

Building Inclusive Public Libraries in Singapore



By Verena Lee
National Library Board,
Singapore

Where Singapore stands



Enabling Masterplans 1-3



Awareness campaigns

Where Singapore stands



Enabling Village – 1st integrated community space



Inclusive playgrounds



1st inclusive preschool

Where Singapore stands



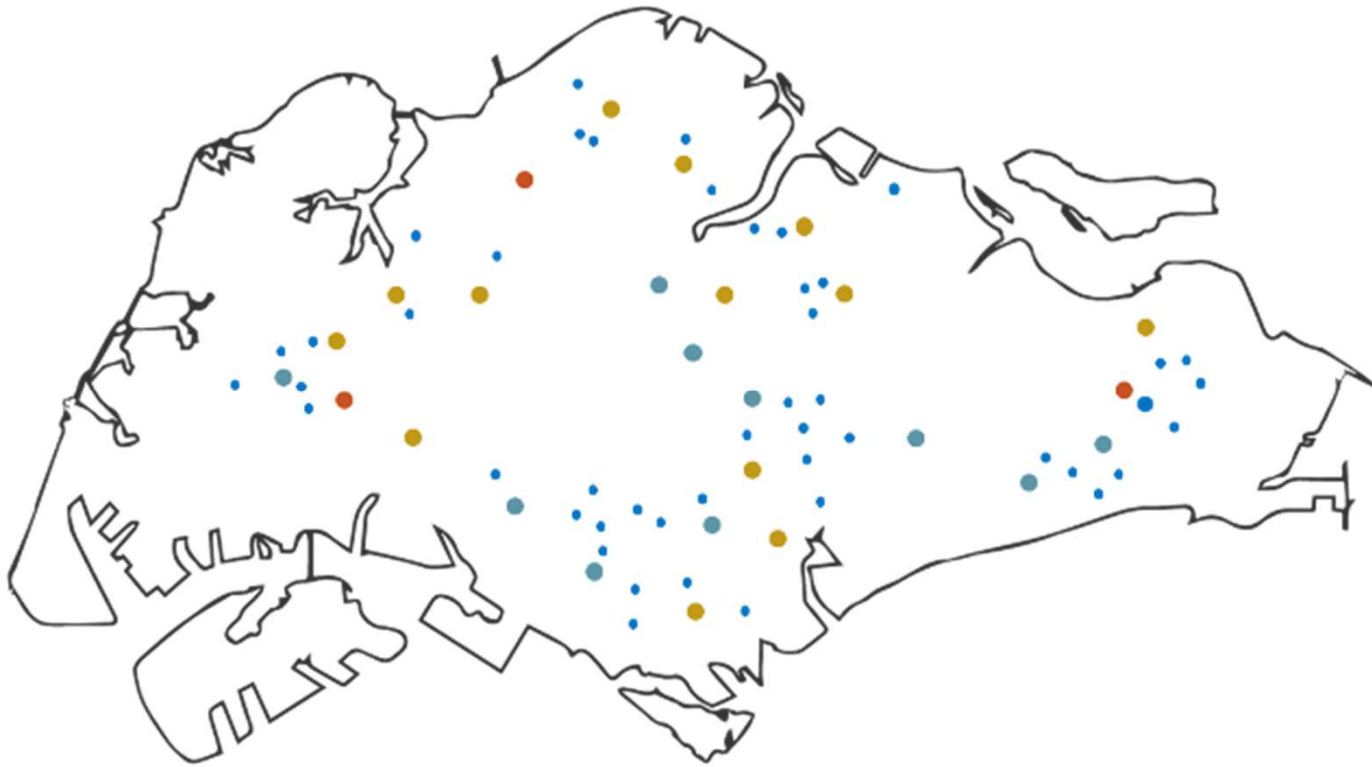
Hands-free fare gates at train stations

- Compulsory education by 2019
- Affordable assistive technology
- Universal design guidelines for buildings
- Wheelchair accessible buses



Inclusive arts programmes

NLB reaches out to young and old



Regional Libraries (3)

Mall Libraries (13)

Standalone Libraries (10)

Community Libraries/Reading Corners (47)

4 out of 5 children enjoy reading more



Parents & educators observed that children are interested in reading



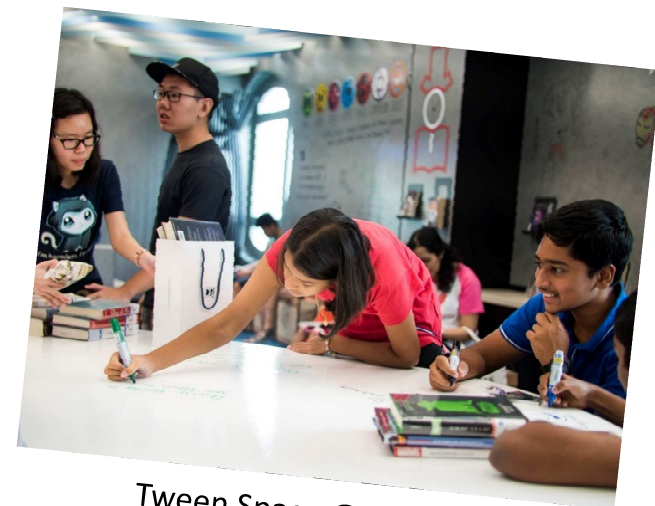
Reach Index up from 50.4% to 53.6%

Libraries Transformed

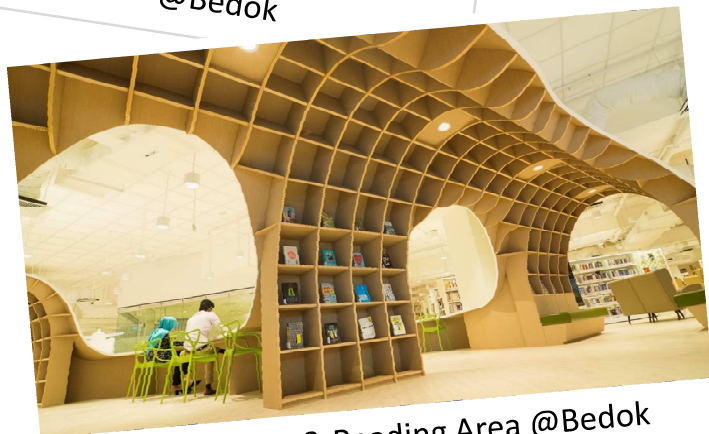
Visitorship doubled and
loans by over 40%



Curated digital display
@Bedok



Tween Space @Sengkang



Teens Study & Reading Area @Bedok



Reading sofas @Tampines



Using colour to help children locate their favourite categories @Bukit Panjang

No one gets left behind – A Journey



Charity Book Donation

New Mobile Library Bus (Big MOLLY bus)

NLB Externship

NLB's Digital Services Centre@Enabling Village

Closed-door sessions for children with special needs

Punggol Regional Library

1998

2008

2010

2015

2021

2004

kidsREAD Programme



2009

Project Deliver Me



2014

Mobile Library Buses (1 Big & 2 Mini MOLLY buses)



2018

Sensory Storytime



WondeRead



Pre-loved books for charities



- For non-profit organisations & social service organisations
- PwDs are invited to choose the books they like
- More than **150,000** books were given to local and overseas organisations

Mobile libraries in the 1960s



Discontinued in the 1990s when more libraries were built in the residential towns

MOLLY, the Mobile Library



For people who find it difficult to travel to the libraries

MOLLY's features



Wheelchair-accessible



Modelled with similar library features



Storytelling by the MOLLY librarian

MOLLY in hot demand

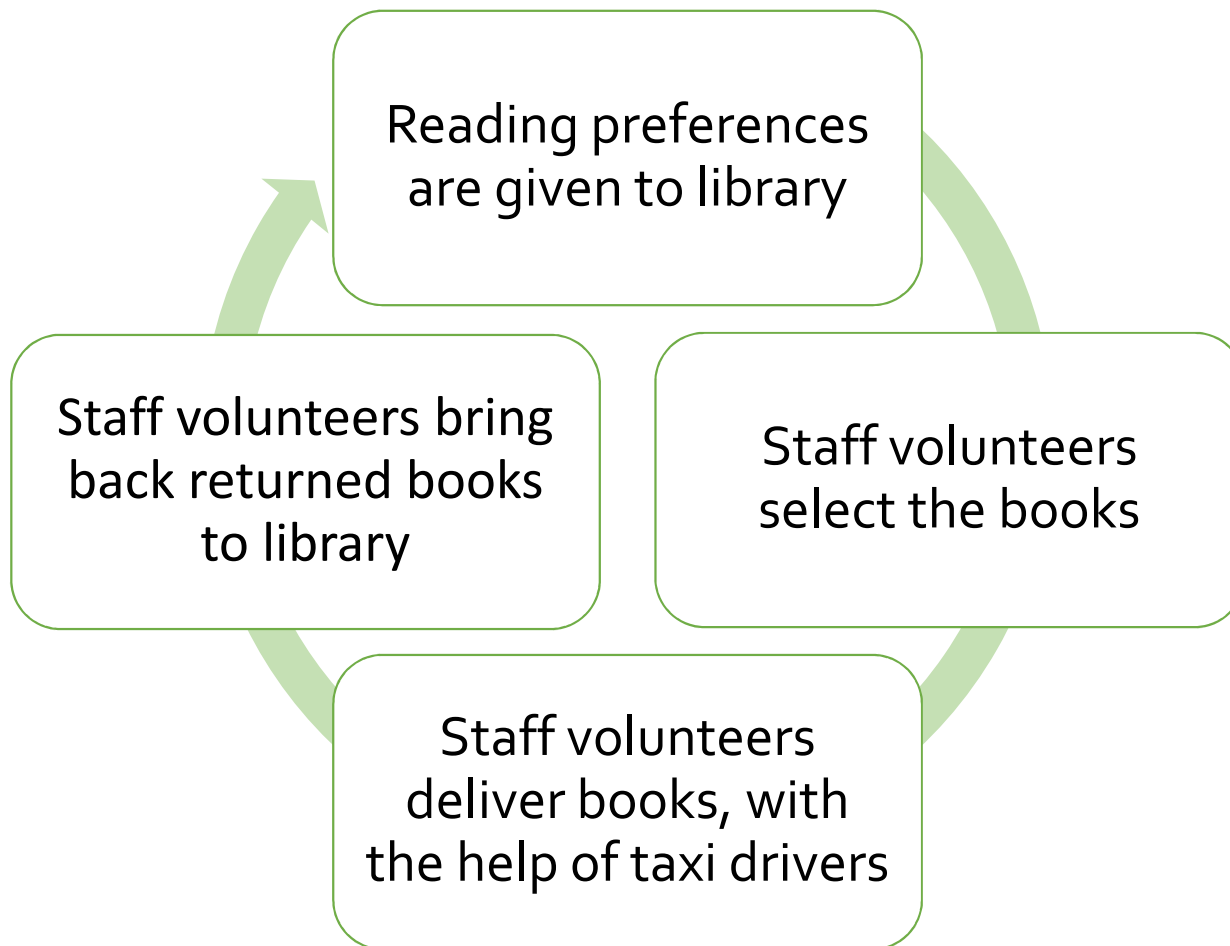


2 more Mini
MOLLYs

Served **518**
institutions

80% of visits are
to special education
schools

Books delivered to the homebound



128

beneficiaries



Volunteering at the libraries

- To become more accustomed to being outside a controlled special needs environment
- Sorting, shelving and shelf-reading of library materials
- To date, **57** PwD are on board



Lifelong Learning Library



library@chinatown



Bukit Panjang Public Library

Ashley, 18, volunteers at Bukit Panjang Public Library



Source: <https://www.sg/en/SingaporeCares/stories/NLB%20Externship%20programme.aspx>

Adults with autism digitise materials



- Every change made in the process has to be carefully thought through and customised to match the individual learning ability.
- To do this, NLB works very closely with job coaches to streamline the processes before they restructure the tasks and provide detailed steps for the clients.

Being employed has created meaning in Joel's life



"I want to work for NLB forever because I love this job. I want to earn money and support my parents when they are old."

- Joel Chua, Quality Checker

Mother wants child to feel welcome

- Desire to bring child with ASD to attend library programmes that are suitable for children with special needs
- First closed-door programme for children with special needs was born

Some planning parameters:

- Distance from train station to library venue
- Programme room that provides privacy
- Observed special education teachers in class

Challenges



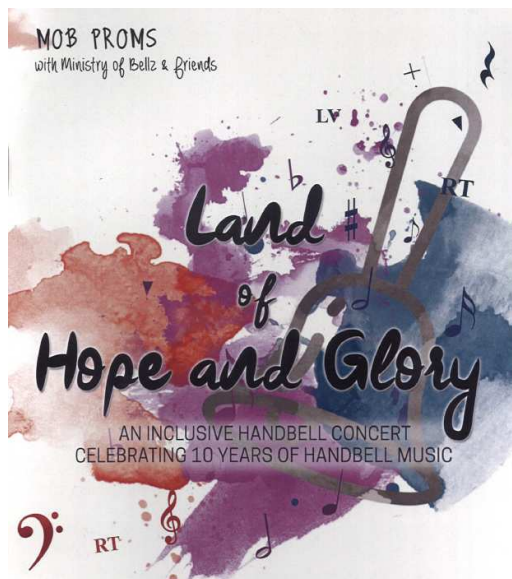
- Lack of public awareness and acceptance of children with special needs
- Librarians didn't know how to handle behaviour of special needs children



“This would give such children a reason to step into the library and an important first step towards making libraries an inclusive public space.”

Ng Bee Lan, parent and founder of Friends of ASD Families Facebook group [2016]

First inclusive programme - Learning from others



Ministry of Bellz – an inclusive handbell concert



An interactive theatrical journey through the National Museum's Singapore History Gallery

First inclusive programme - Learning from others

ALSC Blog
Pursuing excellence for library service to children

Child Advocacy

Programming for Children with Special Needs, Part One

June 23, 2009 | Guest Contributor

by Tricia Bohanon Twarogowski

With budgetary and staffing issues currently facing libraries, children's programming managers and staff may wonder, "Why begin a new storytime program for children with special needs



Jbrary YouTube channel



Pinterest

ALSC Blog

Sensory Storytime – additional measures

Synopsis to manage parents' expectations

Join us for a special story time tailored to engage the different senses. This programme is **designed for children with special needs**. Families with typically developing children aged 4 to 6 years old are also welcome. Each registration is a parent-child pair.

Request for information on child's needs via e-mail

Thank you for signing up for Sensory Story Time. As this is a programme designed for children with special needs, we like to learn more about your child so that we can ensure the programme can be adapted to suit your child. Please fill up the following fields and email it to me.

- 1) Parent's name:
- 2) Child's name:
- 3) Child's age:
- 4) Does your child have an additional need? Yes/No
- 5) If your child has an additional need, what need does he/she have? *[This information will be shared anonymously to the librarian who is conducting the programme to tailor the programme]*
- 6) Other comments/info on your child that will be useful for us in preparation for the programme:

Thank you!

Sensory Storytime – Social story

Sensory Story Time

Date: 3 March 2018
Day: Saturday
Time: 2-2.30pm
**Room will be opened at 1.45pm*
Venue: Geylang East Public Library,
Activity Room (Level 1)

I will be going to Geylang East Public Library with my parents to participate in a programme called, "Sensory Story Time."



This is the entrance of the library.
I will walk straight and turn right.
There is a Customer Service Counter on my right.



After I turn right, I will walk past a book display and turn left.



After I turn left, I will see a brown door to my left.
This is the Activity Room where I will take part in
"Sensory Story Time."



When I push open the door, I will see this room.



Sensory Storytime – additional measures

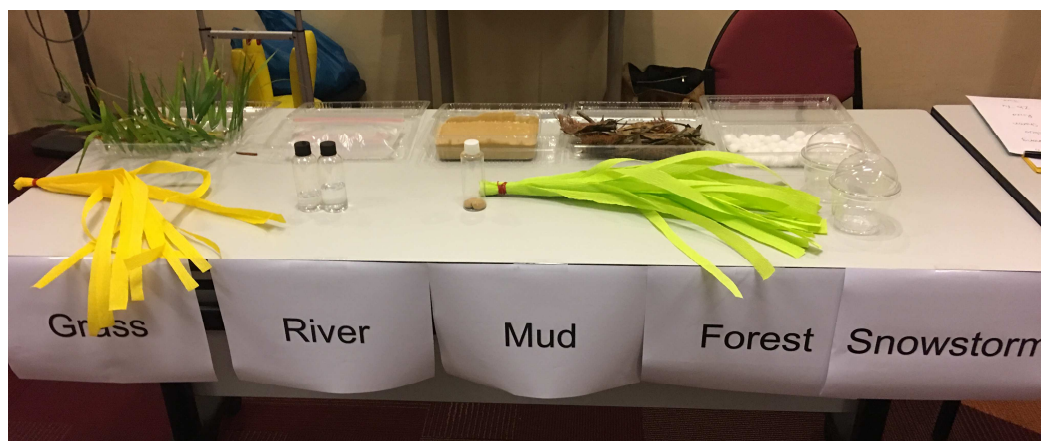


Schedule board



Sensory props included – scarves & egg shakers

Sensory Storytime – additional measures



Materials to engage the senses



Thumbs Up!

“Thanks so much for the social story you prepared. it's **really helpful for my son to prepare himself** before he goes there. Hope he will enjoy on that day.”

– Serene, parent of child with ADHD

Sensory Story Time had **all the right "ingredients" as a sensory friendly session...**

Due credit must be given to the team of unsung heroes from the National Library Board, Singapore (NLB) who have been quietly working on this since they first started something at Bishan Library for the autism group three years ago. Thank you for the strides you have taken. **We love the enhanced version** and are thrilled to know that you have more* in store for us!

– Ng Bee Lan, parent and founder of Friends of ASD Families Facebook group

Boy with ASD is able to settle down at subsequent sessions, and enjoyed singing the familiar songs



Sensory Storytime – immersive style



5
sessions

173
participants

71
families

Punggol Regional Library



- Providing ease of accessibility to get to and navigate within public libraries,
- Universally designed infrastructure and facilities
- Customised services for PwD

We couldn't have done it without you

