

[For Immediate Release]

Post Media Release



19 May 2026

News Editor

FROM CAMPUS TO COMMUNITY: STUDENTS PILOT REAL-WORLD SOLUTIONS ON THE GROUND

- **Students from Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) test and implement innovative solutions directly within the community to address everyday challenges**
- **Symposium showcases how AI and technology-driven solutions are translated into practical applications through interactive demonstrations**

Students across Singapore are stepping beyond the classroom and into neighbourhoods, testing their innovations in real community settings and working with grassroots organisations and residents to tackle everyday challenges. This ground-up approach to innovation took centre stage at the South West Community Development Council (CDC)'s **South West Community Inno Lab Symposium** on 19 May 2026. Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Education, Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration and Adviser to West Coast - Jurong West GRC Grassroots Organisations (GROs), and Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and Mayor of South West District, joined more than 100 students from IHLs, alongside grassroots organisations, social service agencies, government agencies, community partners and residents at the Symposium.

2 Serving as a bridge between academic innovation and real-world application, the Symposium showcased how ideas developed in academic settings are translated into practical solutions that deliver tangible impact for residents at the district level. Four student teams presented their research findings and prototypes, and shared insights from their community testing experiences through interactive booths and live demonstrations, highlighting how solutions have evolved through iteration, collaboration and feedback.

3 "The South West Community Inno Lab is a wonderful example of how our educational institutions and communities can come together to create something greater than the sum of their parts. This cross-institutional spirit of partnership reflects the kind of collaborative, inclusive approach we want to nurture in our next generation – young people who not only have the technical skills to innovate, but also the empathy and civic-mindedness to ensure their solutions truly serve the communities around them. I look forward to seeing how these projects continue to grow and inspire more students to contribute meaningfully to the places they call home," said Mr Desmond Lee.

4 For Matthias Ong, student leading the project under Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), rising utility bills has been an issue close to heart. Matthias has worked with his team to address a challenge that resonates deeply with many Singapore households as more residents are seeking practical ways to conserve electricity and reduce their monthly bills. The team developed *SaveHor!*, an innovative mobile application that helps residents adopt energy-efficient practices through real-time electricity usage tracking and gamified behavioural change features. The app provides per-appliance energy breakdowns, intelligent alerts when approaching usage limits, and a "Mission" page with actionable tips supported by live weather data – such as reducing air-conditioning usage during cooler periods – which helps residents balance comfort while managing energy costs more effectively.

5 "Energy cannot be created or destroyed – but it can be wasted. We cannot take our resources for granted; our every action matters. At *SaveHor!*, our mission is to help residents move beyond analysis and into action. We found that many residents feel overwhelmed by the data, and, without guidance, feel powerless against rising costs. So, we built a system to turn the confusion into proactive engagement. By simplifying

data and making energy efficiency rewarding, we're making sustainability a part of life. We all have the power to make a difference. Your energy, our lives – we better *SaveHor!*” said Matthias.

6 “We are proud to see our youths taking their learning beyond the classroom to tackle community challenges on the ground. They exemplify the spirit of community ownership that we champion in the South West District. By testing and developing their solutions with community partners, agencies and residents, the students have shown their ability in building connections to create meaningful change for society.” Elaborating on South West Community Inno Lab’s real-world approach, Mayor Low said: “The students’ hands-on experience prepares the students to be insightful problem-solvers whose practical solutions improve our residents' daily lives.”

7 While some student teams focus on helping families save energy and reduce costs, others are tackling different everyday challenges that affect residents' quality of life. In response to increasing rodent sightings in one of the estates within South West District, particularly near bin centres and food waste areas, students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic developed an AI-powered rat detection and control system. Tested in outdoor environments near bin centres and burrows, the intelligent trap system detects rodents and automatically applies targeted treatment, leveraging the natural grooming behaviour of rats to manage infestations in communal areas more effectively.

8 Several student teams have also leveraged artificial intelligence (AI) and technology-driven approaches to address persistent community challenges. Students from Singapore Polytechnic conducted live data collection and testing across three housing blocks, using these insights to develop an AI vision model that detects improper waste disposal. Over months of testing, the team refined a solution which helps estate managers optimise bin placement and reduce illegal dumping through timely, data-driven analysis.

9 Beyond AI-driven solutions, students have worked together to develop technology-enabled and design-driven innovations to address community needs. The team of students from Singapore Polytechnic and ITE College West jointly developed

an integrated resource platform to support students with learning disabilities and their families in transitioning to IHLs.

10 Launched in 2024, the South West Community Inno Lab has become a dynamic incubator for social innovation, bringing together more than 100 students from nine IHLs to co-create solutions addressing 10 community problem statements identified on the ground, spanning issues from pest control and waste management to accessibility improvements and energy conservation. A key feature of the programme is its applied, real-world approach, where students pilot their prototypes in actual community settings and incorporate feedback from stakeholders. This ensures that their solutions are continuously refined based on real-world needs, strengthening both their relevance and impact. Through this collaborative co-creation process, the Inno Lab has evolved into a growing ecosystem where ideas are not only generated, but tested, refined and translated into practical solutions that improve residents' daily lives.

11 Details of the event are as follows:

- Event : South West Community Inno Lab Symposium
- Date : Tuesday, 19 May 2026
- Time : 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm (**Media is invited at 11.30 am**)
- Venue : Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
The Campus Centre
8 Somapah Rd, Singapore 487372
- Guest of Honour : Mr Desmond Lee
Minister for Education
Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration and
Adviser to West Coast – Jurong West GRC Grassroots
Organisations (GROs)
- Host : Ms Low Yen Ling
Senior Minister of State
Ministry of Trade and Industry &
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
Mayor of South West District

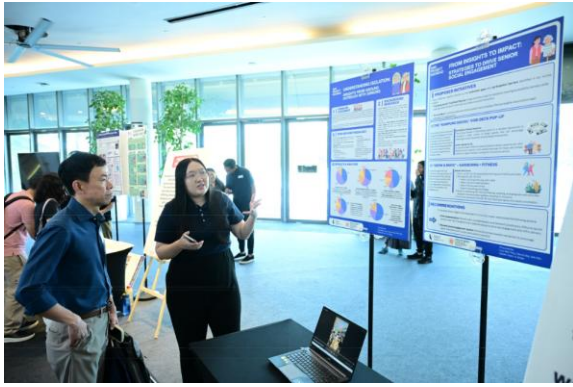
12 Photos for **South West Community Inno Lab Symposium** may be downloaded from the following [link](#). For more information, please contact our Media Liaison Officers below.



Minister Desmond Lee, Mayor Low Yen Ling alongside students from IHLs, grassroots organisations, social service agencies, government agencies, community partners and residents at the South West Community Inno Lab Symposium.



Students from ITE College West and Singapore Polytechnic sharing their project, a comprehensive support system for students with learning disabilities in Institutes of Higher Learning and their families.



Students from SMU implemented a comprehensive five-phase strategy to better understand and engage empty nesters and seniors without family support, with the aim of developing more targeted and effective outreach approaches.

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About the South West Community Development Council (CDC)

The South West Community Development Council (CDC) was formed on 24 November 2001.

Through local help programmes, the South West CDC provides assistance to help the less fortunate in our community. The South West CDC also organises projects and programmes to promote community bonding and social cohesion. The South West CDC adopts the "Many Helping Hands" approach to encourage community ownership among

residents, community partners and corporations to realise its vision of “Owning Your Community”.

Ms Low Yen Ling was appointed the Mayor of South West District on 27 May 2014. Ms Low is also the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and Adviser to Bukit Gombak SMC.

For more information, please visit: www.southwest.cdc.gov.sg

Programme

Time	Administrative Programme
11.55 am	Arrival of Mayor Ms Low Yen Ling Senior Minister of State Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth Mayor of South West District
12.00 pm	Arrival of GOH Mr Desmond Lee Minister for Education Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration and Adviser to West Coast – Jurong West GRC Grassroots Organisations (GROs)
12.05 pm	Video Showcase: South West Community Inno Lab Journey
12.10 pm	Project Sharing by ITE College West, Singapore Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic
12.35 pm	Opening Address by Mayor
12.40 pm	Address by GOH
12.50 pm	Presentation of Certificates to Students
1.00 pm	Tour of Student Booths Networking and Luncheon
1.30 pm	Departure of Mayor

Time	Administrative Programme
	<i>*Media doorstep to be arranged, subject to media request.</i>
2.00 pm	End of programme

Annex A

S/N	Name of IHL	Project Description
1	ITE College West and Singapore Polytechnic	<p>Students with learning disabilities in Singapore's higher education institutions and their caregivers face challenges such as financial strain, inadequate support systems, and lack of tailored resources.</p> <p>Students from ITE College West and Singapore Polytechnic have developed a comprehensive support system for students with learning disabilities in Institutes of Higher Learning and their families. They compiled a database of more than 15 grants and assistance schemes tailored for South West District residents, creating an AI-powered digital platform through the SupportGoWhere portal that integrates financial aid information with emotional support resources and transition guidance.</p>
2	Singapore Management University	<p>Seniors living alone may face challenges in financial literacy and may lack awareness of, or access to, legal assistance for matters such as Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) applications and will writing.</p> <p>Six SMU students, including three Law students, have developed and delivered educational sessions to help seniors living alone understand and complete the LPA processes. The students prepared bilingual presentations and worked alongside professors and lecturers to conduct LPA talks on 10 January 2026, followed by certification assistance on 24 January, directly supporting seniors in navigating the legal documentation process.</p> <p>The SMU team also identified that the primary barrier for seniors was awareness and</p>

		<p>understanding rather than the LPA process itself, leading to considerations for continuing the initiative with future student cohorts.</p>
3	Ngee Ann Polytechnic	<p>Rodent sightings in the community have become more frequent, particularly near bin centres and food waste areas, raising concerns over cleanliness and public hygiene.</p> <p>Students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic have developed an innovative AI-powered rat trap system that automatically detects rats and applies anticoagulant rodenticide, leveraging rats' natural allogrooming behaviour to spread poison throughout colonies for enhanced pest control effectiveness.</p> <p>The students continuously refined their prototype with safety features including reduced trap openings and wire mesh barriers to prevent access by non-target animals, whilst improving the AI camera system's low-light detection capabilities. Through multiple testing phases, they captured images of rats entering the trap and tested the AI detection accuracy and spray mechanisms.</p>
4	Singapore Polytechnic	<p>Caregivers of individuals with special needs lack timely access to specialised services and adequate support systems, resulting in delayed interventions, unmet needs, and a reduced quality of life for both caregivers and those under their care.</p> <p>Students from SP are collaborating with Grassroots Leaders and volunteers from the division to organise house visit sessions as part of their community outreach initiative.</p>

5	Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College West	<p>As our community ages, some seniors continue to face chronic health conditions that affect their independence and quality of life.</p> <p>Students from ITE College West have developed and implemented a comprehensive survey initiative to understand older adults' mental and physical health priorities. Working with the South West Community Development Council, they refined survey questions, utilised FormSG for data collection, and coordinated distribution through targeted outreach to age-appropriate grassroots organisations such as the Senior Citizens' Executive Committee via posters and SMS campaigns.</p> <p>The students successfully gathered responses from 200 respondents by February 2026 and conducted analysis to derive key insights that could inform evidence-based interventions to empower older adults in prioritising their mental and physical wellbeing.</p>
6	Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Singapore University of Social Sciences	<p>Residents in certain estates experience disturbances due to wildlife, particularly jungle fowls and chickens. The noise from these animals affects their daily routines and rest. There are differing views within the community between animal lovers and residents who prefer for the wildlife to be removed, leading to disagreements between the groups.</p> <p>Students from SUSS developed a community engagement strategy to address tensions between animal advocates and residents wanting jungle fowl and chickens removed from housing areas.</p> <p>They integrated chicken-themed activities into a Christmas Block Party, including interactive elements such as ornament-making, memory games, and sticker boards, alongside</p>

		<p>educational displays to raise awareness about cohabitation with wildlife. The students also created online surveys and opinion boards to gather resident feedback, complemented by social media outreach efforts to foster dialogue between different community stakeholders.</p> <p>Their comprehensive approach was presented at the SUSS Annual Project Showcase in February 2026, demonstrating how creative community engagement could help bridge divides on this contentious neighbourhood issue.</p>
7	Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Polytechnic	<p>West Coast division has an ageing population with over 7,000 seniors above 60 years old. While age-related programmes are available, there is a need to enhance barrier-free accessibility across the estate to better support the mobility and daily needs of elderly residents.</p> <p>Students from SP developed an innovative solution to improve barrier-free access, creating a design that underwent multiple iterations based on feedback from the Land Transport Authority (LTA).</p> <p>Working as part of their final year project, the students refined their prototype through early 2026, incorporating technical feedback and successfully producing a 3D-printed prototype by February. Their work was showcased at SP's Graduation Show and Industry Night in March 2026, demonstrating their innovative approach to addressing accessibility challenges in public infrastructure.</p>
8	Singapore Polytechnic	<p>In high-density housing areas, issues like cluttering of common spaces, noise nuisance, and indiscriminate dumping can contribute to neighbour tensions. These challenges often</p>

		<p>require measurements beyond enforcement to achieve sustainable and long-term behavioural change.</p> <p>Students from SP have developed an AI-powered system to combat indiscriminate dumping by incorporating mapping functions and data visualisation to help residents identify available bins and reduce illegal dumping caused by full bins.</p> <p>Following insights on data utilisation, the students proactively collected data within their campus to train detection algorithms and secured approval for a pilot test at three blocks in one of the divisions in the South West District. The students worked with local coordinators to gather specific photographic data from different angles and distances to ensure their AI vision model can accurately detect dumping incidents when deployed, with the system designed to support both residents in disposal planning and estate managers in operational resource allocation.</p>
9	Singapore University of Technology and Design	<p>Many Singaporeans rely on air conditioning to achieve indoor thermal comfort, contributing to higher energy consumption and carbon emissions. Simple, energy-efficient practices such as strategic furniture placement, home decluttering, and natural ventilation remain under-adopted despite their potential to improve indoor comfort.</p> <p>Students from SUTD developed <i>SaveHor!</i>, an innovative mobile application that helps residents adopt energy-efficient practices through real-time electricity usage tracking and gamified behavioural change features. The app provides per-appliance energy breakdowns, intelligent alerts when approaching usage limits, and a "Mission" page with actionable tips</p>

		<p>supported by live weather data, such as reducing air-conditioning usage during cooler periods.</p> <p>The SUTD team is developing <i>SaveHor!</i> into a full-stack App Store application with unique features including remote appliance control, real-time monitoring, and personalised energy-saving recommendations tailored to individual user behaviour patterns, making energy efficiency accessible and engaging for everyday residents through interactive gamification elements.</p>
10	Singapore Management University	<p>There are ongoing outreach efforts by Grassroots Organisations, Social Service Organisations and agencies to engage empty nesters and seniors who do not have family support, but some remain socially isolated and reluctant to participate in community activities.</p> <p>Students from SMU have implemented a comprehensive five-phase strategy to better understand and address these engagement barriers, with the aim of developing more targeted and effective outreach approaches.</p> <p>They conducted needs analysis by gathering elderly demographics data from various agencies and designing questionnaires for door-to-door outreach, whilst engaging with Lion's Befrienders to understand current outreach methods and observing existing grassroots events. The students are working to recruit volunteers for door-knocking activities to identify socially isolated seniors, record engagement barriers, and analyse qualitative insights from community visits.</p> <p>The SMU team has progressed through planned phases including outreach mapping, programme design, and evaluation. Their goal</p>

		<p>is to co-create tailored programmes for different elderly segments in partnership with Lion's Befrienders and Clementi Community Centre, ultimately developing an "Elderly Engagement Framework" that can be scaled by Community Development Councils and Social Service Agencies to improve elderly participation in community activities.</p>
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