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**Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) made an appearance at the inaugural ASEANpreneurs Youth Leaders Exchange Launch and conference on cross-border entrepreneurship**



**20<sup>th</sup> May 2008** - For Heather Chi, a 20-year-old National University of Singapore (NUS) undergraduate, the past week has been both exciting and fruitful. Her social enterprise idea of an ASEAN-themed café, which works on the concept of offering authentic ASEAN cuisine to customers and providing business to local farmers and craftsmen, sparked off a keen discussion among the 28 undergraduates from ASEAN whom she shared this idea with. By the end of the conference, Heather even found



potential business partners—two fellow tertiary students from Cambodia and Thailand.

Heather was a student delegate at the inaugural ASEANpreneurs Youth Leaders Exchange, which saw 29 tertiary student delegates from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia gathering at the National University of Singapore (NUS) from 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008. The conference culminated in a delightful effervescence of ideas, friendships and possibilities.

Organized by the first batch of the ASEANpreneurs Core Committee— students from the NUS Entrepreneurial Society-cum-founding members of ASEANpreneurs: The Youth Leaders Network— ASEANpreneurs Youth Leaders Exchange 2008 served as a valuable platform for the 29 delegates to interact, network, share their ideas as well as explore the possibilities of collaborations.

Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) made an appearance at the conference on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The student on the SOE board, Mr. Lex Leong, brought to the delegates an introduction of the organization, as well as an opportunity for the delegates to work with SOE. Sharing SOE's positive spirit with many more of our ASEAN counterparts has become a wonderful reality.

Guest of honor Mr. Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, said at the event: "Our Singaporean students are very pragmatic. When you want to do something, you will want to know that there are always certain value and benefits. There is an opportunity here in the network for jobs, a career and their passion for doing business. Maybe that will cultivate their interest in ASEAN."

The end of the week-long conference spelt only the beginning of a promising network. A web portal, <http://aseanpreneurs.ning.com>, has been set up to sustain and expand the network of young entrepreneurial minds, as well as provide a virtual



platform for the cross-fertilization of ideas and opportunities for cross-border business collaborations. The web portal currently registers 204 members, and hosts, among other things, discussion groups on various topics, including *Language Learning* and *Business Plan Competitions*. Two more budding student entrepreneurs have since expressed interest in working with Heather. Who knows, this web portal might just be the runway of something big.

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** For interviews with this year's nominees and/or comments from Spirit of Enterprise, please contact Kelly Teoh on +65 97639054 or email at [kelly@soe.org.sg](mailto:kelly@soe.org.sg).

**About Spirit of Enterprise**

Spirit of Enterprise (SOE), an Institute of Public Charter, promotes and advances entrepreneurial spirit in Singapore by honouring local self-reliant entrepreneurs operating small and medium-sized businesses, and serves to inspire Singaporeans, especially the young, to become entrepreneurs by facilitating interaction, communication and knowledge dissemination between students, the entrepreneurs and the general public. Its key programmes include Spirit of Enterprise Awards, Student-Entrepreneur Programme, and SOE Books on Entrepreneurship distributed free to local university and polytechnic business school courses.

SOE is funded by the private sector and its board of governors which consists of established entrepreneurs, corporate senior management, students, public service and political leaders. For more information, please visit [www.soe.org.sg](http://www.soe.org.sg).