Progressive, dynamic and versatile: This is what the city-state of Singapore stands for. The city has a reputation as an innovation hub of Southeast Asia and as garden-city due to its many parks and buildings overgrown with plants. At the DLD conference on October 22nd, the city also paid tribute to its reputation as capital with its own rainforest. With tropical temperatures and humidity of more than 95 percent, DLD founder Steffi Czerny welcomed around 300 participants to the second edition of DLD Singapore in the (luckily air-conditioned) Capella Hotel on the offshore island Sentosa.

The Southeast Asian ecosystem put to the test

Roshni Mahtani knows the Southeast Asian market like the back of her hand. Starting as her private blog, "The Asian Parent" has become the largest online platform for mothers in Southeast Asia. The SEA expert shared exciting insights of markets that are the most promising in the region according to the birth rate: "With 32 million inhabitants, the Jakarta metropolitan region has a larger population than most major western cities put together. If you want to build a successful business, you should consider Indonesia just because of the size of its market."
Burda board member Martin Weiss also discussed the Southeast Asian ecosystem with the region’s most important investment funds such as KKR, Sequoia Capital India and Monk’s Hill Ventures. The panel pointed out the huge potential of the region but also its specific challenges: One has to be aware of the diversity of the Southeast Asian states - just because the idea of a company may work in Indonesia, it does not guarantee success for Thailand as well, stated Weiss. Different cultures, attitudes and religions play a major role in Southeast Asia, so each state requires its own business model.

**Women’s power on stage**

With Shuyin Tang (Patamar Capital) and Esther Nguyen, founder of the Vietnamese entertainment company Pops, two successful businesswomen entered the DLD stage. Vietnam is an extremely fast-growing market that is hungry for content and media, explained Nguyen. Free Wi-Fi is available (almost) everywhere in Vietnam driving consumption. When asked about the high percentage of women amongst Vietnamese CEOs, Phuong Dao Thu, COO of Vietnam’s leading search engine and Burda investment Cốc Cốc, responded that this was nothing out of the ordinary as gender equality is key to her country’s culture.

**Advanced biology and technology**

There were lots of “Ahs” and “Ohs” in the audience when Osh Agabi spoke about the development of his “living machines”: “At Koniku, we program living cells using the same technology that dogs or mice use to smell.” Bringing biology and technology together, machines learn to smell and can be used in airport security to identify explosives or in health to detect cancer cells.

Philipp Zimmermann, the co-founder of the German robotics company Franka Emika, used his industrial robot Franka to demonstrate how it can handle movement sequences such as attaching and detaching a USB stick to a laptop. He emphasized how important it is for the upcoming generation to learn about robotics at an early age. The “Robot Factory” project, in which children and young people experiment with robots at school, is a good example of how this early education can work.

**Time for networking**

On the evening of the conference, speakers and hosts from DLD Singapore met for the DLD Speakers’ Cocktail at the invitation of Burda’s investment unit BurdaPrincipal Investments: Drinks and finger food were served in the private home of the entrepreneur couple Chris Wilson and Than Su Shan.

Around the world: No time to relax for the DLD team as it hit the plane to Australia on the very same evening for the premiere of the DLD Salon in Brisbane.

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