

# **FY2020 Year End Report for**

## **SBC Programmes**

### **April 2020 to March 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

- I. This has been a year of unprecedented crisis and challenge due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. It was a year of disruptions, retreat, adaptations, Zooming, masking and finally some semblance of a path of recovery.
- II. Singapore is in Phase 3 now, with further relaxation of the Safety Management Measures (SMMs). However, there is still much uncertainty over the near future with the recovery tentative.
- III. Over the past year, the programmes and income of the Singapore Book Council had been adversely impacted by COVID-19. However, we quickly adapted and pivoted all our programmes to the digital space. Even though our income has been seriously affected, we still forged ahead to support the literary arts community as best we could in the face of all the challenges.
- IV. It was a steep learning curve and the SBC team is proud to have survived last year. We managed to roll out our signature events such as the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), #BuySingLit and the Singapore Literature Prize, in spite of all the challenges. We even created new programmes like Ready for KidLit and the SBC Read-Along Books, tapping on NAC grant to strengthen our digitalisation efforts.
- V. When Singapore went into the circuit-breaker phase in April, it was an extremely difficult time for the SBC team who had to adjust to the new working-from-home conditions, learn about new digital platforms and programming methods, and experiment with reconfiguring programmes for presentation in an alternative manner. All this within a very short time, and for an online audience whom we might not be familiar with. We also had to make decisions about which programmes to postpone or cancel, and to implement cost-saving measures to ensure our survival.
- VI. We had to dive into research and to quickly acquire the skillsets to manoeuvre the platforms effectively. Much of the learning was hands on and through trial and error. After we successfully organised the first-ever digital editions of SLP and AFCC, we had acquired competent

levels of know-how and technical skills. However, we are still broadening our knowledge of the digital domain and improving the required skillsets to deliver virtual events effectively through the many digital programmes that we worked on.

- VII. While we scrambled to go digital, we also gained many benefits. First, it enabled us to reach a wider pool of audiences than our in-person events could ever reach, even though it did not necessarily translate into more income for us. For instance, more than 5,000 people viewed our SLP virtual awards ceremony on Facebook and YouTube – and some of them even caught it from different countries. This raised the visibility of SLP and enabled significantly more people to be part of the festivities, something that a physical event could not do (or at least it would incur considerably more cost). In addition, the prevalence and convenience of digital platforms has facilitated more international collaboration. We were able to invite many more speakers and facilitators from different countries to be part of AFCC and Academy, without the attendant cost of flight and accommodation. All these gains and learning points provide the necessary fodder for us as we figure out our plans for a hybrid programming format moving forward.
- VIII. As we move into the “new normal”, we are still in uncharted territories. There are still many unknowns and the economic conditions are going to be tough. We are concerned about our financial situation and sustainability, and how fast the recovery will be. However, times of crisis define who we are. We can choose to retreat in defeat, or to persevere and emerge from it stronger. We at SBC are determined to use this period as an inflection point to chart a new path forward and empower the literary community for now and the future.

## 2. Programmes

- I. SBC's programmes are pivoted on four key strategic thrusts; Capability development, multilingual programming, regional literary exchanges, and community engagement. All our programmes were affected by the pandemic. We had to quickly decide which ones to cancel (eg a

planned visit to Thailand); which ones to postpone (eg moving AFCC from May to October); which ones to downsize to reduce costs (all, and in particular reducing the prize money for SLP), as we tried to figure out how to adapt our programmes for the digital space.

- II. We also tapped on the Digitalisation Presentation Grant (DPG) from NAC to conceptualise and present two new digital programmes, in a bid to sharpen our skillsets and to try out new ways of configuring our online programmes.
- III. The team experimented and explored different creative ways of presenting our programmes online, given the rising fatigue for virtual events and the expectation for free or cheap digital content. At the same time, as Singapore entered into phase 3 and allowed in-person events, we began to present a limited number of in-person workshops in our premises as people were increasingly looking for face-to-face programmes. Moving forward, we will be adopting a hybrid approach of online and in-person sessions for our programmes in the “new normal”, with travel restrictions and the Safety Management Measures still in place.
- IV. SBC experimented with various combinations of virtual and in-person programmes, including pre-recording and livestreaming, as well as programmes that are delivered partially via online platforms followed by in-person segments. This included a three-session workshop that was presented on Zoom for the first and last sessions. For the second session which was a hands-on segment, participants were divided into two groups with one participating via Zoom and the other with a trainer who was in Singapore participating at the SBC Training Room.

#### THRUST 1: Capability Development

- I. This thrust focuses on training and providing opportunities for professional development in the literary arts sector. The programmes that fall under this thrust include AFCC, Academy and SBC Campus.

## A. Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC)

- I. The year 2020 marked the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of AFCC and a major change that took place for AFCC this year was the conversion of the Festival and its programmes into a fully digital format, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While AFCC was originally scheduled to take place as a physical event from 28 – 31 May 2020 at NLB, the outbreak of COVID-19 in March and the subsequent circuit breaker affected the execution of the Festival as initially planned. In view of these challenges, the decision was made to postpone AFCC to October, rather than cancelling entirely and to hold it as a fully digital event instead. In addition, we decided to scale down the festival from four days to two and the number of programmes as well.
- II. With the festival's postponement, SBC subsequently revised its programming plans and initiated AFCC Digital, a new digital programming thrust where various components of the festival were presented as a series of pre-festival events that all led up to the main event in October. The move into the digital sphere affected AFCC's programming plans in many ways, one significant effect being that going digital has allowed the team opportunities to explore and expand the programming scope geographically further than would have been possible for physical events, and trying out new platforms to engage audiences.
- III. The AFCC Digital pre-festival events included:
  - i. Digital Storytelling Tools with Rushton Hurley: The first of AFCC's Digital pre-festival events was a public Zoom webinar session on 2 May helmed by Rushton Hurley, a seasoned ed-tech entrepreneur from the US. The session was a collaboration with Rushton that focused on how to use digital storytelling tools in schools. It was very topical as schools in Singapore and around the world were shifting to online learning en masse.
    - a. Access to the webinar was free via registration and the session registered an audience count of 125 attendees on the day. Post-event feedback from the attendees was largely positive,

with most saying that they appreciated the introduction and insight into the different e-platforms and tools that were readily available for use online, and the potential of using them for their own teaching purposes. The recording of the session was thereafter uploaded onto SBC's YouTube channel and made available for public viewing. To date, there have been 547 views of the video on SBC's YouTube channel.

- b. It was fortunate that this opening digital salvo was with Rushton Hurley, whose given understanding and familiarity with the Zoom platform paved the path of digitisation for AFCC 2020.
- ii. Book Illustrators Gallery (BIG) Exhibition: A staple feature of AFCC, the popular Book Illustrators Gallery was usually presented as a physical exhibition at NLB. It was converted into a digital gallery and launched online on the AFCC website on 3 June. The 2020 edition is the first fully online and most extensive BIG to date: Featuring 187 illustrations by 87 illustrators from 13 Asian countries. A total of 336 illustrations by 108 illustrators were received across the open call and curated Country of Focus (COF) submissions. The selection of the featured illustrations was curated by eight guest curators from past COFs at AFCC.
    - a. BIG 2020 was one of the first major digitalisation projects undertaken by AFCC. It was immediately apparent that the presentation of BIG on an online platform opened up the possibility of increased interactive engagement that viewers could have with the artworks, as opposed to just viewing a static, physical display. To that end, the team sought to redesign the BIG gallery on the AFCC website with the aim of leaving visitors to the site with an enjoyable experience.
    - b. User experience was a major factor in deciding on the look and feel, in addition to the navigation capabilities that would be part of the redesign. The team turned to researching and exploring existing digital galleries from various international

museums and art galleries, taking references from these sites on what the BIG exhibition platform could be furnished with, such as zoom in/zoom out functions of the illustrations and supplementary metadata on the illustrations and illustrators.

- c. The usual preparatory work that would have gone into setting up of a physical exhibition translated into double the coordination work for the digital edition as additional resources were now needed to populate the digital gallery. In addition to the illustrations themselves, the team reached out to selected applicants with requests for short introductory videos that would be embedded as part of the metadata within BIG. As this was not initially a required submission for applicants for a physical exhibition, the team had to work with a very tight time frame in collating the videos and preparing them in time of the launch of the exhibition.
  - d. Taken virtually out of the constrained physical space at NLB, BIG 2020 was able to incorporate more content, more than double its usually curated content with a diversified offering that included video and text, as well as translated forms. In addition, the lifespan of the BIG exhibition itself was no longer restricted by the limitations of the availability of a physical space and could continue existing online in perpetuity.
- iii. Book Illustrators Gallery (BIG) Roundtable Discussion: In conjunction with the launch of BIG, an online panel discussion featuring the BIG COF curators was organised and livestreamed on AFCC's Facebook page on 6 June. The panel focused on the variety of illustrations across the regional markets, as well as the curation process that the curators took to select the illustrations for each country's contribution to BIG 2020. Attended by 126 viewers at its peak during the livestream, the video recording of the roundtable was also uploaded onto SBC's YouTube channel post-event. To date, the video has clocked up 4,332 views across both platforms.



- a. The BIG roundtable panel discussion was SBC's first foray into conducting a live streamed session and provided crucial learning points for the team in understanding the mechanics, which helped with the execution of subsequent digital events.
  - b. A pain point for the team at the start was the unfamiliarity with Facebook's streaming function. This proved a stumbling block in the initial planning phase as the team struggled with the set-up of the online event on the platform. It was only through multiple experimentation and research from online forum sites that the team was able to do so. The online panel saw too an increase in the amount of preparatory work needed. Tech runs were organised for the speakers to familiarise themselves with the Zoom platform, particularly for those who were less tech-savvy and extra time budgeted for pre-event prep on the event day itself.
- iv. The Arts of Adaptation: A Virtual Public Talk: Co-organised with the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), the online talk, which took place on 1 August, focused on the shared experiences of content creators and producers from Singapore and the Australian market. Sixty-two viewers caught the live streamed event on the day, and the session recording was uploaded onto SBC's YouTube channel post-event. To date, there has been a total of 1,000 views across both platforms.
- a. Building on the team's prior experience with conducting live streaming, this session was broadcasted on AFCC's Facebook page, following the same model established for the BIG Roundtable. However, the session was not without minor hiccups, particularly when the video was temporarily blocked from public access due to copyrighted content that was presented. While the team was able to resolve the dispute fairly quickly and the session proceeded relatively smoothly without any further interruptions, encountering this issue

- highlighted considerations of IP and reviewing of digital content that would be broadcasted for public, online sessions.
- v. AFCC Masterclass: The Art (and Science) of Pitching: The second session in collaboration with AFTRS, this virtual three-hour masterclass on 22 August was a follow up from The Art of Adaptation talk. A total of 18 participants attended the masterclass, which included local film and TV producers from the Association of Independent Producers (AIPRO), final year students and faculty from LASALLE College of the Arts, and children and YA authors from Singapore.
    - a. Being the first virtual masterclass session organised by SBC, the team had initial concerns about the duration of the session, particularly when dealing with the concentration span of participants for online sessions. We were fortunate in that the facilitators from AFTRS themselves were experienced in conducting such classes and were able to break down the three hours into easily digestible sections for participants, with breaks in between for them to refresh themselves for the upcoming segments.
    - b. Post-event feedback from the participants was largely positive, with most respondents saying that they found the session useful in helping them to gain an understanding on the basics of pitching.
  - vi. AFCC Book Launches: A regular programming feature of the festival, the AFCC book launches likewise underwent a conversion into a digital format for 2020. Held across two days from 26–27 September in the weekend leading up to the AFCC Digital Symposium, a total of 15 new titles were launched across the two days. The launches registered a total of 157 attendees.
    - a. A special launch event was organised on the evening of 26 September, as part of SBC's collaboration with the Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing at the University of Leeds, in the organisation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bai Meigui Translation Competition.

The virtual launch for the winning entry, *Sleepy, Sleepy New Year* was live streamed on AFCC's Facebook page and has accumulated 482 views to date.

- b. The translation competition was open to secondary students from Singapore and the UK, who were asked to translate the Chinese picture book *Sleepy, Sleepy New Year* written and illustrated by acclaimed author Meng Yanan 孟亚楠. Meng is the winner of China's 2016 Bronze and Sunflower Picture Book Award. The winning entry was published by Balestier Press, while the winner was mentored by award-winning translator Helen Wang.
- c. The shift to a digital platform eliminated the physical restrictions for attendance by both audiences and publishers as going online allowed for international participation without the need for in-person availability. International book launch applicants that presented this year included Philippines' Anvil Publishing and UK's Aurora Metro, as well as author Helle Norup from Denmark. The digital nature of the book launches also allowed launch applicants to invite their network of overseas supporters to attend their sessions, which was something that the international applicants commented on and particularly appreciated.

#### IV. AFCC 2020

- i. Held over three days from 2 to 4 October, this year's AFCC was a fully digital affair with a total of 16 programmes on offer for festival attendees. Industry-focused events such as masterclass and pitching sessions were held on the first day, followed by a two-day digital symposium comprising a line-up of 10 panel discussions.
- ii. With the theme of "Voyages", AFCC 2020 sought to navigate the way forward in unfamiliar terrain by presenting the Festival in a digital format. Across the three days, AFCC 2020 clocked a total audience count of 1,526 attendees for 11 ticketed

programmes. A total of 370 delegates participated this year, a decrease from the previous year's high of 690.

- iii. The lower delegate participation rate could be attributed to several factors: Namely the downsizing of the festival from its usual offering of over 100 programmes to just 16 this year, and a general reluctance of people to pay for digital events, particularly in the prevailing climate where people are used to – and often expect – free access to online content.
- iv. For the full programme line-up and bios of speakers, please refer to Annex A for the AFCC 2020 programme booklet.
- v. Masterclass: Understanding the Editorial Process: The digital edition of AFCC 2020 started with a masterclass on the editorial process conducted by Joanna Cárdenas, Senior Editor at Kokila Books, an imprint under Penguin Random House US. Besides looking at the process by which editors assessed manuscripts, the masterclass also provided participants with an insight into the working relationship between author and editor. A total of 12 participants attended the session and preliminary post-event feedback indicated high satisfaction levels for the session.
- vi. Public Webinar – Page to Screen Adaptation: SBC's collaboration with AFTRS for AFCC 2020 culminated in this final session which featured AFTRS facilitators Peter Herbert and Pieter Aquilia and their alumnus Lisa Hoppe speaking on the adaptation process of her latest book-to-screen film project. This session was free for the public via registration, and a total of 41 pax attended the webinar. The session recording has been uploaded onto SBC's YouTube channel, with 7 views to date.
  - a. While the session was originally conceived as a paid masterclass, the decision was made within the week of the event to convert it into a free public session due to the low take-up rate. This was disappointing for the team as the previous two sessions that were done in collaboration with AFTRS saw good audience numbers. We had hoped that the

momentum would spill over to the masterclass. It was only after the conversion to a free programme did audience registrations start to take up. This could be due to the fact that people expected free access to digital content. Paid events are seen as natural barriers of entry, with most being reluctant to pay to attend such sessions.

- vii. Writer's Pitch: A regular feature of AFCC's main festival programming, the Writer's Pitch session this year was organised as a digital session for the first time. Applicants were assigned to separate breakout rooms to meet one-on-one with different representatives. Eight publishing and literary representatives were invited for the session to meet with 15 published and aspiring writers keen on publishing their manuscripts.
  - a. While the digitalisation of Writer's Pitch afforded the team a certain freedom in bringing on board international representatives that would normally be hard to invite for a physical session, this pro was offset by the logistical consideration of managing the appointment for the invited representatives due to the differences in time zones.
- viii. Media Critique: A variation of the Media Pitch that usually occurs at AFCC, this session was a follow-on from The Art (and Science) of Pitching masterclass that took place in August. Four participants from the August masterclass signed up to conduct a trial pitch to five representatives from various local and international media companies and networks, which included Mediacorp, Warner Media and Nickelodeon.
- ix. Digital Symposium: From 3–4 October, AFCC presented 10 panel sessions as part of a two-day Digital Symposium which sought to explore current issues within the realm of children's literature, content creation in the digital sphere and examining how content creators have been affected, and reacted to challenges presented by the pandemic. Five panel sessions were scheduled for each day, with attendees logging on for the

panels, conducted over Zoom webinar, via the AFCC website or accessing the session links provided to them via email. In all, there was a total audience count of 1,514 attendees across all 10 sessions.

- a. As opposed to physical sessions, digital sessions have an inherent limit on the amount of interactivity that is allowed between participants and speakers. As the team was keen to maintain a semblance of networking and interactivity that AFCC audiences are familiar with, the decision was made to organise all panel sessions as live events. One logistical challenge was the coordination of the speakers' schedules across various time zones and narrowing down suitable timings which was manageable for most. While it was not possible to ensure workable timings for all, panel sessions were scheduled at timings that fell between normal waking hours for most speakers, with a few exceptions. Due to the live nature of panels, we were still able to retain the interactive element of the Q&A, utilising the functions of the webinar platform, and making use of the chat function to disseminate information about the session, speakers and the Festival in real time to attendees.
- b. Ease of user accessibility was a major consideration in the execution of the Digital Symposium, with the team exploring ways of how attendees could access the panel sessions without going through the hassle of keeping track of multiple Zoom links. The proposed mechanism was to direct all attendees to a central access point, i.e. the AFCC website, from which they could log in for the sessions. To facilitate this, the team prepared a digital welcome pack which included a login guide for attendees as well as a welcome letter and the e-programme booklet. A major disruption occurred on the first day when the AFCC website went down due to

- overloading of the server. Immediate troubleshooting was put into place and restoring of website access was key priority.
- c. In spite of the technical fault on the first day of the Digital Symposium, the full event proceeded as planned across the two days with few hiccups. Post-festival, the recordings will be made available to all festival attendees to re-watch or catch up on missed sessions for a period of two weeks. The sessions will also be available VOD for people who have missed the festival and want to catch the sessions. Preliminary feedback received from those who attended the live sessions indicate high satisfaction levels for the event.
- x. Special Events: Each day of the Digital Symposium on 3 and 4 October ended with two special events: The book launch of *Our Folktales: The All-Time Favourite Folktales of Asia* on 3 October, and the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA) Ceremony on 4 October. Both events were live streamed on AFCC's Facebook page and consisted of pre-recorded and live segments within the programming.
- a. Book Launch of *Our Folktales*: A regional collaborative project across eight former AFCC Countries of Focus, *Our Folktales* features eight beloved and popular illustrated stories compiled and adapted in both print and digital formats. Mr Lim Boon Heng, Chairperson of Temasek Holdings, was invited as the Guest-of-Honour for the launch. The video has since garnered 1,100 views on Facebook and 43 views on SBC's YouTube channel. AFCC country partners who contributed to the publication were invited to be part of the live segment of the launch and give a short message about the stories over Zoom.
- b. Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA) Ceremony: The 5th edition of the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award was presented in digital format, marking a first for the award. The

ceremony has since garnered 405 views to date on Facebook.

- c. The shortlisted writers for HABA 2020, along with the judges were invited to be part of the award ceremony on Zoom as a way of retaining the sense of engagement that would normally be part of a physical award ceremony. While the announcement of the result was pre-recorded, the shortlists were not made aware of the competition results until the day of the ceremony itself to maintain the element of surprise.
- d. The HABA 2020 winners were Ken Kwek and Lolita Chiong, writer and illustrator respectively for *Kelly and the Krumps*. In their citation, the judges said that they were entertained by the book with its gripping plot and “encompassing a strong local flavour, yet maintaining a balance of international appeal”. The judges also liked the element of authenticity in the narration of the story and felt that the greatest strength of the book lay in its humorous nature, “which is a definite appeal for its target audience”. Please see Annex B for more information about the winners.

## **B. SBC Academy**

- I. In spite of the disruptions, SBC Academy still managed to organise a total of 21 programmes during FY2020. Most of the programmes were online. However, we began to introduce in-person workshops from January to March to try out a hybrid approach.
- II. Many of the workshops in the first two quarters of FY2020 were postponed, reconfigured programmes with a few exceptions. The first workshop reconfigured for an online presentation was Picture Book Matters with Eva Wong Nava and Debasmita Dasgupta. We were nervous about organising it as both the facilitators and SBC were new to conducting a workshop on Zoom. The class was small and participatory, and it went smoothly.



- III. In collaboration with storyteller Sheila Wee, we planned two storytelling sessions The Value of a Story to test if there would be interest in online storytelling workshops. They are usually classroom-based because the workshops hinge on hands-on, group activities. We also wanted to find out if a public holiday would be a good time to have an online workshop, as people were already working from home and their time was more fluid. The session on the public holiday actually saw weak take-up, but the workday afternoon session was full with 24 pax. This was more participants than what we had initially planned for. Interestingly close to half of them were not from Singapore. They were mainly from India and fans of Sheila. Connectivity was an issue with some of the overseas participants and they kept dropping out of the session.
- IV. After the relative success of the online workshops with Sheila Wee, SBC took advantage of the increasing receptiveness towards such content and planned our workshops accordingly. We leveraged on the ease and convenience of the digital platforms and invited overseas facilitators like Anya Goncharova and Paul French. They conducted workshops that focused on different topics like editing and writing creative nonfiction. The editing workshop with Anya Goncharova was encouraging with 17 pax. This could be due to the low price of the session. Paul French's workshop, priced at our usual rate at \$65 had very weak sign-ups. Both sessions attracted overseas participants.
- V. As Singapore entered into Phase 3, it was apparent that people were keen to start attending in-person programmes. We organised Sheila Wee's Introduction to Storytelling as an in-person workshop, and at the pre-COVID course fee (\$588 for the bundle of two workshops). It had a total take up of eight pax which was the maximum number of people allowed for the SBC Training Room at that point due to the SMMs. The wait-list was five pax.
- VI. Another in-person storytelling workshop, conducted in Malay by Jumaini Ariff in March 2021 had 14 sign-ups. It was the maximum capacity that the Training Room could accommodate after the SMMs were relaxed. The workshop fee was \$60.

- VII. These were encouraging signs of increasing interest in in-person workshops which allowed greater interaction between participants and trainer and more intimate discussions. For FY2021, Academy programmes would comprise 40% in-person sessions and 60% either hybrid or virtual sessions.
- VIII. The revenue from Academy dropped drastically. This was because the online programmes were either offered free or at a reduced price to meet public expectations that online programmes should be much cheaper.
- IX. To increase course fees would be a challenge hence. To compensate for the drop in revenue from lower ticket prices, SBC Academy would need to increase attendee numbers by at least 25% which, other than strengthening our marketing efforts, can be achieved by extending our reach beyond Singapore. This can be achieved either via collaboration with Singapore facilitators who have a strong overseas following or engage trainers from overseas who would bring with them their followers.
- X. Please see Annex C for a full list of the Academy programmes.
- XI. We also learnt a number of key learning points from experimenting and trying out different programmes and platforms. They included:
  - i. Duration: How long would participants be able to stay focused? We have to consider if the usual three- and seven-hour sessions would be viable and if stretching the workshop over multiple days would make the commitment too heavy for some courses.
  - ii. Price points: What were accessible price points given that many would be concerned about pay cuts and the stability of their income? There was also the competition from organisations both local and overseas who were offering workshops at heavily subsidised rates, or for free.
  - iii. Platform: The selection of the platform was also important to ensure its effectiveness. We tried out and compared different platforms such as Hangouts, Discord, Skype, Zoom and Microsoft Team. Zoom Pro was eventually selected for its wide range of

- features, competitive pricing and accessibility despite the security issues.
- iv. Zoom has a number of features such as the breakout rooms, whiteboard on which participants can also annotate, screen sharing by the participants, all allow us to replicate a classroom setting if used appropriately. Including breakout sessions, having frequent breaks in the presentation to allow participation from the group such as encouraging participants to type their questions in the chat if they are too shy to voice them, requesting participants to carry out simple responses such as raising of their hands to simple questions all help to make the session more interactive.
  - v. We realised that there is more pre-workshop preparation required for a digital session as compared to an in-person one. There would be at least one technical run with the facilitator ahead of the session to show them the basic functions of the selected platform and to coordinate the flow between the facilitator and SBC. We drafted a simple checklist which we would share with the trainers during the tech run to minimise the risk of any slip.
  - vi. The interaction between trainer and participants is limited by the platform. However, an experienced trainer will be able to engage the participants and make them feel more at ease.
  - vii. Participants seem awkward speaking up on a virtual platform, and many would not even want to switch on their camera despite multiple requests from the trainer. Participants have shared in their feedback that they feel an online session is less conducive to interaction and networking.
  - viii. The percentage of participants who are willing to spend time on completing the feedback form is small. Academy generally sees close to 100% responses from physical session whereas for the virtual workshops, feedback is usually just a mere 20% to 40% of the total group size. It does help if the QR code for the feedback form is put up just before the question and answer session and the

trainer makes an appeal to the participants to give their feedback though it disrupts the flow of the programme.

- ix. Participants expect to pay a lot less for an online workshop totally disregarding the fact that the trainer spends an equal amount of time during and preparing for the workshop and if anything, a greater effort in ensuring participation from the class. This has affected our revenue as discussed above.

### **C. SBC Campus**

- I. SBC Campus is the Book Council's school outreach programme that lets students experience SingLit first-hand through innovative and customisable workshops. The workshops are conducted in English and mother tongue languages, and span across the different levels from preschool, primary, secondary and Junior College students.
- II. We presented virtual workshops by local authors to more than 500 students between April 2020 to March 2021. Due to COVID, many of our school bookings were either cancelled or postponed. We had to quickly adjust and adapt within a short time frame by turning in-person workshops to online workshops. In order to accommodate to the new school timetables and schedules, we offered two types of online workshops, such as live online workshops and recorded workshops to provide more flexibility to the schools. We improved on our delivery and the interactivity of the workshops based on feedback from students, teachers and facilitators.
- III. We kept up with our efforts to promote our workshops to schools. The bookings slowly picked up in July, but still below expectations overall. We had reconfigured many of our workshops to be online, but were also offering schools the option of having in-person sessions. We targeted our marketing efforts at different schools, and were aiming for more bookings in the new calendar year (2021).
- IV. Please refer to Annex D for the full list of workshops.

- V. There were many key learning points for us through our efforts of adapting the Campus programmes digitally and also adjusting to the requirements from the schools:
- i. Embracing different online session formats: Through the school bookings, we got to experience the different formats of classroom settings. For instance, the setting for the workshop, Food Blogging Fun! with Edgefield Secondary School in October was such that the 300 students from 12 different classrooms were logged in to Zoom via their teachers' devices. This would mean that the facilitator would only be able to see the tiny faces of the students from a distanced view, and affected the interaction between facilitator and students. As opposed to the workshop, Curious Together: Using poetry and illustrations to create narratives with CHIJ Toa Payoh in the same month, every student was able to log in via their own device in the school's computer lab. This would then allow for more direct interaction.
  - ii. Adapting to and enhancing the online sessions: We implemented the feedback from the facilitators and teachers from the first half of the year and overcame the limited interactions over online workshops. For instance, in the case of the workshop with Edgefield Secondary School, we informed the facilitators of the setting in advance so they could weave in more and shorter writing exercises and activities to engage the students. We also had to request for the teachers in the classrooms to help facilitate the Q&A segment by nominating and assisting students to go over to the teacher's device so the facilitator can hear and see them clearer.
  - iii. Accommodating to new demands by schools by rolling out new recorded videos/workshops for secondary school students: In October, we also arranged with three writers namely Desmond Kon, Loh Guan Liang and Melanie Lee to conceptualise and develop content suitable for a one-hour video recording to roll out as online writing workshops for secondary school students in

January. Comprising recorded sessions and class handouts, the videos would be made available to schools for viewing for two weeks if they make a booking. The three online workshops were produced to meet the demands of schools which would prefer online sessions to be conducted concurrently across different classes, as well as due to a change in timetable and shorter amount of time allocated for enrichment programmes due to the Covid-19 situation.

- VI. In addition to school workshops, SBC Campus also established partnerships with community organisations to offer customised workshops. One key partnership was with the Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC), which was looking for literary related workshops for their students. They approached SBC Campus as they knew they could tap on our expertise to organise events suitable for children across different age groups.
- VII. As part of the partnership with the Central CDC:
  - i. We conducted a series of speech and drama, and illustration workshops called “Fun with Communications”, virtually for over 40 children from Central Singapore Community Development Council’s Nurture programme (a community literacy and numeracy programme for disadvantaged children aged 7 to 12) from July to December last year.
  - ii. Through the workshops, the children were introduced to improvisation games, interactive activities and drawing exercises to hone their interpersonal communication skills and build their self-confidence.
  - iii. There were a total of 15 workshops, with five sessions each for three different age groups.
  - iv. We engaged theatre practitioners Julius Foo, Rodney Oliveira and Serena Ho and illustrator writer Darel Seow as facilitators.

- v. This was a meaningful collaboration to reach out and bring literature closer to the community and would be a direction that SBC Campus would continue to venture into.
- vi. We also received positive and appreciative feedback from Ms Loo Hwei Kwin (Manager, Partnerships & Programmes, Central CDC). Her comments included:
  - "The Speech & Drama classes, in particular Julius' tier 1 class, were interesting with a myriad of engaging activities curated to encourage the children to speak up & 'perform'."
  - "The Illustration classes for both tiers were well structured, and Darel was certainly a very patient & encouraging facilitator who was able to provide good scaffolding for the children in their tasks."
  - "We are very heartened to observe that though less outspoken than the younger tiers of children, our tier three children had put in much effort to create their very own 'masterpieces' under the patient guidance of Darel these past three weeks."

#### **D. OPEN: Singapore Young Writers Lab**

- I. OPEN is a developmental platform for young writers between the ages of 13 to 25. Comprising talks, workshops and mentorships, the year-round programme span across forms, genres and languages. However, due to COVID, we had to severely scale back our OPEN programmes and only focus on a couple of key ones so that we could reach out to the audience in a targeted way.
- II. We continued our key partnership with the the Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM), which has an ongoing collaboration with SBC for their annual writing competition, Write for Kindness. Write for Kindness is a national creative writing competition open for primary, secondary,

- junior college, and international school students to write stories and poems, and to illustrate them, for younger children.
- III. To better prepare the participants, SKM would organise a series of writing workshops during the March school holidays for them to attend. SBC would usually support SKM by recommending suitable authors and facilitators to conduct the workshops, as well as offering programme ideas.
  - IV. For this year's competition, SKM introduced a new song composition component as part of the deliverables. The winning entries would stand a chance to have their stories produced as an audio-visual book.
  - V. On 19 March, SBC co-organised a song composition workshop conducted by Wigglepods, a creative music and movement company that works with preschool educators.
  - VI. A total of 36 students from 22 participating schools attended the online workshop and they learnt how to compose and incorporate songs into stories for younger audiences.
  - VII. In their feedback to SBC, the students found the workshop "interactive and informative" with "friendly and enthusiastic instructors" who "constantly encouraged them to participate" during the breakout sessions. They particularly enjoyed the exposure to try composing songs and writing lyrics.

#### THRUST 2: Diverse Multilingual SingLit

- I. Programmes under this thrust encourage the diversity of SingLit by creating awareness and recognition of works in the four official languages.
- II. One of the key programmes is the biennial Singapore Literature Prize (SLP), the oldest and most prestigious literary award in Singapore. In addition, we were appointed as the secretariat for the Anugerah Persuratan, which helped increase our engagement with the Malay community.



- III. We also organised a series of talks featuring the 2017 S.E.A Write award winner Chia Joo Ming and marked International Translation Day.

#### **A. Singapore Literature Prize 2020**

- I. The Singapore Literature Prize 2020 was the 17th edition to date and the awards ceremony took place virtually on Thursday, 27 August 2020 via SBC Facebook and YouTube page.
- II. Due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, SBC was impacted both programmatically and financially. Despite the ongoing pandemic and tough economic climate, we decided to still go ahead with SLP this year as we believed that it was even more critical to highlight the importance of books and literature during this time. We also believed that it was important to recognise the contributions, voices and achievements by writers in Singapore.
- III. Two significant changes: We had to make two significant adjustments to the initial plans in order to be able to proceed with SLP 2020.
  - i. Reduction in prize money: The prize money for SLP 2020 was reduced from SGD\$10,000 to SGD\$3,000 for the top prize winner in all 12 categories. It was a difficult decision for SBC to make, and we were concerned about the reactions and possible backlash from both the shortlisted writers and members of the public; but we felt that reducing the size of the awards was a necessary step to take for SLP to go ahead, instead of cancelling it this year.
  - ii. Virtual SLP 2020 Awards Ceremony: We had to brainstorm, research and turn the awards ceremony into an online event within a short time frame of two months. Our first ever virtual ceremony was organised successfully, garnering many positive comments from both the audiences and writers themselves. The ceremony video had garnered 4,048 views on SBC Facebook and 1,609 views on SBC YouTube page respectively as of 9 October 2020.
  - iii. This year, a total of 20 prizes were given out to 17 winners. Our publicity and marketing campaign focused on all the shortlisted

writers and their diverse range of works. We also wanted to highlighted their personalities through a series of personal profiles on our social media platforms. Leading up to the virtual awards ceremony, we organised a total of six #AthemewithSLP online panel discussions and featured many of the shortlisted writers.

- iv. To boost engagement with the public, we introduced a new award category, Readers' Favourite. The public was invited to vote for their favourite book in each of the four language tracks, and stand to win book vouchers. We also partnered with LocalBooks.sg to be the official online bookstore to make the books easily available for purchase.
- v. For the full list of shortlisted writers and SLP judges, please refer to Annex E Ceremony Booklet.

- IV. Process of turning SLP into a virtual event: We researched and watched several overseas virtual book awards ceremonies including the Australian Book Industry Awards 2020 (ABIA) and British Book Awards 2020. Based on our observations, both virtual ceremonies appeared to be entirely pre-recorded and that the winners seemed to know the results in advance, prior to the streaming of the ceremonies. We learnt that the benefits of a pre-recorded virtual ceremony were such that it allowed us to avoid any major pitfalls or technical glitches of a livestream event. However, the downside would mean that the winners would then know of the results before or earlier than the shortlisted writers, hence affecting the surprise element.
- V. We were mindful that we wanted to still maintain the SLP tradition that all writers would know the results only on the actual day. We aimed to work towards organising a virtual ceremony which could still uphold the dignity of an awards ceremony and allowed all writers to feel equally respected and valued.
- VI. We spoke to many industry and video professionals to explore the various permutations, constraints and challenges of a virtual ceremony; and eventually appointed a creative director and videography team who were aligned and in sync with our requirements and needs.

- VII. We decided to proceed with a hybrid format: A mixture of pre-recorded videos to minimise possible technical glitches as much as possible, and live Zoom sessions to capture the spontaneous reactions of the winners and retain the surprise element of an awards ceremony.
- i. Pre-recorded videos: The pre-recorded segments consisted of speeches and presentations by the key people: Namely the emcee; our Guest-of-Honour NAC Chairman Goh Swee Chen SBC Chairperson Claire Chiang; as the 12 judges- presenters.
  - ii. Due to a tight timeline since we needed to factor in time for editing of the recordings, we had to pack the filming schedule of the emcee and six local judges-presenters over two days. We chose the filming location at The Arts House as we wanted to lend its prestige, historical charm and ambience to the virtual ceremony.
  - iii. The remaining six overseas judges-presenters' speeches were recorded via Zoom with our creative director directing and guiding them online. The recording schedule was spread across an entire day as we needed to coordinate the different time zones in the US, UK, China, Taiwan and India.
  - iv. Live Zoom sessions: On the actual ceremony day, we invited all the 47 shortlisted writers to attend the virtual ceremony via Zoom. They were divided into four Zoom rooms according to their respective languages, and could "attend" the ceremony in the room.
- VIII. Challenges faced when organising a virtual ceremony: Given that this was SBC's very first attempt at transforming a physical ceremony into a virtual event, it was a steep learning curve and there were many challenges given the short timeframe and limited manpower strength. Despite the challenges, we were able to adapt and overcome them, and to gain experience in organising virtual livestream events.
- i. Technology demands and Zoom technicalities: The "live" component of the virtual ceremony required a significant amount of timely and accurate coordination among the

creative director, livestream vendor, SBC staff as Zoom Managers and writers. This required all SBC staff involved to be familiar and well-versed with the Zoom technicalities and different functions such as breakout rooms, share screen and spotlighting of the correct winning writer. Furthermore, we were very aware that any minor hiccups or errors would be amplified on a digital platform. It was important that we had ample rehearsals to facilitate a smooth transition, but given the time constraint, we only managed to squeeze three tech rehearsals over two days to work out all the kinks.

- ii. Less tech-savvy writers: Some of the writers had no prior experience of using Zoom and we arranged separate tech runs with them. We appreciated that they were very supportive, accommodating and willing to explore the new technologies with us. Some of them also roped in their family members and colleagues to accompany and assist them on the side, which was very helpful.
- iii. Contingency plans and unforeseen circumstances: We had to exercise critical thinking to pre-empt possible unforeseen circumstances and prepare for contingency plans. For instance, one day before the virtual ceremony, Zoom experienced partial disruption of their Meeting, Webinar and website services worldwide. We had to discuss with our livestream vendor to explore Google Meet as alternative platform. We also arranged for a router service vendor onsite at SBC office to set up the automatic activation of a backup internet in the event our wifi was unable to support the livestream requirements. However, there are also other possible unforeseen circumstances such as power failure which might affect the running of the virtual event. Thus, we also prepared contingency template communication liners and images to be incorporated into the livestream video and social media posts to inform and apologise to the online audiences, if needed.

- IX. Outreach and new initiatives introduced: As we adjust to the demands of turning SLP into an online event, we also explored how we could fully leverage on the digital platforms to replicate certain physical aspects or elements of the SLP experience virtually. We also introduced some new initiatives to improve and ensure a more engaging SLP experience.
- i. New award category SLP Readers' Favourite: We introduced this category so that the public could vote online for their favourite shortlisted book in Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil. We received a total of 2,808 votes. This new category was not only well-received by the public, but by the SLP writers and publishers as well. For instance, Ng Kah Gay (publisher, Ethos Books) said that "... this is a fun initiative that brings the SLP to a broader audience. Appreciate the team's creativity!"
  - ii. Official Online Bookstore: We partnered with LocalBooks.sg to be the official online bookseller from 20 July to 30 September. The duration stretched from the point when the shortlist was announced to a month post-ceremony so that we could extend our marketing efforts over a longer period. With the strong support and publicity from LocalBooks.sg, the shortlisted works were made available on their website very efficiently. This fruitful partnership allowed the public to have convenient access to the shortlisted books, in particular the self-published authors' titles that might not be easily available. We also provided direct purchase links to each of the books on our own SLP website.
  - iii. Support from bookstores and retailers: In addition, we also managed to reach out to 12 bookstores and retailers to promote the shortlisted authors and their works. We provided collaterals such as stickers, posters and wobblers to both brick-and-mortar and online bookstores and retailers, such as BooksActually, Books Kinokuniya, Booktique, City Book Room, Grassroots Book Room, Littered with Books, Maha Yu Yi, MPH Bookstore, and Union Book Co. They displayed the collaterals at their physical stores and on

their webstores. We also posted their photos on our social media to further boost the reach.

- X. Programmes: As part of our outreach effort, SBC also organised a number of online programmes to promote the SLP writers and also feature SLP judges.
- i. #AthemewithSLP online panel discussions: In the lead-up to the virtual awards ceremony, we also organised a total of six online #AthemewithSLP panel discussions over three weeks, every Tuesday and Thursday evening 8pm from 6 to 18 August 2020. The panel sessions were livestreamed on SBC Facebook. They were curated based on the recurring themes and topics of the shortlisted works such as home, history, diversity, and the role of writers in a crisis. The sessions showcased the shortlisted writers by introducing their works and engaging them in meaningful and thought-provoking conversations.
  - ii. Co-moderated by David Wong and Oniatta Effendi, the panel sessions were mainly conducted in English. We also encouraged the Chinese-, Malay- and Tamil-languages writers to converse in their mother tongues with live interpretations. A total of 26 writers participated and the six online panel discussions videos garnered a total of 5,877 views on SBC Facebook as of 9 October 2020.
  - iii. The online panel discussions were also positioned as part of the marketing campaign to create more awareness about the virtual awards ceremony and hype up the online interest towards SLP. The timings of the panel sessions were intentionally set at Thursdays 8pm (SGT) to reinforce the virtual awards ceremony date and engagements with the online audiences. During the end of each panel discussion, the co-moderators would also remind them to tune in to watch the virtual awards ceremony and also visit Localbooks.sg
  - iv. The writers who participated found the multilingual sessions very meaningful and enjoyed the conversations and discussions with each other. Through the exchange of views and ideas, some of

the writers also got to know more about each other works' and discovered similar themes and topics across genres and languages, and felt intrigued to read each other's works which they otherwise might not have the platform to do so.

- v. SLP judges: After the virtual awards ceremony, we organised an online intimate conversation between two SLP Chinese judges, Taiwanese novelist Lo Wei Yu (Judge for Chinese Fiction) and Singaporean writer/academic Dr Tan Chee Lay (Chief Judge for Chinese Poetry). They shared about applying and drawing inspiration from daily life events for their writing process. Nine participants took part in the Zoom discussion on 19 September, which was conducted in Mandarin.
- XI. Post-awards ceremony: To continue our marketing efforts to showcase the SLP winners post-ceremony, we invited them individually to the SBC office to take part in a simple trophy presentation ceremony. There was photo taking with the Executive Director of SBC, as well as short interviews with them that were posted on our social media platforms.
- XII. Learning points: Organising the virtual SLP awards ceremony was a great learning experience for us and there were many learning points.
  - i. Good communication with SLP writers is key: Immediately after the decision to reduce the prize money for the top prize winners was made, we were conscientious of the importance to inform and communicate the shortlisted writers in case of any potential backlash or negative feelings. Hence, before the public announcement to the media, we sent a personal email to all 47 shortlisted writers to inform them first that they were shortlisted and about the reduction in prize money. We asked if they would like to remain in the shortlist. All the writers were very supportive and appreciative of SBC's efforts to continue with the plans for SLP and were agreeable to stay on the shortlist. Subsequently, we worked on the premise to always keep the writers well-informed and aware of the ongoing plans, social media campaigns and progression of SLP.

- ii. Importance of having live interpreters for a multilingual event: Both the writers and online audiences had good feedback for the live interpretations provided during the online panel discussions as well as the virtual awards ceremony. For instance, Dr Pitchay Gani (winner for Malay Creative Nonfiction) commented that "...the translations across all languages were apt and well done." The live interpretations were a good and necessary element in SLP given the multilingual nature of the awards ceremony. In addition to the live interpretations, we also typed the English translations of the winners' thank you speeches in the Facebook comments.
- iii. Attention to detail: There was also many positive feedback on the execution of the virtual awards ceremony, from conceptualisation to the format, logistics and content. For instance, Ms Goh Swee Chen (NAC Chairperson and our Guest-of-Honour) commented that "...the event came across well, and I like the diversity of the judges...", and Ms Olivia Ho (The Straits Time Life!) wrote that "...thank you for a great ceremony... very tightly organised, a pleasure to cover."
- iv. Keeping it simple: Instead of having performances during the virtual awards ceremony, the two short Vox pop recordings of the writers' commentaries on #WhyWeWrite and what they could not live without during the pandemic fitted better with the programme. The Vox pops were well-liked and more appropriate for the online platform and format of the ceremony.
- v. Emphasis on accurate use of Tamil fonts: We received good feedback from the Tamil community on our emphasis and attention on ensuring the accurate use of the Tamil fonts during the virtual awards ceremony and in our collaterals.
- vi. Ample rehearsals with SLP writers: On hindsight, given that the experience on Zoom would be slightly different compared to what would be seen on the livestream by audiences, we could have arranged for Zoom rehearsals with SLP writers to run through



the actual rundown prior to the actual ceremony. It would have helped to avoid any confusion and to minimize their anxiety of "attending" a digital ceremony.

- vii. Multilingual approach for online panel discussions: There was a mixture of reception towards the multilingual online panel sessions. While some audiences and writers appreciated that they were exposed to the non-English writers and their works through the panel discussions, some language writers fed back that they were more comfortable if the panel discussions were conducted solely in their respective mother tongues. The feedback helped us to think through more about how to facilitate multilingual discussions more effectively.

## **B. S.E.A. Write Talks 2020**

- I. We continued our showcase of the S.E.A Write Award winner by featuring 2017 winner, the Chinese writer Chia Joo Ming. This session was postponed from March and reconfigured as a virtual talk.
- II. 邂逅南洋图像 —— 当华语语系遇上东南亚多元文学: Featuring the 2017 winner Chia Joo Ming, the talk was held on 4 July over Zoom and streamed live over the official SBC Facebook and YouTube channels, Joo Ming gave a talk on how users of the Chinese language across the ASEAN interacted with one another, and how these diverse groups of writers, writing in different languages, know about Chinese literature in Singapore.
- III. The talk featured Chia Joo Ming's extensive analysis of the Chinese language as reflected across key works by prolific ASEAN writers. At its peak, the session was attended by 30 participants. It has currently been viewed 505 times on Facebook and 61 views on YouTube.

## **C. International Translation Day**

- I. To mark International Translation Day on 30 Sep, SBC invited the translators of two of Singapore's award-winning books, *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* and *Lonely Face*, to share about the process and the

- issues they faced when translating. Thai translator Nuntaporn Bodharamik translated *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* by Sonny Liew from English into Thai. Natascha Bruce, who is from the UK, translated *Lonely Place* by Yeng Pway Ngon from Chinese into English.
- II. The session was moderated by established translator/writer Shelly Bryant who skillfully led the discussion that was both engaging and informative. Both translators highlighted the nuances and cultural references in the Singapore context as a challenge and the various steps they took to ensure that the translation was culturally accurate.
  - III. The session clocked 583 views on our Facebook to date.

#### **D. Anugerah Persuratan**

- I. Organised by the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MLCS) since 1993, Anugerah Persuratan is part of the MLCS' efforts to recognise Malay language writers. Other than recognition of works, the Award aims to develop and encourage writers to produce works in Malay language, encourage the publication of high-quality works and promote Malay literary in the community.
- II. For the 2020 edition, SBC has been appointed as Secretariat to manage the Award. The award ceremony is expected to take place in the second quarter of 2021, pending COVID-19 measures. There were two major changes for Anugerah Persuratan 2020, namely the streamlining of award categories as well as revision to the submission process.
- III. The streamlining process was part of MLCS' efforts to ensure that there would be quality reading materials and a range of content made readily available for the reading public and promote a vibrant literary scene. Increasing access to reading material and content in the form of a book would be the most ideal. With this in mind, it was decided that single works would not be assessed for Anugerah Persuratan.
- IV. Both the Secretariat and MLCS expected that there might be some negative reaction from the literary community to the reduction in award categories. The Chairperson of Anugerah Persuratan, Dr Azhar Ibrahim spoke to several senior writers and literary figures to seek their feedback

and support regarding this matter. In addition, the Secretariat suggested to appoint the panel of judges who would then be able to lend their support and endorsement for the proposed changes to Anugerah Persuratan. The list of judges can be found at Annex F.

- V. On 17 September 2020, the call for submissions was announced to encourage writers as well as publishers to submit their works. The public was welcomed to nominate literary figures, who would be selected by a special panel formed by the MLCS members to receive the Special Awards.
- VI. As expected, there were a few writers who shared their thoughts regarding the reduction of the award categories on their personal Facebook pages. The Malay media also showed particular interest regarding the awards that were given out. However, overall the community was supportive of the changes.
- VII. More updates would be provided after the selection and awards ceremony in April 2021.

#### **E. Words Go Round**

- I. This is the first year SBC participated in Words Go Round (WGR) as a programme partner. WGR is the school outreach programme of the Singapore Writers Festival.
- II. SBC had originally proposed 23 programmes in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil for preschool and primary school levels. The proposed programmes covered a range of topics such as friendship, kindness, emotional well-being, stress management, inclusivity, environment and intergenerational issues, food and heritage. In the end, we received approval for 11 programmes.
- III. As we received the confirmation late, within a short two months' .we managed to put together all the programmes, from inviting the authors, producing three short videos, coordinating school bookings and to conducting tech runs.
- IV. The lineup of authors included international authors whom we have worked with during AFCC 2020 such as Naomi Shihab Nye (US), Evelyn

Bookless (Ireland), as well as new authors whom we were working with for the first time such as Emma Quick (New Zealand) and Lai Yu Xin (Malaysia). Furthermore, we wanted to focus on CMT programmes, so we invited a number of writers and facilitators working in the mother tongue languages.

- V. Given that the majority of our authors were overseas, all of the sessions were conducted virtually via various online platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom.
- VI. We received a total of 15 school bookings from eight unique schools, namely:
  1. Canadian International School (Lakeside Campus)
  2. Chatsworth International School (Bukit Timah Campus)
  3. Dover Court International School
  4. German European School Singapore
  5. My First Skool at Blk 219 Serangoon
  6. My Kiddie Klubhouse Pte Ltd
  7. United World College of South East Asia (Dover Campus)
  8. United World College of South East Asia (East Campus)
- VII. The total attendance was 1,839 students aged 3-16.
- VIII. Please refer to Annex G for the full list of school booking details.
- IX. Overall, the authors and presenters were well-equipped and comfortable to conduct their sessions virtually and they managed to incorporate interactive elements such as quizzes, movement exercises, craft activities to engage the students.
- X. The programmes were well-received by the students and teachers. Some of the positive feedback from school teachers included:
  - i. How to Talk About Our Feelings by Emma Quick:  
*"Thank you for a wonderful session. It was meaningful and the students demonstrated excitement throughout. Emma, you did a great job and we would love to have you join us again in the near future."* – Hetty Boon, Junior Kindergarten Lead Teacher, Canadian International School, Lakeside Campus

- ii. On Poetry is the Language of Magic by Naomi Shihab Nye and Loh Chin Ee (moderator):  
*"We loved the session this morning - Naomi is a wonderful speaker and it was great to meet Prof. Loh too."* – Jessica Bretthauer, Library Officer, German European School Singapore
- XI. There were, however, many limitations that we faced during virtual sessions. For instance, we had only restricted communications with school teachers to manage the technical aspects during an ongoing session, and the limited control of the view displayed in the classrooms' screens (eg. whether the speaker's video was pinned for optimal view for the students).
- XII. In conclusion, the WGR commission was an enriching and enlightening experience for SBC. It provided valuable opportunities for SBC to continue to explore different strategies of increasing the level of interactivity with students during a virtual session; widen our network and contacts with schools; and also to develop new programmes which we could potentially roll out as part of SBC Campus and NAC AEP programmes.

## **F. Ready for KidLit and Read-Along Books**

- H. As part of SBC's digitalisation efforts, we tapped on NAC's Digital Presentation Grants (DPG) to work on two projects, Ready for KidLit and Read-Along Books.
  1. **Ready for KidLit**
    - II. Ready for KidLit was a new programme initiative launched by SBC this year and organised with support from the DPG grant. This programme took place on 18 July and was curated in response to the pandemic.
    - III. Ready for KidLit! was planned with the intention of retaining a sense of connection with the community, albeit digitally. At the same time, we saw this project as a way for SBC to still support the Singapore literary arts industry through the promotion of Singapore children's literature and the featured writers' works.

- IV. The event was planned as a free, one-day digital festival, with five individually-curated programmes targeted at families with young children from 4 to 12 years old. Presenters engaged for the programmes included children's book writers, illustrators, storytellers and arts educators. In addition, SBC brought on as curators, The Artground, a programme and arts centre for children in refining aspects of the programming. Local books specialist bookseller Closetful of Books was roped in too as the official bookstore for the event, allowing participants to order books by the featured presenters.
- V. Please refer to Annex I for the full programme line-up and bios of the presenters.
- VI. Pre-event registrations for the event numbered at 475, of which a total of 341 attendees were counted across the five sessions on the event day. Post-event, the videos for each of the sessions remained available on the platforms and have garnered 8,724 views across the three platforms to date.
- VII. The sessions for Ready for KidLit! were live streamed across three different platforms simultaneously – SBC and AFCC's Facebook pages and SBC's YouTube channel. While only one session was pre-recorded, the remaining four sessions were live via Zoom and filmed onsite at SBC's office space. To facilitate this, SBC engaged an external videographer to manage the filming and livestreaming process. In this aspect, Ready for KidLit! functioned as a test bed for SBC in the experience of organising live, filmed sessions and multi-streaming across different platforms. It served as an important learning experience in our digitalisation learning journey.
- VIII. In the process of organising Ready for KidLit!, it became apparent that being familiar with the production process and having a working knowledge of it was quite important, particularly for filmed, live sessions where camera angles and cue sequencing are integral in dictating how the session eventually turns out.
- IX. As the SBC team was not sufficiently knowledgeable in that area, we relied heavily on the hired videographer in leading the production

process, which is a potential pitfall if the videographer's experience and capabilities are limited.

- x. To that end, the experience of conducting live sessions also highlighted the advantage of pre-production, and how it could allow us as event organisers more direct control over sessions, reducing the risks usually associated with live sessions such as missed cues or misspoken lines.

## **2. Read-Along Books**

- XI. The second DPG project, SBC Read-Along Books, involved the adaptation of three Singaporean children's picture books, previously published by the SBC, into short animated videos.
- XII. Narrated in Chinese, Malay and Tamil, the animated videos are intended to appeal to the Alpha Generation – a tech-savvy, digitally inclined generation of young readers.
- XIII. Featured in the project are the following titles: *The Crane & The Crab* by S R Nathan (Chinese translation); *What Sallamah Didn't Know* by Sharon Ismail (Malay translation); and *The Snail Who Didn't Want His Shell* by R Chandran (Tamil translation). The books were narrated by selected storytellers from The Storytelling Centre, led by seasoned storyteller, Kamini Ramachandran.
- XIV. The videos applied simple 2D animation onto the book illustrations and featured voice-over narration and text on-screen, with subtitles in English as well. The books have been launched on SBC's website and social media channels, and are freely available for teachers, parents and children to enjoy.

### THRUST 3: Regional Literary Exchanges

- I. This thrust aims to facilitate and encourage literary exchanges with our counterparts in Southeast Asia. However, due to COVID-19, we cancelled a planned trip to Thailand in July.
- II. However, we were still able to deepen our literary partnerships with our AFCC country partners by collaborating on two projects: the BIG online exhibition and *Our Folktales* publication. Please refer to pages 8 and 16 for more details.

- III. Furthermore, we would showcase Thailand as the Country of Focus at AFCC 2021. More details would be available after AFCC in May this year.

THRUST 4: Community Engagement

- I. As part of our effort to reach out to a greater and more diverse audiences, SBC collaborated with several organisations such as Sing Lit Station, The Arts House, the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), GroundZ-0 and City Book Room on a number of programmes. The programmes included the 2020 edition of #BuySingLit; Literary Open Space; SingLit for Solidarity; Seize the Day – A tribute to Yeng Pway Ngon; and Translation and Adaptation – Navigating Languages and Cultures.

**A. #BuySingLit**

- I. The COVID-19 outbreak happened at the #BuySingLit 2020 March weekends and for many of the programmes, programme partners had to either cancel, or reconfigure their programme to a digital one. Several partners decided to postpone their programme in the hope that they could present their programmes when the situation improved. Secretariat informed all programme partners who decided to postpone and reconfigure their programmes that it to take place by 30 June 2020. An update of the number of programmes that were held, reconfigured or cancelled is included in the table below.

Number of Commission and Open Call Programmes

	<b>Commission Programmes</b>	<b>Open Call Programmes</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Number of approved programmes	8	45	53	100%
Physical programmes that took place in March 2020	5	11	16	30%
Reconfigured digital programmes	2	13	15	28%



	Commission Programmes	Open Call Programmes	Total Number	Total Percentage
Cancelled programmes	1	21	22	42%

- II. Challenges of Reconfiguring into Digital: Reconfiguring programmes into a digital format proved to be a challenge for both the Secretariat and the programme partners. Often times, the Secretariat noted that organising a digital programme required a different set of resources and capabilities. Some of the partners were also not ready for the reconfiguration since there were many uncertainties and unknowns too. Given that the changes in plans had to be implemented immediately and the short timeline to reformat all the plans, partners were not able to properly understand the trends and demographics of their online audience. The call to action to boost book sales also had to be compromised since the participants were not able to purchase book in-stores (due to the closure of bookstores) nor online (since not all books were sold on e-commerce sites).
- i. Ability and readiness of programme partners to organise digital programmes: During the period just before the circuit breaker measures were introduced, the secretariat had already advised the programme partners to reconfigure their programmes into a digital format.
  - ii. However, some of the programme partners expressed their inability to reconfigure all aspects of the earlier approved programmes into a digital event due to various reasons. In the case of commissioned programme GoToRoYo – Together @ The Canopy organised by Up Collective, the artists were a new collective made up of multi-disciplinary artists and were reluctant to present their debut performance over a digital platform. They also rationalised that their original performances were all created with an-onsite interactive element that could not be easily done if it were to be held over a digital platform.

- iii. Some of the other small programmes proposed by the Open Call partners also noted that converting into digital programmes might require more manpower to manage the session. For them, they were more comfortable to not proceed with their proposed programmes instead. In the end, 45% of the Open Call programmes were cancelled. In addition, most of those that managed to reconfigure into digital programmes also had to compromise certain aspects since they did not have the capacity and experience to carry out digital programmes well.
- iv. Rethinking programme objectives and outcomes for online audience: Although the cases of COVID-19 outbreak only started to intensify sometime mid-February, there were a lot of uncertainties regarding the situation, and if conditions would improve by June. As such, most programme partners were reluctant to quickly reconfigure their programme and wanted to delay the launch of their respective programmes.
- v. For those who were convinced to organise online sessions and events, they ran into issues of trying to meet the programme objectives and outcomes that were set out much earlier. They also did not have enough time to explore all the possible options and to try out which platform would work better. The secretariat also faced some problems justifying the level of grant support provided to the partners when the scope and deliverables tied to the programmes had to be reduced.
- vi. The secretariat also realised that engaging with an online audience was very challenging. For the most part, this was because the online audience now was presented with an endless supply of online sessions. There was also concern that the online audience was getting more distracted and fatigued due to the sheer amount of online content made accessible for free on various platforms. Unlike a physical event, it was extremely difficult to ensure a captive audience from behind a blank screen.

- vii. The Singapore Malay Book Fair 2020 or Pesta Buku Melayu presented by a group of Malay publishers and Sing Lit Sounds by Sing Lit Station were two partners that completely configured their events for the digital space.
- viii. The physical version of the Malay Book Fair was turned into a week-long digital book fair with a total of 23 pre-recorded programmes and live sessions. It was hosted across several platforms from 13 to 20 September 2020 and took place during the Malay language month Bulan Bahasa.
- ix. The overall response to the digital book fair was positive but the quality of some of the videos was less than ideal. It was due to time and budget constraints and the need to adhere to COVID-19 safe distancing measures which were rigorous during filming.
- x. Sing Lit Sounds was also originally planned as a physical event. It was to take place at two venues: The Arts House as part of Textures, as well as at the Pasir Panjang Power Station as part of SingLit Power House in March 2020..
- xi. The two sessions were eventually postponed and held virtually on 8 and 16 October 2020 via the online platform Discord. However, the functions of Discord differed from platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet which were more common work platforms. Some participants struggled to understand how the functions worked despite the provision of an instruction guide.
- xii. Weakened call to action and reduction in book sales: Previously, the secretariat often encouraged the programme partners to collaborate with bookstores or retailers to facilitate the call to action and encourage book sales during the #BuySingLit month. Some programme partners were also capable of having their own on-site book sales before or after their events. This was an observation that the secretariat noted for several years, where the bulk of book sales and use of vouchers were closely tied to book fairs and on-site book sales at specific event venues.

- xiii. However, in the case of digital events, the secretariat realised that it was not easy to ensure that the call to action remained strong. Often times, book sales were carried out separately and the participants were also not able to sue the physical book vouchers for online purchases. It was difficult to capture the participants interest in the book and encourage them to buy the book immediately after the session.
- III. As Singapore entered into Phase 3 and physical arts events were allowed with certain SMMs in place, we commissioned 24 OWLS to organise a physical event at the Pasir Panjang Power Station, CONVEY. Held on 27 December 2020, CONVEY concluded the year-long #BuySingLit movement.
- IV. Inspired by the Exquisite Corpse approach, CONVEY was an immersive experience that paired Singapore four poets with two illustrators, where they would respond to each other with their creative responses. The audiences could also take part in this site-specific project, wandering through the spaces as they take in the sensual triggers.
- V. Book vouchers: One of the major challenges faced by the secretariat was that of distributing the physical book vouchers. Although the programmes were reconfigured, it was not clear how the programme partners could continue to help distribute the book vouchers to their attendees. Even if some partners offered to mail (via registered post) the book vouchers to the attendees, it was also not clear that the participants could use the book vouchers before their expiration date on 30 June 2020 as all the bookstores were closed in April.
- VI. Two changes: The Secretariat proposed two important changes: First, to extend the validity of the book vouchers for an additional three months until end of September, and second, to explore the use of e-vouchers (in the form of promo codes) on the e-commerce sites of the local bookstores and independent publishers. These changes would then help to alleviate the issue of the readers not able to buy their books in the physical stores, and for the retailers to tap on e-vouchers and boost digital book sales instead. The secretariat then launched two marketing

campaigns – Gift SingLit and Illustrate Our World – to encourage people to support the retail businesses that were affected by the circuit breaker measures. The e-vouchers were also digitally distributed during the 2020 Singapore Malay Book Fair and Sing Lit Sounds.

- i. The digital marketing campaigns saw a high redemption rate of the vouchers distributed through various activities. In comparison, the distribution and redemption rate of the e-vouchers via the Malay Book Fair 2020 and Sing Lit Sounds met with less success. The redemption rate was 10% of allocated vouchers for the Malay Book Fair and 13% for Sing Lit Sounds.

VII. Summary of Statistics:

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Total Number of Programmes & Events	77	99	75
Total Number of Physical Attendees and Participants	40,999	45,562	18,289
Total Views	Nil	Nil	79,153
Increased interest in SingLit (%)	66%	70%	67%
Social Media Reach (number of FB, IG & YouTube followers)	4,670	5,809	7,236

**B. Online Children’s Workshops 2020**

- I. In April 2020, when the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced that the June school holiday was brought forward to May due to the extension of the circuit breaker period, SBC took the opportunity to organise a series of six online children’s workshops focusing on poetry, illustration, comics, storytelling and creative writing. Through the online children’s workshops, we reached out to more than 100 preschool, primary and secondary students.
- II. The six online children’s workshops were put together in less than a month’s time to leverage on the May school holidays and to provide

additional options for parents to sign up for their children and keep them engaged at home during the circuit breaker period.

- III. More than half of the participants were from Central Singapore Community Development Council's Nurture programme. We received positive feedback from Ms Loo Hwei Kwin (Manager, Partnerships & Programmes, Central CDC) who said that the workshops were "very well-curated with robust content and great, engaging facilitators!"
- IV. Please refer to Annex H for the full list of workshops.

### **C. Literary Open Space**

- I. The Literary Open Space is a collaboration between Sing Lit Station, The Arts House and Singapore Book Council. It was a platform for the literary arts community to get together and freely discuss pertinent issues and topics.
- II. Due to the pandemic, the second session was wholly digital. Five breakout rooms were created using the same number of Zoom accounts so that participants could move freely from session to session depending on the topic they would like to listen or contribute to.
- III. The second edition of the Literary Open Space was planned as it was agreed that the community would need the support and the outlet to highlight the issues they were facing especially given the challenging times.
- IV. There were a total of 54 registrations and the discussions centred on digital and cross artform programming, as well as how the various organisations would be able to contribute to the larger ecosystem.

### **D. SingLit for Solidarity**

- I. Funded by the National Integration Council of Singapore (NIC), SingLit for Solidarity is a research project designed by Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) researchers to study the potential contribution of the literary arts (prose fiction and drama script) to promote social solidarity and integration between local and foreign

tertiary students. SUTD partnered with SBC and the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) to organise the programmes.

- II. It dealt with the themes of generational gap and race relations through selected works of Singapore literature by selected Singlit writers and situated them within the context of a rapidly digitalising society.
- III. These workshops were divided into two main topics: intergenerational gaps, and racial relations, the students were divided into four groups, each with the goal of producing 10-minute video productions that will be exhibited virtually on an SUTD platform.
- IV. Two facilitators, theatre practitioner Jeffrey Tan and writer/translator Imran Taib were engaged by SBC to conduct the three-hour workshops on for intergenerational gaps and racial relations respectively.
- V. Challenges / Learning Points:
  - i. The collaboration between SUTD and SBC on the reading workshops provided significant insights on the ability of literary text – in this case selected Singapore literary content – to spur meaningful discussions among youths on critical topics such as intergenerational gaps and racial relations.
  - ii. In hindsight though, aside from the complication brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the conduct of the workshops proved more challenging than how it was initially projected during its conceptualisation last year, particularly with regards to internal logistics, coordination and scheduling, and technology use.
  - iii. As facilitators used Zoom and moved the segments of the workshops around to give the students a more interactive experience, the use of breakout rooms, screen sharing and the treatment of how digital feedback was given and received were interesting learning points to ponder on. It was evident to the organisers that there was a need to fine-tune certain technical aspects of the reading workshops, and to explore other means of delivering instruction, sharing information, and facilitating group discussions for future sessions.

- iv. Although the project had yet to be concluded at the time of writing, it did however manage to achieve part of its objectives. For one, it was able to illustrate that Singlit did have an impactful effect on the attendees, helping them to relate the text to real-life experiences, and link it back to what the narratives were trying to convey in relation to intergenerational gaps and racial relations. The texts selected for the workshops also became impetus for the direction of the scripts the attendees themselves drafted, as part of the final output of the collaborative project.
- v. It was also evident during the workshops and the consultation sessions that the students were engaged with the selected text, regardless if only a handful of them were actually familiar with the selections to begin with. This engagement was also translated in the scripts written for the video output, where students were also able to capture most of the cultural and contextual nuances of the stories they derived inspiration from for their own scripts.
- vi. Programmatically, there were some areas that could be further explored and improved on, particularly in the areas of text selection, the selection of attendees and the general flow of the workshops.
- vii. For one, the facilitators were confined to a certain extent to texts that were provided by the researchers themselves. Although this was understandable, given that the researchers might have had their own reasons for providing the long list of SingLit text to choose from, it would have also been interesting to involve the facilitators in curating the SingLit text that could have been used for the workshops. Although there was considerable independence in delivering the selected Singlit text to the class, it would have been more fruitful to explore beyond the list if there was also a criteria for selection that was provided. Moving forward, future facilitators could then use the criteria to expand the long list and have more material to lift their workshop from.



- viii. Lastly, having provided a general framework for the discussions did help shape up the workshops to some extent, but in the end, it was the facilitators who decided where the session would go. That said, it is recommended that facilitators should be engaged in the development of the session outline, instead of either providing one or letting them draft one in silo. This will ensure that workshops would be able to meet objectives for both the organiser and the facilitator's side.
- VI. Overall, the collaboration was a great opportunity to push SBC's thrusts to introduce and promote SingLit to new audiences, such as youths and schools. To SBC, these audience segments are important to cultivate moving forward to ensure that support for SingLit continues.
- VII. SBC will continue to welcome similar partnerships, since it sees such projects as opportune occasions to reach out to the greater Singapore audience, and to help deepen readers' perception of SingLit and appreciation of the themes.

#### **E. Singapore Writers Festival Youth Fringe**

- I. Celebrating its 23<sup>rd</sup> edition and its first digital iteration, the Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) is regarded as one of Asia's premier literary events. SBC has partnered once again with the festival to present curated programmes that cover youth-centric topics such as online social justice, romance YA fiction, empathic writing and more, as part of the SWF Youth Curators programme.
- II. Initially, Youth Curators were tasked to develop up to 10 programmes, including at least two (2) mother tongue language programmes for inclusion in Youth Fringe 2020. However, with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, directions from the SWF team changed, with the Festival going fully digital. Youth Curators however were advised to continue the curation process as discussed when they were invited.
- III. In response to the disruptions brought about by the pandemic, incubation sessions provided for the Youth Curators to develop, discuss and curate sessions were held virtually over a period of eight (8) weeks

using a variety of platforms including Google Meet, Zoom and Skype. A dedicated WhatsApp group was also created to continue the discussion on mobile, during the incubation period.

- IV. SBC worked closely with its second batch of SWF Youth Curators to conceptualise part of the Youth Fringe virtual programmes this year. Eleven Youth Curators from selected secondary, JC and tertiary schools around Singapore took part in curation workshops and discussions to finalise these curated programmes under the SWF Youth Fringe.
- V. This year, SWF Youth Fringe featured four (4) curated programmes, featuring 13 speakers headlined by the likes of Cassandra Clare, Amie Kaufman, Dr Crystal Abidin and Faz Gaffa-Marsh, developed by 11 Youth Curators aged 15 to 20, representing eight (8) school partners. Of the 11, seven (7) were new curators and four (4) were returning ones.
- VI. All SWF Youth Fringe sessions were held on the official festival platform, Sistic Live, with three (3) pre-recorded sessions and one (1) live session. All four programmes were made available on video-on-demand (VOD) two weeks after the Festival, alongside the main festival programming. The curated programmes ran from 30 October to 8 November 2020, and were made available on VOD until 18 November.
- VII. Please refer to Annex J for the full programme line-up.

#### **F. SBC Community Night**

- I. Community Night commemorates SBC's birthday around December 19 and is an opportunity for SBC to celebrate our ties and relationships with our various stakeholders and partners.
- II. We organised Community Night 2020 entirely virtually, via Zoom. It was a chance to gather everyone for a fun and relaxing evening, and to mark end of the year.
- III. We involved our interns to plan a mix of participatory and immersive programmes for the event. We invited four SLP-winning poets to do readings in the four languages; engaged illustrators to do caricatures of the guests; and organised blackout poetry and SingLit trivia games. Guests could hop from one breakout room to the next to take part in

any of the activities. They were also invited to leave their birthday wishes for SBC on a specially created online notice board using Padlet.

- IV. More than 50 guests attended the event. A digital "Thank You" postcard, illustrated by illustrator Dhanendra, was sent to them after the event.

### **G. Seize the Day – A Celebration of Yeng Pway Ngon**

- I. On 10 January 2021, Cultural Medallion and Singapore Literature Prize winner, Mr Yeng Pway Ngon passed away at the age of 73. To pay tribute to Mr Yeng and his contributions to the literary arts scene, SBC together with City Book Room presented an online tribute to celebrate his life and his works.
- II. The online tribute event was livestreamed on SBC's Facebook on 13 March 2021. The video has since garnered over 1,200 views.
- III. We gathered publishers, translators and writers who have worked closely with Mr Yeng, as well as his close friends and family members to share about the different facets of Mr Yeng and his works, especially the lesser known side of him. They came from different parts of the world, including Italy, US and UK.
- IV. The speakers included writer-translator Jeremy Tiang; translator Natascha Bruce; Italian publisher Andrea Berrini; local publishers Chan Wai Han and Fong Hoe Fang from Ethos; filmmaker Liao Jie Kai, as well as Mr Yeng's wife Madam Goh Beng Choo and his daughter Corrine Ying.
- V. Mr Yeng's family was very appreciative of the event, which offered the late writer the recognition that he deserved. Corrine Ying shared her comments: "Many thanks to the Book Council for a very well-organised tribute! It isn't easy to put together a programme like this, yet everything ran smoothly like clockwork. It was heartwarming to hear from my father's friends, especially those from overseas and in a different time zone. It makes me really proud of my father. My own sharing helped me to grieve as well; thank you for the opportunity and thank you for your dedication towards supporting local authors!"

- VI. We also hoped that this online tribute event would help to further increase the awareness and appreciation of Mr Yeng's, inspiring more readers to discover his books.

### 3. Marketing

#### A. The Impact of COVID-19 on SBC's Marketing and Sponsorship Efforts

- I. With an eye on flagship festival AFCC, premier literary award SLP and the rebranding of SBC set to take place from middle to the end of 2020, SBC set about undertaking preparations from October 2019 onwards in anticipation of a robust 2020 for the Singapore Book Council. Unfortunately, the spread of global pandemic COVID-19 severely curtailed SBC's preparations and planning for its marketing efforts, primarily due to the postponement and delay of the aforementioned initiatives. The following plans have been disrupted:
  - i. Sponsorships and donations: As SBC geared up for our signature events Singapore Literature Prize and AFCC, plans were undertaken to raise donations and sponsorships. The marketing team pitched several sponsorship appeals to potential partners, reaching out to many new companies. The pandemic curtailed all of these efforts, as the companies were not able to contribute as they were hit financially. In addition, we also leveraged on NVPC's City of Good Show, which was held in late June to "save our charities". However, these promotional efforts did not translate into any donations on Giving.SG, despite SBC committing manpower and time to the production and running of a marketing campaign to solicit donations.
  - ii. Adapting marketing efforts: As SBC sought to adapt many of its programmes digitally, the marketing team also had to quickly come up with marketing and PR efforts to promote our programmes as many were cancelled or postponed. We had to constantly and quickly update many of our channels and platforms, including our website and social media platforms. We

were also predominantly reliant on our digital resources, as we could not print or distribute physical collaterals.

**B. Summary of SBC's marcomms efforts**

	<b>Event / Item</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>Digital Media</b>	<b>Collaterals</b>
1	Asian Festival of Children's Content and Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award	1 Radio Interview (CNA 93.8)  5 Press Releases  12 Online Articles	Facebook  Instagram  e-Newsletter  Facebook ads  e-signatures  Website banners  Email invites  Website listings	500 programme booklets  5 pull-up banners  Thank You Letters and Packages
2	Singapore Literature Prize	1 Media Alert – Call for Submissions in Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil  2 Press Releases—Shortlist press release with cover designed with #WhyWeWrite theme and Winners announcement press release, sent out two days before awards ceremony under embargo  3 Radio Interviews / Mentions (Capital 95.8FM, Oli 96.8, CNA938)	eDM  e-Newsletter  Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter  Microsite  E-booklet  Facebook ads  Instagram ads  Email invites	500 ceremony booklets  A3 poster for bookshops  Wobblers  Shortlist Stickers  Winners' Stickers  Thank You Letters and Packages

	<b>Event / Item</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>Digital Media</b>	<b>Collaterals</b>
		1 TV feature: 8pm Suria, 22 August 2020  20 Online articles  4 Print articles	e-signatures	
3	Other programmes	4 Online articles	Website listings  Facebook  Instagram  e-signatures  Website banners  e-Newsletter	

**C. Summary of reach of SBC's marcomms effort**

	Item	Platform	1 Apr 2020 Subscribers / Followers / Page Likes	1 Oct 2020 Subscribers / Followers / Page Likes	Metrics	Amount of Increase for Followers
1	Newsletter	Mailchimp	14,295	14,635	13.4% Open Rate	340 or 2.38%
2	SBC	Facebook	5,295	6,345	351,831 Reach 6.17% Engagement Rate	1,050 or 19.83%
		Instagram	844	1,313	42,221 Reach 4.59% Engagement Rate	469 or 55.57%
		Twitter	707	825	22,672 Impressions	118 or 16.69%
		Website			23,400 Users 64.1% new users	
3	AFCC	Facebook	8,489	8,832	159,010 Reach 8.36% Engagement rate	343 or 4.04%
		Instagram	1,720	1,906	24,205 Reach 7.01% engagement rate	186 or 10.81%
		Twitter	NA	350	12,113 Impressions	NA
		Website			13,907 Users 84.6% new visitors	

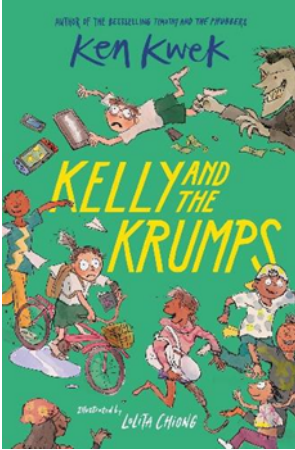


#### D. Observations and future planning

- I. The #WhyWeWrite's social media campaign for SLP bore significant fruit for SBC. A total of 416,724 online audiences were reached, nearly double the previous period's 232,485.
- II. The #WhyWeWrite campaign also contributed to a noticeable increase in social media following for Facebook and Twitter, with the 19.83% growth on Facebook seeing SBC surpass Sing Lit Station as Singapore's most followed nonprofit literary organisation page. This growth was double the previous period's 8.62% growth. Twitter's growth was more than double the previous period's growth of 8.2% increase in followers.
- III. The SLP, with its many shortlisted writers and their works, provided an excellent range of content that can be utilised to grow SBC's digital audience.
- IV. Please see Annex K for selected media coverage.
- V. For future marketing efforts for SBC's programmes, we would have to rely even more on digital and social media. We will explore more diverse avenues of reaching out to our digital audiences, and working with different organisations and partners to cross-promote our events.



**Annex B: Hedwig Anuar Children’s Book Award (HABA) 2020**

Please find below details about the HABA 2020 winners, Ken Kwek and Lolita Chiong, author and illustrator of *Kelly and the Krumps*.

Book Title	Synopsis
<p><b>Kelly and the Krumps</b></p> 	<p>Kelly Mao has got quite the headache: her tiger mum is threatening to ground her, her tuition timetable barely gives her time to eat, and she suspects her twin brother is up to something. On top of everything, the PSLE is looming!</p> <p>When the pressure gets too intense, Kelly decides to secretly join a dance crew called the Krumps, but slowly she gets entangled in her brother’s troubles with an evil genius named Fang Boy.</p>
<p><b>Author: Ken Kwek</b></p> 	<p><b>Bio</b></p> <p>Ken Kwek is a screenwriter, film director, playwright and author of the best-selling <i>Timothy and the Phubbers</i>, his first children's novel. Ken studied literature at the University of Cambridge and dramatic writing at New York University. He worked as a journalist and a cook for a few years, then wrote and directed several movies</p>
<p><b>Illustrator: Lolita Chiong</b></p> 	<p>Lolita Chiong is the illustrator of <i>Timothy and the Phubbers</i>. She is currently studying illustration with animation at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. She loves drawing cartoons, pixel art and comics. In her spare time, Lolita loves going to the bird park to draw the birds, and the prawning pools to catch prawns. She also loves eating chicken nuggets with her boyfriend.</p>

### Annex C: Academy

Full list of workshops and programmes from April 2020 to March 2021.

No	Date	Title	Synopsis	Trainer	No. of Attendees / Participants
1.	18,19 & 26 Apr 2020	Picture Book Matters	A workshop for aspiring and emerging picture book writers and illustrators in Asia.	Debasmita Dasgupta & Eva Wong Nava	6
2	7 May 2020	The Value of a Story: Using Stories to Impart Values to Children	Storytelling is a powerful tool for passing on values. This interactive online workshop will show you how.	Sheila Wee	5
3	8 May 2020	The Value of a Story: Using Stories to Impart Values to Children	Storytelling is a powerful tool for passing on values. This interactive online workshop will show you how.	Sheila Wee	24
4	29 May 2020	Introduction to Role Drama	A customised workshop for Riverside MOE Kindergarten	Sheila Wee	22
5	17 Jun 2020	Is My Book Agent Ready Editing your manuscript for submission to agents	Learn key editing steps every writer should follow before submitting his or her manuscript to an agent or publisher	Smita Khan, Trisha Das	8
6	27 – 29 Jun 2020	Menulis Fiksyen Melayu Dengan Cara Okky Madasari (Writing Malay Fiction: The Okky Madasari Way)	Master short stories and fiction writing in Malay with award-winning and best-selling author, Okky Madasari.	Okky Madasari	5
7	2 Jul 2020	Editing for the International English Market	Participants get an overview of editorial considerations and insights into what international editors are looking for in a manuscript submission.	Anya Goncharova	17
8	4 Jul 2020	Introduction to Literary Translation	The workshop will address the mindsets and issues underlying the process of	Shelly Bryant	14

No	Date	Title	Synopsis	Trainer	No. of Attendees / Participants
			literary translation and is ideal for aspiring translators.		
9	24 Jul 2020	Based on a True Story: Writing Compelling Literary Non-Fiction	Participants learn how to write compelling true stories, from family memoirs to true crime from the author of a New York Times Bestseller!	Paul French	10
10	12 Aug 2020	From Page To Stage: 17A Keong Saik Road	A panel where the creatives share how the novel "17A Keong Saik Road" was brought from page to the stage as a dramatised reading	Woo Hsia Ling, Jean Tay, Koh Hui Ling, Charmaine Leung	30
11	12 Sep 2020	Drawing for a Living	Trainer will share tips on how to break into the exciting business of freelance illustration.	Debasmita Dasgupta	5
12	30 Oct 2020	Alternative Lives: Imagining and Exploring Your Possible Worlds	In this introduction to journaling workshop, participants will utilise freewriting and stream-of-consciousness techniques to imagine and explore the possibilities of self.	Chan Lishan	55
13	31 Oct 2020	Introduction to Storytelling I	In two 7-hour modules of hands-on training (over 2 consecutive Saturdays), participants will gain a firm grounding in storytelling skills and leave with one ready-to-tell story.	Sheila Wee	9
14	7 Nov 2020	Introduction to Storytelling II	The second of the two-module workshop. Participants should have either taken the first module or have experience in storytelling on public platforms.	Sheila Wee	8
15	20 Nov 2020	Silver Stories	Participants will get hands-on tips on how to connect, or reconnect with the elderly in their work or families.	Juriah Atan, Shalni Doshi	5

No	Date	Title	Synopsis	Trainer	No. of Attendees / Participants
16	17 Dec 2020	Embracing the Weird: Writing Speculative Fiction	Embracing the weird in your writing is to take risks and break rules. Victor Ocampo will guide participants in exploring how writing in unusual ways can unlock creativity.	Victor Fernando R. Ocampo	8
17	19 Dec 2020	A Single Swallow – In Conversation with the Author, Translator and Editor	Author Zhang Ling, translator Shelly Bryant, and editor Liza Darnton share their experiences working together on .	Zhang Ling, Shelly Bryant & Liza Darnton	60 live 645 views
18	7, 23 & 28 Jan 2021	The Final Steps: Literary Translation Workshop	This course will equip translators with the skills and knowledge to refine their translations.	Anya Goncharova & Shelly Bryant	7
19	6 Mar 2021	Jom Bercerita!	An introduction to storytelling in Malay	Jumaini Ariff	15
20	17 Mar 2021	Translation & Adaptation - Navigating	How does translation play out on stage? This free panel with notable theatre practitioners reveal how original work is adapted for audiences in a different language.	Seng Soo Meng, Zulfadli Rashid, Jean Tay, Phoebe Chan & Zelda Tatiana Ng	18 live 390 views
21	27 Mar 2021	Reveal: The Art of 'Showing'	Explore the meaning of 'Show, don't tell' and how to apply this principle when writing fiction and nonfiction with writer-editor, Verena Tay	Verena Tay	6

**Annex D: SBC Campus**

Full list of workshops from April to December 2020. There was no school booking from January to March 2021.

No	Date	Digital / In-person	Workshop Title	Synopsis	Trainer	School	No. of Pax
1	27 Apr	Digital	Curious Together: Using illustrations & poems to create narratives	The session explores collaborative expressions using both poetry and images to tell compelling, culturally anchored and personal stories.	Loh Guan Liang	Tampines Secondary School	35
2	13, 27 Jul	Digital	Imaginative Writing	The session explains how creative writing can be fun and therapeutic and tap on their	Melanie Lee	Tanjong Katong Girls' School	25
3	3, 24 Aug	Digital	Introduction to Ekphrastic Writing	The session introduces ekphrasis, a review of literary devices used in poetry and idea consolidation exercises and inspire students to write their own vivid poems.	Loh Guan Liang	Tanjong Katong Girls' School	23
4	3 Sep	Digital	Setting, Structure and Beyond: A Deeper Appreciation of Films	The session analyses films and discovers how story concepts, characters, structure makes a film compelling to watch as well as unpacking the	Yong Shu Hoong	Tanjong Katong Girls' School	23

No	Date	Digital / In-person	Workshop Title	Synopsis	Trainer	School	No. of Pax
				hidden meanings and metaphors used.			
5	25 Jul, 1 Aug, 8 Aug	Digital	Fun with Communications (Tier 1) for Primary 1 and 2	The session includes ice breakers and introduces speech and drama to develop communication skills.	Julius Foo	Central Singapore Community Development Council	15
	15, 22 Aug	Digital		The session invites students to create their own stories through images and illustration exercises to craft narratives inspired by their personal interests.	Darel Seow		
6	25 Jul, 1 Aug	Digital	Fun with Communications (Tier 2) for Primary 3 and 4	The session includes ice breakers and introduces speech and drama to develop communication skills.	Serena Ho	Central Singapore Community Development Council	18
	8, 15, 22 Aug	Digital		The session invites students to create their own stories through images and illustration exercises to craft narratives	Darel Seow		

No	Date	Digital / In-person	Workshop Title	Synopsis	Trainer	School	No. of Pax
				inspired by their personal interests.			
7	21 Oct	Digital	Food Blogging Fun!	The session focuses on online writing skills, such as for food blogging and introduces various creative vocabulary for food descriptions.	Melanie Lee	Edgefield Secondary School	309
8	26 Oct	Digital	Curious Together: Using illustrations & poems to create narratives	The sessions explores collaborative expressions using both poetry and images to tell compelling, culturally anchored and personal stories.	Darel Seow	CHIJ Toa Payoh	21
					Loh Guan Lian		
9	18, 25 Nov	Digital	Fun with Communications	The session includes ice breakers and introduces speech and drama to develop communication skills.	Rodney Oliveiro	Central Singapore Community Development Council	10
	2, 9, 16 Dec			The session invites students to create their own stories through images and illustration exercises to craft narratives inspired by their personal interests.	Darel Seow		

**Annex F: Anugerah Persuratan 2020**

The full list of judges

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Dr Azhar Ibrahim (Chief Judge)	Overall
2	Dr Mukhlis Abu Bakar (Head)	Children's Literature
3	Tajudin Jaffar	Children's Literature
4	Isa Kamari (Head)	Literary Essays
5	Dr Aishah Mohamad Kassim	Literary Essays
6	Dr Nazry Bahrawi	Novel
7	Mohd Raman Bin Daud (Head)	Novel
8	Suraidi Sipan (Head)	Poetry
9	Dr Kartini Anwar	Poetry
10	Suratman Markasan (Head)	Short Story
11	Chairul Fahmy	Short Story
12	Nadiputra (Head)	Theatre
13	Aidli Mosbit	Theatre



### Annex G: Words Go Round 2021 Sessions

No	Date	Title	Synopsis	Author/Presenter	No. of students
1	3, 5, 11, 12 Mar	How to Talk About Our Feelings	Interactive storytelling session with breathing exercises and craft activity to cultivate mindfulness and emotional awareness.	Emma Quick (New Zealand)	542
2	1, 4, 8, 11 Mar	Captain Green to the Rescue!	Interactive storytelling session and craft activity to highlight the importance of conservation.	Evelyn Bookless (Netherlands)	582
3	11 Mar	Art of Making Thosai (English session)	The session includes a cooking demonstration of making thosai and chutney, as well as craft activity and movement exercises.	Grace Kalaiselvi (Singapore)	100
4	3, 5 Mar	Meet the Author: Lai Yu Xin (Mandarin session)	Interactive storytelling session in Mandarin on author's exciting children's book series.	Lai Yu Xin (Malaysia)	273
5	3, 4, 5 Mar	Poetry is the Language of Magic	Acclaimed poet and Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye sharing about inspirations for writing poems, as well as Q&A interaction and writing exercises for students.	Naomi Shihab Nye (US), moderated by Loh Chin Ee (Singapore)	225
6	4 Mar	Virtual Tour of the <i>Asian Spices Kids</i> Kitchen (Mandarin session)	Interactive video with animations on finding the missing <i>Asian Spices Kids</i> characters and fun quizzes in Mandarin about food through engaging the five senses.	Su Zhangkai (Singapore)	117
<b>Total no. of students</b>					<b>1,839</b>

## Annex H: Online Children's Workshops

Full list of online workshops run by Singapore Book Council during the May 2020 school holidays.

No	Date	Digital/ In-person	Workshop title	Workshop Synopsis	Facilitator	No. of pax
1	20 May (AM)	Digital	Writing Pictures and Drawing Words with Darel Seow	Create your own stories through images in this fun workshop, inspired by your personal interests as well as what you see around you.	Darel Seow	29
2	20 May	Digital	Design your own Comic Book Character! with Zaki Ragman	Design your own comic character in this holiday programme for comics enthusiasts.	Zaki Ragman	7
3	20 May (PM)	Digital	Writing Pictures and Drawing Words with Darel Seow	Create your own stories through images in this fun workshop, inspired by your personal interests as well as what you see around you.	Darel Seow	30
4	22 May	Digital	Story Craft with Nek Selampit	Join Nek Selampit for an online STORY CRAFT session for young audiences and those young at heart!	Jumaini Ariff	12
5	22 May	Digital	Pictures and Poetry, Assemble! with Loh Guan Liang	Discover ekphrastic poetry through guided writing exercises, ekphrastic poems and song lyrics.	Loh Guan Liang	8
6	27 May	Digital	Using Photographs as Writing Prompts with Sim Ee Waun	Discover how to bring your story and characters alive using a photographic prompt in this fun workshop!	Sim Ee Waun	30

## Annex I: Ready for KidLit

Full list of programmes and presenters' bios.

Time	Session Title and Synopsis	Presenters
10am – 10.45am	<p><b>I'm Very Busy</b></p> <p>What does your little one think Baozi is doing when he says he's busy? Draw along with creators Colin and Yen Yen as they bring silly suggestions from kids to life. Also, enjoy a dramatic reading of <i>I'm Very Busy</i> from the hilarious <i>Little Dim Sum Warriors</i> bilingual picture book series.</p> <p>Bonus: download free simple cut-outs of Xiajiao, Baozi and Shaomai and take part in the story with us!</p>	Colin Goh Woo Yen Yen
11.15am – 12pm	<p><b>It's Rhyme Time!</b></p> <p>Let loose and run wild with your creativity! Step into the world of funny and nonsensical rhymes and learn how to create simple limericks in this fun and engaging session.</p>	Deborah Emmanuel
1pm – 1.45pm	<p><b>What Colours Are You Feeling?</b></p> <p>Our emotions are colourful like a rainbow but we often struggle to label or describe our emotions properly. Let's have fun creating colourful and fun emoji crafts that helps us express our emotions and use it to share an emotive story.</p>	Angela Ng
2.15pm – 3pm	<p><b>Duelling Illustrators – Live!</b></p> <p>Watch two illustrators engage in battle as each attempts to outdraw the other. While a story is read out live, the artists will each draw out their vision of how the scenes from the story would look like.</p>	Darel Seow Quek Hong Shin Jumaini Ariff
3.30pm – 4.15pm	<p><b>Let's Sing, Play and Move to ORIGAMI! with Wigglepods</b></p> <p>Come join us for a creative music and movement adventure with Wigglepods. We will SING, MOVE and PLAY in this fun-filled session inspired by the book titled <i>Benji, Yumi, Origami!</i> by Emily Lim-Leh and Kazumi Wilds.</p>	Lavina Chong and Shalene Phang

Presenter	Bio
Angela Ng	Angela is a Lecturer on Design Thinking. She believes emotions drives experiences and is at the heart of all experiential designs. As a Positive Psychology practitioner, her study on emotions further extended her work into design for well-being. She is the author of the book, <i>What Colours Are You Feeling?</i> and TEDx Singapore 2019 Speaker on <i>Design Think To Happiness</i> .
Colin Goh	Colin Goh is a writer/cartoonist whose work includes the international bestseller <i>Search Inside Yourself</i> . With wife Woo Yen Yen, he created <i>Dim Sum Warriors</i> (a critically-acclaimed graphic novel series published by Scholastic, which was also adapted into a major stage musical in China) and <i>Little Dim Sum Warriors</i> , a spin-off bilingual storybook-and-app series for young readers. Visit <a href="http://www.dimsumwarriors.com">www.dimsumwarriors.com</a> for free previews and more details.
Darel Seow	Darel is a visual storyteller who illustrates the tales of the natural world through his unique brand of wry wit and whimsy. He believes in the draw of storytelling as a means of engagement, creating experiences that simultaneously excite and educate. Particularly interested in museums and culture, he has worked with art, cultural and educational institutions to encourage learning through the power of imagination and play.
Deborah Emmanuel	Deborah Emmanuel is a Singaporean poet, performer and professional speaker. She has written three books, two one-woman shows and countless poems. When not writing, Deborah tours internationally, makes theatre, plays music, and meditates a lot.
Jumaini Ariff	Jumaini is a published author and well-known for her storytelling persona; 'Nek Selampit'. She heads 'Storyscribblers' which provides quality literary workshops for students and preschool educators. In 2017, Jumaini became the first storyteller to be appointed as a Language Ambassador, by the Malay Language Council Singapore.
Lavina Chong	Lavina Chong has been an Early Childhood Educator for the past 30 years, as a classroom teacher, teacher trainer, professional staff development instructor, consultant, curriculum specialist, conference speaker and a University professor. She is the Managing Director of Wigglepods Pte Ltd, a creative music movement company, that specialises in the arts for children 0-12 years.
Quek Hong Shin	Hong Shin is a freelance illustrator who has written and illustrated several picture books including <i>The Amazing Sarong</i> , <i>The Incredible Basket</i> and <i>Universe of Feelings</i> . <i>The Incredible Basket</i> was the winner of Best Children's Book at the 2019 Singapore Book Awards.

Presenter	Bio
Sharlene Phang	Shalene Phang is an educator with Wigglepods and has been in the early childhood field for 9 years. She is well-loved by children, and loves singing and playing the ukulele in her spare time.
Woo Yen Yen	Woo Yen Yen is CEO of Yumcha Studios, an edtech company focusing on cultural confidence and global competence for kids through comics and apps. She is an education expert with a doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University, specializing in curriculum design. With husband Colin Goh, she recently published <i>Little Dim Sum Warriors</i> , a bilingual book and app series for young readers. For more details and learning resources, visit <a href="http://www.dimsumwarriors.com">www.dimsumwarriors.com</a> .

### Annex J: SWF 2020 Youth Fringe Programmes

Event Title	Speakers	Description	Platform
<b>Once More, With Feeling</b> 1 Nov, Sun 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Faz Gaffa-Marsh Diana Rahim Faith Ng (M) Aravin Sandran	In times of a pandemic and social injustice, how can online content-writing, journalism and photography convey messages in more empathetic and inclusive ways? In this conversation, aspiring young writers and online content creators will share insights on how to talk about the triumphs and challenges through the art of listening and understanding multiple perspectives.	Sistic Live
<b>A (Teenage) Love Affair</b> 3 Nov, Tue 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Cassandra Clare Anittha Thanabalan Amie Kaufman (M) Felicia Low-Jimenez	Why are readers so enthusiastic about "shipping" a fictional couple in romance arcs? Does this change the way we talk about real relationships? Three YA novelists discuss how realistic representations of romance are in the YA genre, and how these narratives could impact readers in real life.	Sistic Live
#thoughtsandprayers 7 Nov, Sat 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	YEOLO Joel Tan Deesha Menon Nor (M) Crystal Abidin	As the old adage goes, "it's the thought that counts". Yet, are well-meaning thoughts good enough in this day and age of viral activist movements and hashtag challenges on social media? Three speakers explore the whims and fancies of keyboard warriors, viral moments, and what social justice really entails. #blessed	Sistic Live
Spill the Tea 8 Nov, Sun 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	YEOLO Crystal Abidin Brenda Tan (M) Jollin Tan	Your favourite Internet celebrity couple has just broken up. A content creator has issued yet another apology video. Someone, somewhere, has spilled the tea (again). Why and how are the audiences so invested in the personal lives of social media influencers and celebrities? Do they even know you exist? Three speakers discuss the parasocial relationships between the audience and the celebrity and the implications from such illusory experiences.	Sistic Live