

Mr Khoo Jyh Hao

School of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Master of Engineering / Class of 2003

In recognition of his sterling achievements with engineering firm Utracon, the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Nanyang Technological University, is proud to present Mr Khoo Jyh Hao with the CEE Outstanding Alumni Award.

Mr Khoo joined Utracon – which specialises in post-tensioning, precasting, bridge specialist works, system formwork and structural strengthening – as a design engineer right after completing his master's degree at CEE. He went on to work in the marketing department, where he contributed to the firm's business development work in Singapore. By 2007, Utracon had grown exponentially to become the largest specialist contractor in Singapore, and Utracon Overseas was formed for Mr Khoo to take the firm's services to the Greater Asia Region.

In 2008, aged 31, Mr Khoo was appointed director of Utracon Overseas. He went on to expand the company's footprint beyond Singapore into the world's biggest construction markets, with a focus on the Southeast Asia and South Asia regions. Today, Utracon has had permanent establishments in Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, as well as India, and has completed projects in Africa, Middle East and Guam (American territory) too.

Along the way, Mr Khoo has successfully led Utracon Overseas in overcoming obstacles such as the Covid-19 pandemic, political unrest in Myanmar, and currency crisis in Sri Lanka. For instance, when Covid-19 struck, he recognised how hospitals worldwide faced a shortage of ventilators and took the initiative to provide them for employees – this was crucial especially for infected employees who were not able to be admitted to hospitals.

Under his leadership, Utracon Overseas has received numerous accolades. It placed fifth at the prestigious Enterprise 50 Awards for 2020 and then third in 2021, while also receiving a sustainability special mention that year for its post-tensioning methods that help reduce construction material and enable environmentally-sustainable projects. Utracon Overseas also won in the Heavy Civil Construction category of the Singapore Business Review (SBR) National Business Awards 2021, for its involvement in the construction of two bridges in Bangladesh using digitally synchronised launching method.

In addition, for a building project it participated in for the National Bank of Cambodia, the company clinched the Star Award in the Builder category of the Building and Construction Authority's (BCA) inaugural SGBuilds Award in 2020.

In an interview with *The CEO Magazine* previously, he said about his leadership style: "Leading by example is very important. I always try to be a good role model. I lead my team by giving directions instead of instructions, because that kind of relationship is like treating them as a partner. Teamwork is very important; we ensure our staff feel that we are working as a team, as a family."

Despite his busy schedule, Mr Khoo has been an active volunteer for 23 years with Tzu-Chi Foundation (Singapore), the Singapore branch of the Taiwan-based charity organisation, and currently serves as the head of its charity development department. In March this year, he announced that the foundation would open its first dialysis centre in Singapore to serve kidney patients living in the northeastern region of Singapore. He had also led the Foundation to support NTU undergraduates through bursaries.