninsular hubs on could take advantage of.

Discussions:

Q: Do you do teacher training?

A: We do. We teach them that things can be done beyond traditional ways - essays can be typed out for example.

Q: So the way to sustain it is to get the government to support

A: The end goal is to prove to our government that there are many agencies that are willing to help, so they should help - they think it causes 1 million per school.

Q: How effective is the programme?

A: The schools have reported an increase in enrolment after we have gone and helped.

Earth Heir

Presenter: Xiao Cheng Wong

Project outline: To grow impact by improving supply chain via technology and better marketing strategy and execution. Beneficiaries include underprivileged ingenious people and refugees in Malaysia.

Discussions:

Q: How Quality control, especially for bulk orders?

A: Currently manually vetted by Earth Heir (in-house), requires long term relationships with artisans who may be unwilling to make so many repeat orders

Q: Social Priorities

A: try not to use plastic in their packaging, also maintaining the livelihood of artisans, not necessarily women but are indigenous people and refugee artisans

Q: What kind of support do you provide the artisans? (e.g. Capacity Building)

A: Involved in the design process and prototyping, then train locals in the making process.



DeafTawk



Presenter: Ali Shabbar and Wamiq Hasan

Project outline: To bridge the communication gap between deaf and hearing person, so they can have access to quality health, education, and employment opportunities.

Champion: Ayesha Khan, Hashoo Foundation

Champion's Endorsement: At the heart of the Hashoo Foundation's operations is the core belief that 'Together we make a difference' and investing in people ensures a socially cohesive and

economically just society. DeafTawk was supported by the Hashoo foundation as it fulfilled their criteria and they worked very well together.

Discussions:

Q: Does DeafTawk have first mover advantage?

A: Scalability is the key to their advantage and they are hoping to launch offline through AI and machine learning through collected data sets. Generally not a sector that others usually join in to.

Q: What use is the investment ask being put towards?

A: To build the offline service through machine learning and to scale throughout Asia and Middle East

Q: Are the government and ministries keen on collaborating?

A: Yes, government-funded organisations are under-staffed in terms of interpreters, they provide a cost-effective solution.