



YSEALI GAME CHANGERS EQUIPS SOUTHEAST ASIAN VIDEO GAME DESIGNERS TO TACKLE GLOBAL CHALLENGES THROUGH GAMING



From left to right: Game design experts Alan Gershenfeld, Lien Tran, Lindsay Grace; Malaysian Minister of Youth and Sports YB Hannah Yeoh, U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia Brian McFeeters, and Group CEO of Biji-biji Enterprise, Rashvin Singh.

By [U.S. EMBASSY MALAYSIA](#)

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — The United States Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, in partnership with the Biji-biji Initiative and Synapze, is proud to present the YSEALI Game Changers Regional Workshop, which will convene game designers representing 11 Southeast Asian nations for a workshop on how to design games that address social issues and a game jam during which participants will prototype games that address topics including climate change, civic engagement, economic empowerment, education, and more.

As policymakers, we have a crucial role to play in shaping the future of the gaming industry. We must work to create an enabling environment that encourages development and deployment of an industry that is not only healthy but with a social purpose,” said Minister of Youth and Sports YB Hannah Yeoh, speaking at the launch.

The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) is the U.S. government’s signature program to strengthen partnerships with emerging leaders in Southeast Asia; to expand their skills as effective civic, economic and non-governmental leaders in the region; and to encourage them to work together across borders to solve regional challenges.

“Southeast Asia is quickly becoming a hub for game development and other creative technologies, and the popularity and interactivity of video games make them a uniquely powerful way to view important issues like climate change and media literacy in a new way,” commented U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia Brian D. McFeeters, “Through YSEALI Game Changers, we’re using the power of the YSEALI platform to give these talented young technologists a chance to make games that impact their communities and potentially the world.”

The YSEALI Game Changers Regional Workshop will be led by renowned American and Southeast Asian game design experts including Lindsay Grace, Knight Chair in Interactive Media at the University of Miami, Alan Gershenfeld, Co-Founder/President of E-Line Media, and Lien Tran, an award-winning game designer and instructor at DePaul University. Among the regional experts joining the program are Saqina Latif, Managing Director of Persona Theory Games, from Malaysia, El Lim, Founder of Khayalan Arts, from Indonesia, and Luna Javier, Co-Founder and Creative Director of Altitude Games, from the Philippines.

“YSEALI Game Changers is a glowing example of the power of games and play to connect people, bring communities together, and inspire economic and socially impactful change. It’s an illustration of the pervasive nature of play, the power of play to engage, empower and involve not only game players, but the people who make them.” commented University of Miami game design professor and program trainer Lindsay Grace, “There’s a reason that we call these game jams, because like musicians who have jam sessions, each participant and trainer brings their unique skills and experience to improvise new projects. We all still play the keyboards, just a different way. It’s a cultural exchange through play.”

YSEALI Game Changers incorporates a range of instructive modules, including narrative in games, impact game methodology, and transformational game design. Social impact experts will also provide insights on how to effectively incorporate themes of education, environment, social economic empowerment, and civic engagement into game design, offering valuable perspectives on how to create socially impactful games that can spur positive change in the Southeast Asian region.

Participants in the game jam and pitching competition will compete for a pot of over \$30,000 in seed funding and a three-month mentorship to complete the development of their game prototypes, leading to a showcase at an international games conference later in 2023.

YSEALI Game Changers is supported by a range of public and private sector partners including the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), Microsoft Xbox, Persona Theory Games, and Sony Playstation Studios Malaysia.

For more information about YSEALI Game Changers, please visit ysealigamechangers.com.

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