

TEDx

Bencoolen St **Youth**

programme booklet.



Singapore Management University
Administration Building

22 March (Sat)
2pm - 8.30pm

Event Schedule

Time	Activity
1330 - 1415	Registration
	Movement to Venue
1415 - 1430	Opening Ceremony
1430 - 1530	Speaker 1 - Mrs Alya Annabi
	Speaker 2 - Mr Jack Sim
	Speaker 3 - Mr Kei Koga
1530 - 1550	Intermission
1550 - 1650	Speaker 4 - Mr Wesley Ng
	Speaker 5 - Ms Ng Ray Yen
	Speaker 6 - Ms Ilika Motani
1650 - 1710	Intermission
1710 - 1830	Speaker 7 - Mr Vareck Ng
	Speaker 8 - Mr Theophilus Kwek
	Speaker 9 - Mr Alexander Tsai
	Speaker 10 - Mr Jovann Loh
1830 - 1930	Closing Ceremony
1930 - 2030	Event Performances & Networking Session

About TED

TED is a global foundation devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. It started out in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design. Since then, its scope has become ever broader. With its two annual conferences, video website TED.com, initiatives and community projects, TED is now a platform and a global movement focused on meaningful change through the power of ideas.

About TEDx

In the spirit of discovering and spreading ideas, TED has created a program called TEDx. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events, including ours, are self-organized.

TEDx was created in the spirit of TED's mission, Ideas Worth Spreading. The program is designed to give communities, organizations and individuals the opportunity to stimulate dialogue through TED-like experiences at the local level. At TEDx events, live presenters share innovations and ideas, seeking to spark deep conversation and connections. **TEDx events are fully planned and coordinated independently, on a community-by-community basis.**

TEDx Organizers are not hosting events for political reasons, monetary reward or personal gain. **They are doing so because they truly believe in the power of ideas to change the world.** TEDx events are open source, local and community-driven events that inspire innovation, thought leadership and visionary insight.

Our Theme

TEDx Bencoolen St Youth is a dynamic, youth-led initiative designed to inspire and empower young minds. Centered around the theme

"Muse: A Period of Reflection / A Source of Inspiration",

the event explores how introspection and inspiration shape perspectives and drive meaningful action.

It invites attendees to pause, reflect, and uncover the transformative power of quiet moments — not only for personal growth but for fostering connections and impact within the wider community.

Through compelling talks, engaging discussions, and creative activities, this event seeks to connect with youth by addressing their aspirations, challenges, and role in shaping Singapore's future. By showcasing innovative ideas from diverse voices, TEDx Bencoolen St Youth aims to foster a culture of curiosity, inspire change, and provide a vibrant platform for young people to share, learn, and grow together.

Speakers

Mr Yip Hon Weng

Guest of Honour

Member of Parliament for Yio Chu Kang Single Member Constituency



Yip Hon Weng is a first-term Member of Parliament for Yio Chu Kang SMC, with a distinguished career in the Singapore Administrative Service. He has held senior roles in key ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, Health, Defence, and National Development, where he led transformative initiatives like the Municipal Services Office to enhance community services. As the founding director of the Ageing Planning Office and head of the Silver Generation Office, Hon Weng championed seniors' issues, overseeing nationwide outreach programs that impacted over 500,000 Singaporeans.

Now a Director at Temasek, he leads human capital strategies and previously drove investments in deep technology to bolster Singapore's economic growth. Renowned for bridging high-level policy with on-the-ground implementation, Hon Weng is committed to serving the community. A graduate of prestigious institutions including MIT, Harvard, NUS, NTU, and UK universities, he holds degrees in advanced mathematics, financial engineering, and public administration, reflecting his diverse expertise and leadership. He is married with 5 children.

Speakers

Mr Yip Hon Weng

Guest of Honour

Member of Parliament for Yio Chu Kang Single Member Constituency

The Power of Resilience: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

In reflecting on his journey, Yip Hon Weng recognizes that the true power of resilience lies not in merely enduring hardship, but in transforming it into a stepping stone for growth. His experiences as a young person—grappling with academic pressures, societal expectations, and moments of self-doubt—taught him that resilience is not just a passive trait. It is the capacity to adapt, learn, and emerge stronger from life's challenges. This ability to turn obstacles into opportunities became the very foundation of his success.

Yip believes that failure is not the end, but rather a crucial teacher along the way. He recalls key moments where setbacks forced him to innovate, rethink, and discover parts of himself he hadn't known before. These failures ultimately propelled him forward, guiding him to where he is today as a Member of Parliament. Through his journey, he has also come to understand that resilience cannot be built in isolation. It's the unwavering support of family, mentors, and peers that nurtures the emotional and psychological strength needed to face an ever-changing world.

In sharing his story, Yip hopes to encourage young people to reframe their understanding of challenges. By embracing resilience not just as a skill but as a mindset, they can unlock their potential and navigate uncertainty with confidence. For Yip, resilience is not only something that shapes an individual but also something that shapes communities—empowering people to rise above, contribute meaningfully, and create a future of collective progress.

Speakers

How Hanging My Laundry Changed My Life

Mrs Alya Annabi

Entrepreneur | Founder of GreenPush



Alya is a multi-passionate entrepreneur working at the intersection of sustainability and personal growth. She founded GreenPush to help companies raise sustainability awareness in a fun and engaging way. Following her passion for personal growth, she founded Positive Push to empower women to take action on their vision & goals.

An Earthshot Prize Official Nominator and Ambassador for Unstoppable, Alya is also a dynamic public speaker and community builder. Her mission is simple: to inspire action and create spaces where individuals can grow, connect, and make meaningful change happen.

Speakers

How Hanging My Laundry Changed My Life

Mrs Alya Annabi

Entrepreneur | Founder of GreenPush

Hanging laundry seems ordinary.
But what if an ordinary moment could
turn into an extraordinary one?

Alya Annabi shares how a simple act of slowing down helped her recognise the misalignment between her job and her true aspirations.

In her talk, Alya explores the power of reconnecting with nature to reconnect with oneself. She invites the audience to step away from digital distractions, embrace uncertainty, and find clarity in the most unexpected moments. Because sometimes, the path forward isn't about having all the answers, it's about having the courage to take the first step.

Speakers

How to Survive the Anti-Jobs Future

Mr Jack Sim

Founder of the World Toilet Organization



Widely known as Mr Toilet, Jack Sim broke the global taboo around toilets and sanitation. He founded the World Toilet Organization (WTO), a global non-profit working towards a world with clean, safe toilets and sanitation for everyone, everywhere, at all times. Born in a slum in Singapore in 1957, he learned entrepreneurship and gumption from his uneducated mother who started a series of small businesses. He was also inspired by the gumption of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and grew up watching the amazing transformation of his country from third world to first.

From school failure, he became a serial commercial businessman (sixteen businesses). After attaining financial independence he left the rat-race to become a serial social entrepreneur. After fighting the bureaucrats, he enrolled at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and graduated with a Master's in Public Administration at the age of 56. He also graduated at Singularity University's Global Solutions Program at age fifty-nine. Some of the awards he won are: Schwab Fellow of the World Economic Forum, Ashoka Global Fellow, Queen Elizabeth's Points of Light Award, Clinton Global Initiatives Fellow, Time Magazine's Heroes of the Environment for 2008. For his contribution to humanity, he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow UK in 2022.

Speakers

How to Survive the Anti-Jobs Future

Mr Jack Sim

Founder of the World Toilet Organization

For centuries, knowledge was power. The arbitrage between those who know and those who don't, would determine their destiny.

Education is an opportunity for people to move up the prosperity ladder. But our current rote learning mode is becoming relatively obsolete in the era of AI, AGI and eventually, BCI (brain-computer integration).

When I was given a 10 weeks scholarship at the Singularity University at NASA in 2016, I was shocked that all the emerging 200 new technologies were anti-jobs.

Since humans can't become better robots, our only chance of survival is to be better humans to prevail over the robots.

Come and listen to how Gumption is now the most essential survival skills that our school did not teach you.

Speakers

The Future of Global Leadership in a Multipolar World

Mr Kei Koga

Associate Professor for Public Policy and Global Affairs, NTU



Kei Koga is Associate Professor at the Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Concurrently, he is a Nonresident Fellow at The National Bureau of Asia Research (NBR), the United States, and a member of RIPS Research Committee, the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS), Japan.

His research focuses on International Security, International/Regional Institutions (particularly ASEAN), and East Asian/Indo-Pacific security.

Speakers

The Future of Global Leadership in a Multipolar World

Mr Kei Koga

Associate Professor for Public Policy and Global Affairs, NTU

In today's multipolar world, leadership faces the temptation of populism, offering simple solutions that often neglect long-term consequences.

Power politics matters to maintain stability, but divisions within and between nation-states threaten global stability, underscoring the need for unity. Engaging in blame games hampers progress; instead, leaders should focus on constructive engagement and dialogue.

By clearly articulating choices and aligning words with actions, leaders can foster trust and guide societies toward sustainable futures.

Speakers

Reclaiming Wonder: The Power of Childlike Curiosity

Mr Wesley Ng

Student | Global Community Builder



Wesley Ng is an incoming undergraduate and current national serviceman who works extensively with children in multiple roles. As a Global Community Builder and student volunteer at Junior Achievement Singapore, he teaches financial literacy to children, while also leading Cake From The Hearts—a non-profit organization he founded to celebrate the birthdays of underprivileged children.

Through these experiences, Wesley has observed firsthand the natural curiosity, creativity, and fearlessness that children possess—qualities that adults often lose as they age. His mission is to help others recognize and reclaim these valuable childhood traits, applying them to overcome modern adult challenges and rediscover the things that made life extraordinary.

Speakers

Reclaiming Wonder: The Power of Childlike Curiosity

Mr Wesley Ng

Student | Global Community Builder

As we age, we lose our innate ability to question why and challenge assumptions, replacing wonder with indifference and fearless curiosity with social anxiety. Using age seven as a touchpoint - a time when we were old enough to explore yet young enough to marvel at everything - this speech explores the transformative power of childlike curiosity.

We'll examine how two major factors erode our curiosity: the numbing routine of daily life and the fear of judgment in social interactions. Wesley shares his month-long experiment of living like his seven-year-old self, which transformed not just individual interactions but his entire worldview - from striking up conversations with strangers to rediscovering his fascination with constellations.

The speech weaves together compelling neuroscience research - showing how curiosity triggers dopamine release, enhances memory formation, and even correlates with longevity with practical, time-bound strategies anyone can implement. These include the "First Time" technique for daily activities, a "Seven-Year-Old Timer" for social situations, and the "Why" journal for cultivating daily curiosity.

Drawing the crucial distinction between being childish and being childlike, he showcases how great innovators like Einstein and Marie Curie succeeded because of their childlike wonder. In our AI-driven era, where machines can answer any question, human curiosity becomes more valuable than ever. While AI can provide answers, it takes human curiosity to question assumption and imagine new possibilities - making our childlike wonder not just personally fulfilling, but essential for addressing humanity's complex challenges.

Speakers

So like, what are we? — On self-labels

Ms Ng Ray Yen

Student | Community Advocate



When Ray Yen is not thinking about coffee, she is probably already drinking it. In the little time she has left, she is a Y4 triple science + geography student from RGS Debate who cannot do chemistry to save her life. As someone whose entire personality is mostly about her dogs, she will do her best to talk about something else for once. She looks forward to seeing you there at TEDx Bencoolen St Youth!

Speakers

So like, what are we? — On self-labels

Ms Ng Ray Yen

Student | Community Advocate

The average person probably cannot catalogue themselves into a neat mental box and shelve themselves underneath some Dewey Decimal-esque label, but for some reason we still try our best to do so anyway.

Labeling our identity can be comforting in that it helps us to make sense of the world, to signal how we see ourselves and what we think we should be known as, but it also compels us to cripple our potential. In the end, the average label really only belongs on a grocery store item, not on our sense of self.

Speakers

How I Learned to Figure Skate by Learning to Fall

Ms Ilika Motani

International Figure Skater | Youth Volunteer | Writer



Ilika Motani is a Year 5 (JC1) student at NUS High School. She is passionate about math and science and does volunteer fieldwork in intertidal zones with NParks.

A figure skater on the Singapore National Team, she represents Singapore in international competitions. She is a local writer and her poetry has been published in multiple literature journals. She was the president of her school's English Language Interest Group and is an actor in the Drama Club.

Behind this list of accolades, however, is the most important thing about Ilika: she is not afraid to fail.

Speakers

How I Learned to Figure Skate by Learning to Fall

Ms Ilika Motani

International Figure Skater | Youth Volunteer | Writer

Despite seeming antithetical to figure skating, the first skill taught in beginner skating classes is how to fall.

**Why, then, is failure
not a skill taught to us from young?**

Instead, most children grow up fearing failure, a trait that is detrimental to their future success. In her talk, through her personal experiences with falling and failure in figure skating, Ilika Motani will discuss the why and how of learning to fail.

Speakers

The Future Lies In Our Streets

Mr Vareck Ng

Transit Advocate | Youtuber



Vareck is a safe streets advocate who shares vlogs on YouTube channel “tehsiewdai”.

He volunteers with passionate individuals in Safety for Active Mobility Users, Bike Commute Singapore, and Singapore Youth for Climate Action to set people thinking about clean mobility. Through bike rides, casual chats, and workshops, he hopes to inspire the next generation to follow their hearts and chase their dreams.

Speakers

The Future Lies In Our Streets

Mr Vareck Ng

Transit Advocate | Youtuber

Streets were once places where people met, ate, and lived their lives.

However, development in the past few decades has turned them into loud, dangerous barriers, fragmenting neighborhoods into tiny islands surrounded by rapid rivers.

Through a humanistic approach, transport advocate Vareck Ng hopes to reimagine public spaces for softer and more liveable towns—because streets are the heart of communities and the future of cities.

Speakers

Hard to get – why write poems when no-one understands them?

Mr Theophilus Kwek

Poet | Writer



Theophilus Kwek has published four collections of poetry, two of which were shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize.

In 2023, he was the youngest writer and first Singaporean to be awarded the Cikada Prize by the Swedish Institute, for poetry that “defends the inviolability of life”.

He is also part of the Forbes 30 Under 30 Class of 2024. His next book, Commonwealth, will be published in May 2025.

Speakers

**Hard to get – why write poems
when no-one understands them?**

Mr Theophilus Kwek

Poet | Writer

"Poetry? I don't really get it".

Almost everyone has entertained this thought at some point, and among all other forms of writing, poetry has a good claim to be the least understood. Yet despite it being so baffling to so many, some writers still stubbornly choose to keep writing poetry.

Why on earth would they do that - and what could the answer tell us about the place of poetry in the world today?

Speakers

Conversational AI for Migrant Workers

Mr Alexander Tsai Yih-Rae

Reach Alliance Researcher | Student



Alexander is a second-year student from the College Of Integrative Studies, SMU. His major explores the intersection between computer science and psychology — how AI can drive behavioural change.

As a Reach Alliance researcher, he investigates how conversational AI can enhance financial literacy in migrant workers in Singapore. Outside of the academic realm, he enjoys making floral arrangements and baking.

Speakers

Conversational AI for Migrant Workers

Mr Alexander Tsai Yih-Rae

Reach Alliance Researcher | Student

The surge of interest in LLMs such as ChatGPT or Gemini has prompted the question of their usefulness in cultivating saving habits.

In this talk, we discuss various aspects of LLMs, including personalisation, attitudes towards LLMs, and the efficacy of multi-modal approaches. We ground this in the context of enhancing financial literacy for migrant workers using conversational AI.

Speakers

Uniformity is Overrated: Speak Up

Mr Jovann Loh

Student | Advocate



Jovann is a JC2 student at Eunoia Junior College, which means they've mastered the art of looking busy while procrastinating and surviving on dangerously little sleep. They have no fancy accolades, no groundbreaking research to their name, but they do have an unfortunate habit of going down ideological rabbit holes instead of doing actual work.

Between cramming for exams and questioning their life choices, they've noticed something odd: everyone seems to think they're the hero of history. Every ideology claims to champion freedom, justice, or equality precisely until you disagree with them. This talk isn't about giving you the "right" answers (if they had those, they'd be much richer), but it might make you question just how much of what you believe is actually yours, and how much is just borrowed from the loudest voices around you. And if nothing else, at least it'll be more interesting than another GP lecture.

Speakers

Uniformity is Overrated: Speak Up

Mr Jovann Loh

Student | Advocate

The speaker highlights a paradox: those who preach inclusivity often silence dissent.

In today's hyper-connected world, conformity isn't enforced by law: it's self-imposed, driven by fear of exile. Social media turns expression into performance, where deviation invites punishment, not debate.

This performative conformity is more insidious than traditional oppression. It doesn't just demand obedience, it trains people to anticipate the "right" opinions, shaping beliefs out of fear rather than conviction. The result? An illusion of progress masking intellectual stagnation.

History's greatest minds weren't celebrated for blending in. They shattered consensus. Yet today, we rebuild the cages they fought to break, mistaking ideological purity for true diversity. The speaker seeks to contend that a world without disagreement is a world without growth.

Networking Session

**Connect with speakers
and attendees.**

**Meet Singapore's advocacy
and awareness groups.**

**Tuck into a
scrumptious buffet**

**Whilst being seranaded by our
talented performer **Hao Ran**,**

**And a special poetry recital
by one of our speakers,
Mr Theophilus Kwek, as
well as youth performers
Wu Liangyu and **Liu Kecan****

Organizing Team

Sun Yuxuan – Lead organiser

Wu Yuxuan – Co-organiser

Roderick Foo – Co-organiser/Curator

Zolten Chia – Volunteer Manager

Xavier Koh – Sponsorships and Budget Manager

Javier Tan – Event Manager

Danielle – Video and Production Lead

Mantha Akshara – Website Manager

Xavier Tan – Publicity Director

Anya Mittal – Designer

Philyra Yunyi Soon – Designer

August Pek Yao Lin – Designer

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SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching.

Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative, and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools:

- College of Integrative Studies
- College of Graduate Research Studies
- School of Accountancy
- Lee Kong Chian School of Business
- School of Economics
- School of Computing and Information Systems
- Yong Pung How School of Law
- School of Social Sciences



SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government, and the wider community.



Yeo Hiap Seng (Yeo's) is a local heritage brand that has pioneered innovations in Asian beverages for a century. 100% of Yeo's beverages are Nutri-Grade A or B (below 5% sugar).

Yeo's First Harvest Green Tea is freshly brewed with the first tea leaf buds from Spring for the best aroma and complex flavours. Filled with natural antioxidants goodness for your enjoyment.

Yeo's Immuno Soy Milk is freshly extracted from Canadian soy beans and contains Vitamin B6 & Zinc. Naturally high in protein, cholesterol free, trans fat free, and lactose free—because you really do deserve it all.

I'M KIM KOREAN BBQ



CAPTAIN KIM KOREAN BBQ & HOTPOT

Kingdom Food Group is a growing Food & Beverage (F&B) operator in Singapore with seven restaurants.

Its story began in 2014 when the first outlet at the iconic School of the Arts (SOTA) was opened, with the aim to offer good quality food in friendly restaurant atmospheres at affordable prices for all to enjoy. Buffet prices start from \$15.90++ with more than 60 varieties.

Since its opening in 2014 at School of the Arts (SOTA) building, I'm Kim Korean BBQ has established a reputation of great food quality and affordability, and has become a sizzling hot favourite restaurant, attracting Korean food enthusiasts from all over the world.

IM KIM **KOREAN BBQ**



CAPTAIN KIM **KOREAN BBQ & HOTPOT**

Captain Kim is Kingdom Food Group's first Halal-certified Korean BBQ and Hotpot restaurant with three outlets, located conveniently near the various MRT stations, while being widely popular especially among the Muslim community.

Located at The Centrepoint, GoroGoro Steamboat & Korean Buffet is the first hotpot in Singapore with a Korean twist. It caters to different taste preferences by having seven choices of soup bases to choose from, including Korean's favourite Ginseng, Japanese Collagen Soup, as well as Mala that's well-loved by the Chinese.



Here at The Golden Duck Co. we're all about crafting awesome gourmet snacks worth sharing!

Founded in 2015 and headquartered in Singapore, The Golden Duck (TGD) is largely responsible for the creation of the impossibly umami – and now globally raved about – Salted Egg Yolk snacks.

TGD's snack creations have since been enjoyed by millions of tastebuds from over 20 countries, and new product innovations have led to flavours beyond Salted Egg – all of which continue to delight and surprise snackers around the world!

So friend, if you're up for a snacking adventure you're in good hands.

Step into our world of crazy, gourmet snacks, and see why we're (quite literally) on the tip of everyone's tongues!



Community Health
Assessment Team

Since 2009, CHAT has supported young people aged 16 to 30 with their mental health concerns.

Think of CHAT as Singapore’s “AAA” battery powering youth mental health. Our team of youth support workers, doctors, outreach workers and youth mental health advocates focus on:

- Awareness, promoting mental health literacy and reducing stigma among young people;
- Access, providing crucial mental health interventions and resources; and
- Assessments, offering confidential and personalised mental health checks for those aged 16 to 30.

As a Centre of Excellence for Youth Mental Health, CHAT also advances research and shares best practices to train communities and professionals to support young minds.

In recognition of our leadership in youth mental health and delivery of accessible, high-quality services, CHAT received the National Clinical Excellence Team Award from the Ministry of Health in 2022.



Incorporated in 2012, Foodieland is a specialty food and beverage importer and distributor in Singapore.

We are the official Singapore distributor for several international brands such as Garden (Hong Kong), DyDo (Japan) and Four Seas (Hong Kong). We hope to continue bringing high-quality and unique food products from around the world to our local shores.



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@FoodielandSG



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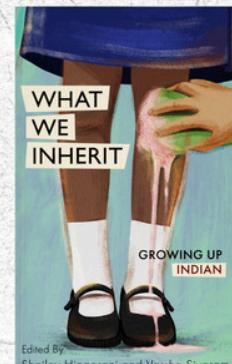
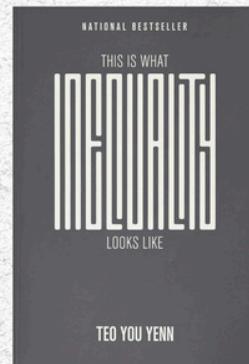
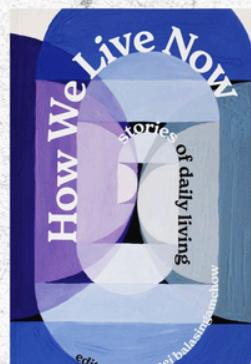
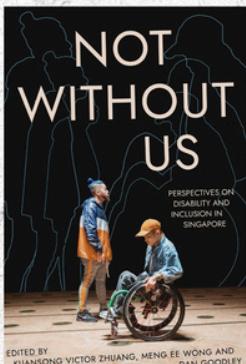
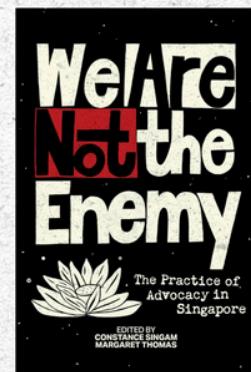
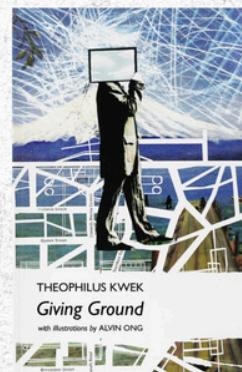
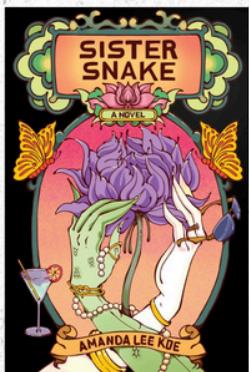
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We are an independent Singapore publisher of literary fiction, non-fiction and poetry, working with volunteers and partners to grow an environment for literature and the arts in Singapore and Southeast Asia.



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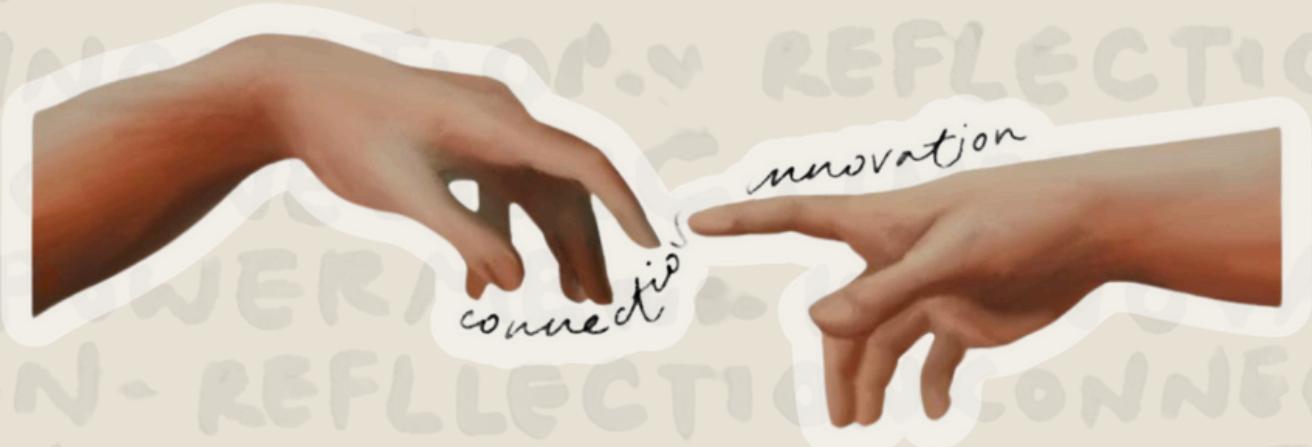
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TEDxBencoolen St Youth.
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