

SEAB-link



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Image courtesy of MOE

Dear Readers,

The global COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the way we work, live and play. SEAB was not spared from its impact.

This issue will feature how we have responded to the challenges brought about by the pandemic to ensure that our business continues as usual.

A number of major events took place during the past six months, under the shadow of the pandemic. Fortunately, the affordances of technology allowed us to overcome some of the challenges.

One such event was the release of the 2019 GCE A-Level results in February this year. With the growing concerns over the spread of the virus and lockdowns imposed by other countries, some candidates were stranded overseas and were not able to return to Singapore to collect their results. To facilitate the candidates' applications to institutes of higher learning, we took the initiative to release the results to candidates electronically, and provided them with digitised certificates. The details can be found on page 3.

The implementation of the circuit breaker measures and full Home-Based Learning (HBL) had also affected the conduct of the national examinations, such as Coursework and the Mid-Year Mother Tongue Language (MTL) examinations. With the

removal of the Common Last Topics (CLTs) from the teaching syllabuses, the exam syllabuses had to be aligned to these changes. In an article on page 8, we will share how these issues were managed within a short period of time.

We also took a bold step to decentralise the distribution of question papers. For the very first time, the collection of question papers by Presiding Examiners (PEs) was decentralised to seven venues – SEAB and six schools. This initiative received positive feedback as it reduced the travelling time for the Presiding Examiners and avoided the congregation of key examination personnel in a single venue. Read the article titled "Implementation of Zonal Hubs for Question Paper Distribution" to find out more.

The current situation requires all of us to make adjustments to our lives. Our people have displayed grit, resilience and innovation during these difficult times and many have gone beyond the call of duty. Let us stay safe and continue to stay strong in overcoming the challenges ahead! #SGUnited

Meng Lee,
On behalf of the SEAB-link Editorial Team

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Release of the 2019 GCE A-Level Examination Results

The GCE A-Level examination results release is one of the milestones that many students look forward to, as the results are generally used to progress to the next stage of their education. The 2019 GCE A-Level examination results that were scheduled to be released on 21 February 2020 was no different, except that the results release took place amidst the evolving COVID-19 global situation.

Traditionally, school candidates would return to their respective schools to collect their results on the day of the results release. This arrangement provided an opportunity for students and teachers to come together to celebrate students' achievements as well as for students to thank their teachers for their support during the national examinations. Where needed, the teachers could also support the students with appropriate, timely counselling and advice on the options for their next level of study.

Cross-agency collaboration to ensure timely release of results

As a result of travel restriction, some school candidates who were overseas were unable to return to Singapore in time to collect their results personally from their schools. Furthermore, the safety of the school personnel and school candidates were of a concern when large groups gathered on the day of results release. Hence, the COVID-19 situation posed some challenges for SEAB in ensuring that candidates were able to receive their results and facilitating their application for admission to the next educational institution.

To allay the concerns of candidates who were unable to receive their results in person, we enhanced the results release system, which was used by private candidates to access their results and extended it to school candidates. School candidates were given access to the system to view their results by using either their SingPass (for candidates who are Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents) or a system-generated PIN (for International Students).

Singapore Government Agency Website

Internet Examination Results Release System

2019 Examination Results

Name	: JAMIE	Exam Year	: 2019
IC No	: G1234567U	Exam Level	: GCE A-LEVEL
Ex No	: 88888890	Citizenship Type	: International Students

Appeal of results, please click on "Appeal" button. (The appeal fee for each H1/AO level subject is \$0.02, each H2/A level subject is \$0.01 .)

Subject Name	Subject Code	Alpha Grade	Numerical Grade
Mathematics	0001	C	Six

Back Print Appeal

Printed directly from this panel are not certified true copies.
Results which are taken under Access Arrangements are annotated with # (Exemption Symbol) and + (Access Arrangement Symbol).

Screenshot of SEAB's results release system. Results are for illustration purposes only.

We collaborated with the SkillsFuture office to facilitate the download of candidates' examination certificates digitally from the SkillsFuture Portal. The availability of the digital certificates helped to facilitate candidates' applications for overseas universities. We also worked closely with MOE and the local universities to facilitate the candidates' application for university courses without the need to submit hardcopy result slips.

Timely communication to stakeholders

To ensure the smooth release of the examination results on 21 February 2020, an engagement session with School Leaders of the Junior Colleges and Millenia Institute was held before the results release to share with them the procedures on the release of results to their candidates and gather their feedback on the approach.

With the strong partnership and collaboration with our key stakeholders, the 2019 GCE A-Level examination results were successfully released to all candidates as scheduled on 21 February 2020.

Conduct of the Supplementary Admission Exercise for International Students During COVID-19

The Admissions Exercise for International Students (AEIS) is a centralised admissions exercise conducted by MOE for international students who wish to join Singapore's mainstream primary and secondary schools. SEAB supports MOE in the conduct of the exercise annually.

This year, the Admissions Exercise for International Students was successfully administered to about 1,400 candidates at the Singapore Expo Convention and Exhibition Centre from 19 to 21 February 2020. Amidst the COVID-19 situation, it was imperative that safe management measures were put in place to safeguard the well-being and safety of the test candidates and test administration personnel. Hence, SEAB took reference from the measures required by the Ministry of Health and implemented them.

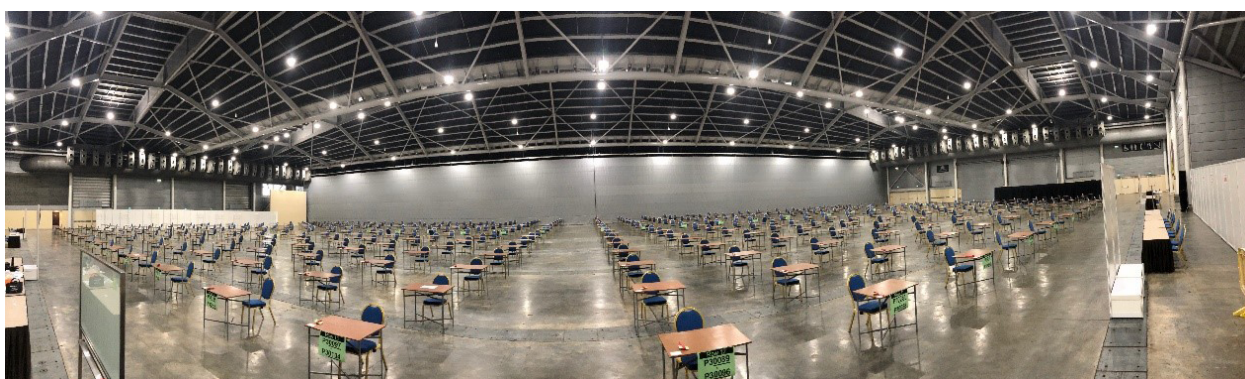
Prior to the test, MOE and SEAB had issued an advisory on the measures to contain COVID-19 to all candidates and their parents/guardians for compliance. The advisory declared entry restrictions for candidates from the Hubei



Province and a mandatory 14 days self-quarantine period for those from affected regions in China. With the implementation of entry restrictions at Singapore's immigration checkpoints, only those already in Singapore and had submitted the compulsory travel declarations for checks, were allowed to sit for the tests.

The nation-wide DORSCON level had elevated to 'Orange' on 7 February 2020. On the test days, temperature checks were conducted. Safe-distancing measures were put in place, such as zoning the candidates by test groups to prevent cross mingling as well as wipe down. All candidates were seated two metres apart from one another. Any candidate or their accompanying parents/guardians, who had a temperature of more than 38 degrees Celsius or exhibited flu-like symptoms, were barred from entering the test venues. Similarly, any candidate who exhibited flu-like symptoms during the tests were immediately given a mask and isolated before their parents/guardians took them home.

With the measures in place, the supplementary AEIS was conducted safely and successfully.

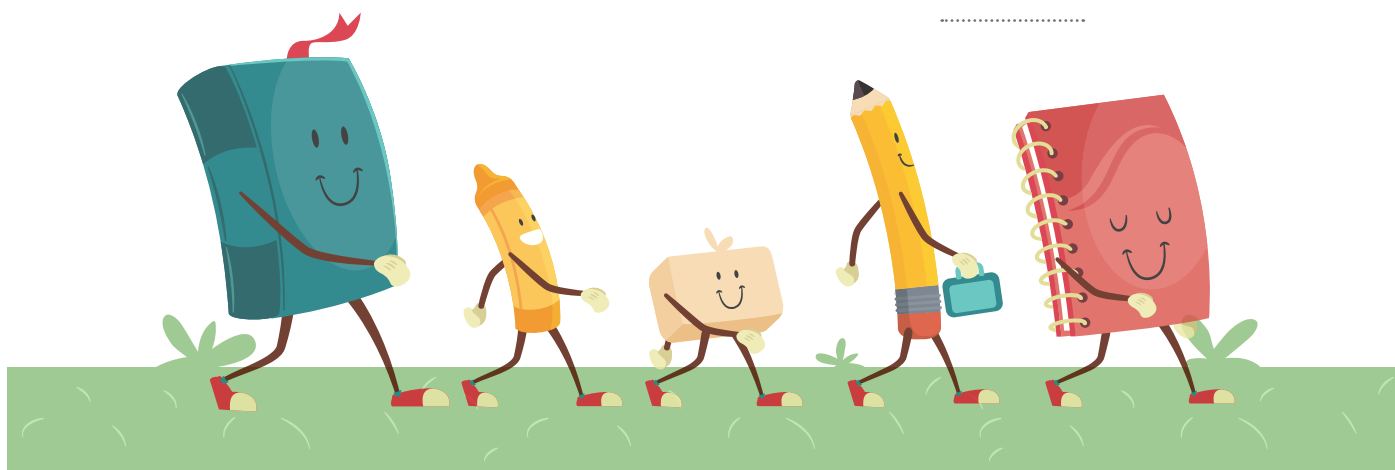


Layout of the seating arrangement within Singapore EXPO: Candidates were sitted two meters apart from one another.

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Temperature screening for all entrants to the test venues

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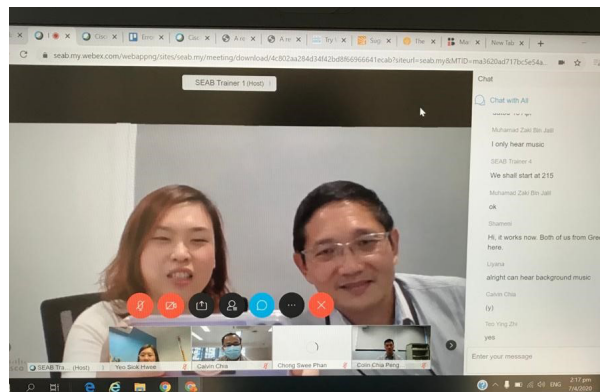
Moving face-to-face training to online platforms through the use of technology

During the Circuit Breaker period, all non-essential professional development (PD) were deferred and any essential PD would have to be conducted online to ensure the safety of teachers and our staff. The Primary 4 Subject-Based Banding (P4SBB) workshop is one such example of essential PD.

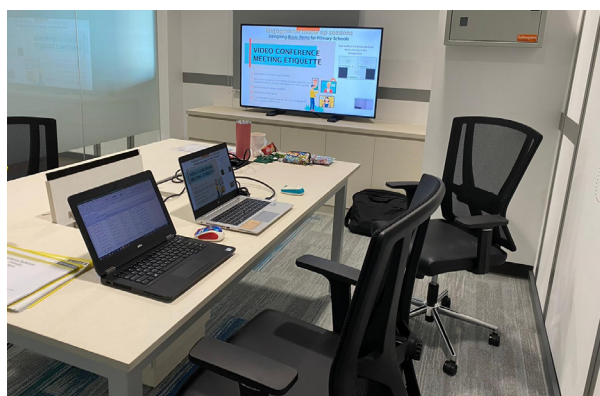
As the delivery of the course content and learner's experience over a video-conferencing tool would differ vastly from those of a traditional face-to-face workshop, our trainers had to adapt all the workshop materials within short notice to effectively engage the participants online. New online group activities were developed and the trainers used different methods and online engagement tools to deliver the content and elicit responses from the participants. The trainers took the challenges in stride when confronted with the new challenges to make online delivery of the workshops possible.

To boost the effectiveness and efficiency of conducting the workshops using Cisco Webex, the training-related resources for both the trainers and the participants were curated. From April to June 2020, a total of 36 P4SBB workshops were conducted by 15 trainers to about 1,150 teachers. We received positive feedback from the teachers. They applauded this mode of training with much appreciation during this tumultuous period to keep them updated with the skills and knowledge needed to set and vet the Primary 4 End of Year papers. Overall, it was a great learning experience for us as we worked as a team to rise above the challenges.

Following the success of the online workshops, we would continue to enhance this mode of training and share more online asynchronous learning resources with teachers via our new training administration and learning management system, ShareLearn.



Ms Joy Tay and Mr Tan Lee Sze, from the Assessment Planning and Development Division, conducting training via the Cisco Webex platform



Setup of the meeting room to provide a conducive environment for trainers to conduct their online training, with minimum disturbance



A screenshot of the participants via the Cisco Webex platform.

COVID-19: Conduct of National Examinations

To curb the escalating COVID-19 situation locally, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce imposed a circuit breaker period with a stringent set of safe-distancing and management measures that took effect from 7 April 2020. In this article, we share some of our work behind-the-scenes to ensure that national examinations are conducted fairly to provide valid assessments for all candidates.

Challenges faced with the implementation of Circuit Breaker Measures and Full Home Based Learning (HBL)

The implementation of the full HBL had significantly impacted students' progress for their coursework, most of which cannot be done at home due to the need for face-to-face teacher supervision and access to special equipment or facilities – studios for Music, and Design and Technology, food laboratories for Food and Nutrition, and sports equipment and facilities for Exercise and Sports Science. At the same time, the pressure was mounting on SEAB as we had received queries from teachers and students who were anxious about the impact of the pandemic on coursework progress.

With the extension of the Circuit Breaker period and the subsequent adjustment of the academic calendar, the conduct of the Mid-Year Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Written and Listening Comprehension examinations also required rescheduling. In addition, we needed to quickly update the changes to the examination syllabuses with the removal of the Common Last Topics (CLTs).

Other challenges included the review of the briefing and training schedules and mode of training for examination personnel for the marking exercises, and the series of practice and familiarisation sessions on e-Examinations for the 2020 national examinations. Precautionary measures also needed to be put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of candidates and exam personnel who would be involved in the examinations and marking exercises.

Within SEAB, we had to grapple with the new normal brought about by split teams and telecommuting arrangements that were activated at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in February 2020 as part of SEAB's business continuity plans.

With the impending need to communicate the national examination timetables to candidates and schools, swift actions were taken to put in place safe management measures to ensure the safety and well-being of candidates as well as the smooth conduct of the 2020 national examinations.

#SGUnited, #SEABUnited

For example, various divisions within SEAB had worked closely together and swiftly sprang into action to map out the contingency plans, and strategies for coursework in anticipation of the different scenarios such as candidates who would be on Leave of Absence or Stay Home Notice, and the possibility of prolonged school closure for periods of up to 2 weeks, 4 weeks and even 6 weeks. The teams had to work within a very tight timeframe and many rounds of discussions were done via messaging applications and video conferencing due to the telecommuting arrangements.

We were also thankful of the well-established partnership and strong coordination efforts with teachers, MOE Divisions and Cambridge International, who were responsive and had provided helpful inputs on the adjustments made to the coursework components and decentralisation of the final examinations for the GCE A-Level H3 subjects taught by autonomous universities. With their tireless efforts, we were able to quickly implement the changes for these examinations.

Adjustments to the 2020 National Examinations

Several changes were made to the 2020 national examinations due to the circuit breaker measures as well as the need to safeguard the safety and health of candidates and examination personnel.

Some of these changes included:

Adjustments to Assessment of Coursework

SEAB would apply three methods to ensure that the assessment of coursework remained fair and accurate:

- (i) Extending national submission deadline, where possible, taking into consideration the recovery of curriculum time due to cancellation of schools' mid-year examinations, and overlap with schools' preliminary examinations and national examinations;
- (ii) Adjusting task requirements, for example, reducing the number of assessment tasks, where appropriate and without compromising on the validity of assessment; and
- (iii) Accepting evidence of learning from the schools and applying special consideration in grading the candidates in these coursework subjects.

Removal of CLTs from National Examinations

The CLTs were removed to allay students' concerns and anxiety about catching up with the curriculum.

In line with the removal of the CLTs in the teaching syllabuses, questions which assess the CLTs would be removed from the year-end national examinations. The examination syllabuses of the subjects with CLTs removed had been updated and teachers and students would be able to access SEAB's website for more information. Details were also communicated to schools and candidates.

Reschedule of examinations due to Circuit Breaker

The national examinations for the A-Level H3 subjects taught by local autonomous universities were rescheduled to take place in end May instead of end April and mid-May.

The GCE O- and A-Level Mid-Year MTL written examinations were also postponed to 18 and 19 June 2020, while the GCE O- and A-Level MTL and MTL 'B' Listening Comprehension examinations were rescheduled to 27 July 2020.

Implementing Safe Management Measures for National Examinations

To ensure the safety and well-being of students, teacher-invigilators and staff, safe management measures for the conduct of national examinations had been put in place.

These include:

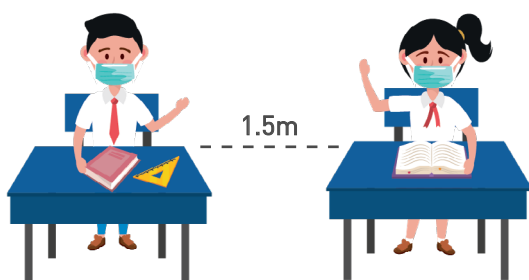
Wearing of face masks



Temperature screening and travel history and health declaration



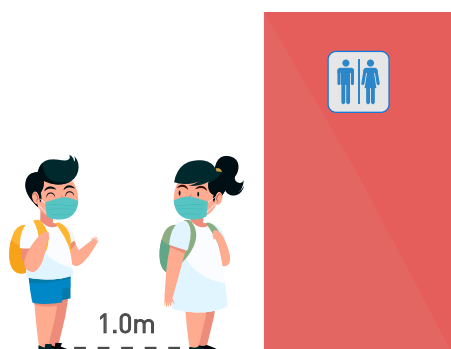
Sitting students at least 1.5 metres apart from one another



Putting a maximum of 30 candidates in each classroom or zoning when using the hall as examination venue



Assigning designated washrooms for groups of students and for them to visit the washrooms in small batches, in order to avoid intermingling between groups



Staggering dismissal time to avoid congregation





Additional measures implemented for Oral and Performance Examinations

- Desk shields between candidates and Oral Examiners during the oral examination
- Having Exam Personnel to assist candidates in keying in their particulars into the laptop at the silent preparation station to minimise touch points
- Wiping down of equipment by Exam Personnel at the silent preparation station for each candidate

The safe management measures implemented for the oral examinations were also designed in the form of an infographic to assure candidates and parents.

Safe Management Measures for Oral Exams

Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

GENERAL MEASURES

1
Practising safe distancing

Students should maintain at least 1m distance from other candidates or persons as part of safe distancing measures.

Students should not talk to one another, gather in groups or crowd around any designated areas, toilets, or in the canteen.

2
Practising good personal hygiene

Students will be reminded to clean their hands with hand sanitiser before starting their silent preparation and Oral Exam.

3
Masks and desk shields

Students must wear masks at all times, except in the Oral Exam room, where students will remove their masks for reading aloud/presentation and oral interaction with the Oral Examiners.

A desk shield will be placed between the student and the Oral Examiners in the exam room.

IN THE HOLDING ROOM



Students will be seated 1m apart from each other in the holding room.



When interacting with students, such as giving instructions or directing them to their seats, the Exam Personnel will observe a safe distance.

AT THE SILENT PREPARATION STATION



At the silent preparation station, each student will clean his/her hands with hand sanitiser before taking his/her seat.

The Exam Personnel will assist students to key in their particulars in the laptop so as to minimise touch points for each student.



After each student completes the silent preparation, the Exam Personnel will wipe down the mouse and table for the next student.

IN THE ORAL EXAM ROOM



In the Oral Exam room, the Oral Examiners and the student will be seated 1.5m apart and a desk shield will be placed in between them. Oral Examiners will wear either face shields or masks.

After the Oral Exam, students will wear their face masks and wipe down the mouse, table and desk shield. The students will sanitise their hands before leaving the Oral Exam Station.

Before the Oral Exam begins, the Oral Examiner will inform students to clean their hands with hand sanitiser, remove their masks and keep them in a hygienic manner.

Image courtesy of MOE

Exam administration and training

With the affordances of technology, briefings and trainings had been moved online to video conferencing platforms. New initiatives, such as online learning, were also introduced for examination personnel, in light of the current situation. Existing instructions and guidelines to schools were also reviewed to enable schools to manage the national examinations with safe management measures in place.

Dealing with the evolving COVID-19 situation

The COVID-19 situation is still evolving with many uncertainties. As we have to deal with numerous developments that can happen within a short timeframe, this has also made us think out of the box to explore new ways of doing things. With the challenges ahead of us, many of us have also established closer partnerships within SEAB and with our partners, as well as built resilience in the course of our work.

SEAB and MOE are closely monitoring the continuing impact of the COVID-19 situation on national examinations. We will continue to review the precautionary measures for national examinations and provide further updates to schools, to ensure alignment to the latest measures as announcement by the Multi-Ministry Taskforce and MOE.

Let us stay united to overcome the challenges ahead. #SGUnited.

Implementation of Zonal Hubs for Question Paper Distribution

The distribution of question papers is an important last milestone of an examination process before the Question Paper (QP) finally gets delivered to the hands of a candidate on the day of the examinations. Throughout the years, we had counted on our trusted and dedicated pool of Chief Presiding Examiners (CPEs) and Presiding Examiners (PEs) to carry out this important responsibility.

During the written examinations period, close to 300 CPEs and PEs would report at SEAB's QP issuing centre located in the Tiong Bahru Examination Centre before dawn to collect the QPs for their respective centre.

As this was the only QP issuing centre, the SEAB site would be congested with vehicles and human traffic. For most of the PEs who did not live near the issuing centre, they had to start their day as early as 5am to collect the QPs from SEAB before travelling to their assigned examination centre to prepare for the examinations. This was the routine for the entire GCE-Level written examination that would span over 40 days.

Decentralising the collection of QPs through schools

Noting these pain points of congestion within SEAB and long travelling distances for the PEs, we sought to better support the schools and alleviate the teachers' administrative efforts.

Starting from the Mid-Year written examinations in 2020, we introduced the zonal hub model for the GCE N(A)/N(T)- and O- Level examinations, where QPs could be collected from six different schools or "zonal hubs", as well as the SEAB site. Instead of having all PEs travelling from various parts of Singapore to collect the QPs from SEAB, more than 200 PEs would collect the QPs from a hub located in their vicinity.

Key Benefits:

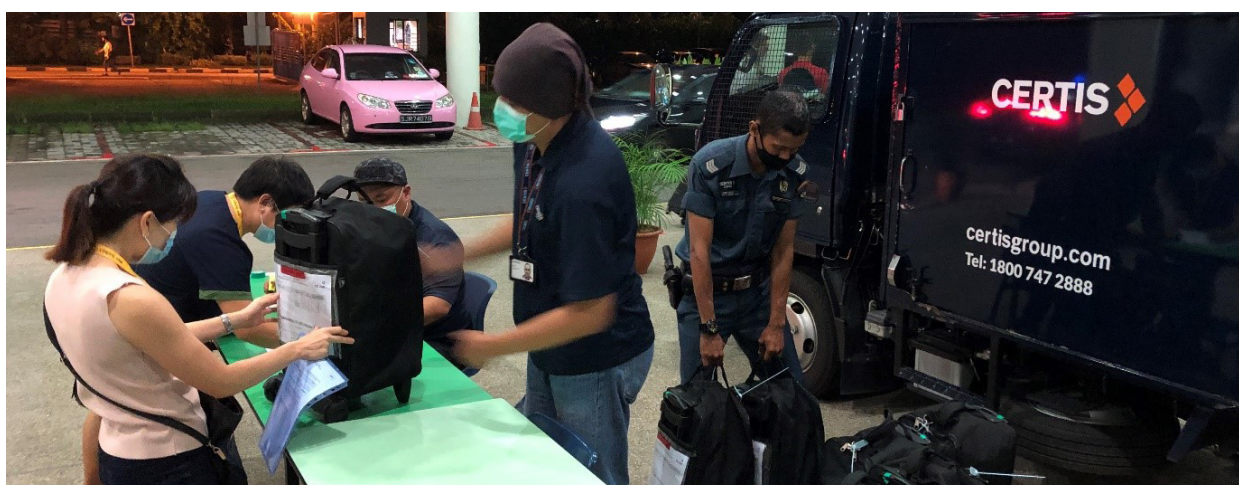
- Reduce travelling time and distance - 80% of schools will no longer need to travel to SEAB to collect question papers, reducing a total travelling distance of 72,380 km per year;
- Reduce congregation of crowds;
- Reduce teachers' administrative work.

This was also a timely initiative during the current COVID-19 situation, as decentralising the QP collection allowed for safe distancing by reducing the congregation of PEs in the SEAB site. This would help to mitigate the potential risk of mass community transmission with smaller groups of PEs at the zonal hubs.



PEs observing safe distancing measures while queuing up to collect the QPs.

Strict measures in place: PEs had to present their Civil Service Cards for the verification of their identities before collecting the trolley bag of QPs.



PEs checking the details on the secured trolley bag before heading to their exam centre.

Strong partnership with schools

Prior to the implementation of the initiative, we engaged the six zonal distribution hubs identified to ensure that they had suitable amenities, such as sufficient parking lots and availability of sheltered and conducive area(s) for secure issuance of question papers. Each zonal distribution hub will act as the QP issuance centre for about 20 other schools nearby. A pilot run was conducted for the GCE O-Level Mid-Year Mother Tongue Language (MTL) written examinations on 18 June 2020. At about 6.15am, several PEs were seen at these designated hubs to collect the QPs.

At every zonal hub, safe management measures were also incorporated as part of the precautionary measures against COVID-19. Before the CPEs and PEs could collect the QPs at the Collection Counter, the personnel on-site ensured that the PEs had used the SafeEntry application to check-in at the venue and taken their temperatures before passing them the QPs that were contained in secured trolley bags.

PEs welcomed this initiative as their travelling time had been greatly reduced, which also minimised the transit risks of examination materials. The satisfaction index of this new initiative was high at 3.7 (out of 4.0). It was also evident from the feedback gathered from the PEs:

“

I was surprised at the speed of distributing and collecting of papers. It was very fast and fuss free for me.

.....

The administration of the conduct of exam was well planned. The use of distribution centres is really useful for schools like mine which is far from SEAB HQ, as there is no need to travel too far and too early.

.....

The collection hub is a good start. Perhaps this can be considered for future National Exams.

”

With the collection of the QPs decentralised, the PEs were also more assured in carrying out their duties safely despite the COVID-19 situation. For us, it had also reduced the congestion during the examination weeks. This was truly a win-win situation for all!



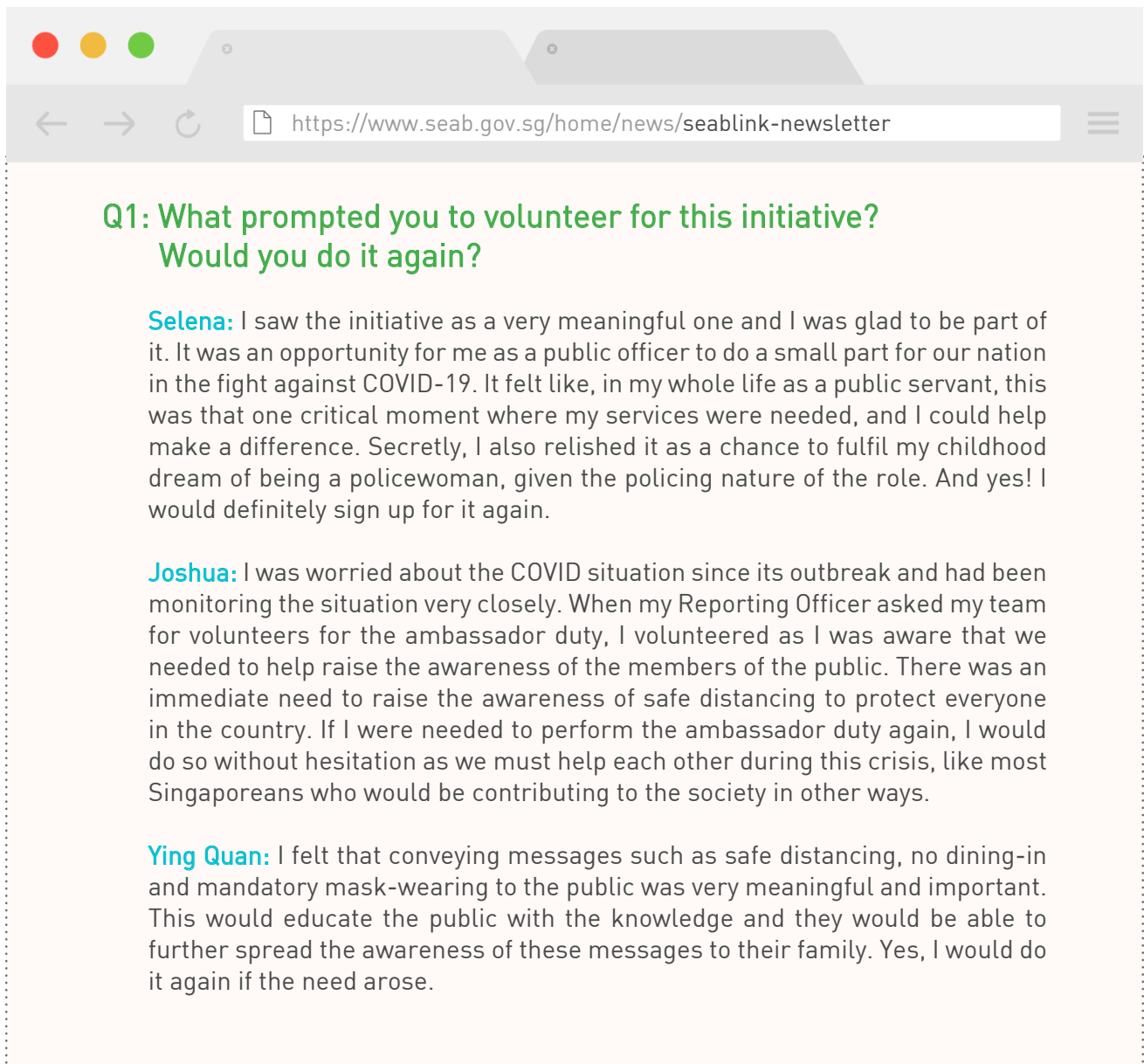
The SEAB's Da Vinci Team from Operations Support who made this initiative possible.

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SEAB lends a hand in the SG Clean Campaign

On 16 February 2020, the National Environment Agency (NEA) launched the SG Clean campaign. As the COVID-19 situation evolved, all public agencies were called upon to support this campaign. Some of our officers had selflessly volunteered to participate in this campaign. Despite the risks of being in the public and engaging citizens face-to-face amidst the ongoing pandemic, they had stepped up to the call of duty and did their part for the public service.

We caught up with a few of the volunteers to find out more about their thoughts and experiences.



Q1: What prompted you to volunteer for this initiative? Would you do it again?

Selena: I saw the initiative as a very meaningful one and I was glad to be part of it. It was an opportunity for me as a public officer to do a small part for our nation in the fight against COVID-19. It felt like, in my whole life as a public servant, this was that one critical moment where my services were needed, and I could help make a difference. Secretly, I also relished it as a chance to fulfil my childhood dream of being a policewoman, given the policing nature of the role. And yes! I would definitely sign up for it again.

Joshua: I was worried about the COVID situation since its outbreak and had been monitoring the situation very closely. When my Reporting Officer asked my team for volunteers for the ambassador duty, I volunteered as I was aware that we needed to help raise the awareness of the members of the public. There was an immediate need to raise the awareness of safe distancing to protect everyone in the country. If I were needed to perform the ambassador duty again, I would do so without hesitation as we must help each other during this crisis, like most Singaporeans who would be contributing to the society in other ways.

Ying Quan: I felt that conveying messages such as safe distancing, no dining-in and mandatory mask-wearing to the public was very meaningful and important. This would educate the public with the knowledge and they would be able to further spread the awareness of these messages to their family. Yes, I would do it again if the need arose.



https://www.seab.gov.sg/home/news/seablink-newsletter



Q2: Describe how your day would go.

Christina: On the first day, we were given an On-Job-Training briefing by officers from NEA. We understood from the NEA officers that our role was to educate and remind the public to keep a safe distance while they were queuing for food in hawker centres.

Every morning, we would report to the person-in-charge for duty at a designated hawker centre. After that, we split ourselves into groups to patrol the hawker centre to ensure that both stall owners and patrons followed the safe management measures. They were supposed to wear their masks and keep a safe distance during queuing. They were not supposed to loiter around or sit down to dine in. Some of the patrons would approach us to find out more about the measures and we would explain the do's and don'ts to them.

We also informed the person-in-charge if we needed to take a break. At the end of the day, there would be a debrief by the person-in-charge and a sharing within the team of the unique cases and situations encountered. After the debrief, the person-in-charge would submit a report to NEA.

Mandy: The assigned location and schedule would usually be sent a few days, or sometimes, one day in advance. Therefore, I needed to mentally prepare myself that the location could be far from my home. Being deployed to the afternoon shift meant that my duty would start at 1.30pm and end by 5.30pm. The team would arrive 10 minutes earlier for a short briefing to remind us of our roles and responsibilities. We worked in pairs so that we could keep a lookout for one another. Our main duties were to guide and encourage stall holders and patrons in hawker centres to practise safe distancing measures, such as no eating and drinking in dining areas, take-outs only and a safe distancing of 1 metre. We also advised the vulnerable groups to avoid visiting markets during peak periods like the weekends. On some days, I was appointed as the Point-of-Contact (POC) and I would need to submit a daily report at the end of the shift. I would also share with other POCs the issues and difficulties that we faced via the WhatsApp group chat.



SG Clean Ambassador Briefing by NEA



Q3: Tell us one of your most memorable encounters during this outreach. You can share a heart-warming or challenging encounter. For challenging encounters, you could share how you overcame the challenge.

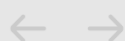
Joshua: We were assigned to hawker centres and markets to perform our duties. There were stall owners who persistently refused to wear their face masks properly even after multiple reminders. Some of them became irritated and even complained to NEA when they received multiple reminders to wear their masks properly. A lot of patience and persistence was needed to monitor and educate such stall holders. Initially, there was this stall with two elderly women who pulled down their face masks frequently. They explained that they were not able to breathe well because of their reusable cloth face masks. They were advised to try another face mask and that they must don their mask when they were outside their house. I did not expect them to do anything after advising them. However, I was pleasantly surprised when I saw both of them wearing surgical masks the next day. After they started using the new face masks, they stopped pulling down their face masks as frequently as before. Some members of the public also thanked the ambassadors when they walked past us to encourage us. Overall, the ambassador duty was an important one as there were several members of the public who needed to be educated on safe distancing and the importance of mask-wearing to protect them.

Selena: I encountered this lady who sat outside Amoy Street Food Centre, trying to sell packets of tissue. When she saw my colleagues and I approaching, she broke into pleas, asking us not to arrest her as she had no money and needed to earn a living. It was heart wrenching, seeing someone in her state but unfortunately, she was not allowed to be there. To help her and persuade her to go home, we bought some packets of tissue from her and bought two packets of food for her.

I might have had an easier time as compared to my fellow colleagues who had their fair share of difficulties in managing members of the public who were either overtly or covertly non-compliant. The ones whom I had met were mostly cooperative and compliant with the most unfriendly one just giving me a stare after I reminded him to don his mask properly. There were also stall holders who were behaving like naughty kids – they put on their mask quickly when they saw us approaching and would take them off when we walked away. It took a lot of patience and perseverance to work with them. The most rewarding experience was when some stall holders and members of the public expressed their appreciation for our work, especially when they found out it was voluntary.

Jazz: Till today, I could still remember how challenging it was to endure the hot weather and long hours standing while I was on duty as an SG Clean Ambassador. However, I recalled a heart-warming encounter which made me feel that my endurance throughout was worth it. On one occasion, a member of the public approached me to ask if I had volunteered to be a SG Clean Ambassador, to which I said yes. The member of the public then expressed her gratitude for my service and commented that it was very courageous and selfless of me to help during this difficult time. To me, this acknowledgement from the member of the public really spoke louder than anything else.

Ying Quan: Thankfully, the people we encountered during the whole campaign were very friendly and receptive to the measures in place. Stall owners were very helpful in relaying messages to their patrons to maintain a safe distance while queuing. We met many friendly elderly folks who came up to us for a chat or to ask questions. One even invited us to her house for lunch. During that period, it was also very heart-warming to see that most people were compassionate and helpful towards the less fortunate in the community. For example, food stall owners / patrons would offer or buy food and drinks for those who were in need.



<https://www.seab.gov.sg/home/news/seablink-newsletter>

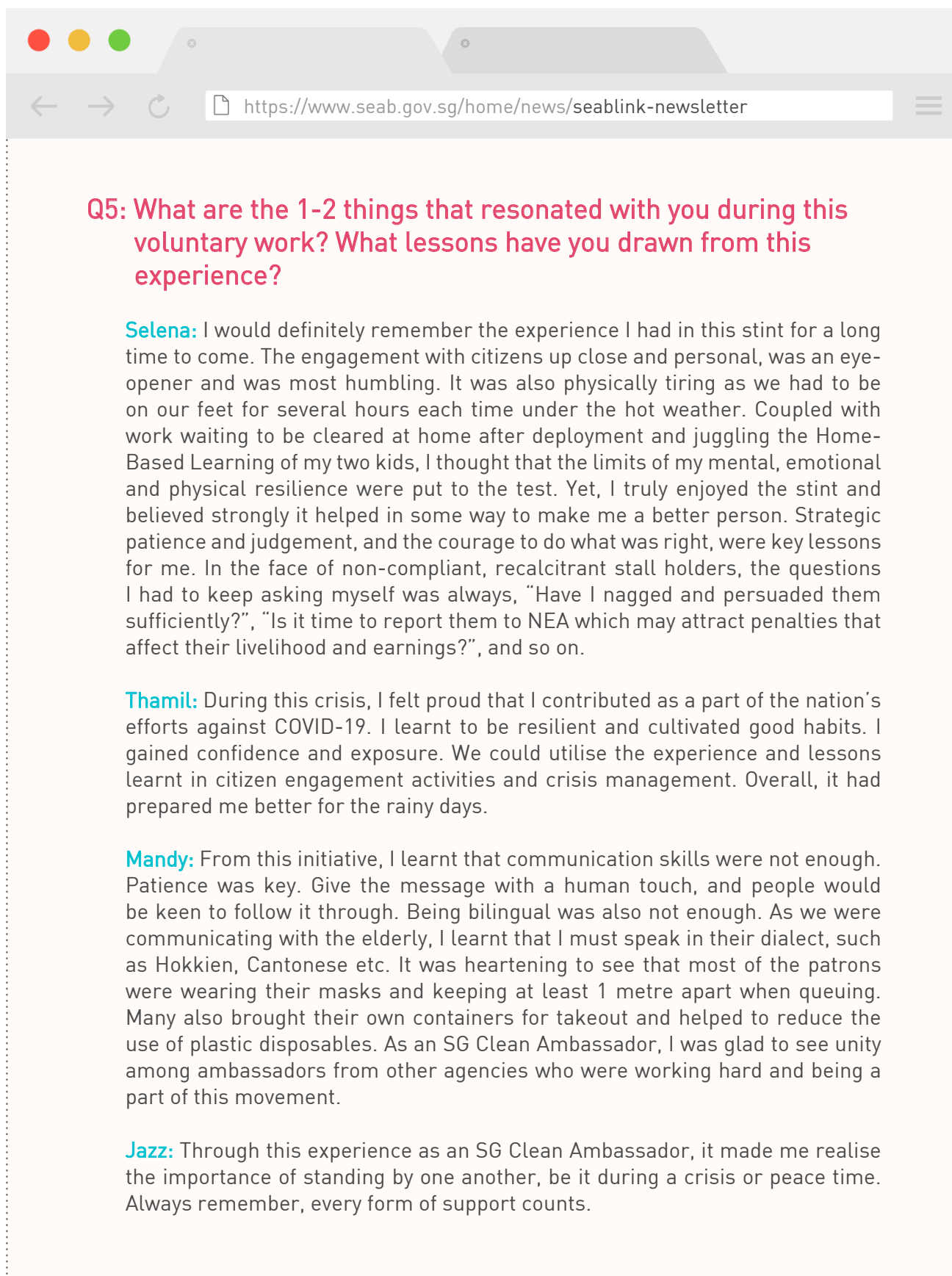


Q4: Did you encounter any challenges, or members of the public who were more challenging to engage?

Thamil: Managing the mindsets of the public during the outbreak of COVID-19 situation was one of the challenges that I faced. Even though the measures had been put in place, it took a bit of time to educate and help the public understand the rationale behind it. Another challenge would be to maintain self-discipline to uphold an upright image of public officers to members of the public during the rounds.



Some of SEAB's volunteers spotted



Q5: What are the 1-2 things that resonated with you during this voluntary work? What lessons have you drawn from this experience?

Selena: I would definitely remember the experience I had in this stint for a long time to come. The engagement with citizens up close and personal, was an eye-opener and was most humbling. It was also physically tiring as we had to be on our feet for several hours each time under the hot weather. Coupled with work waiting to be cleared at home after deployment and juggling the Home-Based Learning of my two kids, I thought that the limits of my mental, emotional and physical resilience were put to the test. Yet, I truly enjoyed the stint and believed strongly it helped in some way to make me a better person. Strategic patience and judgement, and the courage to do what was right, were key lessons for me. In the face of non-compliant, recalcitrant stall holders, the questions I had to keep asking myself was always, "Have I nagged and persuaded them sufficiently?", "Is it time to report them to NEA which may attract penalties that affect their livelihood and earnings?", and so on.

Thamil: During this crisis, I felt proud that I contributed as a part of the nation's efforts against COVID-19. I learnt to be resilient and cultivated good habits. I gained confidence and exposure. We could utilise the experience and lessons learnt in citizen engagement activities and crisis management. Overall, it had prepared me better for the rainy days.

Mandy: From this initiative, I learnt that communication skills were not enough. Patience was key. Give the message with a human touch, and people would be keen to follow it through. Being bilingual was also not enough. As we were communicating with the elderly, I learnt that I must speak in their dialect, such as Hokkien, Cantonese etc. It was heartening to see that most of the patrons were wearing their masks and keeping at least 1 metre apart when queuing. Many also brought their own containers for takeout and helped to reduce the use of plastic disposables. As an SG Clean Ambassador, I was glad to see unity among ambassadors from other agencies who were working hard and being a part of this movement.

Jazz: Through this experience as an SG Clean Ambassador, it made me realise the importance of standing by one another, be it during a crisis or peace time. Always remember, every form of support counts.

Christina: The following are my two takeaways from this initiative:

1) Communication is key

The way we communicated to the stall owners and patrons were very important. Initially, the stall owners and patrons misunderstood that we were making things difficult for them. So, we needed to find a way to communicate or explain to them that we were not there to penalise them, but we were there to advise both the stall owners and patrons what they could and could not do. The two main points that we always needed to remind them were to wear their masks properly, and practise safe distancing at all times (keeping 1m away from others) to keep everyone safe. After proper communication, the stall owners and some of the patrons became cooperative and friendly towards us. Some of the patrons even approached us when they had doubts pertaining to the Circuit Breaker measures and we would explain to them the do's and don'ts.

During my work, I needed to communicate to the Exam Personnel (EP) and Temporary Staff on the tasks that we needed them to perform. It was very important to be clear in our communication to them so that they would be able to perform the task as requested with minimal mistakes.

2) Don't let bad comments affect us during the mission

During this period, we did encounter some stall owners and patrons who were uncooperative and they even raised their voices at us. Whenever we encountered such situations, we were told to disengage. I felt that we should not get disheartened or discouraged by these actions. We must learn to overcome this and not let it affect us.

With this experience, I learnt that when we received any negative comments or feedback from other parties in our work or daily encounters, we should not get discouraged and distracted. We should learn from the mistakes and pull ourselves up to complete and solve the issues. it affect us.



SEAB SG Clean Ambassador advising members of the public to keep a safe distance from each other during queuing.



SEAB officers preparing for duty



SEAB SG Clean Ambassador sharing the do's and don'ts with a stall owner.

Career Opportunities

SEAB offers a rewarding and challenging career. We are looking for suitable candidates to fill the following position:

- Research Officer, Assessment Research
- Assessment Officer, Biology
- Assessment Officer, Tamil Language

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