

Innovation wins at Singtel social programme

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AS AN asthmatic child, Adrian Ang, co-founder and CEO at AEvic Health, often had trouble articulating what he felt when an attack came on.

With this experience, and understanding the difficulty children have in expressing what their symptoms are to caregivers and doctors, Mr Ang founded AEvic Health in 2016 with associate professor Ser Wee from Nanyang Technological University. The collaboration later expanded to include Daniel Goh, cluster head for paediatrics from the National University of Singapore.

The startup developed a smart wearable device, AireSone Junior, that can help parents track and monitor their child's asthma in real time, and be alerted to an oncoming asthma attack.

Mr Ang said: "If we look at the world today, there are more than 293 million children suffering from asthma, making it one of the most prevalent diseases affecting children. According to the World Health Organisation, this number is expected to increase by 30 per cent in 2025, putting further stress on global healthcare cost."

He added that the device empowers parents to take early clinical intervention and achieve better clinical outcomes, translating to fewer hospital visits and lower long-term medical cost per patient.

Another startup, XCLR8, was founded in 2016 by three people who met at Singapore Management Univer-



AireSone Junior, a smart wearable system that wirelessly tracks a child's vitals.

PHOTO: AEVICE

sity's Master of Science in Innovation programme. The team members – who had relatives with relevant physiotherapy-linked problems – had an interest in tackling the ageing population problem via technology, and developed a tele-medicine solution with sensor technology.

XCLR8 Remote Rehabilitation creates real-time representations of patients' movements. Through a 3D avatar, patients can perform prescribed exercise routines and the algorithms will automatically detect deviations from correct movement patterns and provide instructions for corrections.

Lincoln Dacy, co-founder of XCLR8, said: "Most of the developed countries are now faced with ageing population problems and are facing shortages of medical professionals to meet such growing demands. On the other hand, more than half of the world's rural population do not have

access to healthcare facilities and most extreme examples can be found in the Asia-Pacific region. A tele-medicine-enabled solution like ours can therefore serve as a scalable and cost-efficient solution."

He added that to keep rising medical costs under control, a pro-active approach to exercise and therapy is needed and with this technology, preventive exercise programmes can be designed and monitored to decrease the cases of musculoskeletal conditions, or even reduce the number of falls and arthritis.

"Our aim is to increase the overall quality of life of our users, either through prevention or rehabilitation."

Both companies, with the aim of benefiting the society at large, were among the 10 regional social impact startup winners of the Singtel Group Future Makers 2018.

Into its third year, the Future Makers programme attracted over 3,000 applicants from five countries

and the 10 winners were awarded a total of S\$110,000 in funding from the Singtel Group on Nov 9.

Andrew Buay, vice-president of group sustainability at Singtel, said: "We believe technology has the power to enrich lives and empower everyone. The Future Makers programme reflects this conviction and leverages the best of our regional partners to nurture innovators to create greater social impact."

"Startups from five countries took part in the regional finals and these two startups (from Singapore) selected for the programme had solutions we felt could scale and address issues that are common across the region, or where we could leverage our partnerships and presence in the region."

He added that MNCs are able to provide a broad global view of the issues and opportunities beyond the local market. This is critical in the social impact space because scalability is key to any startup's ability to grow, and to be profitable and sustainable in the long run. "In a nutshell, Singtel helps startups open doors and reach out to suitable partners to drive the adoption of innovative solutions that make a difference."

Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise (raiSE) has been a participant and supporter of the Singtel Future Makers programme since its inception. Senior manager of raiSE, Nicole Pauh, said: "The Singtel Future Makers programme is a good example of how all ecosystem stakeholders, including corporates such as Singtel, can contribute and play an active role in growing and shaping innovative solutions to address pressing social needs."