

by RAHIMI YUNUS

SUNWAY is driving entrepreneurship and innovation through the Sunway Innovation Labs (iLabs) that would transform Sunway City Kuala Lumpur into a "living lab".

Sunway, one of the country's largest conglomerates, will continue to gather leading researchers, experts and academia to generate real-world solutions for the betterment of the environment and mankind under the iLabs initiative.

Launched in 2017, Sunway iLabs is fast becoming a distinguished platform for start-ups to build their ideas and eventually turning into a vision that would evolve Sunway City Kuala Lumpur into a major technology-driven ecosystem of the 21st century.

"We created a platform, iLabs, to see what students were keen on doing and types of markets entrepreneurs may want to focus on. Then we started to learn as Sunway Group, and to see how we could leverage the existing facilities and capacities within the group and business units and bolt on to any digital, skill and technologies," said Sunway Group chief innovation officer and Sunway iLabs director Matthijs van Leeuwen.

He said the initiative enables Sunway to future-proof the industries that the group has already been doing and create new industries.

With the tagline of "Inspire. Build. Launch.", the group's flagship smart sustainable township Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is set to be the epicentre of innovations and smart solutions.

The 800-acre (323.75 hectares) site has been chosen to be the testbed of the living lab.

#### Five Verticals

Sunway is developing iLabs that comprises five verticals namely "Smart Cities", "Digital Health Tech", "EduTech", "AgrifoodTech" and "e-Commerce".

"We have decided on these five because we have identified underlying trends in different industries," van Leeuwen said.

The Smart Cities vertical aims at disrupting conventional real estate markets through the use of artificial intelligence, blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) to reimagine and transform the use of space.

The goals are to build sustainable cities that are smarter and healthier and to improve consumer's convenience, connectivity and quality of life with technology.

Van Leeuwen said iLabs is in talks with Sunway's property and retail arms to understand how to become smarter, to digitalise townships and see how IoT could be used to better understand customers.

The Digital Health Tech vertical is looking at digitalising customers' journey, from entering the hospitals, registration, to checking out, and everything in between.

It targets to enhance the efficiency of healthcare services, harness data and conduct in-depth analyses to solve problems around preventive health such as non-communicable diseases.

Through the EduTech vertical, Sunway is transforming the education landscape from impact-driven teaching and learning tools to disrupting traditional education systems by providing peer-to-peer, gamification, problem solving and hands-on learning on its campus.

iLabs has partnered with Sunway Education Group to offer a world-renowned coding



The Canopy Walk in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is also known as 'Ecowalk' which connects Sunway Pyramid, Menara Sunway, The Pinnacle Sunway, Sunway Geo Residence, Sunway Lagoon Club, Palm Ville Condominium, Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway University, Monash University and Sunway Lagoon BRT Station



(From left) Sunway iLabs ventures head Eleanor Choong, Sunway group chief innovation officer and Sunway iLabs director Matthijs van Leeuwen and Sunway FutureX community manager Koo Tse Chien

school — Ecole 42 — that led to the launch of 42KL in July 2020.

iLabs' AgrifoodTech vertical incorporates IoT to revamp traditional agriculture to a sophisticated, technology-based industry.

The vertical tackles challenges in Malaysia's food security with technology solutions throughout the farm-to-fork supply chain towards clean and healthy food production.

Sunway via iLabs is also spearheading in building decentralised smart urban farms throughout its cities across the country.

The e-Commerce vertical wants to accelerate the adoption of e-Commerce and digital solutions among businesses for faster growth, venturing into new markets and exploring additional revenue streams.

iLabs has collaborated with Alibaba Group through the Global e-Commerce Talent programme to inspire, inform and enable one million young digital talents worldwide by 2023.

Since 2000, Sunway has invested RM200

million in digitalisation, including improving internal processes, enhancing customer-facing initiatives and business ventures.

#### Covid-19 Challenges

But 2020 has witnessed unprecedented challenges including for Sunway to keep the transformation momentum of Sunway City Kuala Lumpur and iLabs.

Yet, the pandemic is also an opportunity for iLabs to prove its mettle in the innovation space.

Tapping into iLabs' cutting-edge leads, Sunway University is collaborating with Pemandu Associates and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation on the Global Covid-19 Index (GCI).

The GCI is the world's first holistic and comprehensive index on Covid-19, consolidating data on the pandemic from verified sources of 184 countries into a comprehensive index to which governments, businesses, and communities can refer.

Updated daily, the database ranks 184 countries based on how well they respond to the pandemic.

In April, Sunway Medical Centre and iLabs built a contactless Covid-19 testing pod, allowing Malaysian front liners to conduct testing for suspected cases more safely and efficiently.

The first unit is now serving at Sunway Medical Centre in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur.

In the UK, the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre at the University of Cambridge has found itself at the heart of the university's response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Cambridge Institute of Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease, which opened in autumn 2019 in the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, enabled researchers to explore the biology of SARS-CoV-2 by culturing live virus.

Separately, Sunway also has implemented a range of measures across its malls, theme parks, hotels and headquarters to ensure heightened safety for patronage.

Sunway Malls has put in place 82 measures of new normal that include introducing an 'Order and Collect' station and deploying 4,000 closed-circuit televisions across Sunway Malls as well as thermal scanners and/or handheld contactless temperature scanners at all entering and exiting points.

For Sunway Theme Parks, despite the operations have not fully resumed yet, the group has continued ramping up its precautionary measures since January to combat the pandemic.

Similarly, Sunway Hotels and Resorts have implemented a 'Sunway Safe Stay' programme that covers almost 30 protocols to ensure the wellbeing of all guests and staff, from floor markers to hotel furniture rearranged to ensure social distancing is observed and enforced throughout the hotel.

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