

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday 10 November 2014:**

**BRITISH COUNCIL LAUNCHES CREATIVE INNOVATION INITIATIVE ACROSS ASIA,  
AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE UK**

A brand new programme from the British Council will give cultural innovators the chance to collaborate with peers across the world, hone their professional skills and see their ideas realised with special project funding.

Developed and presented by the British Council, **ELEVATE** is a programme that aims to build a global community of problem-solvers, who will meet practical challenges with innovative solutions to social problems, such as urbanisation, aging populations and sustainability.

The first stage of the programme will be the **ELEVATE StartWell™ Challenge**, which will open for applications on Monday 10 November from entrants in Australia, Burma, China, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, Philippines and the UK.

The **ELEVATE StartWell™ Challenge** is developed in partnership with Singapore philanthropic house, the Lien Foundation, in line with Lien Foundation's StartWell™ initiative, which aims to rethink the priorities of childhood in Singapore. The partnership between the British Council and the Lien Foundation grew out of a mutual concern for social issues and an ambitious approach to harness creativity and values-based decision-making.

The **ELEVATE StartWell™ Challenge** asks applicants to present innovative new concepts to improve the element of play in early childhood (0-8 years), reimagine urban spaces and playgrounds, and the way young children interact with space.

*"Play is how children navigate experiences, cultivate curiosity and creativity, and most importantly, learn," said **Mr Lee Poh Wah**, Lien Foundation's Chief Executive Officer. "It is their natural way of discovering new knowledge and vital to their development and wellbeing. If we want happy & healthy children, we need to nurture their playful instincts, and provide stimulating environments. The Challenge is to identify these playful possibilities and transform it into serious opportunities to positively impact children's learning and development."*

Applicants can be anyone who uses creativity in their work and life including (but not limited to) artists, designers, performers, digital technologists, and architecture.

Those with the best ideas will become the first **ELEVATE Fellows**, and will be invited to attend a fully-paid residential **Innovation Camp** at **Yamaguchi Centre for Arts and Media [YCAM]**, in February 2015.

After the innovation camp, ELEVATE Fellows may be chosen to receive a share of the ELEVATE support money (**SGD 50K**), with which they may realise their play space idea or continue professional development. Fellows will also have access to a bespoke digital platform (from March 2015), which will include resources and educational content from leading organisations such as the **Institute for Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship (ICCE), Goldsmiths, University of London**.

**Applications for ELEVATE Startwell™ Challenge open Monday 10 November 2014 and close Monday 5 January 2015.**

To find out more about ELEVATE, visit  
<http://www.britishcouncil.sg/programmes/arts/east-asia/regional-programmes/elevate>

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#### About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publically-funded grant provides less than 25 per cent of our turnover which last year was £781 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

You can also keep in touch with the British Council through **Twitter.com/britishcouncil**, **twitter.com/eabritisharts** and **blog.britishcouncil.org/**

#### About the Lien Foundation

The Lien Foundation is a Singapore philanthropic house noted for its model of radical philanthropy. It breaks new ground by investing in innovative solutions, convening strategic partnerships and catalysing action on social and environmental challenges. The Foundation seeks to foster exemplary early childhood education, excellence in eldercare and effective environmental sustainability in water and sanitation.

In the area of early childhood education, the Foundation aims to create a better playing field by strengthening capacity in this area and opening up opportunities for disadvantaged pre-schoolers. In June

2012, the Lien Foundation released a global benchmark study called “Starting Well” that ranked 45 countries on their provision of preschool education.

[www.lienfoundation.org](http://www.lienfoundation.org)

### About StartWell

StartWell is a community-led initiative that seeks to rethink the priorities of childhood and support preschool teachers who build the foundation of our children’s future.

Comprising organisations and individuals, the StartWell initiative consists of a series of projects aimed at bringing this vision to life. These include [A Different Class](#) (a study to imagine preschool buildings in unusual sites.), [Superhero Me](#) (a crafts and character-building curriculum), Elevate StartWell Challenge (a competition to design play spaces), Science Of Play (a resource guide for purposeful play), and the launch of Singapore’s first inclusive preschool where able-bodied and special needs children come together.

[www.startwell.sg](http://www.startwell.sg)