

experience  
**Singapore**

A newsletter of the  
Singapore Cooperation Programme  
January - March 2012  
ISSUE 42

**AID IN ACTION**

HELPING THE DISPLACED  
AT THE TARO SUPPORT  
CENTRE IN MIYAKO CITY

**IT'S A FACT!**

WHY FOREIGN  
RESEARCHERS FLOCK TO  
SINGAPORE UNIVERSITIES

**AERIAL  
ARTISTRY**

SINGAPORE TAKES FLIGHT  
WITH THE SINGAPORE  
AIRSHOW 2012



# Dear readers,

**T**he *Experience Singapore* team hopes that 2012 has gotten off to a flying start for all of you! We look forward to continuing to bring to you the many and varied facets of Singapore. In this respect, we were heartened by the good feedback we received via emails and letters in response to our last issue, which featured Singapore's maritime aspirations.

This bumper issue of *Experience Singapore* brings you the excitement of the recently-concluded Singapore Airshow 2012 as we take to the skies for breathtaking, and often death-defying, aviation displays and stunts. We also bring you colourful highlights from Chingay 2012, an annual street parade marking the end of the Chinese New Year period with cultural performances from around the world.

In **Joining Hands**, we feature the Taro Support Centre, the first reconstruction project by the Singapore Red Cross to assist survivors of the March 2011 tsunami in Japan. And in **Making Friends**, hear from international researchers who have made Singapore their base to undertake research and development. Also, read in **Reflections** about how participants from the world over have benefitted from a Singapore Cooperation Programme seminar on government policies to promote small and medium enterprises.

We hope you will enjoy reading this very colourful issue of *Experience Singapore*. Do let us know what you think about it. As you know, the team is always looking at how we can improve *Experience Singapore* and we especially value your comments and suggestions towards this end.

**Sudesh Maniar**

**Director**

**Public Affairs Directorate**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore**

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Share with us your memories, photos and views of your experience in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Email us at [mfa@mfa.gov.sg](mailto:mfa@mfa.gov.sg). Three entries stand a chance to win goodie bags with souvenirs of Singapore Airshow 2012!

Our congratulations to the three lucky writers whose letters are featured in this issue — you have each won an exclusive goodie bag with colourful publications on Singapore!

*Experience Singapore* is a publication of the Public Affairs and Technical Cooperation Directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. The Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, and is aimed at sharing Singapore's developmental experience with other developing countries.

You can now follow us on Twitter! [Follow @MFASg](https://twitter.com/MFASg)

### QUOTES FROM READERS' LETTERS

"I attended one of your programmes in 2007 and to me, it was a wonderful experience. Since then I have been keeping abreast of new developments in Singapore. I commend your efforts."

**Bolarinwa M.K**  
**Nigeria**

"I am very happy to have received my first copy of the *Experience Singapore* newsletter. It is really wonderful and very informative. It reminds me of the kind people in your nice country, the memories of staying there and being with my friends from the Civil Aviation Academy of Singapore. I really had a very interesting time in your country and I learnt a lot of things."

**Abdul Satar Azami**  
**Afghanistan**

"Excellent organisation, professional people, beautiful country always on my mind when I receive my copy of *Experience Singapore*. It brings back a lot of memories of my visit to Singapore — learning, making friends, good food, good people and beautiful landscapes. I am truly grateful for the experience."

**Natasa Nikolic**  
**Bosnia and Herzegovina**



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SINGAPORE

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**Publishing Consultant**  
MediaCorp Pte Ltd

Cover photo: Getty Images

## WAITING TO BLOOM

Come June 2012, the scenic Marina Bay area is set to unveil its latest attraction: Gardens by the Bay.

The green lung is part of ongoing efforts to make Singapore a "city in the garden" and comprises three waterfront gardens — Bay South, Bay East and Bay Central. These cover a total area of 101 hectares.

The Gardens' many highlights will include two conservatories — the Flower Dome which will feature

Mediterranean-type plants; and the Cloud Forest which will mirror tropical high elevation regions like those in South America. There is also the Heritage Gardens comprising the Indian Garden, the Chinese Garden, the Malay Garden and the Colonial Garden.

"We are a country of many cultures and the gardens offer the perspective from the viewpoint of plants," said Dr Kiat W. Tan, CEO of Gardens by the Bay, on 12 Nov 2011.

## MOST BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

Singapore has been named as the easiest place to do business for the sixth consecutive year by the International Finance Corporation and World Bank. The study called "Doing Business 2012" measured the business regulatory environment in 183 countries. "Singapore is an interesting case because despite being ranked No 1, it continues to improve, it continues to change," said Ms Sylvia Solf, lead author of the Doing Business

Project, World Bank Group. She cited the country's consistent improvement in e-government services, setting up one-stop shops for start-ups, and fast-tracking approvals for construction and building permits. The annual survey encourages countries to move towards more efficient business regulation. It covers government initiatives in areas such as helping new businesses start up, providing credit information and improving tax regulations.

## TALKING POINT

**"The Rebel will hover like a helicopter, fly nice flat spins, do all sorts of gyroscopic tumbles and all the traditional graceful aerobatics too. There should be enough smoke, noise and action to entertain anyone."**

— Australian pilot Tony Blair, 41, who performed daredevil stunts in his single-propeller Rebel 300 during the Singapore Airshow from Feb 14 to Feb 19 at the Changi Exhibition Centre.



## SCOOT AIMS TO FLY HIGH

There will be a new way to fly into Singapore from mid-2012 — via Scoot, a new budget carrier launched by Singapore Airlines (SIA). Offering airfares of up to 40 per cent lower than full service-carriers, Scoot will fly on medium and long-haul routes, including to Australia and China. It has chosen the Australian city of Sydney as its first destination for daily service when it begins operations in June. The budget airline, which is wholly-owned by SIA but will be managed independently, aims to have 14 planes by 2016. Capitalised at S\$280 million, Scoot aims to start making a profit after the first two years.



Photo: TPG

## SINGAPORE BY NUMBERS

# S\$15 billion

What the Economic Development Board of Singapore (EDB) is projecting fixed asset investments in Singapore to rise to. Despite a slowing global economy, the EDB remains "cautiously optimistic" about 2012, as investment interest in Asia remains healthy.

# 1 to 3%

That is how much Singapore's economy is projected to grow in 2012.

# 18%

The percentage of new foreign undergraduates in Singapore universities in 2011.

# SOARING HIGH

**SINGAPORE'S STATUS AS A REGIONAL AVIATION HUB HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED WITH THE RECORD VISITORSHIP FIGURES AND NUMBER OF DEALS INKED AT THIS YEAR'S SINGAPORE AIRSHOW.** WORDS BY GENE KHOR

Crowds flocked to the Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 display. The airline is retiring its fleet of 51 747s planes after nearly four decades of service.



A demonstration of the Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, a multi-role jet fighter aircraft, and the McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing) F-15 Eagle, a twin-engine, all-weather tactical fighter designed by McDonnell Douglas, by the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) at the Singapore Airshow 2012. These two jets were recently acquired by the RSAF.

**F**rom a sneak peek at Boeing's 787 Dreamliner to heart-stopping aerial acrobatics from the Republic of Singapore Air Force's F-16C jets, the Royal Malaysian Air Force's Smokey Bandits and the Royal Australian Air Force's Roulettes, the recent Singapore Airshow 2012 had something for both trade and public visitors.

The biennial event, which is Asia's largest and one of the three most important aerospace and defence exhibitions on the global calendar, drew a record number of trade and public visitors this year. In total, some 900 exhibitors from 50 countries — a significant increase from the 800 at the inaugural show in 2008 — participated in this showcase of cutting-edge developments in the aviation industry.

Members of participating delegations readily attested to the commercial importance of the event. "The Singapore Airshow continues to be a great platform for us to reach out to the aviation community in the Asia Pacific region," said Ms Katy Padgett, Communications Manager from American aircraft manufacturer Pratt & Whitney. "As an industry leader, it is critical to us to have a significant presence at major airshows around the world and the Singapore Airshow ranks high on our priorities."

**“The Singapore Airshow is the only event of its kind that brings together the largest number of high-level delegations from the Asia Pacific region and beyond.”**

Mr Jimmy Lau, Managing Director of Experia Events, the show’s organiser

The event clocked a record attendance of around 145,000 trade and public visitors. Held from 14 to 19 February 2012 at the Changi Exhibition Centre, it also took up 50,000 sq m of space; 6.5 per cent more area than the previous show in 2010.

“The Singapore Airshow is the only event of its kind that brings together the largest number of high-level delegations from the Asia Pacific region and beyond,” said Mr Jimmy Lau, Managing Director of Experia Events, the show’s organiser. “These include heads of the international aviation community, high-level government and military delegations, and top industry leaders.”

**REGIONAL BASE**

Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer, ranked the fourth largest in the world, was participating in the show for the third time.

“Singapore is our regional base and therefore participation at the show is a natural extension of our business development here,” explained an Embraer representative. “There are several factors that make Singapore an attractive aviation hub for us. Its ability to provide excellent MRO [maintenance, repair and



The Roulettes flying team from Australia.

overhaul] services across commercial and private/business aviation, and its focus on aviation-related research and technology programs are just a few examples.”

“Its proximity to its neighbours is a plus too- you can fly to most of the countries in the Asia Pacific within eight hours”

Embraer is just one of the more

than 100 global and local aerospace companies currently operating in Singapore. Its Singapore branch was set up in 2010 and provides customer support, aircraft simulator training and spare parts distribution to the Asia Pacific region. The company is also part of A\*STAR’s (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) SERC (Science and Engineering

Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan’s Embraer Legacy 650 executive jet was on display for visitors.



Photos: Getty Images & Corbis



The Singapore Airshow 2012 was open to the public on 18 and 19 Feb 2012.

Research Council) programme to conduct research in the aviation sphere.

#### LOCAL PRESENCE

Although foreign companies have stepped up their presence in the exhibition, homegrown Singapore Technologies (ST) Engineering continued to dominate the showfloor, occupying 3,500 sq m of exhibition space.

ST is one of Asia's largest defence and engineering groups, and special-

**“Singapore must maintain a leadership position as a global aerospace hub by continuing to deliver world-class infrastructure.”**

Mr Lui Tuck Yew, Singapore's Transport Minister

ises in services for the aerospace, electronics, land systems and marine sectors.

“Our aerospace arm, ST Aerospace, is one of the largest aviation MRO companies in the world,” said Mr Patrick Choy, Executive Vice President, International Marketing, ST Engineering. “It's the world's number one airframe MRO service provider, clocking about 8.7 million man-hours annually. The success of our aerospace business is representative of Singapore's push towards becoming a major aviation and aerospace hub.”

MRO operations and services account for 90 per cent of Singapore's aerospace sector, while manufacturing makes up the rest.

#### COME TOGETHER

The theme for Singapore Airshow 2012, “Driving Change, Overcoming Challenges Together”, was especially pertinent given the current challenges faced by the global aviation indus-



A Rolls-Royce aircraft engine.

try arising from rising fuel prices. In spite of this, the long-term prospects for the sector remain good, according to Singapore Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew.

Speaking at an event on 7 January 2012 to commission the new control tower at Seletar Aerospace Park, Mr Lui said the industry in Singapore had grown by an average of 12 per cent annually over the past two decades. In 2010, it reached a record output of about US\$5.7 billion (S\$7.14 billion) and employed about 18,000 workers.

The global airline industry is in fact encountering far less turbulence now. Based on figures from the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines, this



Singapore's ST Engineering, one of Asia's largest defence and engineering groups, occupied 3,500 sq m of exhibition space.



A visitor takes a closer look inside the cockpit of a Lockheed F16D Fighting Falcon.

sector clocked in a profit of around US\$15 billion in 2010, a remarkable achievement considering the losses of around US\$15 billion in 2008 and US\$10 billion in 2009.

"Singapore must be a part of this global growth, to enable the local aerospace sector to contribute significantly to the economy and to create good jobs for Singaporeans," said Mr Lui. "To achieve this, Singapore must maintain a leadership position as a

global aerospace hub by continuing to deliver world-class infrastructure."

In working towards this outcome, the Singapore government is developing more infrastructure to support the industry and encourage R & D, while also upgrading the talent pool via further education and training in the field.

The 320-hectare Seletar Aerospace Park — whose leading tenants include ST Aerospace, Rolls-Royce

and Pratt & Whitney — has already achieved a 75 per cent take up rate. Work on its Phase III will begin later this year, according to Mr Lim Kok Kiang, the Economic Development Board's Executive Director for Transport, at a pre-Singapore Airshow briefing.

And with a record US\$31 billion worth of deals inked at Singapore Airshow 2012 — three times more than what the 2010 event chalked up — there can be no doubt that the show's objective of fortifying Singapore's position as a global marketplace and networking powerhouse for the world's aviation community has been met.



The Boeing 787 Dreamliner was also on display. The two largest aircraft manufacturers, European Airbus and American Boeing, drew the most attention during the event.

## HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

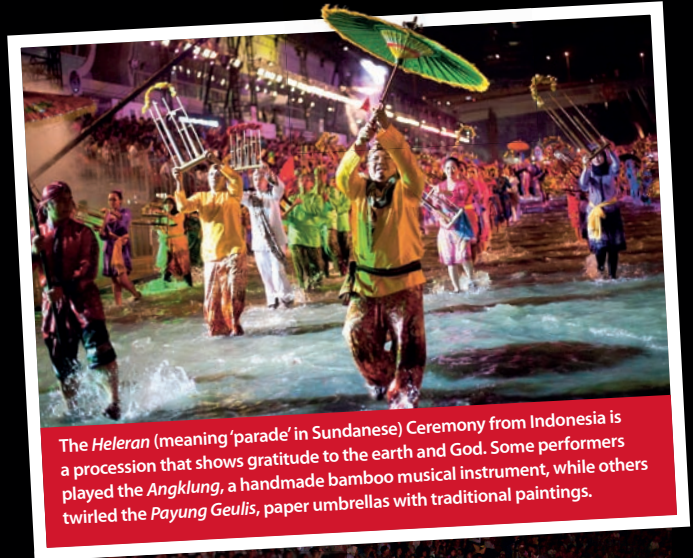
- A record S\$39 billion worth of deals were inked, three times more than the last airshow
- A record number of visitors attended, with around 145,000 trade and public visitors
- Visitors got to tour Singapore Airlines' last three remaining Boeing 747-400s; the airline retires its Boeing 747 fleet by March this year
- Boeing gave visitors a sneak peek of its latest carbon fibre airliner, the 787 Dreamliner
- Exhibitors have already started snapping up spots for the next event in 2014; 70 per cent of space has been reserved

Photos: Getty Images, Corbis, Experia Events

IN SINGAPORE

# GLOBAL PARADE

What do you get when you put 8,000 performers from seven countries together? If it is for Chingay in Singapore, you get a colourful parade of massive proportions! The annual event drew awe and applause from the more than 150,000 spectators, including tourists and visitors to Singapore. Held on 3 and 4 February 2012, the two-hour spectacular featured local participants as well as those from Egypt, China, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia. Traditionally held as the finale to Singapore's Lunar New Year celebrations, this year's parade — the 40th — was held at the Pit Building which also hosts the annual F1 Singapore Grand Prix.



The *Heleran* (meaning 'parade' in Sundanese) Ceremony from Indonesia is a procession that shows gratitude to the earth and God. Some performers played the *Angklung*, a handmade bamboo musical instrument, while others twirled the *Payung Geulis*, paper umbrellas with traditional paintings.



ABOVE: Titled 'Flowers in Bloom', this dance was performed by the Lan Yang Dancers from Taiwan. It's meant to represent spring, when flowers bloom and come to life. The dancers' costumes represent different varieties of flora found in Taiwan, like orchids, peonies, lilies and lotus. BELOW: To mark this year of the dragon, the 'Prosperity Flying Dragon & Phoenix Dance' from China made its second Chingay appearance. Manoeuvred by cables that brought the two mystical creatures as high as 40m, they are meant to usher in peace and prosperity.







800 performers from the People's Association Youth Movement set the Chingay Parade 2012 ablaze with their high-energy Dragon Dance



Performers from Malaysia's Tian Loong Koong Stilt Walking Group and Johor Bahru Hong Yang Sports Association lit up the parade dressed as the Chinese Gods of Fortune, Longevity and Prosperity

A 300-strong contingent from the China Red Star Dance Troupe made their presence felt with a traditional Han Dynasty dance sequence



It's a feat of strength and endurance as 50 performers from the Zhanjiang Dragon Dance Troupe from China linked up for the first ever human dragon dance here



The Reda Folkloric Troupe from Egypt entranced spectators with the centuries-old *El Mawlawia*, a dance that sees them spin and whirl to the music



Performers from the Japanese Association sung and danced to the evergreen Japanese hit 'Ue o Muite Aruko', also known in English as 'Sukiyaki'

Photos: People's Association (PA)



# A WELCOMING CENTRE

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in March 2011, victims in one of the affected main towns have found reprieve in a temporary care centre built with donations from Singapore. WORDS BY GENE KHOR

**M**other Nature showed her vicious side on 11 March 2011 when a massive 10-metre high tsunami slammed into Japan's north-east coast in the aftermath of an 8.9 magnitude earthquake — the most powerful ever to strike the country. Almost 20,000 people were killed or went missing, with the Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures being the hardest hit.

In an overwhelming show of support by Singaporeans, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) received S\$35 million in donations for its Japan Disaster Relief Fund. SRC set up the fund on 13 March 2011 to provide relief and assistance to the victims of the disaster, including the provision of basic necessities to Japanese families placed in temporary housing. SRC has also contributed nursing beds and vehicles to transport the elderly and the disabled.

## ONE-STOP RELIEF

In November 2011, Singapore's

assistance in Japan's recovery efforts continued with the opening of the Taro Support Centre (TSC) in Miyako City in Iwate Prefecture. Built at a cost of ¥70 million (S\$1.16m), the centre is a joint effort by the SRC and the Singapore Embassy in Tokyo, in collaboration with the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and Iwate Prefecture.

This project is the first reconstruction project funded by SRC's Japan Disaster Fund. The TSC aims to serve the 1,000 or so evacuees from the 400 households who have, since the disaster, been living in three temporary housing close to the centre. It also serves parts of Taro Ward within 10 km from the facility, which includes another 200 households.

The centre is managed by social welfare association Taro Washinkai which has 10 care workers on duty to provide daily services to the elderly who make up more than 30 per cent of the residents in the ward.



**MAIN AND MIDDLE PHOTOS:** The opening ceremony of the Taro Support Centre on 15 November 2011 was attended by representatives from the Singapore Red Cross and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as officials from Miyako city and the Iwate prefecture government. **ABOVE:** A plaque to commemorate the completion of the centre.

The Miyako City authorities have installed equipment for the caregivers to rehabilitate the elderly, and these include bathroom facilities catering for those who are physically challenged. A kitchen and a tatami room serve as a communal area.

An elderly resident said at the centre's opening, "I'm worried about my health but I don't want to always visit the hospital. If there's something wrong with me, I can be taken care of at this facility so I look forward to coming here."

#### OTHER EFFORTS

Mr Shogo Tsugawa, Parliamentary Secretary of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, said: "This project went very well. We were able to form such a facility from the generosity shown by Singaporeans."

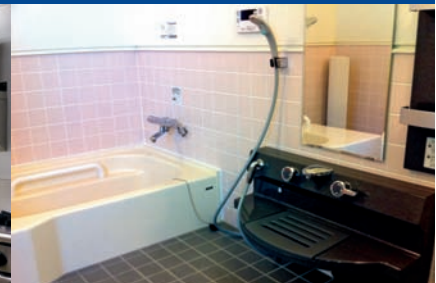
In addition to the centre, the

**"This project went very well. We were able to form such a facility from the generosity shown by Singaporeans."**

Mr Shogo Tsugawa, Japan's Parliamentary Secretary of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism



Mr Lim Theam Poh, Director of Operations and Head of International Services from the SRC (right), with an elderly resident of the ward, at the TSC.



The kitchen (above, left) at the TSC serves as a communal area. The bathroom (above, right) is equipped to cater for the elderly who make up more than 30 per cent of the residents in the ward.

SRC has supported relief efforts by supplying bottled water, collapsible water containers, blankets and mattresses. It has also set up Restoring Family Links, a tracing service that helps Singaporeans and the Japanese community in Singapore to locate immediate family members who have been uncontactable following the disaster.

Besides the TSC, a large portion of the Japan Disaster Fund 2011 has been earmarked to fund other reconstruction projects in the affected areas. A key criterion for the projects is that they should benefit the survivors of the disaster in practical ways. SRC will also fund the construction of a ¥700 million multi-purpose hall at Rikuzentakata city in Iwate prefecture and a ¥300 million nursery school at Shichigahama city in Miyagi prefecture.

Construction for both projects is expected to begin in 2012 and be completed by 2013.

## AFTER THE TYPHOON...

The Singapore Red Cross was also in the Southern Philippines, which had been hit by Typhoon Washi. Singapore reached out to those in need on 21 December 2011, sending assistance and aid to survivors of Typhoon Washi in Mindanao, Philippines. The SRC worked alongside the Philippines National Red Cross to distribute relief items and food supplies, after the disaster had left 500 dead and thousands homeless. The SRC followed up with some post-Christmas cheer a week later when a second team distributed S\$200,000 worth of food and family items donated by Singapore. Packaged as a 'Family Christmas Pack', it included clothing, sleeping materials, blankets and school supplies and footwear for children.

Photos: Singapore Red Cross/Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Nanyang Technological University (NTU) faculty member Professor Nadia Magnenat-Thalmann

## A GLOBAL RESEARCH HUB

**DIVERSE TALENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE JOINING SINGAPORE'S THREE UNIVERSITIES, AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S R & D LANDSCAPE.** WORDS BY FAIROZA MANSOR

**G**ood things seem to come in threes — as far as Singapore is concerned — for Nanyang Technological University (NTU) faculty member Professor Nadia Magnenat-Thalmann, a pioneer in the area of interactive digital media research known as virtual humanity.

Prof Magnenat-Thalmann first came to Singapore in 1995 as a visiting professor at the National University of Singapore (NUS) for six months. Smitten by the country's sunny weather — among other things — she returned in 2008 for a personal sabbatical. In August 2009, she returned to Singapore to take up her current position as Director of the

interdisciplinary Institute for Media Innovation (IMI).

The Swiss national is one of the growing number of international researchers in Singapore universities as the country moves towards its goal to be a global research centre of excellence. More than S\$16 billion has been committed to public research and development over the next five years, with twice this amount invested in the private sector.

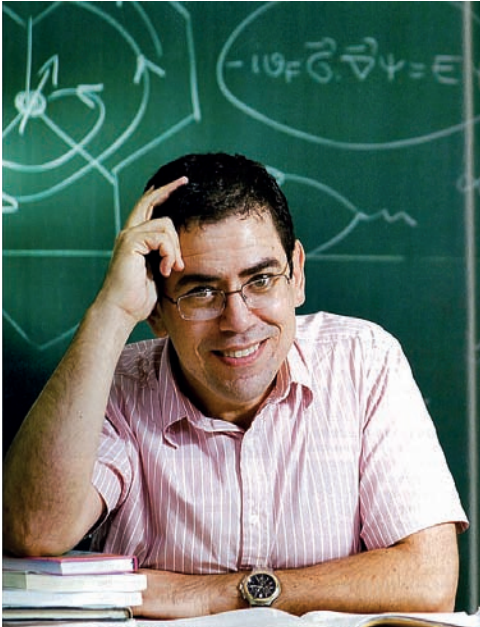
Besides NTU and NUS, Singapore also has a third university, the Singapore Management University (SMU).

According to the Director of NTU's Human Resource Faculty Affairs department, Dr Koh Hock Tee, the number

of full-time international faculty at NTU has risen by about 44 per cent between 2007 and 2011. "The university's teaching and research staff hail from more than 70 countries, bringing with them dynamic international perspectives and years of solid industry experience," he said.

Prof Magnenat-Thalmann's husband, Professor Daniel Thalmann, is also part of the NTU faculty as a Visiting Professor at the School of Computer Engineering. He is also the PhD coordinator at IMI.

"The Singapore government offers generous funding and freedom for researchers to grow and develop their projects," said Prof Magnenat-Thalmann, who used to teach in universities in Canada and Switzerland. "NTU offers a vibrant and conducive environment for me to discover and learn new ways of living and thinking."



Professor Antonio Helio Castro-Neto, Director of the NUS Graphene Research Centre, and Professor in the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science



Associate Professor of Accounting Zang Yoonseok joined the SMU School of Accountancy as an assistant professor



The Singapore Management University

expatriates — conduct research as well as teach.

Associate Professor of Accounting Zang Yoonseok, a Korean, joined its School of Accountancy as an assistant professor in 2003 after completing his PhD studies at the University California at Berkeley.

“As a rookie researcher, the most important criteria in finding a job was whether the university provided a conducive research environment. This involves subscription of important research databases, regular research workshops, and reasonable teaching load,” said Assc Prof Zang.

“Singapore is an attractive city because of its expat-friendly culture, vibrant economy and safe environment for work and play — all that on top of the good research support that the country offers.”

Professor Barry Halliwell, Deputy President (Research and Technology) at NUS acknowledges the increase in the number of international researchers at the institution. “NUS has a robust research culture, talented faculty and firm support which offer a conducive atmosphere for researchers to synergise their efforts and achieve scientific and medical breakthroughs, and discover new insights into socio-economic patterns and behaviours,” he said.

At NUS, there are now 76 nationalities, including Singaporeans, represented among the teaching and research staff.

Professor Antonio Helio Castro-Neto, Director of the NUS Graphene Research Centre, and Professor in the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, came to Singapore from the United States where he had been a Physics professor for 20 years. He joined NUS in 2010.

“NUS is well-known for its high levels of excellence in teaching and research and also for being highly entrepreneurial. It rivals the best universities in the USA and Europe,” said the Brazilian national.

Prof Castro-Neto finds the Singapore experience “fascinating” and plans to stay for as long as he feels that he is contributing effectively to NUS, and as long as the university supports his work in the field of Condensed Matter Physics.

“Singapore has a truly rich international, multi-cultural environment and is a very welcoming country. My wife and I feel at home here,” he said.

At SMU, there were 174 full-time international faculty members in 2010, compared to 126 in 2007. All members of the SMU faculty — locals or

## “The Singapore government offers generous funding and freedom for researchers to grow and develop their projects.”

Prof Magnenat-Thalmann, a pioneer in the area of interactive digital media research known as virtual humanity.

## RESEARCH A NATIONAL GOAL

To develop a vibrant and innovative scientific community, the National Research Foundation (NRF) was established in January 2006 as a department under the Prime Minister’s Office, and tasked with driving Singapore’s research and development efforts. It announced its fourth batch of 10 young scientists in January 2012. These were selected from 174 applicants worldwide, and each NRF research fellow will receive up to S\$3 million over five years to support their field of studies.

Photos: National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Hong Chee Yan

# BUILDING BLOCKS

**84 representatives from various developing countries came to Singapore to learn how the country develops government policies to promote its small and medium enterprises.**

WORDS BY GENE KHOR

**S**ingapore-based education group, EtonHouse expanded into Suzhou, China in 2003. When it wanted to venture further into China in 2008, it turned to International Enterprise (IE) Singapore for advice. IE Singapore is an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry tasked to help local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) expand overseas.

EtonHouse leveraged on IE Singapore's market knowledge of China, as well as the financing schemes offered to aid its expansion. It was given a grant to conduct a market feasibility study, which included interviews with government officials, expatriate business owners and public service bodies

in the city it had planned to expand in.

Based on the findings of the study, EtonHouse refined its expansion strategy. Besides Suzhou, the education group is now in Chengdu, Dongguan, Jinan, Nanjing, Wuxi, Yiwu and Zhuhai.

Such partnerships between SMEs and the government made a huge impression on Mr Edward C Chin-Mook, President of the Caribbean Association of Small & Medium Enterprises in Jamaica.

"This level of innovation and business facilitation is the catalyst by which all governments should embrace," he said. "I think the most important lesson is that there needs to be a synergy [between the different

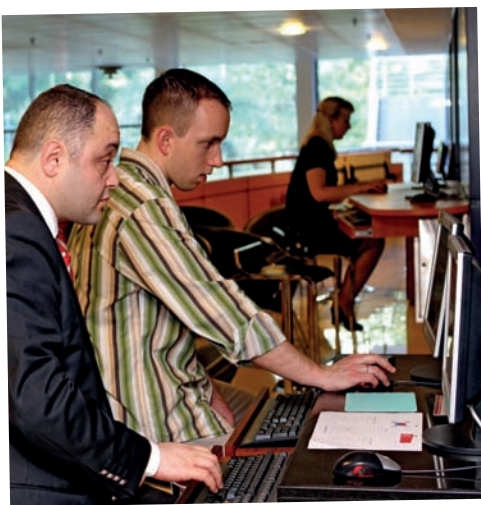


EtonHouse International School in Chengdu, China.



The course "Case Studies of SME Successfully Leveraging Intellectual Property (IP) Assets for Business Competitiveness" was conducted from 29 Nov to 1 Dec 2011.

**BOTTOM AND RIGHT:** Participants attending the course "Developing Government Policies to Promote SME Development" which was conducted from 4 to 13 January 2012.



sectors] for business development to grow.”

Mr Chin-Mook was one of 84 participants from developing countries — including Kenya, the Maldives, Bhutan, Vietnam and Morocco — who were in Singapore to learn how the country developed government policies to promote its SMEs. He attended the “Innovation & Micro, SME: The Singapore Experience” seminar organised under the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). It was conducted under the Singapore-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme by the Singapore Training and Development Association, from 9 to 13 January 2012.

At the seminar, participants learnt

**“This level of innovation and business facilitation is the catalyst which all governments should embrace.”**

Mr Edward C Chin-Mook, President of the Caribbean Association of Small & Medium Enterprises in Jamaica



Mr Mohamad Itani, Deputy Head of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Republic of Lebanon, giving a thank you speech on behalf of the participants of the “Developing Government Policies to Promote SME Development” course held at the Civil Service College.

about different government policies that support SMEs. An example was the IE Singapore’s Exporters Development Programme, which helps SMEs venture overseas through training in export strategy and market visits.

The level of support for SMEs also impressed Mr Dominic Muriuki, Planning Executive for the Export Processing Zones Authority of Kenya. Apart from streamlining procedures for start-ups, he noticed that Singapore designated “areas for research like Biopolis, which houses public and corporate research laboratories in one location”. He added that Kenya is keen to “create an environment like that...with tech parks and educational opportunities to stimulate the growth of SMEs”.

Two other courses pertaining to SME development were also organised under the SCP. The “Case Studies

of SME Successfully Leveraging Intellectual Property (IP) Assets for Business Competitiveness” course was co-organised with the World Intellectual Property Organisation and Intellectual Property Office of Singapore. Conducted from 29 November to 1 December 2011, it aimed to give participants a better understanding of how enterprises can leverage on their IP assets to remain competitive.

The other course “Developing Government Policies to Promote SME Development” was conducted by the Civil Service College from 4 to 13 January 2012. It covered topics such as clean governance and, harnessing science, technology and innovation for development.

However, Mr Ivan Kazlou who attended the course was most surprised to learn that students at Singapore’s secondary schools routinely apply the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (or SWOT) analysis method when working on projects.

“I’m amazed to hear that such ideas and practices are being encouraged at such a young age here,” said the Chief Counsel to Chairperson of Minsk Region Executive Committee in Belarus.

“This [strategic planning method] is something we’d like to introduce to our country’s youths as well. We believe it’s because of such education, as well as government support, that Singapore’s SMEs have flourished.”



Mr Ashok Nair, Adviser, Special Advisory Services Division, Commonwealth Secretariat (right) and Mr Edward C Chin-Mook, President of the Caribbean Association of Small & Medium Enterprises in Jamaica (middle), with another participant at the “Innovation & Micro, SME: The Singapore Experience” course, 9 - 13 Jan 2012.

# THE E-WAY TO EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

**OPEN SOURCE E-RESOURCES WERE DEVELOPED DURING A WORKSHOP JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING.**



Participants of the course forged lasting friendships and created educational materials that could be used around the world.

No matter where you are, access to a set of electronic training materials on educational leadership will soon be just a click away.

These training materials are the product of the 10th Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) International Materials Development and Training Workshop, jointly organised by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

The 12-day workshop was held from 17 November to 2 December 2011 at the National Institute of Education International. Twenty-three senior level educators from the small states of the Commonwealth looked at ways to develop online content on educational leadership — a dynamic term coined in the late 20th century to replace educational administration. Participants of the workshop were divided into six groups, each tasked with examining the strategies and tools required to lead change. They also discussed current issues, policies and technologies affecting the management of educational institutions.

At the end of the workshop, they created a set of educational leadership training materials that can be used and adapted by individuals and institutions from around the world. Upon return to their home countries, participants continued to share their skills with colleagues.

The COL is an intergovernmental organisation aimed at helping developing nations gain access to quality education and training.

Under the VUSSC, small states of the Commonwealth collaborate to develop open content e-resources. These non-proprietary e-materials — developed by small states, for small states — help to broaden global access to education through the innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT).

For more information on the Singapore Cooperation Programme, please visit [www.scp.gov.sg](http://www.scp.gov.sg)

## SCP ROUNDUP

21 NOV TO 9 DEC 2011

Ten senior executives from six Asian countries learnt about the best practices of Singapore and South Korea during a course on public governance and administration. The inaugural course, "Senior Executive Programme in Public Policy and Administrative Reform", was attended by 10 participants from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines and Vietnam. The Singapore segment of the course covered areas such as leadership, human resource management, public sector reforms, anti-graft measures, public engagement through new media and Singapore's whole-of-government approach. During the course, participants also visited the Building and Construction Authority, Land Transport Authority and National Parks Board. The course was jointly conducted by Singapore's Civil Service College and the Korea Development Institute.

9 TO 13 JAN 2012

A five-day seminar on aviation security, entitled "Aviation Security: Auditing Techniques and Developing Security Manuals", brought 31 personnel from the aviation industry around the world to Singapore. It was conducted by the Singapore Aviation Academy, the training arm of the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore. The participants, hailing from more than 30 countries among them Albania, China, India, Myanmar, Tunisia and Uzbekistan, comprised executives, managers and supervisors from civil aviation authorities, airport operators and airlines. Participants also learnt how to develop and conduct effective aviation security audits. They were also provided the tools to develop security manuals for their respective organisations that would meet the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

21 FEB TO 2 MAR 2012

The Singapore experience in planning, developing and maintaining its major road projects took centre stage during a 12-day course on road infrastructure. The course entitled "Road Infrastructure Management and Maintenance" was attended by 32 officials and engineers from 25 countries including China, Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka. During the course, Singapore's traffic planners and policymakers spoke on subjects such as green construction, risk management and road maintenance. The course was conducted by the Land Transport Authority Academy.