

**An interview with Ms. Nirit Ellenbogen Team lead of Project Mad in Singapore & North Bridge Road; won the Distinguished awards by Nanyang Polytechnic School of Design & Architecture**



This project expanded opportunities for more people. What inspired this project, and how did you appeal to design students to participate?

*MAD in Singapore students' summit was initiated and conceived from the objective to engage design students from different levels of education, and to invite them to experience how Social Innovative Design Actions, can be initiated and implemented by ground up activities and by students, and*

*how these initiatives can create positive impact at selected public spaces in Singapore.*

*Another objective was to bring students, industry experts and stake holders from the various communities, together, to get to know each other, to work together, and to witness the power of collaboration.*

*As the main objective was to let the students experience SELF INITIATIVE, we aimed to motivate them, by the opportunity to receive grants to implement the projects they would conceive instead by the common award of grades or other rewards.*

*As educators, we realized that design students would appreciate the opportunity to initiate real life projects and even receive grants, if being successful, in order to execute them, as this is not a common opportunity for them, in most design schools.*

*We decided to facilitate this to happen with a 3 days summit, and students were also motivated by the opportunity to meet and collaborate with each other, with industry experts and to be inspired by key industry leaders as speakers.*

*We learnt that students appreciate competitions, but this competition was different, as instead of the usual few prizes to be won, we decided not to limit the amount of awards, and the only condition to win, was to produce an appealing design proposal. We believe that this principle assisted in motivating the students to participate, and also contributed greatly to foster a true collaboration spirit during the 3 days design incubator.*



How do you think your project has developed the love that locals have for Singapore?

*MAD in Singapore's programme, requested the participants to examine public spaces in Singapore and to identify and explore how these spaces could be better used and to rethink how to reprogramme them and make them more lively and loveable.*

*We believe that the engagement with a public place, whether as designer or the user, is holding a great capacity to nurture and to enhance our love to Singapore.*

*The community garden at North Bridge Road, is engaging the residents engage with their public place and the fact that they have developed ownership for it is a sign of attachment and love.*

How did you find out about COLA and what attracted you to apply for it?

*Nanyang Polytechnic, School of Design, has applied and awarded with COLA awards in the past, and as we appreciate the opportunity to be recognised, it was natural for us to apply again.*

*We appreciate COLA's values and mission as educators.*

What advice would you offer to potential applicants who are keen to start their projects?

*We would like to advise potential applicants not to be afraid to dream, even if their idea seems impossible or very challenging to achieve.*

*If one believes in his or her good cause, they should have the courage and determination to make that happen.*

*MAD in Singapore was conceived and made possible with very little resources. We had little budget and had to rely mostly on our own passion, hard work and determination.*

*As we believed in our good cause, it was not difficult to convince other schools and industry partners, to join and contribute their time, talents and efforts, while the only compensation we could offer was the opportunity to be part of an inspiring social initiative.*

What would be the next area that you would like to see or be part of transforming in Singapore to make it a more lovable city?

*As educators, in the way we teach and operate, we would like to continue to nurture and inspire the young generation to be initiative, to care for the country and society and to see their primarily purpose in becoming designers, in making our lives in Singapore, better.*

