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FACTSHEET ON THE INSTITUTE FOR ADULT LEARNING

Background of IAL

Established in 2008 as an institute of the former Singapore Workforce Development Agency, IAL started with the objective of providing baseline training needs for adult educators (AEs), coupled with the directive to conduct research in adult learning. IAL was subsequently incorporated as part of SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG)¹, and the institute evolved and adapted its mission and programmes alongside the SkillsFuture national movement - expanding dynamically into continuing professional development and professionalisation of the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector, as well as widening research into workforce development and lifelong learning.

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) became an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) since 1 April 2019. The move enables a more synergistic collaboration as IAL brings to SUSS its expertise and experience in adult learning and Continuing Education and Training (CET), while SUSS provides an ecosystem of resources and experts rooted in academic rigour.

In November 2022, IAL was designated as the National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning (NCAL) to systematically raise the quality of adult teaching and adult learning across the TAE sector. It builds on the capabilities and networks that IAL has developed since its establishment, in andragogical research, enterprise engagement, and international collaboration. As the NCAL, IAL will:

- Raise the quality of adult educators through continuous education, and in collaboration with Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and training providers;
- Attract and enable leading industry professionals to contribute to adult education in their field;
- Drive innovation and technology adoption for the sector, and equip adult educators with needed digital skills;

¹ Singapore Workforce Development Agency was reorganised into two statutory boards – SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore in 2016.

- Conduct research to inform policy and practice in continuous education, and facilitate the translation of such research into methods, resources, and tools for adoption and scaling across the TAE ecosystem, and;
- Support the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning network, by advancing the theory and practice of workplace learning, including the provision of training and consultancy for companies.

Strengthening the TAE sector

IAL created the Adult Education Network (AEN) as a platform for TAE professionals to connect, collaborate and learn for continuing professional development and skills acquisition.

Besides AEN, IAL also pursues the national drive in professionalising the sector through the Adult Education Professionalisation (AEP) initiative. Under AEP, there are three tiers of recognised professionals – Associate Adult Educators (AAEs) who are established in their TAE fields of practice; Specialist Adult Educators (SAEs) who have attained skills mastery in areas of specialisation; and Adult Education Fellows (AEFs) who have made significant contributions in TAE fields of practice, and are appointed by nomination and invitation only.

Catering to the growth of TAE professionals

Over the years, IAL has curated and developed a host of programmes to meet the skills upgrading needs of TAE professionals. Starting with the anchor Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment and now known as the WSQ Advanced Certificate in Learning and Performance 2.0 and the signature WSQ Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education has transited into the new WSQ Diploma in Design and Development of Learning for Performance, IAL has since expanded its offerings from certificate and diploma to Master programmes, as well as various continuing professional development programmes to help TAE professionals develop and upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Research

IAL champions research in sustaining economic performance through skills, shaping employment as well as CET decisions. The research conducted by IAL aims to provide a strong knowledge base for the development of policy and practice in TAE through applied

research. Guided by national research themes, the four focus areas of research conducted by IAL are i) digital futures and skills, ii) work and lifelong learning, iii) career, employment and labour market and iv) adult learning pedagogy, technology and TAE ecosystem.

Innovation

To push the frontiers in learning innovation, iN.LAB was launched in 2015 as part of the national iN.LEARN 2020 plan to explore learning design and practices, curate best practices and relevant learn tech as well identify emerging trends, to promote the adoption of learning innovations in Singapore. iN.LAB has also incubated ideations and facilitated the development of prototype solutions in learning innovation.

Industry & Workplace Learning

Over time, IAL has built up its expertise in industry and workplace learning as a key thrust in its engagement with enterprises. The Centre for Workplace Learning and Performance (CWLP), a professional development centre, aims to develop organisation capability in workplace-based learning for business performance.

Under CWLP, the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE) @ IAL was set up in April 2020 to develop work-learn capabilities and further workplace learning in enterprises. It will also prepare TAE practitioners to help enterprises enact workplace learning. The Learning Enterprise Alliance was also launched as a knowledge network of curated enterprises representing diverse industries committed to using workplace learning in the design of work and workplace practices.