



CYC The Custom Shop has repurposed leftover fabric from tailored garments into face masks (left); Sampangan's "magic box" uses carbonised technology to convert any type of waste into active carbon that can be used to fertilise and improve soil quality (above). PHOTOS: CYC THE CUSTOM SHOP, INTERNET

TAKING HEART

Sustainability in the spotlight

Almost 800 applications from across 63 countries took part in the DBS Foundation Social Impact Prize competition

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SUSTAINABILITY was the common thread among the four finalists of the DBS Foundation Social Impact Prize (SIP) competition held last Friday. As the grand prize winner, Singapore startup StratifiCare walked away with \$575,000; while Indonesian company Sampangan bagged \$525,000 as People's Choice winner.

Initiated by DBS Foundation and Singapore Management University (SMU), the DBS Foundation SIP aims to identify sustainable, scalable and enterprising business solutions from across the world that address crucial social problems. Almost 800 applications from across 63 countries responded to the call.

Karen Ngui, board member of DBS Foundation, said: "We believe the future of business lies in being purpose-driven; and social enterprises, with their dual bottom line, are prime examples of this: they contribute to the growth of local economies, serve the underserved, and often employ those from marginalised groups."

StratifiCare discovered a panel of biomarkers that can determine the progress of dengue fever. Patients who are predicted not to progress to severe dengue can then be managed at outpatient settings.

Sampangan is a waste-to-carbon

technology service company that aims to help local governments, agriculture areas, industrial areas, and waste transporters process waste in both solid and liquid forms safely and sustainably. Using its carbonised technology, organic and non-organic waste can be converted into active carbon in its "magic box". There, heat radiation is used instead of full incineration, making this process environmentally friendly, and the active carbon material can help fix farm soil and increase harvest yields.

Fauzal Rizki, CEO of Sampangan, said: "Sampangan is the combination of the Indonesian word *sampah* that means waste, and *pangan* that means food. Sampangan aims to convert waste to circular economy by contributing to food security from our activated carbon contribution to organic farming and increase in harvest productivity."

Solving waste problems

According to Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry's 2019 report, the country generates 64 million tonnes of annual waste. Sampangan currently has a waste processing capacity of 12,000 tonnes per annum.

"In the medium term, we hope for Sampangan to reach six million tonnes per year waste processing capacity by 2025. Our focus is to approach local governments and private industrial estates to help solve municipal waste problems with



3 Embers' home meal kits are packed in bio-cane containers made from renewable sugar pulp and are home compostable.

PHOTO: 3 EMBERS

key target areas of landfills, real estate and hospitals," the CEO said.

In the same vein, catering company 3 Embers is doing its part to conserve the environment. Food waste accounts for about 10 per cent of the total waste generated in Singapore, but only 18 per cent of the food waste is recycled. Hence, the caterer is working with Phuture Meat to provide plant-based meat menu options, and partners local farmers to source sustainably for food products.

Chef Teo Yeow Siang said: "F&B operators need to look beyond their costs and profits to embrace sustainability. The government and relevant

authorities also need to educate the masses about the need for sustainability so consumers will be willing to take in the cost." He added: "From this pandemic, with the disrupted global supply chains, we are reminded that Singapore has to boost its home-grown food production to improve its food security. We can do our part by supporting local farmers and educating consumers about the quality of local produce."

During the pandemic, an extra 1,334 tonnes of plastic waste was generated from food delivery and takeaway meals during Singapore's "circuit breaker", according to a study

by alumni from the NUS Master of Science Environmental Management programme.

This prompted 3 Embers to partner BioPak for its Fun and Dine session during the circuit breaker, where participants received a meal preparation kit and then cooked with chefs through a Zoom session. The ingredients were packed in bio-cane containers made from renewable sugar pulp and are home compostable.

Now that restrictions are easing, the company is using the same biodegradable containers for its delivery.

Chef Teo said: "During this period, there is an increased demand for food

deliveries and takeaways, and it is even more important for F&B owners to consider using sustainable packaging. Consumers can also do their part by bringing their own re-usable containers for takeaways."

Sustainability is the name of the game, and Fong Loo Fern, managing director of family-run tailoring business CYC The Custom Shop, has repurposed leftover fabric from tailored garments into face masks.

Most polluting

Stephanie Dickson, founder of media company Green Is The New Black, said: "(Studies have shown) that fashion is one of the most polluting and socially corrupt industries in the world. The world produced around 80-100 billion pieces of clothing every year."

Ms Foo, the tailoring artisan of CYC The Custom Shop that made shirts for the late Lee Kuan Yew, had always felt that there was a lot of excess fabric that could be used, and was thinking of a way to reduce it. When the pandemic struck, she had the idea to produce face masks using the excess fabric. "We sold more than 15,000 masks from April to September. Some of these masks were made from cut-outs but a large part were made from fabrics we have in stock, and some we buy specially for the retail masks. We also provided more than 200,000 mask kits during the period to volunteers who helped sew masks for the foreign workers. These were made from fabric stocks that we have in our inventory," she said.

Ms Foo added: "We only have one Earth. If we fill it with rubbish, it will have no place to go."