



## ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

In the wake of rapid development in the last few decades, what is the future of population growth in Southeast Asia? What are the accompanying problems and obstacles that have emerged in each of the societies that make up this increasingly significant region? How will the range of policy responses perform in the wake of a 'new normal' within a post-COVID-19 world? Will population levels decline further due to ongoing border lockdowns and economic downturns? Moreover, will we see a resurgence of nationalism, fundamentalism and weakening tolerance of social diversity due to growing surveillance among nation-states in a 'new normal'? How will the youth or the aged and their families in the region be affected by such uncertainties? Will the future of transnational migration flows be forever altered? These are just a few of the critical questions that reflect the wide range of potential demographic shifts that Southeast Asia faces in light of current events.

The definition of demographic change will be defined in broad terms, drawing from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives that acknowledge the intersectionality between each of them. This workshop, therefore, seeks to raise important insights and initiate new dialogues within complex and multifaceted demographic issues emerging across Southeast Asia, while examining policy issues that have emerged because of them. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on all aspects of life in the region, this workshop is a timely response to the growing recognition of how demographic issues related to ageing, inequality, migration, diversity, employment and technology adoption have affected the sustainability and development of various countries in Southeast Asia.

## SESSION 1 – DAY 1 – 19 NOVEMBER 2020 (THURSDAY)

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE 'NEW NORMAL': REFLECTIONS ON AGEING AND FERTILITY WITHIN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Situated within the context of Southeast Asia and the ongoing pandemic, the following presentations address the most well-known demographic phenomenon in modern society, that of ageing societies. Dr Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan (National University of Singapore) highlights the importance to transcend alarmist and negative views of ageing societies by constructing new narratives that acknowledge the productive aspects of ageing from case studies in Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar. This is followed by Dr Premchand Dommaraju's (Nanyang Technological University) view that ageing in Southeast Asia is a highly transformative and gendered experience within families that intersects with the impact and consequences of neoliberal social policy. Finally, Dr Hoang Ba Thinh's (Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities) discussion of Vietnam's changing fertility rates in recent decades reveal important perspectives on differences in fertility due to geographical region, ethnicity, education and gender. This sets the stage to inform population policies within Vietnam's Population Strategy till 2030.

10.00 am – 10.10 am (Singapore time)	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b> Mr Christian Echle Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung</p>
10.10 am – 11.30 am	<p>Moderator: Dr Kevin S Y Tan Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute</p> <p>Panelists: <b><i>Measuring Productive Aging in Southeast Asia: Some Reflections from Comparative Analyses of Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand</i></b></p> <p>Dr Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan Associate Professor, Department of Sociology; and Co-Director, Centre for Family and Population Research, National University of Singapore</p> <p><b><i>Gender, Demography and the Family in Southeast Asia: Perspectives and Policy Implications</i></b></p> <p>Dr Premchand Dommaraju Associate Professor, School of Social Sciences; and Director, Master of Science in Applied Gerontology, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</p> <p><b><i>Replacement Fertility Rates in a Society in Transition: The Impact of Vietnam's Population Policies</i></b></p> <p>Dr Hoang Ba Thinh Director, Research Center for Gender, Population, Environment and Social Affairs, Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam</p>

## SESSION 2 – DAY 1 – 19 NOVEMBER 2020 (THURSDAY)

### EVALUATING INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITIES AND MIGRATION ISSUES IN AN ERA OF LOCKDOWNS

Managing demographic changes also require an understanding of issues beyond fertility and life expectancy. The role of migration and intergenerational mobility, therefore, remain important factors affecting the shifting demographic profile of all societies. This is no different in the case of Southeast Asia, as Dr Dipinder Singh Randhawa (Nanyang Technological University) examines how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted intergenerational mobility while discussing potential policy considerations to address challenges in the face of growing income gaps. Dr Steve K L Chan (Keimyung University), on the other hand, analyzes the complex reasons and policy issues surrounding outgoing unskilled migrant workers from Thailand and Vietnam—two of Southeast Asia’s fastest ageing societies—to South Korea. The struggles of these workers have now been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, Dr Kevin S Y Tan (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute) evaluates the consequences of the COVID-19 lockdowns that have resulted in an extended closure of the two causeways linking Singapore and Malaysia. The policy challenges of negotiating and navigating the complexities in resuming travel between Singapore and Johor Bahru at the risk of new waves of infections will be discussed.

3.00 pm – 4.30 pm  
(Singapore time)

Moderator: Dr Benjamin Loh  
Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panelists: ***“Are children’s lives likely to be better than their parents?”: Intergenerational Mobility in Southeast Asia***

Dr Dipinder Singh Randhawa  
Adjunct Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

***Why We Leave: Examining the Policy Issues Surrounding Thai and Vietnamese Migrant Workers and their Impact on Population Change***

Dr Steve K L Chan  
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Keimyung University, South Korea

***Unlocking the Lockdown: Policy Challenges to the Malaysian-Singapore Connection across the Causeways***

Dr Kevin S Y Tan  
Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

## SESSION 3 – DAY 2 – 20 NOVEMBER 2020 (FRIDAY)

### NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Few societies, if any, can claim to be socially homogenous once such claims are critically examined, particularly in light of a highly globalized and transnational environment. The demographic reality of all societies is, consequently, one of diversity in terms of social-cultural, occupational and embodied differences. This is firstly addressed by Dr Lana Khong (National Institute of Education) and Dr Jason Tan (National Institute of Education) as they examine the policy of 'Foreign Talent' within Singapore's education system, unravelling the multi-faceted dynamics of employment policies, which reveal greater challenges to assimilation and integration than presumed. This is followed by Dr Kyoko Kusakabe's (Asian Institute of Technology) insights on an opposite scenario, where Thailand's fishing communities face sustainability challenges due to their shrinking numbers. This is exacerbated by labour migration policies that prevent Cambodian workers from remaining in Thailand, but who are, on the other hand, competent replacements. Finally, Dr Evi Nurvidya Arifin (Universiti Brunei Darussalam) highlights the predicament of the elderly with hearing disabilities in Indonesia within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Relevant policies are examined along with recommendations that can further assist this often-neglected community.

10.00 am – 11.30 am  
(Singapore time)

Moderator: Ms Moe Thuzar  
Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panelists: ***'Foreign Talent' in Singapore and Some Implications for Schools***

Dr Lana Khong and Dr Jason Tan  
Lecturers, Department of Policy, Curriculum and Leadership, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

***Demographic Changes in Fishing Communities within Thailand and Cambodia***

Dr Kyoko Kusakabe  
School of Environment, Resources and Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

***Right to Hear: Understanding Hearing Disability among Older People in Indonesia***

Dr Evi Nurvidya Arifin  
Senior Assistant Professor, Center for Advanced Research (CARE), Universiti Brunei Darussalam

## SESSION 4 – DAY 2 – 20 NOVEMBER 2020 (FRIDAY)

### ENABLING TECHNOLOGY AND PROTECTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD IN A POST-COVID-19 ERA

Both technology advancements and the environment represent two ends of an experiential continuum that potentially exert a strong impact on populations. Reflections on the management of demographic change require greater cognizance of how these two areas intersect, influence and even transform the well-being of communities and individuals. Dr Prapaporn Tivayanond Mongkhonvanit (Thammasat University) will share an important reminder of how children—our youngest in societies—are the most at risk in suffering when a natural disaster strikes, or even in the case of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, well-designed social protection policies for children play a key role in enabling households to avoid negative coping strategies and mitigate disaster impact. Dr June Tay (Singapore University of Social Sciences) complements such concerns and strategies by examining how the COVID-19 pandemic has, ironically, given a boost to technology adoption of the digital economy among various age-groups in the region through both need and economic contingency. Finally, Dr Calvin M L Chan (Singapore University of Social Sciences), will highlight the importance of acknowledging the unique issues and challenges that the elderly face when engaging within the digital economy in order to minimize potential digital divides during the current pandemic.

4.00 pm – 5.30 pm  
(Singapore time)

Moderator: Dr Kevin S Y Tan  
Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute

Panelists: ***Social Protection in Managing Disaster Risk in Climate Change***

Dr Prapaporn Tivayanond Mongkhonvanit  
Dean, School of Global Studies, Thammasat University, Thailand

***Development of the Digital Economy in an Evolving Pandemic Environment***

Dr June Tay  
Head, Digital Media Programme, School of Science and Technology, Singapore University of Social Sciences

***Digitally Transforming an Ageing Population***

Dr Calvin M L Chan  
Director, Office of Graduate Studies, Singapore University of Social Sciences

## ABSTRACTS

### SESSION 1:

#### ONGOING TRENDS AND THE 'NEW NORMAL': REFLECTIONS ON AGEING AND FERTILITY WITHIN SOUTHEAST ASIA

##### *Measuring Productive Aging in Southeast Asia: Some Reflections from Comparative Analyses of Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand*

Dr Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan

Alarmist views regarding the burden that older persons pose for family and society are prevalent. Nevertheless, there have been increasing attempts by policy makers worldwide, including those in Southeast Asia, to counter these negative views by focusing instead on older persons' contributions to family and society. To do so, one of the first steps is to empirically assess what kind of productive activities older persons engage in and how prevalent such productive engagement is. In this presentation, I will share key findings from my recent comparative analyses of productive aging in three developing Southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand. I will also describe key lessons and challenges in measuring the concept of productive aging in the context of developing Asian countries that lack strong data infrastructure. I will conclude by discussing implications for policy.

**Bussarawan (Puk) Teerawichitchainan** holds joint appointments as Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Co-Director of the Centre for Family and Population Research. Prior to joining NUS, she was Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of Social Sciences, SMU where she served as Associate Dean (Research) during 2016-17. She received a PhD from the University of Washington. She was a past fellowship recipient of Fulbright, the Social Science Research Council, RAND, and the Population Council. Her research interests lie at the intersection of family demography, social gerontology, population health, and social stratification. She conducts research on these topics mostly in the context of Southeast Asia. Her current research examines the roles of family, policy, and social structure in explaining the well-being of older persons in the Asia Pacific region, particularly Southeast Asia.

##### *Gender, Demography and the Family in Southeast Asia: Perspectives and Policy Implications*

Dr Premchand Dommaraju

By 2050, there will be 100 million people in Southeast Asia who are over the age of 65. Ageing is already reshaping several aspects of the family in the region. This presentation will focus on three aspects of ageing and the family: demography, gender and policies. The demographic changes are not only remaking household structures but also altering family relationships, reciprocity, and obligations. The ageing experience is deeply gendered, and gender is a potential marker for vulnerability in old age in the region. While several countries in the region have launched action plans and policies, these are guided by neoliberal values and seek to minimize the role of the state in providing welfare to older persons. Policy implications of these aspects for countries in the region will be further discussed.

**Premchand Dommaraju** is Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the master's programme in applied gerontology at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research focuses on socio-demographic issues related to marriage, families and households, and ageing in Asia. His works have appeared in leading social and demographic journals including

*Population and Development Review, Demographic Research, Population, and Population Studies*. He was the sole associate editor of the journal *Asian Population Studies* between 2009-2018. Currently he serves as the vice president of the Asian Population Association.

### ***Replacement Fertility Rates in a Society in Transition: The Impact of Vietnam's Population Policies***

Dr Hoang Ba Thinh

In 2019, Vietnam's population was 96.2 million people, making it the fifteenth largest population in the world. This paper will focus on analyzing the changes in its fertility rates over the last two decades and the roles of population management policies in Vietnam. Regarding Total Fertility Rates (TFR); Vietnam's data during 2001–2019 saw a downward trend over the years, from 2.25 children/woman in 2001 to 1.99 children/woman in 2011; during 2012–2019, it was at the same level as or lower than the replacement fertility rates (fluctuating between 2.04 and 2.10 children/woman). Though Vietnam's fertility rates have been lower than its replacement rates, there are considerable differences between regions and areas; ethnic group; education levels and women's living standards quintiles. In that context, Vietnam has issued some important policies with a view to "changing the focus of population policies from family planning to population and development", including Vietnam's Population Strategy towards 2030 (2019) and the Prime Minister's 2020 decision to approve a "program of birth rates adjustment towards 2030 for regions and targets", to name a few.

**Hoang Ba Thinh** is Professor in Sociology and the Head of the Department of Gender and Family at the Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam. He is also currently its Director of Research Center for Gender, Population, Environment and Social Affairs (2005-2020)—. He was Visiting Scholar at Pennsylvania State University, USA (1994-1995); Exchange Scholar at York University, UK (1999, 2000). Professor Hoang has also served as the Vice president of the Council of Interdisciplinary Science of Politics and Management Sciences, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. He is the author of eighteen books and has co-authored twenty books and over 100 articles in journals on gender, family, sexual health and sex workers. In addition, he has coordinated more than ten major research projects at all levels, including national scientific and technological projects. He was awarded the title of Excellent Teacher by the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

### **SESSION 2: EVALUATING INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITIES AND MIGRATION ISSUES IN AN ERA OF LOCKDOWNS**

#### ***"Are children's lives likely to be better than their parents?": Intergenerational Mobility in Southeast Asia***

Dr Dipinder Singh Randhawa

A powerful aspiration for parents is to endow their children with the wherewithal to improve their lives. Facilitating economic mobility, also known as intergenerational mobility (IGM), is a fundamental objective for governments as well. IGM may result partly from investments in health, education, infrastructure — leading to increasing productivity and incomes. Social stability is contingent upon distribution of the benefits of economic growth across the widest swathes of the population. This paper draws upon the World Bank's Global Database of Intergenerational Mobility (GDIM) to assess how Southeast Asian nations have fared in recent decades in improving livelihoods of its citizens. It makes a preliminary attempt to gauge the consequences of

the COVID-19 pandemic for income distribution and prospects for the economically vulnerable segments of society. The concluding section discusses policy interventions to mitigate growing income gaps and to cope with the challenges thrown up by the advent of the fourth industrial revolution.

**Dipinder S Randhawa** is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. His research interests are in the areas of development economics; finance and banking; policy formulation and analysis; technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. He has taught at Syracuse University and the National University of Singapore and held visiting appointments at universities in China and Thailand. Dipinder received his Master's degree from the Delhi School of Economics and PhD from the Whitman School at Syracuse University.

### ***Why We Leave: Examining the Policy Issues Surrounding Thai and Vietnamese Migrant Workers and their Impact on Population Change***

Dr Steve K L Chan

Globalization often implies the increased flow of people, goods and information across country borders. Consequently, labour migration between Southeast Asian and the rest of Asia is part of this trend. This is a phenomenon that is distinguishable from migrant flows between the emerging economies of Asia to developed Western societies. Framed in this context, my presentation examines the reasons and policy issues surrounding outgoing unskilled migrant workers from Thailand and Vietnam to South Korea. The two countries are of great interest in this regard as they are two of the fastest ageing societies in Southeast Asia, with Vietnam having the youngest population in the region. Demographic numbers on fertility and mortality issues do not tell the full story, as it is important to examine the role of policy in influencing such flows. My discussion, therefore, will examine the policies adopted by each country in relation to the Work Permit System (WPS) of South Korea, and also provide an empirical grounded perspective on the reasons for such migration based on fieldwork interviews.

**Steve K L Chan** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Keimyung University, South Korea. He has taught at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and Lingnan University, Hong Kong. His research interests include economic sociology, political sociology, environmental politics, ethnicity and migration. He was a visiting fellow at Chulalongkorn University and Chiangmai University in Thailand. His recent publications are found in *Region and Cohesion*, *International Journal of Development Issues*, *Environment* and *Urbanization ASIA*, and the like. He received his PhD from the University of Melbourne.

### ***Unlocking the Lockdown: Policy Challenges to the Malaysian-Singapore Connection across the Causeways***

Dr Kevin S Y Tan

Following the advent of nationwide lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the two causeways linking Singapore to the rest of Peninsula Malaysia have been effectively shut down for more than six months since 18 March 2020. Efforts to gradually resume a sense of normality only began in mid-August 2020. Nevertheless, the economic and the far less discussed social costs to this prolonged shutdown have been great, as both Singapore and Johor Bahru, the southernmost Malaysian city closest to Singapore, have always possessed close economic and social ties that transcend geographical borders. Prior to the lockdowns in both countries, the two causeways were some of the busiest border crossings in the world, with approximately 300,000 persons traversing them daily. From a demographic perspective, this reflects the

symbiotic significance of borderlands transnationalism between nation-states, ultimately impacting the social, cultural and economic development of both Singapore and Malaysia. By examining current policies at managing border mobilities along the causeways in the face of a 'new normal', potential challenges and recommendations are examined.

**Kevin S Y Tan** is a Visiting Senior Fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. A sociologist and cultural anthropologist, he is currently researching on the topic of Demographic Transitions in Southeast Asia and the convenor of an ISEAS Yusof-Ishak Institute webinar series on "Well-being in Southeast Asia". He was also a former Head of Programme for graduate studies in Community Leadership & Social Development and Non-Profit Management at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. His current research interests include Ageing Societies, Urban Enclaves, Transient Migration and Borderlands Studies

### **SESSION 3: NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY**

#### ***'Foreign Talent' in Singapore and Some Implications for Schools***

Dr Lana Khong and Dr Jason Tan

Singapore's population policy in the last three decades, given sub-replacement fertility rates, has been to directly inject new blood into the local community. Skilled foreign professionals have been drawn mainly from so-called 'indigenous sources', namely China and India, undergirded by the assumption that an infusion of people from these two countries would be relatively painless for social and cultural assimilation since Singapore has an incumbent ethnic Chinese and Indian population. However, there is plenty of evidence that the process could be bumpier than policy-makers expected. Schools, to a large extent directly mirroring national undercurrents, offer a window through which to examine the competitive dynamics emerging from a 'replacement migration' of ethnically-similar but culturally-distinct people groups. Admission policies to schools and higher education institutions as well as in content areas such as Citizenship Education focusing on shared identity and values can stretch not only the competencies of educators but more critically, the fabric of the community.

**Lana Khong** is Lecturer at the Policy, Curriculum and Leadership Studies Academic Group of the NIE, NTU. Lana completed her M.Soc.Sci [Thesis: 2nd-Language Socialization: A study of preschool children in Singapore] from the NUS and her PhD in Education [Dissertation: Effective Parenting and the Role of the Family in Educational Mediation] at the NTU. Lana's current research interests and publications are in the areas of leadership for school-family-community engagement, teacher professional development, qualitative research, and the social context of education in Singapore.

**Jason Tan** is Associate Professor with the Policy, Curriculum and Leadership Studies Group of the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. Jason completed his MEd in Comparative Education from the University of Hong Kong in 1993 and his PhD in Comparative Education at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1996. Jason currently teaches courses in comparative education and the Singapore education system. He has given numerous domestic and international media interviews on education in Singapore. He is also a past Editor of the Asia Pacific Journal of Education (APJE).

### ***Demographic Changes in Fishing Communities in Thailand and Cambodia***

Dr Kyoko Kusakabe

Thailand is experiencing decrease in youth population, and migration of youths from rural areas to urban areas. Fishing communities experience the same trend, and there is a dearth in people to work in fisheries. The lack of labor in the border district of Thailand hire Cambodian migrant workers to work in fisheries. The aging fishing community and its economy is supported and activated by the large presence of Cambodian workers. However, the changes in fisheries policies as well as policies on labor migration has made it difficult for Cambodian workers to stay in Thailand, and small-scale fisheries is experiencing multiple difficulties. On the other hand, Cambodia is still a demographically young society. However, there are high out migration from the fishing communities, especially in the inland fishing communities around Tonle Sap Lake, while coastal fishing communities are able to keep their young generations in the village through the availability of factory work in the coastal area. This presentation demonstrates how the policies on migration and industrialization affect the make-up of the demographic composition of the community, affecting the livelihood of women and men.

**Kyoko Kusakabe** is a Professor of Gender and Development Studies and the Head of Department of Development and Sustainability at the School of Environment, Resources and Development in Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. Her research focuses on labor migration and the gender analysis of work. She also works on fishing communities and is an executive committee member of Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section of Asian Fisheries Society. She is also the co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Gender, Technology and Development* (Taylor and Francis).

### ***Right to Hear: Understanding Hearing Disability among Older People in Indonesia***

Dr Evi Nurvidya Arifin

Hearing disability is one of the often-neglected topics in research and policy making. However, this disability has far-reaching consequences on quality of life of the people themselves and their families, community and the state. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the suffering of older people with hearing disabilities. Internationally, many countries have agreed with the UN Convention for People with Disabilities. Although Indonesia has collected data on hearing disabilities, the data has not been made available publicly. Furthermore, there has been no detailed analysis on the data. This paper fills in this gap. It provides information on the socio-economic-health conditions related to hearing disabilities and provides estimate of prevalence of hearing disability at the provincial level in Indonesia. It also examines some recent policies relevant to this issue and provides recommendation on how to minimize the older people's deprivation because of hearing disabilities.

**Evi Nurvidya Arifin** obtained her Ph.D in Social Statistics from the University of Southampton, UK, and is currently Senior Assistant Professor, Centre for Advanced Research (CARE), Universiti Brunei Darussalam. She was in Singapore until 2014 spending more than a decade at ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. Previously, she was postdoctoral fellow at the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis and Asia Research Institute, NUS. Prior to joining CARE, she was in Indonesia to teach at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, and a researcher at the Centre for Ageing Studies. She is currently an Adjunct Researcher of the Demographic Institute, Universitas Indonesia. She was a research coordinator at the Centre for Family and Ageing Studies (CeFAS), and taught at the Post-graduate program on Public Health, University of Respati, Indonesia.

## **SESSION 4: ENABLING TECHNOLOGY AND PROTECTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD IN A POST- COVID-19 ERA**

### ***Social Protection in Managing Disaster Risk in Climate Change***

Dr Prapaporn Tivayanond Mongkhonvanit

It is children who are the most at risk in suffering when a natural disaster strikes. Natural disasters—exacerbated by climate change—can undermine and even reverse the impressive improvements in the lives of children in Southeast Asia in recent decades. When a disaster strikes and destroys sources of livelihoods, the almost inevitable response of poor households are coping strategies, which are harmful to children, such as saving money on food, and reducing investments in children’s health and education. Well-designed social protection can play a key role in enabling households avoid negative coping strategies and mitigate disaster impact. This presentation intends to connect disaster research, advance understanding of demographic changes, and inform policy interventions. The field research undertaken in Thailand and the Philippines reflects the important of disaster and climate-sensitive social protection in Southeast Asia, as there are limited examples of comprehensive risk mitigation and prevention programmes, which incorporate social protection. Framed in the context of a post Covid19 world, this underlines the need to strengthen proactive elements of national programmes to manage disaster risk coupled with a stronger focus on proactive, disaster and climate-sensitive social protection to build the resilience of households in Southeast Asia.

**Prapaporn Tivayanond Mongkhonvanit** is the Dean of the School of Global Studies at Thammasat University. She was a Board Member of the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand and the Founding Director of Social Policy and Development (SPD) International Programme at Thammasat University. Prapaporn conducts research in areas of social protection. She has researched the connection between Thailand’s welfare scheme and the informal sector, paying particular attention to OTOP producers and Thailand’s social entrepreneurship. She has also conducted studies in Thailand’s early childhood care and education. Her study for UNRISD was on Thailand’s universal health scheme. Prapaporn is the recipient of Asia Society’s Asia 21 Young Leaders Award and has a DPhil in Social Policy from the University of Oxford.

### ***Development of the Digital Economy in an Evolving Pandemic Environment***

Dr June Tay

Broadly defined, the digital economy is the use of digital technologies on production and consumption patterns and that influences how goods and services are traded, marketed and purchased. The growth of digital economy is fueled by a plethora of digital technologies which encompasses cloud computing, 5G mobile network, internet of things, autonomous vehicles, robotics and artificial intelligence. With increased GDP among Southeast Asian countries (SEA), digital devices such as computers and smart phones, and also the enabling internet and mobile services has become affordable. With many countries experiencing intermittent lockdowns, there is a greater need to rely on digital technologies and related applications. One significant development of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the greater level of technology adoption among the resident populations in various Southeast Asian countries. Implications of such shifts suggest increased per capital spending on e-commerce along with the growing presence of ‘influencer marketing’ towards a wider range of age groups, although this may vary from country to country.

**June Tay** is the Head of Digital Media Programme at School of Science and Technology in Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). Prior to joining SUSS, June worked for

government agencies and was an instructor on ICT and Electronics in higher education. After earning her PhD, June joined British Telecommunications (BT) in the UK as a research scientist. During her career with BT, she contributed to the Internet Standardisation in Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), producing several publications and six granted patents in the fields of computer networks and security. She is the creator of SUSS's Digital Media Bachelor's Programme. A keen participant in technical research and industry discussions, a major aspect of her applied research seeks to bridge existing gaps between various industries and enterprises.

### ***Digitally Transforming an Ageing Population***

Dr Calvin M L Chan

Population ageing is one of the key demographic changes in contemporary societies. People are living longer, with the size and proportion of older persons increasing rapidly. At the same time, societies around the world are also undergoing digital transformation. The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying lockdown of cities have further fuelled the scope and speed of digital transformation in many societies. The confluence of these two global phenomena has raised much concern over the well-being of older persons living in increasingly digitally-enabled societies as older persons are typically among the least technologically-savvy demographic group. Considering the Asian virtue of respect and care for elders, it is important that this demographic group is not left behind even as societies in Southeast Asia become digitalised. Based upon a study on the use of digital technology among older persons in Singapore, possible interventions to develop a more age-friendly digitalised society will be discussed.

**Calvin M L Chan** is an Associate Professor and Director (Office of Graduate Studies) at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. His research focuses on the social and organisational aspects of information systems, with particular interest on the digitalisation of the private sector (e.g. digital disruption of SME), public sector (e.g. e-government and smart cities) and people sector (smart communities and ICT & Ageing). He serves on a number of committees related to ICT & Ageing and was on the Board of Directors of The Council for Third Age.