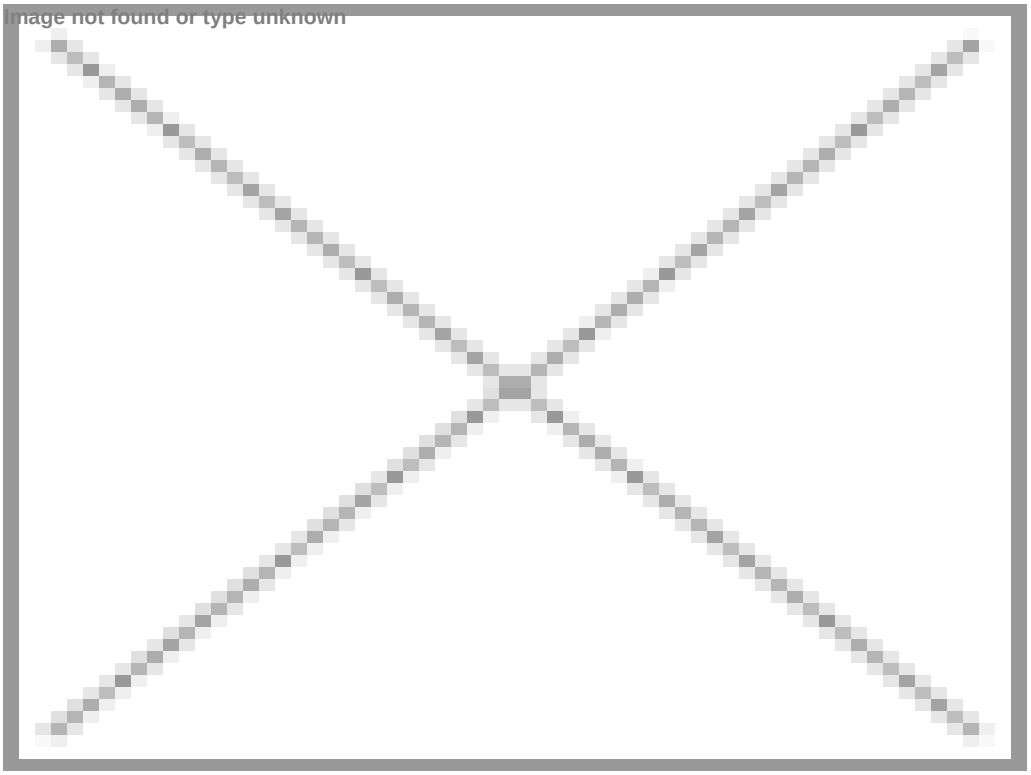
19 DEC 2022

‘IT FELT LIKE WE WERE TRULY UNITED THROUGH SPORTS’ – KYRA SEOW (SGP) ON THE UTS WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL

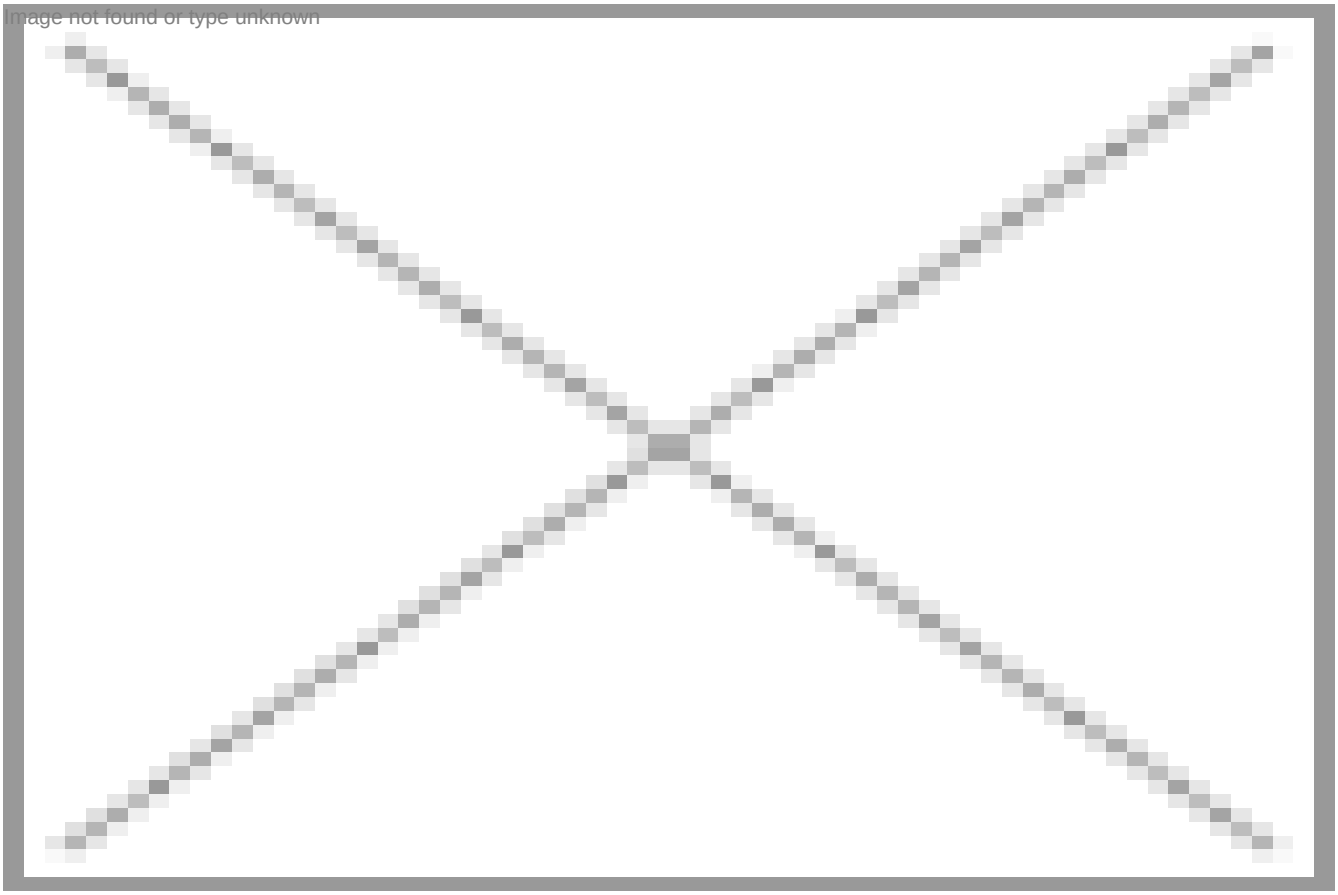
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When the world went into lockdown and meaningful engagement could only be achieved by virtual ingenuity, many people rose to the challenge and exceeded their own expectations and those of others.

One such individual was **Kyra Seow** of **Singapore**, who received an award for her “truly outstanding” work as an Ambassador for UIPM Sports in the inaugural Virtual Youth Festival (VYF) in 2020.

The VYF was the initiative of United Through Sports (UTS), with patronage from the International Olympic Committee, Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics, SportAccord, GAISF, and AIMS. And when the chance came to continue her ambassadorial role in person at the 2022 UTS World Youth Festival in Bangkok (THA) in November, Kyra jumped at the chance.



Below the inspirational 13-year-old describes her experience in her own words.

I was honoured to represent Singapore and UIPM at the UTS World Youth Festival 2022 in Thailand as one of 15 selected UTS Youth Ambassadors.

The day before the festival began, we had an Ambassador Welcome dinner where I finally met my fellow UTS ambassadors in person after only seeing them virtually the past three years! I felt like I was meeting my extended family after a long time.

When the opening ceremony was about to commence the following day at Srinakharinwirot University, a downpour started just as the performers began their drumbeat. We quickly moved under shelter. I was amazed at how quickly the organisers dried up the seats, amazing Thailand! Everyone immediately came back together to clean up, and it was a special moment for me as it felt we were truly united through sports.

Throughout the ceremony, I was constantly awed by the myriad of talent on show from Muay Thai performance to symphony orchestra and hip hop dance. Again, amazing Thailand! I was glad to be part of this grand ceremony as a flag bearer in a parade with my fellow ambassadors at the flag handover.

Over the next few days, I took part in many educational seminars by presenters from eminent sporting organisations on a range of topics impacting the sporting fraternity such as anti-doping, gender equality, human trafficking and youth development.

There were many sports, including para sports, that I could try throughout the festival. I also participated in workshops on self-defence and Muay Thai where I had the honour of training with world champions. I was impressed how inclusive and non-judgmental everyone was. They made me feel so welcome.

I even had the privilege of sharing the stage with the UTS President, Stephan Fox, talking about Modern Pentathlon and my personal story, and promoting my multi-advocacy project to encourage every individual to do their part no matter how big or small to make the world a better place. I made this presentation to the sports leaders present and it was also broadcast on the Olympic Channel, Festival website and the UTS YouTube channel.

The UTS World Youth Festival was an eye-opener and great learning experience for me. I learned first-hand how UTS is making a difference in thousands of children's lives around the world through sports and education. I had such a blast and will definitely keep in touch with my fellow ambassadors, and I hope to meet everyone again! A big thank you to UIPM for giving me the opportunity.

UTS President Stephan Fox said: "UTS Ambassadors were at the centre of the UTS World Youth Festival 2022 in the heart of Bangkok. Kyra was invited as a selected exceptional ambassador, not only to meet the other young leaders, but to also take an active role in the educational and sporting activities.

“We are proud of Kyra and are honoured to have her join us, representing UIPM as an ambassador of sport under the Olympic values, and promoting inclusion of everybody.”

UTS CEO Julia Govinden added: “I have seen Kyra grow over the last few years with dedication, consistency and heart. Through the power of sport we have invited young change-makers such as Kyra to have the opportunity to unite with shared values, moving together as one voice.

“UTS works to give opportunity and Kyra has been phenomenal not only during the festival but before it, and no doubt she will continue advocating for a better world through her environmental project. We look forward to contributing towards Kyra's journey and will do our best to nurture a community of youth who we believe can truly change the world."