

**Future-Ready Society Conference Series 2023:
How to Get Involved: Opportunities for Collaboration and Action for the
People-Private-Public (3P) Sectors**

By Yu Yen King

Tote Board, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities (LKYCIC) and Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) launched the Future-Ready Society Impact Fund on 10 May 2023. At the launch, Dr Justin Lee, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Policy Lab, IPS; Dr Harvey Neo Senior Fellow, LKYCIC; and Ms Tan Su-Yin, Senior Director of Grants, Tote Board shared about the fund, futures-oriented research, and how the community can participate in projects as well as in the Action Fellowships.



From left to right: Tote Board Chairman Mrs Mildred Tan, Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Director of IPS Janadas Devan, and Chair of the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities Prof Cheong Koon Hean at the launch of the Future-Ready Society Impact Fund

Ms Tan Su-Yin, Tote Board's Senior Director of Grants, introduced the overarching objectives of the fund. Tote Board gives \$500 million every year to a broad base of causes, such as social services, health, arts, sports, community resilience and sustainability, with the aim of supporting a caring and resilient Singapore. While Tote Board's core role continues to be supporting social interventions to address current challenges, Tote Board seeks to also prepare the social ecosystem for challenges that lie ahead. Since 2008, Tote Board has supported the development of capabilities and capacities in the non-profit sector by providing funding for charities to engage in digital transformation.

She added that the Future-Ready Society Impact Fund and Knowledge Partnership will facilitate more intentional people, public and private (3P) partnerships, as Singapore needs to build a strong social compact to prepare for future disruption. First, the collaboration and knowledge sharing between Tote Board, IPS, LKYCIC and the broader social ecosystem, seek to uncover trends and potential solutions to help Singapore better plan collectively and proactively for future challenges. Next, the fund will support the implementation of action-oriented pilots, which allows the testing of potential solutions, tools and frameworks to obtain proof of concept. Ms Tan explained that this will allow practitioners to make mistakes in a safe space and iterate to make things better.

Ms Tan also acknowledged that some of these projects may challenge current social norms and assumptions, but we need to be open to novel solutions as we cannot assume the same formula that brought us success in the past will guarantee our success in the future.

Objectives of Futures Research and Focal Areas

Dr Harvey Neo, Senior Fellow at LKYCIC, shared more about the Knowledge Partnership. Quoting the words of the former Head of Civil Service, Peter Ong, he reiterated that Singapore has never enjoyed the luxury of not planning for the future. Dr Neo stated that while we are fairly confident of knowing some future scenarios, such as an ageing population, food insecurity and the climate crisis, we also need to build a resilient community to overcome unknowns. Dr Neo also posited that planning for the future is not just about reacting to anticipated trends but also thinking about the kind of society we want to have and how we can work towards our shared goals.

Building resilience for our society to collectively respond to unknowns as well as facilitating dialogue and building consensus on our desired future society, are both challenging. Thus, Dr Neo stressed that we need to be forward-thinking and innovative in the research questions and the solutions that we pursue, and we need rigorous, evidence-based solutioning to test pilots and fine-tune solutions.

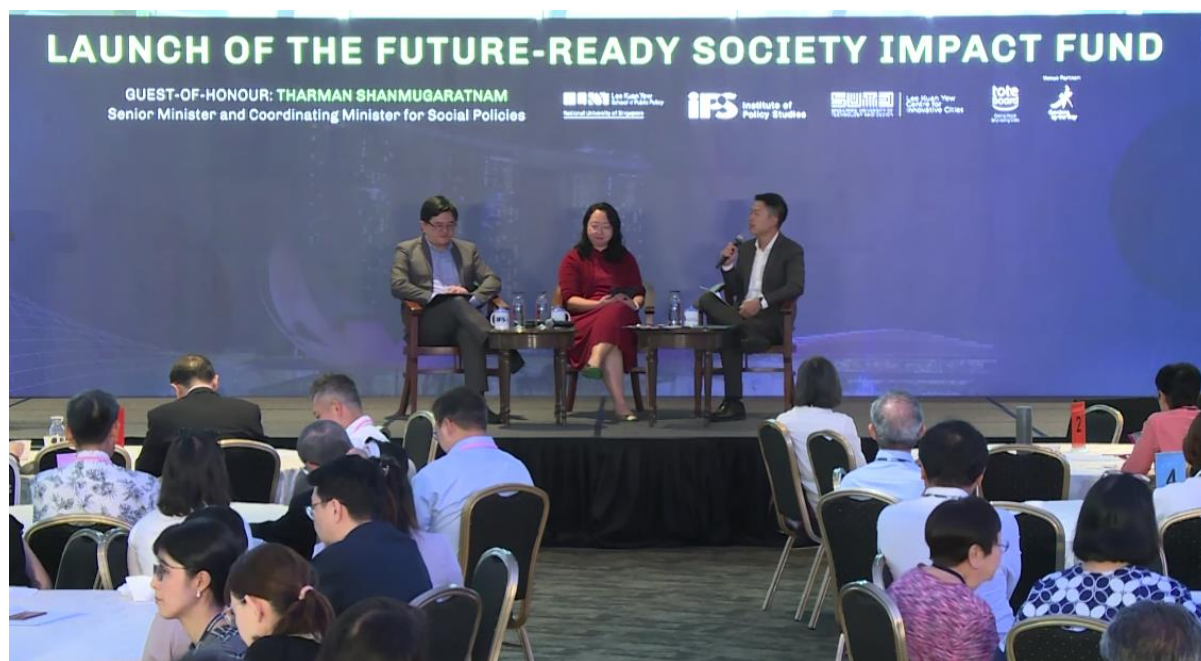
Dr Neo explained that the Knowledge Partnership model is committed to actionable research and experimentation with the shared goal of supporting a more future-ready society. He then called on the audience and the broader social ecosystem to participate in the Knowledge Partnership by injecting new ideas and fostering new collaborations. He shared one example of research that interested parties can collaborate on — how to navigate belonging and community in an age of mass urban development as large tracts of public housing leases expire and family structures diversify.

Projects in the Pipeline & Action Fellowships

Dr Justin Lee, Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Policy Lab at IPS, spoke briefly on the projects that Policy Lab has in the pipeline:

- **Inclusive Business Incubator:** This will offer entrepreneurship training, co-founder matching and start-up support for economically disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, ex-offenders and single mothers.
- **Giving Circles:** This seeks to mobilise five to seven families to give money directly to a family with lesser means, so that their income reaches a minimum level required for financial stability.
- **Participatory Budgeting and Citizen Design:** Residents in a local community will develop ideas for the use of a discretionary budget, and engage in collective deliberation and decision-making.
- **Citizens ReAssembled:** Citizen's panels will be formed with people from diverse opinion groups, and the panels will be tasked to arrive at a synthesised position. Pre and post polling will be used to see if the citizens panels are able to generate greater consensus.

Dr Lee announced that Action Fellowships will be awarded to successful applicants to lead, co-design and potentially implement the Inclusive Business Incubator and Giving Circles projects. Action Fellows will receive a stipend for a year and will be appointed as Adjunct Fellows in either IPS or LKYCIC. To support innovative ideas from the community, applicants can also propose their own project for consideration in an Open Category.



Left to right: Dr Harvey Neo, Ms Tan Su-Yin and Dr Justin Lee at the launch of the Future-Ready Society Impact Fund

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If you have comments or feedback, please email futureready@sutd.edu.sg. Additionally, to stay updated on the latest development of our project, we invite you to visit our website at <https://futurereadysociety.sg/> and sign up for our mailing list.



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