



BOLD Annual Report 2020

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS!

2020 is the year of the Covid Pandemic but fortunately BOLD was able to get grants from Yayasan Hasanah as a Community Partner as well as from the Penang State Government, Lim Lean Teng Foundation, Pertubuhan Jawi Peranakan, Pan Malaysian Pools and Saw Seng Kew Foundation, all faithful supporters of BOLD in the past few years.

BOLD also received some financial support from the Government's Prihatin scheme to ease hardships caused by the Pandemic and the NECIC provided a special grant to pivot to Online intervention programs for Children with Special Needs. As in past years, we received donations from many generous individuals which, together with small collections from families benefitting from our services, all helped to cover our expenses in 2020.

A big Thank You to all our generous donors and supporters, both big and small. It is your support that enables BOLD to continue its work for Children with Special Needs from year to year.

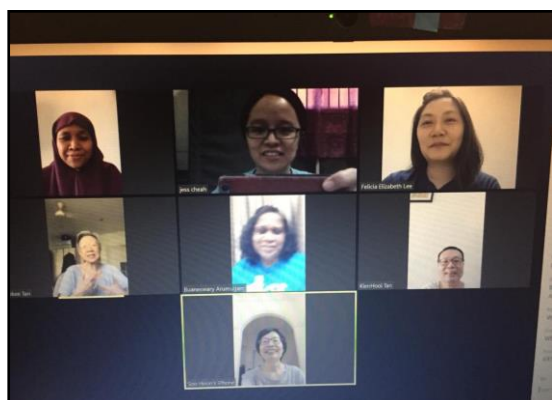
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

In January and February, we were busy starting our Play Group, Social Group and Focus on Literacy programs and gearing up to launch a big push in the Yayasan Hasanah Project. However, the lockdown on 18 March put an abrupt stop to all activities, forcing us to adjust to the "New Normal".

In our shared programs with Asia Community Service, First Step staff took the lead in conducting the first Online session on 2 April. There are, of course, limitations in working with very young children but the transition to conducting Online sessions as an alternative mode for this very important Early Intervention Program has been a successful one. However, we have sadly had to stop JOM Mobile Toy Library as well as Respite Care.

After several reskilling sessions, Focus on Literacy as well as the Yayasan Hasanah Project went Online in the third week of April. The first Online Storytelling session was conducted by our dedicated Chinese language storyteller on 30 April. In an impressively successful

transition to Online mode, she had maintained a total of 16 sessions in 2020. However, we were unable to revive Play Group, Social Group or even Parents Support Group.



First Online Staff Meeting - April 2020



Online Storytelling about Hari Raya - May 2020

Finally, Support for Inclusive Education was maintained at a much reduced rate by our Consultant through Online communications.

SPECIAL OUTREACH: YAYASAN HASANAH PROJECT

Yayasan Hasanah approved our grant application to be their Community partner to conduct Focus on Literacy Outreach Program in 2020!

We recruited 2 additional part-time staff and adjusted the job scopes of existing staff in preparation for full implementation of the program. The team's first task was to identify 9 preschools and primary schools (teaching in 3 different languages) for the project.

The recruitment and training of team members to conduct weekly FOL teaching sessions resulted in 34 potential recruits who attended the One Day Introductory Workshop on 9 February. Following this, 15 recruits attended 4 half-day sessions in Malay; 3 attended the 3 half-day sessions in Tamil; and another 14 attended 3-half day sessions in Mandarin. The Mandarin sessions included an additional group of 13 volunteers from Tzu Chi Kindergartens, a preschool organization with which we have had a close working relationship for the past two years.





By the end of February, teachers in the 9 preschools/primary schools, which had agreed to take part in the project, had identified Children with Reading Difficulties (CRD) in their classes for our teams to conduct assessments. Fifteen team members were assigned to the schools and time-tables for teaching sessions were arranged.

In the first two weeks of March, the teams visited their respective schools to conduct Pre-intervention Assessments and “Ice-breaker Sessions” with the **63** CRD selected for Project Yayasan Hasanah 2020. These early sessions were an important basis for the teams to establish a relationship with their respective CRD. Even more important, perhaps, was that the children found these introductory sessions interesting and enjoyable, laying the foundations for them to be eager to continue with the sessions, even after they changed to Online mode.



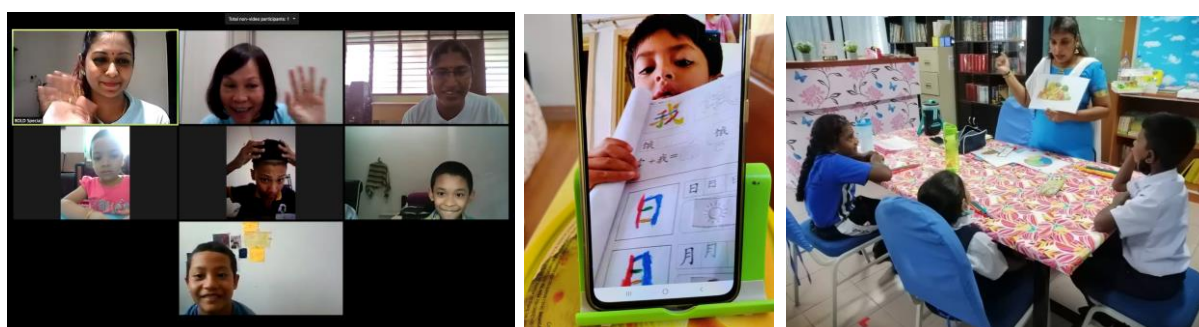
Just as actual teaching was about to start in the third week of March, this smooth beginning was disrupted by the announcement of the MCO, followed by the closure of all schools from 18 March.

In rapid response, BOLD staff and Yayasan Hasanah team members immediately familiarised themselves with Online apps and began experimenting with new tools and techniques. By the last week of April, **5 teams** were able to start with **21 children**. Sadly, this represents *just ONE third* of the targeted **63 children**. After schools re-opened in July, **2 more teams** were able to pick up on teaching sessions. With **7 teams** working, either Online or Face-to-Face, we have been able to reach **50 children** in **7 schools**.

In recognition of the disruptions due to school closures and SOPs that stopped non-school staff from entering the school premisses, Yayasan Hasanah conducted a mitigation review in November 2020 and approved a No-Cost Extension of the project to March 2021.

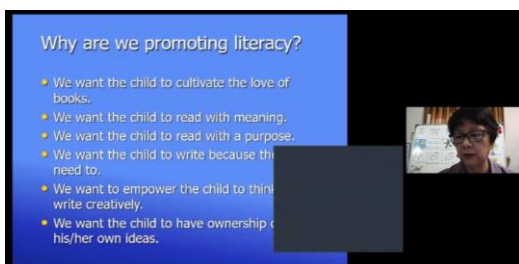
Thus, Focus on Literacy Outreach 2020 had continued seamlessly into January 2021 with Online teaching sessions for 23 children. Even after Yaysan Hasanah Project officially ends in March 2021, BOLD will continue teaching the children until they have reached the necessary reading level for them to cope with mainstream classes if their families are able to continue with the Online teaching schedules.

Clearly, in comparison to previous years, there had been a drastic reduction in the number of programs we were able to run and the number of children we were able to serve. But our staff and team members had worked very hard to respond to the new challenges and it is a credit to their dedication and commitment that we had been able to do this much in a year of uncertainty with repeated lockdowns and all kinds of new pressures.



TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

In this exceptional year, there were opportunities for BOLD staff and team members to learn new skills as there were many Webinars featuring international experts from different parts of the world. The NECIC organized a whole series of webinars when they launched the Teletherapy project in April and Yayasan Hasanah also offered learning opportunities for NGOs including the “Change Makers” Webinar series. BOLD focused on in-house training and upskilling of staff and team members to respond to the “New Normal”. February was



dedicated to 11 training workshops to equip a pool of new team members to carry out the Yayasan Hasanah Project. Another series of workshops was held in April to assist team members adapt what they had learnt to go Online. From May to August, three Refresher training courses were organized for team members plus a special session on Early Literacy and Language offered by Chia Kien Eng, our Committee member. All FOL team members

