

Mr Utopia

YAP KWONG WENG SPEAKS ABOUT HIS IDEALS AND HIS INTENTION TO CHANGE THE WORLD

It is virtually impossible to put a finger on what a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum such as Yap Kwong Weng does. As Yap himself explains, he, together with others like him, engages with leaders outside his field and community to serve as a sounding board and adviser to international organisations, governments and private institutions as they address global challenges such as environmental issues, improving education and eradicating poverty.

How do you play a part in the World Economic Forum's process of determining its goals?

The World Economic Forum creates special task forces that focus on very specific global agendas and goals. The way the World Economic Forum does this is to convene a diverse global community such as private businesses, public domain and Young Global Leaders to address climate change issues, oil prices, social problems and many more. That is where I come in. As a Young Global Leader, I represent a member from this region on a platform designed to engage international representatives from business, civil society, government, arts and culture, academia and media to discuss and agree upon a collective future.

How do you expect to make changes without being tangled with political, partisan or national interests?

People often have trouble discerning political issues from social ones. These issues that are seemingly rife with politics can actually be broken down and addressed on the social level. Let's look at Singapore's ageing population for instance, though not as alarming as Japan's, it has sparked foreign talent policies in an attempt to keep the workforce young and sustainable. Rather than think of our aged as being useless to the economy, something that the general populace can think about is how to capitalise



PROFILE

As a Young Global Leader, World Economic Forum, Yap Kwong Weng, 35, works in close cooperation with the World Economic Forum to integrate young leaders into deep interaction with other stakeholders of global society to determine the mission-led, principle-driven activities of the YGL community.

on their skills and wealth of experience to fit together with the youth and technology of today. Suddenly this issue has become more of a social than political one.

How can companies get involved in community building and volunteerism?

Companies can get involved in community building and volunteerism by first making a commitment to include social responsibility into their business strategies. The implicit returns of doing good extend beyond profit maximisation. It cultivates character and social capital, which in turn, bridges human capital and performance.

How can Corporate Social Responsibility and volunteerism help companies excel in the world's current economic climate?

Social innovation and entrepreneurship are both deeply rooted in volunteerism and corporate social responsibility. Today,

thousands around the world have stepped up and used a "bottom up" approach to address global issues such as widening gaps in poverty, the environment and technology. These initiatives enable new ideas, businesses and efficiencies to be established. Countries, especially those from developing economies can benefit more from this emerging paradigm. [A](#)

YAP ON INITIATING CHANGE

1. Always think two steps ahead without being influenced by disruptive "noises".
2. Hold a deep sense of purpose. Know what you want and go for it. Time is limited.
3. Don't let conditions change you. Make the best of what you have to create real change.