



YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
LEADERS INITIATIVE

Fulbright

# YSEALI Academy Newsletter

Second Issue | Winter 2021

## **The YSEALI Academy Quarterly Newsletter**

YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam

1F, Crescent Plaza, 105 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu Ward, District 7, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Inaugural Issue, Fall 2021

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# Message from the Director



More than a year ago, YSEALI Academy was established at Fulbright University Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City with the mission of providing capacity-building seminars to young professional in Southeast Asia and strengthening the ties between the U.S. and ASEAN. Looking back at our three very successful seminars, today we have 105 alumni joining the YSEALI Academy network across 10 ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste, who are ready to collaborate in solving regional challenges from energy transition to digital transformation, and startup ecosystem.

The Public Seminar on Energy Economics and Public was led by Huynh Trung Dung to welcome the first 35 fellows of the academy. The seminar discussed a variety of topics ranging from the basics of energy use and conservation to macroeconomic framework and policy tools for energy management. The second seminar on Technology and Innovation focusing on Digital Transformation was led by Huynh Nhat Nam. The fellows in this seminar launched projects on Data Privacy, AI in Healthcare and Medical Industry, E-Wallet, Data Protection, Tele Health, Healthcare Digitization and Digital Talent Gap. Our last seminar in 2021 was led by Hoang Ha Thi. This seminar focused on Navigating the Startup Ecosystem and featured a Hackathon, where fellows worked on conceptual business solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of society.

YSEALI Academy has set the highest academic standards to attract the most talented young professional in the region. We have collaborated with world-class speakers from prestigious universities and leading companies to deliver lectures, panel discussions, and leadership training to our fellows. We have invited over 90 speakers, including Nobel Laureate, Presidents and CEOs, and Forbes 30 under 30.

A special thank you to all who share your time and talent to the YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam.

*Enjoy reading our stories, and Happy Lunar New Year!*

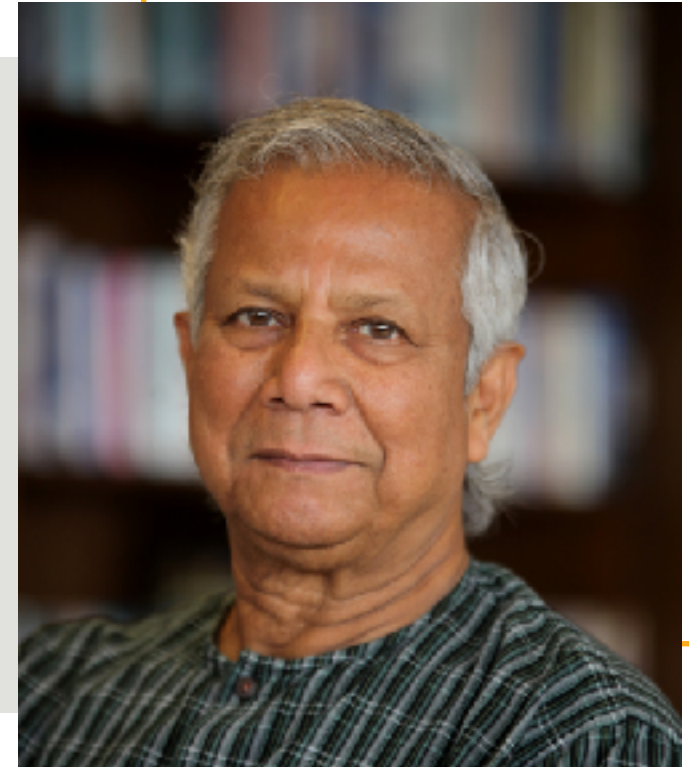
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Quang", which is a stylized representation of the name Le Vu Quan.

**Le Vu Quan**

*Director of YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam*

# Message from Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus

In the Distinguished Lecture Series hosted by the YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam, Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus stated that Covid has made millions of people lose their income significantly and they are pressed down. He stressed that the pandemic has stopped the train that would lead people to the destination of destruction, urging youths to change its course.



Yunus asked young people following his talk, "Should we go back to it and ride it to the final destination of destruction? Or we don't ride it and build a new train to take us to a new direction?" He elaborated that a new train that brings happiness and safety to this planet should be built. Yunus said that people should undo the old principle, to create a new kind of world where profit maximization is not the only way to do business. He is confident that human beings are all born as entrepreneurs, but somehow economic theory has pushed people into a belief that only with good education and good skills, they are employable, otherwise they have no values.

*Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus is the founder of Grameen Bank, pioneering the concepts of microcredit and social business, founding more than 50 Social Business companies in Bangladesh. In 2006, Professor Yunus and Grameen Bank were jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize.*

[Click here to read the full article](#)

# Meet our Lead Faculty of Public Policy: Huynh Trung Dung

From a very young age, Huynh Trung Dung already knew that he wanted to contribute to the common good of society. From his perspective, the public sector had more room for construction and direction in comparison to the private sector, and that is where he decided to work for the public good. “Public Policy is everything around us. It is in every single breath we take, whether we stay inside or we go outdoors, we are all bounded by Public Policy,” Dung exclaimed.



At YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam, he serves as a Lead Faculty for Public Policy. In this position, his responsibilities are not confined to the teaching duties, but rather, expand to strategic planning, proposing new topics, and inviting, connecting lecturers and experts from all across the world.

The diversity of fellows, as well as guest speakers, poses some challenges for Dung while also presents him with interesting experiences. The challenge was that he had to design an intensive program suitable for students in 11 Southeast Asian countries (including Timor-Leste) and from a variety of professions. It is also interesting because it is the first program in Southeast Asia to discuss public policy at a regional and interdisciplinary scale for young leaders in the region. All the while, being in a coordinating lead position also gives him opportunities to simultaneously learn more about fields that are not his specialty.

[Click here to read full article](#)





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# **Flashback of 2021 Technology and Innovation Seminar**



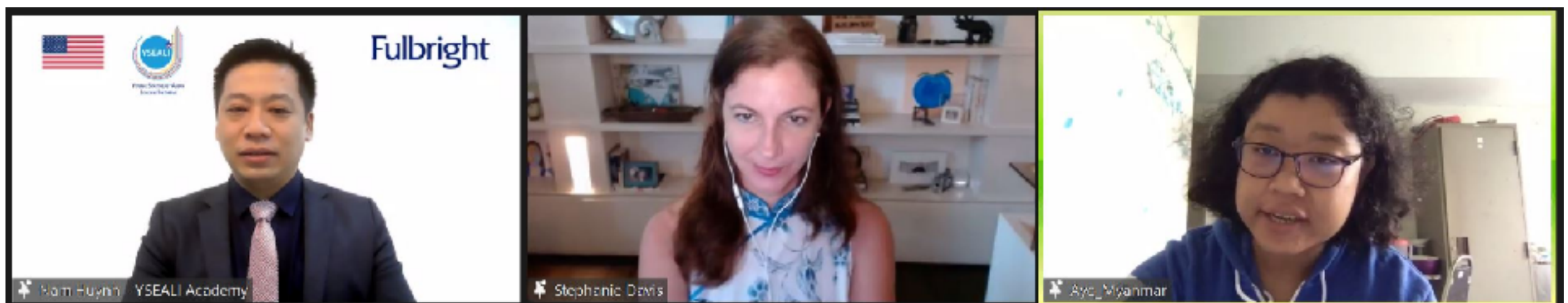
# Transformers Go Beyond!

*The YSEALI Academy Flagship Technology and Innovation Seminar on Digital Transformation with the participation of 35 fellows from 11 Southeast Asian countries was concluded on 24 September 2021.*

## Our two-week journey of learning, sharing and caring

The two-week Digital Transformation Seminar was undoubtedly an enriching learning experience. When asked about their overall impression, our Fellows keenly described the seminars as “dynamic”, “inclusive”, “engaging”, and “mind-changing”. Challenges of a virtual format and unstable world contexts notwithstanding, the seminar was acclaimed “beyond expectation” by many. While week 1 focuses on building foundational knowledge to facilitate the Fellows’ journey into the digital world, week 2 aims to equip the learners with on-field experience in topics such as Digital Transformation in the Workplace, Digital Transformation in Service or Cyber Security.

Apart from lecturers, our Fellows also learned through the sharing of panelists in panel discussions, which urged them to reflect on their own experience working with data, especially for those already in data-driven industries. Our Fellows also gained profound insights as they worked together on team projects. Or Nita, our Cambodian Fellow, remarked, “Team [working] is not only about having outstanding members - it's about how we cooperate together. We know, we share, and we learn from each other, so our project went smoothly". Undoubtedly, peer-to-peer sharing also makes a valuable addition to their learning experience at this seminar.



***Dr. Huynh Nhat Nam**, Lead Faculty for Technology and Innovation (L), **Mrs. Stephanie Davis** (Vice President of Google Southeast Asia, C) and **Aye Hninn Khine** (YSEALI Academy Fellow, R) in the Keynote Lecture of the YSEALI Academy Technology and Innovation Seminar*



# Transformers Go Beyond!

Our Fellows demonstrate that the insights from panel discussions or lectures have added breadth and depth to their engagement with not merely their current profession but also a wide range of contemporary issues. Notably, for those who had not previously identified themselves as tech-savvy folks, they now acknowledge a deep integration of digital technologies together with data science into the fabric of human lives—no matter what their job might be, confessing that they are better prepared to face any sort of wrecking ball that comes along swinging in such an ever-changing and digitized era.

## **Every ending is another beginning**

However, our Fellows also claim even though the Seminar has come to an end, the journey of digital transformation during which they are the ones who promisingly take the lead is just beginning. Underscoring that knowing is definitely not enough, they all aspire to translate theory-based information obtained from the lectures into real-life practices, and to put freshly acquired sharings from distinguished panelists to good use by conducting deeper research, launching hands-on projects, or starting to initiate social movements.

Given each participant is highly motivated to leap into action, there is every likelihood that some joint initiatives are growing from the soil of this long-lasting fellowship. As Wahyu—a Fellow from Indonesia—puts it, “ After this Seminar, other Fellows and I want to start up a project on helping people transfer money more easily. I also hope that we alumni can apply for the grant of USAID to undertake this project [...] I hope that all of our initiatives can be proposed to US Department programs such as USAID, YSEALI Seed, etc.”

Such a wish reflects a genuine desire, on the part of Fellows, to enlist firm support from US-sponsored funds and take advantage of the connections within the YSEALI Academy Alumni community. That said, with thorough investment, it will be a golden chance for these aspiring startups—with the participation of various community-minded pioneers in ASEAN countries—to take the lead and head off existing social challenges.

All in all, such a high spirit of multilateral collaboration with which every Fellow walks away from the YSEALI Seminar paves a promising path for sustainable development within ASEAN, notably in the aspect of digital transformation. The spirit resides in the deep connections where trust, mutual support, and unity in diversity coalesce.

**Le Kha - Do Thi Minh Han**

# Meet our Fellow: Dr. Sheena Ramazanu

A research fellow at the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Dr. Sheena Ramazanu was among the 35 fellows participating in the Technology and Innovation seminar, held virtually by the YSEALI Academy at Fulbright in September 2021.

From her professional practice as a registered nurse to her scholarly career in teaching and research, she shared the stories that inspired her journey, including the valuable lessons gained from the YSEALI Academy seminar and technology's potential to transform the field of healthcare across the region.

“Digital footprints of people and businesses for better decision making”, Ramazanu was also impressed with the extensive issues and topics covered within the seminar, including machine learning, data sciences, fintech, cybersecurity, and climate change.

The Technology and Innovation seminar was also packaged with workshops on leadership skill, which Ramazanu deems indispensable to effective - and emotive - communication that will push ideas into reality.



Ramazanu believes by sharing expertise and knowledge across disciplines, getting in on the cultural and social perspectives of different parts of the world - something the YSEALI Academy has proved to be an excellent facilitating platform - can we get united to act and come up with solutions to help the vulnerable in certain parts of ASEAN.



# Meet our Fellow: Lai Cheng Wong

Lai was born in Penang, Malaysia, and was influenced by her parents' hard work and faith in education. "My parents once said education is a gift of a lifetime for every child. My effort to pursue higher education is the gift that I give back to my parents," Wong shares.

"I'm thankful that YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam put me in a team with a group of people with different backgrounds and interests. A team with diverse interests and different cultural values offers a wide range of thought processes and perspectives" Wong stresses.



Her ultimate goal is to raise teachers' awareness and understanding of media literacy and digital citizenship, thus the teachers can become the agents of change in their communities to better protect their students against cyber-risks and be ready for the future of digitalization.

"Being part of the YSEALI Academy's Fellows community is so great because I became more confident to face and surpass all challenges I may encounter in the future. It was life-changing to meet all my mentors and lecturers who trained me to acquire knowledge in digital transformation. YSEALI Academy gave us so much courage and strength to pursue our dreams through the power of collaborations. By sharing information, resources and capabilities, we can achieve great things together that we could never achieve alone", Wong shares.

"My commitment to my community grew even stronger during and after the Technology and Innovation Seminar. Not only did the seminar offer knowledge, but also the following opportunities"

Lai Cheng Wong , 2021 YSEALI Academy Fellow

# Meet our Fellow: Marlina Ahmad

Being a proud representative of Brunei, the country that chaired the ASEAN Summit 2021 with a focus on digital transformation, Marlina Ahmad shared that her journey with the YSEALI Academy's flagship seminar on Technology and Innovation had been rather “unconventional”. Marlina Ahmad is currently a Communications Advisor at Brunei Shell Petroleum, an energy company with more than 90 years of history employing 4000 professionals with over 20,000 business partners.

"Digitalization has an opportunity to improve our ways of working does not matter what industry you sit in. I already do not fit the profile in terms of industry, I do not even fit the profile in terms of expertise. But I firmly believe that having data-backed communications is very important." - Marlina assessed.

In just a few months after the Digital Transformation seminar at YSEALI Academy, the fellow confessed that she found herself saying "I have learned [this] in [the YSEALI] seminar, maybe we can try doing [that]" on multiple occasions.

There is more than the technology and the infrastructure that powers digital transformation: more than anything else, mindset and the human capacity to handle such technologies are what matter most.

The fellows all have a lot of aspirations, and they have a lot of drive, and "By learning with [them] and from [them], the seminar changed the way I view things and change the way I tackle different things at work." Marlina is hopeful about a future where they can continue to collaborate with these newfound friends in a regional project and she cannot wait to explore all the amazing possibilities for her YSEALI fellows and for herself.







Private Secretary Room  
Executive Secretary

YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE (YSEALI)

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

PROMOTING THE MAKONG  
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

Hanoi, Viet

# **Southeast Asian Corners**



# My Penang, My Pride

I was born and grew up in Penang, Malaysia. It was a small sleepy island in those days and not many people knew anything about it. Today, it is consistently rated as the best place to retire in the world.

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, Penang or also known as the Pearl of the Orient, is famous for its soft sandy beaches and rich cultural heritage sights.



Visitors to the city will find Penang's history not only in its buildings and monuments but also in the community and everyday life of the city which is a rich mix of modernity and turbulent history.



*Kuih-muih (in Malay) are bite-sized snack or dessert foods commonly found in Penang*

Penang is fondly regarded as the food capital of Malaysia with a wealth of street food that emphasizes noodles, spices, and fresh seafood. Penang's cuisine reflects the Chinese, Nyonya, Malay and Indian ethnic mix of Malaysia, as well as influences from Thailand. If you are looking for a foodie holidays, Penang is an ideal destination for you!

**Wong Lai Cheng**

Alumna of 2021 Technology and Innovation Seminar



# My Secret Recipe

Hello, I'm Nita Or, an alumni fellow of Technology and Innovation Seminar. I like to cook, so a story of the recipe is the one to share. I'm not good at cooking but normally do the meal, particularly during the pandemic. The faster meal is the best choice for me.

The lock down period was a memorable moment that I found the secret recipe of simple cuisine which mixed up with the incredible taste. The food called, "Canned fish noodle soup" and its taste was like a Tom Yum flavor. During the city was shut within 14 days, no one could leave from home and it was hard to buy the food outside. I started to check all the stuff in the kitchen and suddenly saw a canned fish and noodle in the cupboard. Undoubtedly, I began to prepare and let me brief you how.

Bear with me to try, but I'm unsure whether or not you like it. Plus, I posted on social media and most of the friends wanted to try this too!

First, poured the water about 500ml in the pot and after its boiled, put the canned fish to blend it well. I added a bit of sugar; chicken soup and soy sauce and then added Bok Choy (Chinese cabbage). After two minutes, putting the instant noodle and just wait fifty seconds to cook. Finally, squeezed a slide of lemon with fresh chili as need.



**Nita Or**

Alumna of 2021 Technology and Innovation Seminar

# Stay connected



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