On the 3rd of April 2010, I was invited by NUS AIESEC to facilitate a session on creativity for ‘Symposium Neue Thinken, which is a symposium centered around ‘new thinking for social action’. It was organised by NUS AIESEC under their initiative ‘Project Embedded’, and it focuses on bringing out awareness on the importance of creativity and innovation for the sustainability of social enterprises.

Excited to share my knowledge on creativity, I designed a 1 hour exercise for participants to explore and understand creativity better. Since it was in a symposium on social enterprise, I gave it a social slant and named it ‘Creativity for social service’.

There were 15 objects and 15 pictures placed randomly around the room. The participants were split into 3 groups, and each group was given a problem to solve. The problems were represented in pictures and included homelessness, depression and hunger. My objective was to get the participants to leave their seats, walk around the room and ‘explore’ the various objects and pictures. The idea was to form associations between the items and a possible solution. The theory behind this is that creativity involves an element of exploration, as well as forming links where none had existed before.

This was a picture taken during the session, before the exercise started.
I felt the participants did a very good job, some very interesting associations were formed. From the feedback I received, most of them had fun and were inspired to use creativity in their lives as well as serving their community.

It was a prototyped session and it went well. There are definitely improvements to be made, and I will certainly conduct similar sessions in future for different settings. This exercise is very generic and could be used for people in different professions.

Overall, the symposium was great. There were some incredible people there as well, such as Jack Sim, the founder of the World Toilet Organization, Bernise Ang, founder of Syinc, and Eugene Tay, founder of TEDx Green. I also got the opportunity to meet Kuik Shiao Yin, the founder of the School of Thought, where she gave an inspiring lecture on building a good social brand. I made friends with the members of NUS AIESEC and other noteworthy student social entrepreneurs. It was an intensive networking session and a very satisfying one.

Here’s a group picture I took with them at the end of the day.