

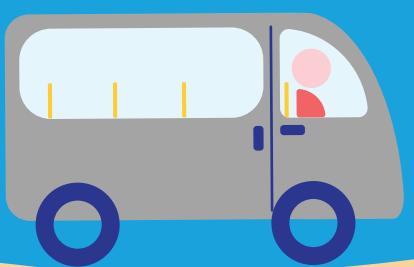
ANNUAL REPORT **FY2020/21**

YEAR TWO AND COUNTING



Another one for the books!

niec
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



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1

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

I am humbled and honoured to step into this role as Chairman of NIEC from 1 January 2021, having been on the NIEC Board since April 2019 when it was first formed.

Financial Year (FY) 2020 was an exceptional and challenging year. COVID-19 brought Singapore and many parts of the world to a standstill, with disruptions of unprecedented scale. During this trying period, NIEC responded decisively. Health and safety of our students and staff were top priority, given NIEC's role in serving the preschool sector. Safe management measures were put in place across our campuses and training efforts pivoted to online platforms so that learning could continue for our student-teachers. NIEC navigated the uncertainties of the crisis by adopting new ways of doing things and accelerating changes that otherwise might have taken years to implement. I am heartened that earlier investments in IT and digitalisation paid off, as staff were able to

change course delivery to the online platform almost overnight.

Growth in EC Sector

The Early Childhood (EC) sector has attracted professionals from all walks of life, with a significant proportion of those joining the sector being mid-careerists. Despite the rise in Singapore's unemployment rate to 3.6% in the third quarter of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector created over 1,900 work opportunities as part of SGUnited Jobs and Skills programmes where 85% of work opportunities were for professional, manager, executive and technician (PMET) roles such as preschool teachers, centre leaders and childcare services managers. Openings were also available for

traineeships and attachments. NIEC made provisions to support requests for increased training places for the EC sector arising from the SGUnited initiatives.

Despite the pandemic, NIEC did well in sustaining healthy intakes for pre-service training (for both post-secondary students and mid-careerists) while experiencing an increased demand for Continuing Education & Training (CET) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses. NIEC is on track to achieve the target market share for pre-service training for EC educators and teachers. Outcome indicators were good with high course satisfaction rates, high students' completion rates, good employment rates, job performance and skills enhancement ratings.

NIEC is well-positioned to deliver its mandate to uplift and sustain the quality of our EC educators, which continue to be in strong demand. During a visit to NIEC in November 2020, then-Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing, then-Manpower Minister Josephine Teo and then-Social and Family Development Minister Masagos Zulkifli affirmed that the EC sector was still growing in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. About 180,000 children were enrolled in preschool and by 2023, this is expected to grow to 200,000. The sector hired 21,000 preschool teachers and is still recruiting, with continued healthy demand for EC teachers.

Planning Ahead

In September 2020, the NIEC Board came together with Management for our first strategic planning meeting to guide NIEC in its strategies and action plans moving forward. The meeting discussed NIEC's medium-term directions, which included uplifting EC Sector manpower through in-service professional course offerings and deepening NIEC's organisational expertise and capabilities. The Board noted the importance of NIEC faculty imparting the right knowledge and skills to students and inspiring them to shape young lives. Our hope is that EC student-teachers

can in turn be good role models for children. In addition, to strengthen partnerships with the diverse range of operators in the EC sector, we agreed to set up a dedicated Business Development unit to engage operators and identify appropriate in-service courses to meet specific needs.

Changes in NIEC Board

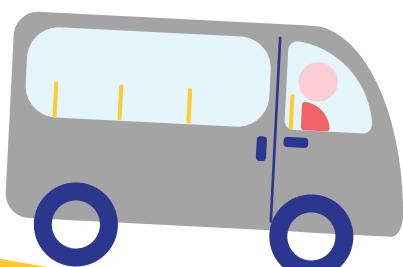
It is with deep appreciation that I would like to thank Ms Lai Wei Lin, who stepped down as Chairman of NIEC from 1 January 2021, for her unstinting support and steadfast leadership in setting up NIEC and providing strategic guidance for the institution over the past few years. I would also like to thank Prof Kam Chan Hin who retired from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) on 31 July 2020, and consequently resigned as alternate director to Prof Christine Goh. We extend a warm welcome to his replacement, Prof Tan Ooi Kiang.

Having taken over the Chairmanship from Wei Lin, I am grateful to the NIEC Board for their strong support and stewardship, and to the NIEC Management team for their leadership and efforts to ensure business continuity during the past year. NIEC plays a critical role in a growing sector, to develop EC educators who can in turn nurture, inspire, educate and care for every child. Building on strong foundations, I am confident we will continue to grow NIEC from strength to strength.



Ms Melissa Khoo

Chairman, NIEC Board





NIEC is the national
training institute for
EC educators.





2

MESSAGE FROM **DIRECTOR, NIEC**

FY2020 was an unprecedented year for all of us. But with gumption and resilience, we overcame as NIEC United.

The start of the FY was met with a surge in local transmissions of the COVID-19 virus with clusters of infection in Singapore. The government introduced safe management measures including a circuit breaker that lasted from 7 April to 4 May 2020. Workplaces were closed, except for those providing essential services, and schools moved to full home-based learning.

Successful Adoption of Online Course Delivery

In tandem with national management measures and the Early Childhood Development Agency's (ECDA) guidance for the EC sector, NIEC expeditiously moved to full e-learning for Pre-Employment Training (PET), CET and CPD courses from 30 March 2020. Online training was provided to support faculty on the use of key IT

platforms such as NIEC's learning management system and where needed, tutorials and one-on-one coaching were conducted. From a survey conducted for CET students in late May 2020, students' feedback on e-learning was positive. More than 90% of students agreed that they felt engaged by the lecturers and were able to cope with online learning.

Due to the unique operating context of NIEC, we continued to leverage the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) (i.e. Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), Temasek Polytechnic (TP) and Institute of Technical Education (ITE)) established systems, processes and practices, and collaborated to jointly engage and support our PET students' learning and well-being especially during the circuit breaker period. We also leveraged the

services at the National Institute of Education's (NIE) Wellness Centre to provide counselling for our CET students on a needs basis.

NIEC staff located in HQ office and NIEC (City) Campus, our main CET campus, worked from home from 7 April to 9 June 2020 when NIEC physical premises were reopened.

Continued Strong Demand for NIEC's Courses

Our PET student intake* decreased slightly for the Academic Year (AY) 2020 with 830 students (860 students in AY2019). The student intake for our CET courses, on the other hand, grew by 14% to 1,879 in FY2020 (1,651 in FY2019). In addition, we sustained good demand for our CPD courses, whereby 31 courses were conducted over 89 runs for 2,393 in-service educators (2,372 in FY2019). The demand for CPD courses was attributed to our new Outdoor Learning series which was launched in 2020.

As part of the SGUnited Jobs and Skills initiative to increase employment opportunities in the EC sector, NIEC in collaboration with ECDA made provisions for more certificate/diploma training places. In addition, NIEC continued to work closely with ECDA, SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG) to promote the Professional Conversion Programme for Preschool Teachers to equip mid-career individuals who desire to become early childhood educators with the necessary qualifications and skills. NIEC also referred applicants to the Place-and-Train scheme under which participating preschools will employ the trainees before course commencement, rendering them eligible to receive its funding support.

*This intake figure excludes the PET students taking the Diploma in Chinese Studies at NP, which has an Early Childhood track in Year 2.

Staying Relevant in our Course Offerings to Support the EC Sector

On 2 November 2020, NIEC welcomed then-Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing, then-Manpower Minister Josephine Teo and then-Social and Family Development Minister Masagos Zulkifli when they made a virtual visit to NIEC, observed one of our online classes and spoke with our students. Their visit underscored the government's strong support for the EC sector and our integral role in quality training provision, affirming us for the quick pivot to online learning to ensure undisrupted teaching and learning.

NIEC supports the aspiration for lifelong learning, in particular for knowledge and skills upgrading of EC educators at various stages of their career and has put in place strategies for implementation. We continue to have active engagement with key stakeholders like ECDA, SSG, NIE, Ministry of Education (MOE) and preschool operators. When necessary, new courses are developed and course content reviewed. In 2020, NIEC rolled out a new CPD series in Outdoor Learning and launched the new CET Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education-Teaching in Chinese (DECCE-T (Chinese)), reviewed our Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership (ADECL), among other course developments such as in Inclusive Practices (IP), to ensure that our course curriculum remains relevant and responsive to industry needs.

Stronger Partnerships with Operators through a New Business Function

We continued to develop stronger links with operators through regular engagement sessions to better understand their staff professional development needs. To support this ongoing work, we established a new, dedicated business development function from 1 January 2021.

Building our People and Being Responsive to Feedback

Our success as an organisation hinges on the ability to create a positive culture that inspires, engages and brings out the best potential of staff. We are working on stronger development programmes and growth opportunities for our academic and corporate staff. As part of our Integrated Talent Management Framework, we sought to clarify job profiles, support and develop talent at various levels. In July 2020, we commenced a Job Evaluation exercise to scope the various job profiles, with the aim of using them to map out career pathways for various job families, including faculty. To ensure that NIEC continues to have the necessary talent and expertise to staff key functions, we put in place a Talent Review process in October 2020 for senior management to discuss and identify talents for further development while ensuring that there are targeted courses to meet training needs of all staff. As a national training institute for EC educators, our faculty are updated on EC developments, training resources, research findings and their applications in the local context. In November 2020, we launched our Faculty Buzz, an information and learning portal with specially curated resources accessible to all NIEC staff.

In October 2020, to better understand and respond to our staff's needs, an employees' survey was carried out. Named "Bee Heard", the findings were useful in establishing baseline staff sentiments in our organisation's developmental journey and created opportunities for senior management and staff to co-develop solutions to address the root causes of identified issues. While the survey findings were encouraging in some categories, opportunities were presented in some other categories for further review and analysis. The "Bee Heard" feedback is being used to chart actions for improvements to build a positive and

supportive culture at NIEC where every staff is valued and empowered to give their best.

Conclusion

I am deeply grateful to the NIEC family for coming together as one, for their gumption and resilience, in adapting to the unprecedented challenges arising from COVID-19 steadfastly and swiftly as NIEC United, keeping our corporate services as well as teaching and learning on an even keel. Thank you to our Board for their continued guidance and dedication in strategically steering NIEC through our second year of operations. I also thank our partners for journeying the past year together and look forward to more collaborations to come.

The NIEC story is still unfolding. This coming FY will see us continuing to shape the future of NIEC by strengthening the foundations to take us there – this will entail trust, patience and an open mind to new ideas and new ways of doing; it also means questioning our assumptions and letting go of the known to traverse new terrains. I am confident that we will be able to forge our way ahead as we take concrete steps to enable NIEC to move closer to our Vision to be the *leading institute for early childhood educators - inspiring excellence in practice*.



Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong

Director

National Institute of Early Childhood Development







3 ABOUT NIEC

NIEC's mandate is to provide high-quality training for early childhood educators in Singapore. This is part of the ongoing government efforts to improve the quality of EC care and education.

At A Glance

NIEC's mission is to develop EC educators to nurture, inspire, educate and care for every child. As an inherent part of our mission, we offer a wide range of full qualification PET, CET courses for pre-service and in-service educators as well as short CPD courses. Full qualification courses are at certificate, diploma, advanced/specialist diploma and post-diploma certificate levels.

While we stay focused on delivering our mission, our work plans and strategies are also aligned towards achieving our vision to become the leading institute for EC educators – one that inspires excellence in practice.

In our first year of operations in 2019, we rolled out the harmonised pre-service diploma and several other CET and CPD courses, including the post-diploma Certificates in Preschool Mother Tongue Language Teaching in Malay and Tamil.

In 2020, we launched the Outdoor Learning CPD series. We also reviewed the content of in-service advanced/specialist diploma courses in early intervention and learning support and developed new post-diploma certificate courses in infant care practice and inclusive practices, for roll-out in 2021/2022.

To complement the curriculum, our practitioner-based faculty are supported to deliver quality teaching with use of appropriate pedagogy that enliven discussions with practical knowledge and adaptations. These helped to generate ideas for application of learning at the workplace.

We also worked closely with important stakeholders like ECDA, MOE and operators, to ensure that NIEC's training is in line with the government's strategic directions and meets the sector's needs.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

**MISSION :**

To develop early childhood educators to nurture, inspire, educate and care for every child.

**VISION :**

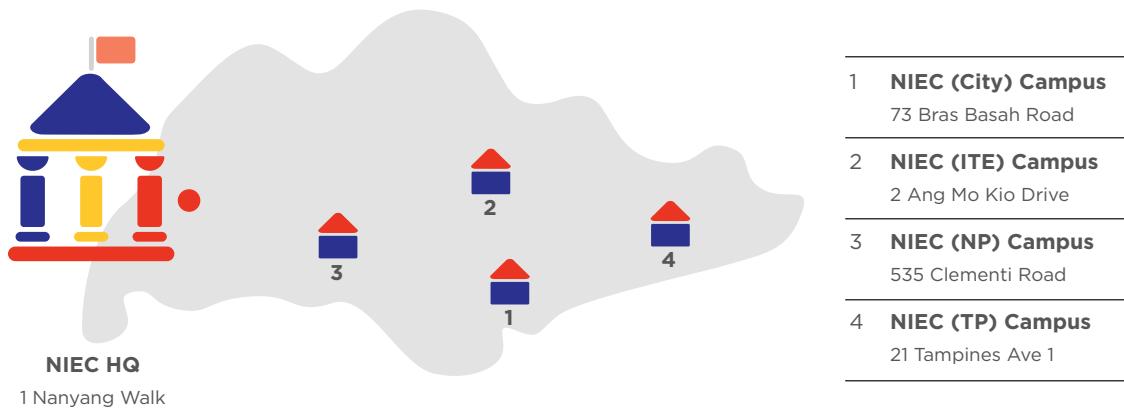
The leading institute for early childhood educators - Inspiring excellence in practice.

**VALUES :**

Respect, Integrity, Care, Collaboration, Excellence (RIC²E).

1 HQ + 4 CAMPUSES

The NIEC Headquarters is located within the NIE campus at Nanyang Walk. Our courses are conducted at our 4 campuses in ITE College Central, NP, TP and the city area.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

ENROLMENT IN 2020
SAW MORE THAN

5,700

FULL QUALIFICATION STUDENTS

2,300

SHORT COURSE STUDENTS

AROUND

2,370

STUDENTS GRADUATED IN 2020

MORE THAN

50

FULL QUALIFICATION AND
SHORT COURSES OFFERED

AROUND

100

FULL-TIME TEACHING FACULTY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

The NIEC Board is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that NIEC is governed and managed responsibly and prudently to achieve organisational effectiveness and sustainability.



Ms Melissa Khoo
Chairman
Deputy Secretary (Policy),
Ministry of Education
*Appointed Chairman on
1 January 2021*
*Appointed Board Member on
1 April 2019*



Professor Christine Goh
Director,
National Institute of Education
*Appointed Board Member on
9 October 2018*



Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong
Director,
National Institute of Early
Childhood Development
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Ms Chan Yen San
Partner, KPMG LLP
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Mr Peter Lam
Principal and CEO,
Temasek Polytechnic
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Mr Clarence Ti
Principal and CEO,
Ngee Ann Polytechnic
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Ms Low Khah Gek
Chief Executive Officer,
Institute of Technical
Education
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Dr Christine Chen
Founder and President,
Association for Early
Childhood Educators
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Professor Ho Lai Yun
Emeritus Consultant,
Singapore General Hospital
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali
Executive Principal and Head,
Iyad Perdaus Child
Development
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Dr May See
Senior General Manager,
MY World Preschool Ltd
*Appointed Board Member on
14 March 2019*



Professor Tan Ooi Kiang
Deputy Provost (Education),
Nanyang Technological
University
*Appointed as an Alternate Director
to Professor Christine Goh on
1 September 2020*

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021



Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong
Director



Ms Yin Tong
Divisional Director,
Corporate Development



Mr Ang Teck Hua
Registrar / Dean,
Academic & Student
Management



Dr Lucy Quek
Dean,
Curriculum & Programmes



Dr Ho Yin Fong
Dean,
Faculty & Leadership
Development
Campus Head,
NIEC (City)



Ms Tham Foong Chue
Campus Head,
NIEC (NP)



Ms Dorcas Tang
Campus Head,
NIEC (ITE) & NIEC (TP)



Ms Wong Mun Ee
Head,
Finance & Administration



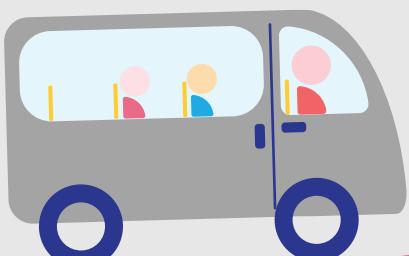
Ms Rosewati Sukiman
Head,
Human Resource



Mr Lai Garluck
Head,
Information Technology



Ms Lim Ping Ping
Head,
Marketing & Communications



The NIEC Senior Management team has executive responsibilities for the implementation of NIEC's programmes and delivery of performance objectives. Director, NIEC helms the organisation with the support of Divisional Director, Corporate Development who oversees the key corporate functions of Information Technology (IT), Human Resource (HR), Finance & Administration (F&A), Marketing & Communications (M&C) and Strategic Planning & Organisational Excellence (SPOE) which are each led by a Head/Assistant Head.

The Academic divisions in the areas of Faculty & Leadership Development (FLD), Curriculum & Programmes (C&P) and Academic & Student Management (ASM) are each led by a Dean who reports to Director, NIEC. Each of the NIEC campuses is also led by their respective Campus Head, who oversees their campus-based teams of faculty and day-to-day course delivery at the various locations.

A COVID-19 Ops Management team, comprising mainly Senior Management members, was set up in 2020 to identify and coordinate supporting measures consistent with our government's directives, to ensure the well-being of our NIEC community, the EC sector, the larger society and to do our part to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Singapore.

Organisational Changes in FY2020

There were a few changes to Senior Management appointments during the year:

- Ms Tham Foong Chue was appointed NIEC (NP) Campus Head with effect from 1 October 2020. With this, she relinquished her former portfolio of Assistant Dean, C&P and Deputy Campus Head of NIEC (NP) Campus. Dr Lucy Quek remained as our Dean, C&P.

- Ms Dorcas Tang was appointed NIEC (TP) Campus Head with effect from 18 January 2021, in addition to her existing portfolio as NIEC (ITE) Campus Head. We record our appreciation to Dr Winston Ang, former NIEC (TP) Campus Head, for his contributions over the past two years.

Upcoming Organisational Changes in FY2021

Further organisational changes will be implemented in FY2021. After more than two years of operations, there is now a better understanding of the synergies between academic affairs, applications processing, and student management, particularly for CET courses. These functions will be consolidated to form a new Student & Academic Services (SAS) Division.



Strategic Directions

NIEC held its 1st NIEC Board Strategic Planning Meeting on 24 September 2020. Both Management and the Board benefitted from the rich discussions and insights gained from the sharing. We were also privileged to have members of ECDA Management at the meeting to share about the wider EC sector developments and contribute their views. The focus of discussions was on the medium term, for NIEC to strengthen our in-service course offerings to uplift the EC sector and continue to deepen our own internal expertise and capabilities to meet

future needs. The medium-term strategic directions will further influence and shape our strategies moving forward.

Overall, NIEC continues to be guided by its strategy map. The four strategic thrusts to Deliver Quality Courses, Partner Customers and Stakeholders, Build our People, and Strengthen Critical Enablers guide NIEC's Divisions and Campuses to develop workplans that are aligned to organisational goals and objectives. In the chapters to come, the key milestones, outcomes and achievements accomplished in FY2020 are reported under each strategic thrust.

The strategic thrusts are summarised as follows:

DELIVERING QUALITY COURSES

We are committed to delivering quality courses. As the national training institute for early childhood educators, we strive to ensure our courses are high quality with practice-oriented learning and practicums, and delivered by highly qualified staff to meet different learner profiles.

PARTNERING CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

We are focused on partnering and working closely with customers and stakeholders, including our students, industry operators, potential trainees, ECDA, MOE and NIE, among others.

BUILDING OUR PEOPLE

We are committed to build our core - the people who make up NIEC. We will continue to work on establishing NIEC's identity and culture, developing staff capabilities and expertise, as well as sizing our manpower resources to meet operational needs.

STRENGTHENING CRITICAL ENABLERS

We are committed to provide the requisite infrastructure and systemic support through the strengthening of critical enablers. We strive towards implementing academic and quality assurance policies, corporate systems and processes to support daily operations, and an organisational excellence framework, to ensure organisational health and efficacy.

NIEC stays focused on delivering our mission to develop EC educators, providing a wide range of courses for educators at every stage of their career.



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星期二

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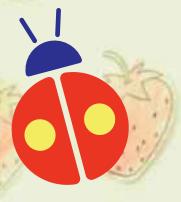
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星期四

草莓



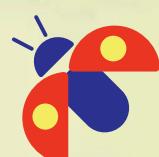
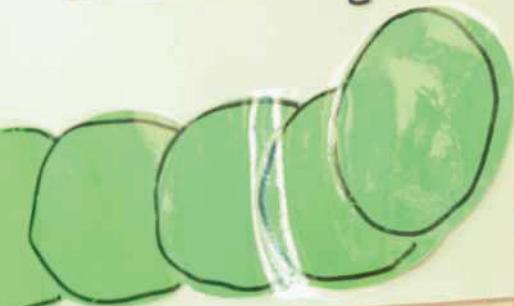
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冰激凌





4 **DELIVERING QUALITY COURSES**

NIEC's strategic thrust of delivering quality courses ensures our courses are well-designed with robust curriculum, are relevant in meeting sectoral needs and of high quality to enable NIEC students to develop values, knowledge and skills to be competent and confident EC educators.

In FY2020, NIEC conducted 21 PET and CET EC full qualification courses. These included foundational training for beginning teachers and educarers, and specialist training for in-service educators in EC learning support, early intervention, and leadership. NIEC also ran 31 ECDA-endorsed or customised CPD courses for in-service educators to upskill their competencies in teacher-child interactions, classroom management, personal mastery, leadership and mentoring, among others.

Change in Mode of Course Delivery Due To COVID-19

As Singapore entered the circuit breaker period in early FY2020, NIEC came together as one organisation to rally and support each other. We quickly adapted to the government's safe management measures.

For our PET courses which are nestled within ITE College Central, NP and TP, our course delivery adhered to the parameters and directions set by

these IHLs. All our PET and CET full-qualification courses were quickly converted to online delivery. All faculty and corporate staff worked collaboratively to minimise disruption to teaching and learning.

Practicums and internships, an integral part of our practice-based training for our students to put theory into practice and be work-ready, were rescheduled till after the circuit breaker. We worked closely with the centres and our students, and revised our administrative processes to support the successful completion of these practice modules subsequently.

All essential CPD courses were also taught via online learning. These courses were time-bound and required by ECDA for EC educators to meet a specific job role or as a pre-requisite for milestone training (e.g. Mentoring Novice Teachers and Mentoring for Professional Growth). CPD courses that were not suitable for conversion into online learning or were not critical were rescheduled to a later date. Over time, NIEC was able to convert and deliver more of our CPD courses online to meet the training needs for in-service EC educators in tandem with the prevailing COVID-19 management measures.

NEW COURSE OFFERINGS

New courses continued to be developed in FY2020 to meet the evolving needs of EC educators.

The following new course offerings were launched during the year:

CET Course



Advanced Certificate in Early Years (Chinese) was launched in June 2020. Targeted at Chinese-proficient EC educators who work with children from birth to 36 months, students will receive an EY2 (i.e. Level 2) educator certification upon successful completion.

CPD Courses



Building Number Sense was launched in November 2020. Learners will be able to make connections between theory (i.e. principles under MOE's Nurturing Early Learners framework) and practice, in relation to understanding numbers.



Outdoor Learning Series comprising seven workshops were rolled out over the period of March to October 2020. Targeted at EC educators teaching children of different age groups as well as centre principals, the workshops demonstrate creative ways of integrating outdoor learning activities within their preschool programmes for infants and children up to six years old. Centre principals will also be equipped with the knowledge and skills to integrate outdoor learning as part of the centre's programme.



Storytelling for Effective Classroom Management was launched in December 2020. As storytelling plays a critical part in preschoolers' overall development, participants will learn to identify factors that affect emotions and behaviours and how to apply motivational and behaviour-reinforcement techniques through the use of storytelling. The course also helps with effective classroom management in the EC setting.



Review and Improvement of Existing Courses

Besides developing new courses, NIEC's curricula were periodically reviewed for update and to ensure constructive alignment in both the content and assessment. We adopted an inductive approach to delivery in order to improve understanding and learning for our students. Some of the courses that were reviewed in 2020 were as follows:

Mother Tongue Language

To strengthen the training of preschool Mother Tongue Language teachers, a review was conducted to ascertain optimal ways to do so, and the type of courses to be made available for their professional upgrading.

Inclusive Practices

With the national focus towards building a more inclusive society, modules on IP were developed to upskill EC educators with knowledge and skills to support children with developmental needs more effectively. These were incorporated in NIEC's pre-service diploma courses. In addition, NIEC also refreshed the course content for NIEC's two Specialist Diplomas i.e. in Early Childhood Learning Support and in Early Childhood Intervention (Special Needs). We are also

developing a new Certificate in Inclusive Practice for roll-out in FY2021/2022.

Health, Safety and Well-being

Arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, NIEC started a timely review of the content in some modules to deepen knowledge in supporting child health, hygiene, safety and well-being, and also to equip our students to be more adaptable and resilient in a changing world.

EC Leadership

ADECL is a milestone course and a mandatory professional requirement for deployment as centre leaders. Offered since 2016, NIEC conducted a review of the course to ensure it remains relevant in providing robust foundational training for beginning centre leaders and to give them a strong start in their leadership journey. The course evaluation was completed in March 2021 with updates identified for ADECL.

Higher NITEC Curriculum

In response to industry's demands for deeper industry-relevant skills, aspirations of ITE students for upgrading and the need to cater to diverse learners, the Higher NITEC course structure will be reviewed. The work is expected to be completed in 2023.

Monitoring Course Quality

End of module/course surveys were administered regularly to obtain feedback on our delivery of courses. Besides student surveys for PET modules and courses, NIEC also carried out more than 700 surveys from January to December 2020 for CET and CPD courses. Compared to the same period last year, we scored higher on students' course satisfaction and evaluation of teaching.

Graduate Survey Findings

Feedback from the annual PET and CET graduates' employment surveys showed that NIEC graduates enjoyed good employment outcomes. This was particularly so for our CET graduates who switched to an EC career or in-service educators who after the CET course took on different job roles in the EC sector.

Feedback from operators on the quality of NIEC graduates were also obtained through surveys. So far, we obtained affirmation that our graduates performed well as EC educators, applying their

knowledge and skills to meet current assigned job expectations and/or enhanced job scope.

Recognition and Awards

Student Recognition and Awards

Our students continued to do us proud. NIEC students at the various PET campuses were recognised for their outstanding achievements in their co-curricular activities, leadership and community work and academic performance clinching awards sponsored by key sectoral partners like Association for Early Childhood Educators (AECES), PAP Community Foundation and NTUC First Campus.

Staff Recognition and Awards in Teaching & Learning

Several NIEC faculty based at NIEC (TP) and NIEC (NP) Campuses also received Teaching Awards from TP and NP respectively. We celebrate with our staff and will continue to provide opportunities for their personal and professional development.

NP's Special Home-Based Learning Academic Award for Teaching & Learning Innovation

(Excellence Award)

- Ms Amelia Jaishree

(Commendation Award)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| ● Dr Eunice Say | ● Ms Therese Kwan |
| ● Ms Darseni Rengasamy | ● Ms Jean Ong |
| ● Ms Lin Yanyan | ● Mr Bryant Goh |

TP's School of Humanities & Social Sciences 2020

(School-wide Teaching Award)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| ● Ms Ng Cheng Khim | ● Ms Fiona Yow |
|--------------------|----------------|

A photograph of a young female teacher with dark hair tied back, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a black and white checkered skirt. She is sitting cross-legged on the floor, holding a colorful children's book titled "Pant Yo Yo". She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In front of her, several children are sitting on the floor, facing her. One child in the foreground is wearing a striped shirt and red pants, looking at the teacher. The background shows a bright room with a large window, a colorful geometric mural on the wall, and wooden stick figures standing near the window.

We graduate
confident and
competent
EC educators.





5

PARTNERING CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

“It takes a village to raise a child”. So we strive to be a relevant and integral member of the EC sector to support the growth and development of the children in Singapore in the role we play as the national training institute for EC educators.

This strategic thrust underlies our belief in partnering closely with customers and stakeholders, including our students, EC operators, potential trainees, ECDA, MOE and NIE, among others. In the process, we establish and increase the awareness of the NIEC brand, engage and create value for our students, and deliver beneficial experiences for our partners at various touchpoints.

Increasing Awareness of NIEC Brand / New Outreach Efforts

With limitations on physical outreach efforts due to the COVID-19 situation, NIEC quickly switched to new digital platforms to continue reaching out

to the public, aspiring EC educators and practitioners. We rolled out a range of online engagement activities for different target groups. Several online course previews were held for mid-careerists. The Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) microsite was set-up and digital career talks conducted for several secondary schools.

Response for the online events was good, especially the course previews which had more than twice the number of participants compared to the physical sessions. Looking ahead, we will continue to ramp up our online mode of engagement and take the opportunity to have greater reach. We also launched our first naptime webinar series for EC practitioners, where our

faculty shared practical tips, supported by theory/research and localised to Singapore's context, to enhance ground practices. These bite-sized talks proved popular with EC educators, as they could learn in the comfort of their workplace. The two naptime webinars conducted in 2020 attracted strong attendance across the EC sector.

All in all, our online events and activities reached out to more than 3,000 mid-careerists, 800 EC practitioners and more than 2,000 secondary school students. In addition, our digital ads and campaigns that ran across multiple platforms resulted in a reach of more than 600,000 hits.

As the EC sector continues to grow, we partnered and supported e2i, WSG, SSG and ECDA in 14 outreach efforts from January to November 2020, focusing on job creation and mid-career switches. NIEC also started to work with the Community Development Councils for another channel to reach out to potential mid-careerists keen to make a switch to EC. We collaborated with ECDA on a digital #askmeananything campaign where potential applicants could engage with us via Facebook and Instagram to address some commonly asked questions.

Media and Publicity

Good media coverage and positive publicity bring greater awareness of our brand. This is beneficial especially for a new organisation like NIEC. In the year 2020 alone, we garnered more than 16 media coverage opportunities. Here are some highlights:

NIEC as the National EC Training Institute

- **Ministers' Facebook Page** - We hosted Ministers Josephine Teo, Chan Chun Sing and Masagos Zulkifli to a virtual visit at NIEC which included a closed-door dialogue with our senior management and a virtual Social-Emotional Learning Development class taught by our faculty Dr Yvonne Chan.

■ **CNA 938, Money Mind** - NIEC Dean, Faculty & Leadership Development Dr Ho Yin Fong, shared insights about the EC sector and EC educators alongside Principal of MY World @ Sun Natura.

■ **ECDA's Facebook and Instagram** - NIEC faculty Ms Jean Ong, Ms Yeo May Ling and Ms Jerine Chng addressed questions from potential early childhood educators via ECDA's #askmeananything campaign where ECDA crowdsourced questions via Facebook and Instagram.

Faculty Experts

■ **Beanstalk Magazine** - NIEC faculty Ms Irma Iryanti, Ms Amelia Jaishree and Ms D K Gowri Danakodi gave expert tips on topics including how to motivate a child to read, how can educators build a child's identity as a self-directed learner and how can teachers help children work and play cooperatively in a group.

■ **The Sunday Times** - News article covered NIEC staff Dr Yvonne Pek's and Ms Siti Shaireen's comments on activities that parents could organise for children at home during the circuit breaker.

■ **The Straits Times** - Another article on our staff Dr Yvonne Pek's and Ms Siti Shaireen's views on what to look out for in high-quality media content for young children.

■ **Mediacorp Vasantham Central** - A documentary show "Ethiroli" featured NIEC faculty Ms Darseni Rengasamy's sharing at the MOE's e-Mother Tongue Language Symposium 2020 on engaging young children with mother tongue language learning during full home-based learning. Two students from NIEC's Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education also shared their views.

Student Features

- **Lianhe Zaobao** - An article on our DECCE-T (Conversion) student Mr See Weng Hong who left the shipping industry to take care of his son who has mild ADHD. He shortly joined the EC sector after realising his strength in interacting with children.
- **Lianhe Zaobao** - Another DECCE-T (Conversion) student Ms Melissa Teo shared why she made the switch from a molecular biology research company to work as a preschool teacher.
- **Berita Harian** - Our passionate students who entered the Diploma in Early Childhood Development and Education through EAE shared their reasons for applying for the EC course.
- **Berita Harian** - DECCE-T (Conversion) student Ms Nur Liyana Mohamed Rafid shared why she made the switch from working in the arts to becoming a preschool teacher.

Playing Our Part in the Community

NIEC supports staff and students to seize opportunities for volunteering as it increases learning, professional confidence and a sense of accomplishment. Here are some examples of how our staff and students contributed to the community during the FY:

- NIEC faculty Ms Sharon Toong collaborated with River Valley High School to be a coach for their community involvement project. She conducted discussion sessions with students and a teacher at the planning stage, provided clarifications for their project direction, and gave inputs to their produced video, which could be used as a teaching aid to nurture children's socio-emotional development in preschools.

- NIEC faculty contributed to the wider body of knowledge of EC practices in Singapore. AECES launched a book which our faculty Dr Ginia Ng Sok Hoon had co-authored with a SUSS faculty on "新加坡幼儿教育发展：1842-2018". The book covered the "History of Early Childhood Education in Singapore: 1842-2018", which spanned the development of EC education in Singapore from private school model, to set-ups by community organisations, and the government's recent strong investment in the EC sector.
- Two NIEC (NP) students initiated a fund-raising campaign to benefit 40 underprivileged families during the month of Ramadan. They were able to raise more than double their initial fundraising target.
- A group of four NIEC (ITE) student leaders were involved in the National Reading Movement: Read for Books Charity Drive 2020 by National Library Board (NLB). Through their collective efforts, they raised 1,000 books, benefitting 838 children from 16 social service agencies. Our students were commended by NLB for their contribution.
- A group of 13 NIEC (TP) students collaborated with Tampines North Community Club (TNCC) for their Tampines North Spooktacular Halloween 2020. The Halloween-themed competition required residents to either create a piece of craft (Boo-tiful Craft Ideas) or whip up a snack (Bone-appetit Treats). Our students created three video tutorials on Halloween crafts and snacks to guide and inspire residents to participate with their own creations.



Engaging, Supporting and Creating Value for Students

Students remain our utmost priority. We spent time and resources to consider the attributes that we desire for NIEC students that would make a positive impact for the EC sector. A task force, comprising representatives from our HQ Divisions and Campuses, was set up to focus on strengthening our PET and CET graduates' workforce readiness, with one key deliverable being NIEC's desired graduate profile. The task force obtained views and inputs from focus group discussions with various internal and external stakeholders (i.e. different groups of NIEC students and staff, operators, ECDA, MOE, etc.). The task force will complete its recommendations in FY2021.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, physical graduation ceremonies could not be held for about 2,400 outgoing students. For our CET graduates, we made alternative arrangements to commemorate the milestone by sending a graduation package to each graduand. We also engaged a photography studio to facilitate our graduands to capture the precious moment with their loved ones.

Student Seminars

Two online NIEC Cross-Campus Student Seminars were organised in 2020. Four speakers from the Centre for Research in Child Development (CRCD), NIE shared on local research topics such as developing self-control skills in young children, enhancing learning and development through motor skills, facilitating quality teacher-child interactions, as well as teaching in a bilingual classroom. The two seminars were well-attended and moderated by NIEC faculty, Dr Yvonne Pek and Ms Dorcas Tang respectively. Participants also learnt how to relate research findings to applications in the preschool classrooms.

Academic & Wellness Framework

In establishing NIEC's Academic & Wellness Framework, we took a holistic look at how to better support our students' learning, development and well-being. For a start, arrangements were made with NIE's Wellness Centre for our CET students to consult with professionals for counselling services should there be a need. As an established practice, PET students were able to access counselling services at their respective Campuses. We will be strengthening other aspects of our Framework over time, including a one-stop Service Centre and in areas of academic advisement, academic support, wellness programme as well as student development and alumni relations programmes.

Partnering Key Stakeholders

Partnering EC Operators

With around 2,000 childcare centres and kindergartens, we formed a dedicated business development unit in January 2021 to engage operators on their staff training needs. Apart from identifying NIEC's value proposition to operators, the unit will also be scanning the latest trends and sourcing for other opportunities/partnership to expand our training provisions.

NIEC continued with the existing engagement arrangements with operators such as:

- Placement of NIEC students at centres for practicum and internship opportunities.
- Obtaining feedback on the performance of NIEC graduates and students, and addressing their staff training needs through available CET and CPD course offerings.
- Participating in various networking and feedback sessions to gain a deeper understanding of prevailing EC practices and ground needs.

Partnering the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

Being the national EC training provider, NIEC works closely with ECDA on several fronts in sectoral directions, course development, and outreach. In 2020, we partnered ECDA to host a virtual Teachers' Day celebration for students at the PET campuses. In the coming year, we will support ECDA to develop and roll out the curriculum changes following their review of the Skills Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education as well as other larger sectoral development initiatives.

Partnering the National Institute of Education (NIE)

Strategically positioned to be affiliated to NIE, synergies between NIEC and NIE in research and training related to the early childhood and primary school years can be expected over time. In our second year of operations, we harnessed

opportunities to collaborate with NIE to enhance our course development and delivery as well as to enrich our students' experiences. These included:

- Having Prof Tan Oon Seng, Director of CRCD, at NIEC as part of his sabbatical leave, where professional exchanges were held to strengthen the links between CRCD and NIEC, and to explore possible future collaborations.
- Learning from NIE's research on perception/ performance of students based on their learning in an EC module to review our curriculum and delivery.
- Leveraging NIE's Associate Professors' expertise to teach modules in the Certificate in Preschool Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Teaching course and also in MTL CPD development.
- Inviting NIE faculty to share their expertise and local research findings at the NIEC Cross-Campus Student Seminars in October 2020.



Partnering Other Agencies

We worked with various agencies to build our internal capabilities and to enhance our training provision:

- Worked with Sport Singapore (SportSG) to conduct a 3-day SportSG-NIEC Train-the-Trainers workshop on Motor Skills Development for our faculty.
- Organised a joint Brown Bag Seminar with National Gallery to share Gallery's resources and programmes for faculty.
- Worked with Pikler House, Hungary, to design and conduct an "Introduction to Pedagogical Approach for Birth to 3 years old" for faculty.

We also collaborated with partners to develop resources for the sector:

- Worked with KK Women's & Children's Hospital to edit and re-write nine books from the Wagga series. In addition, NIEC will be supporting the research of a pilot study in 2021 to examine the utility of the Wagga Series in helping Kindergarten children improve their social emotional learning.
- Worked with the Ministry of Social and Family Development as advisor on its development and curation of resources for the Family Values Education Projects. The projects aim to inculcate pro-family values in children and work towards strengthening familial relationships to build strong and resilient families.

Partnering ITE, NP and TP at our NIEC PET Campuses

With our NIEC campuses at ITE College Central, NP and TP, we worked closely together with the IHLs to ensure that our students and staff stayed

engaged and coped well during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the initiatives implemented were:

- Provided faculty platforms to teach them tools for online engagement and use of Education Technology (EdTech) for staff who were not tech savvy.
- Sourced for additional laptops and wifi dongle for our students who needed help.
- Obtained special permission for students with challenging home environments to be in campus for online lessons with appropriate safe management measures in place.
- Carried out regular check-ins with students on how they were coping and at the same time, provided counselling for those in need.

Partnering Parents

As our students at NIEC (ITE), NIEC (NP) and NIEC (TP) campuses are fresh secondary school leavers, NIEC made concerted effort to engage parents and provide them with relevant information. This helped them to guide and support their children during their preschool teacher training:

- NIEC (ITE) held two online parental engagement sessions – one for each year of students' parents. During the first-year session, parents were informed of the knowledge and skills covered in the EC course and how these could be applied. The second-year session provided information on the enhanced internship processes, assessments and how parents' support was important for their children in the last lap of their training journey with us.
- NIEC (TP) held a similar online session for parents of students who were in their freshman year. Apart from knowing the care persons responsible for students' well-being, parents were also briefed on the



essential information regarding the course structure, practicum/internship and career prospects. Parents' enquiries on academic results, student activities, ECDA Teaching Award and further studies were also addressed at the session.

- NIEC (NP) engaged students and parents during the ECDA Training Award briefing to provide more information about the training award and its conditions, application process and eligibility criteria. The session was well attended, and parents were able to check with the ECDA Training Award coordinator on other queries that they had.





6

BUILDING

OUR PEOPLE

People make up NIEC and building our people is a critical strategic thrust. To lay a strong foundation within NIEC, in FY2020/21 we focused on sustaining staff engagement and well-being especially during the work-from-home (WFH) period, establishing NIEC's identity and culture, and fleshing out our Integrated Talent Management framework to inform and guide the development of staff capabilities and expertise.

Staff Strength

As at 31 March 2021, NIEC's staff strength remained the same as in the previous year at 196, excluding adjunct staff.

Sustaining Staff Engagement and Well-being

In view of local transmission of COVID-19, NIEC organised staff into split teams and instituted alternating work-from-office (WFO) and WFH

arrangements for all staff in early 2020. Thus, when circuit breaker measures kicked in that necessitated the closure of our office premises at NIEC HQ and NIEC (City) campus, our staff were prepared to manage the changes in work environments and processes. WFH arrangement was extended to all staff, including those who provided front-line services such as teams processing admissions or managing CET students. These staff were given additional support (e.g. defraying mobile phone expenses) to assist them in their virtual/online operations.

As our staff at NIEC (ITE), NIEC (NP) and NIEC (TP) campuses followed the work arrangements of the respective IHLs and adapted the delivery of our lessons accordingly, timely communication was given to staff on upcoming changes to lesson delivery and work arrangements so that they could make the necessary preparations.

NIEC introduced several initiatives to ensure the well-being and continuous engagement of staff especially during the circuit breaker period and subsequent phased re-opening. The initiatives included flexible work arrangements, HR newsletters to deliver bite-sized content on self-care, access to counselling services, making benefits claims more flexible, etc. As a personal touch, we provided each staff with a Care Pack containing items related to NIEC's RIC²E values.

A COVID-19 Wellness Check was conducted in May 2020 to check-in and obtain feedback on how staff were coping with working from home. While staff were generally coping well, the platform allowed staff to post their concerns and queries. Staff feedback were addressed and supporting measures implemented.

The Staff Welfare Committee also ramped up its activities during the prolonged WFH period to keep staff connected with one another, with involvement of staff from all levels and across campuses/divisions. Online workout sessions, cooking demonstrations, and brown bag sessions were well-attended and provided opportunities for fun and healthy breaks.

Building NIEC's Identity and Culture

Building a strong and positive NIEC culture requires several building blocks to be in place. In October 2020, we commissioned a consultant to help us conduct an employee engagement survey (EES) branded as "Bee Heard @ NIEC". The intent of the EES was to measure the present level of staff engagement, identify key gaps in engagement drivers if any, and propose interventions to close these gaps and strengthen engagement of staff. The EES also highlighted differences, if any, when compared to the normative benchmark of public and private agencies in Singapore as well as those that had undergone substantive organisational changes.

The survey received a strong participation rate with a positive overall sustainable engagement score. As a follow-up to the survey results, workshops were held for senior, middle management and selected key staff to review the feedback and issues at NIEC-wide level. This was further cascaded to divisional and campus levels so that specific root causes could be identified. Management and staff co-developed improvement actions for their respective divisions and campuses in order to gain more ownership and commitment. Follow-up actions from the EES will be rolled out in FY2021.

As a lead-up to NIEC's virtual annual Staff Townhall in November 2020, Senior Management shared their reflections on how they were inspired by staff displaying and living out NIEC's RIC²E values as they navigated the impact of COVID-19 in their work and personal lives. This provided practical examples on how our corporate values could be translated into real actionable behaviours to be emulated by anyone. Senior Management's affirmation and recognition of staff also helped to encourage and motivate staff to persevere in the midst of challenges.



NIEC also introduced the 'Gardens of NIEC' as a creative and easy-to-recall way to communicate our value proposition to staff. Comprising four gardens - Nurture, Inspiration, Empowerment and Care - each garden focused on a different aspect of the NIEC Employee Experience that worked together to provide a rich and vibrant environment for our staff to thrive in.

New Initiatives in Staff Development

Major thought and policy development work on talent management and leadership development were completed. NIEC will be implementing an Integrated Talent Management framework to ensure that there is a systematic concerted effort in leveraging talent strategically through the management of various people-related functions, such as workforce planning, talent acquisition, learning and development, performance

management, rewards and recognition, succession planning and employee engagement.

During FY2020, work started on a slew of initiatives. One was the Job Evaluation and Compensation Analysis Review to better understand NIEC's job roles and chart career pathways for our staff. NIEC also started developing a Leadership Development programme and Succession Management framework to build our leadership and talent pipeline. These programmes will be implemented in FY2021.

More than 1,000 training places were taken up during the financial year, giving an average of 30 training hours per staff. A new training programme on "Digital SkillsFuture Awareness" was introduced to increase staff awareness and acquire digital skills.



Building NIEC's Organisational Expertise & Capabilities was identified as one of the medium-term directions for NIEC. A key strategy was to focus on faculty development and enhance internal training capabilities to deepen student learning through improvements in the quality of teaching. A suite of development programmes was started:

- Brown bag sessions and professional development workshops. These activities and workshops will help faculty members to acquire competencies in the six identified strategic areas of focus, as well as in EdTech.
- Development of a teaching and learning observation tool that when completed and rolled-out, will enable our faculty to review their teaching approaches and propagate good practices across the campuses.
- Skills training in personal mastery to role-model and positively influence their students to be resilient in handling the demands of being EC educators. Under the work plan, a core group has been identified to champion the understanding of personal mastery and to build the capability within NIEC.
- Launch of NIEC's signature Professional Development programme, the "Professional Practice Attachment" where our faculty will have opportunities to conduct small-scale inquiry projects at preschools or in organisations. We are also exploring several attachment opportunities at renowned centres of excellence for our staff to gain greater exposure in specific areas of interest.
- Faculty can also work with institutions on small-scale collaborative research.

■ An online learning and information portal named "The Faculty Buzz", was implemented to provide convenience for staff to access curated local and international resources related to teaching pedagogy, research and EC trends, to support self-directed bite-sized learning.

■ Training sponsorships and awards were rolled out to assist selected faculty to further their studies/interest.

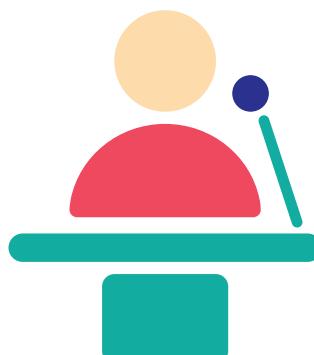
With better clarity on NIEC's staff development roadmap, Management will be able to engender greater buy-in from staff and harness faculty strengths to deliver quality training.

Creating More Career Opportunities for Staff

Since November 2020, job openings were advertised internally to create more career opportunities for staff. Interested staff could also apply to work on short-term HQ project assignments and acquire a broader understanding of NIEC's wide-ranging operations and insights on the planning and coordination to achieve organisational goals.

National Recognition for Staff

NIEC is honoured to have our staff recognised at the national level. We celebrate the conferring of the Singapore National Day Awards - Long Service Medal (Pingat Bakti Setia) 2020 to Dr Ho Yin Fong, Dr Kok Siat Yeow and Ms Rosewati Binte Sukiman.



At NIEC, we have opportunities to grow and contribute in strategic areas of interest.







7

STRENGTHENING CRITICAL ENABLERS

We define critical enablers as policies, systems and processes that are necessary to support the effectiveness and efficiency of NIEC.

The strategic thrust of strengthening critical enablers is supported by the Corporate and ASM Divisions to deliver the following strategic objectives:

- Sustainable operations and efficient processes including IT policies and systems
- Sufficient resources
- Impactful HR policies and practices
- Smooth finance operations
- Effective academic governance framework and operations
- Impactful change management
- Clear and timely internal communications

We highlight some of the key outcomes and achievements in FY2020.

Sustainable Operations and Efficient Processes

NIEC continued to obtain feedback and review our IT policies, systems and processes to improve organisational efficiency and staff productivity, with the following initiatives driven by the IT Division:

- Partnered relevant divisions to respond in a timely manner with appropriate IT solutions so that corporate services and course delivery could proceed smoothly, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Formed an EdTech Committee comprising members from academic divisions and NIEC campuses to identify and promote the adoption of relevant educational technological tools, and to build EdTech competencies for identified staff.
- Refined IT policies and systems for robustness. During the year, we also established the IT deployment and asset management policies and IT incident management procedures.
- Supported operations of key NIEC systems by enhancing systems to better reflect ground operations and overcome bottlenecks.
- Rolled out and refreshed two systems:
 - Field Practicum System to enhance efficiency for practicum matching; and
 - Library System to enhance access to learning resources.
- Added Padlet and SWIVL to enhance IT capabilities and improve engagement.

To complement the above initiatives, staff were upskilled in IT competencies. Types of training provided included:

- Learning Management System (Canvas) level 1 and 2 trainings
- EdTech tools (e.g. MS Teams, Big Blue Button (Canvas Conference), Padlet and SWIVL)
- Productivity tools (e.g. Kofax PDF and Network Attached Storage)
- IT Security and Personal Data Protection Act training

Sufficient Resources

To supplement our manpower resources, we leveraged adjunct faculty for course delivery as well as in selected course development. NIEC adopted a prudent approach in financial management, tracking expenditure against budget and ensuring that variances were justified.

Impactful HR Policies and Practices

Following the implementation of the integrated Performance Management System in September 2019, the full performance management cycle for staff comprising performance planning in January 2020, mid-year review and year-end review was carried out. System enhancement is still ongoing with the development of Human Resources Management System e-modules for Appraisal.

HR Division responded to staff needs due to COVID-19 and the WFH arrangements. Processes and programmes such as recruitment interviews, staff orientation, training and workshops were held virtually. In addition, new and revised HR policies and processes to support staff well-being were rolled out.

A key improvement made was to move the appointment of adjunct faculty to a master contract with staggered payment. This cut down on timesheet submissions and paperwork. HR will continue to review policies and practices for higher staff productivity.

Smooth Finance Operations

F&A Division worked with NTU (our parent entity) and system vendors to onboard the Systems Applications and Products (SAP) system. Targeted to be implemented in FY2021, this will improve the management of financial information, enhance details in management reports as well as align the financial reporting for smooth consolidation. SAP will also strengthen our internal controls and improve accuracy and efficiency of our processes. In addition, NIEC's procurement will also be hosted on NTU's ARIBA system, where in addition to more efficient process, we can also leverage NTU's term contracts for standard procurement items.

Effective Academic Governance Framework and Operations

Academic Quality Management (AQM) practices were in place since NIEC's set-up, as we inherited and adapted the prevailing AQM-related practices at the various Campuses. Following the formation

of an Academic Quality Management (AQM) unit under ASM Division in October 2019, a review was done on AQM-related policies, guidelines, processes and standard operating procedures to initiate the development of the NIEC AQM Framework. Approved by the Board of Studies in May 2020 and endorsed by the NIEC Board in June 2020, the AQM Framework identified existing as well as new quality-related processes and review to uphold NIEC's academic standards and quality. ASM Division will continue to work with divisions and campuses, as well as other stakeholders to further refine associated processes and standard operational procedures for implementation.

With our multiple-campus operating model, steps were taken to enhance the overall consistency in the application of admission policies and processes. The following processes were standardised across all NIEC campuses for better management and a stronger NIEC brand experience:

- Setting student intake targets for different admission exercises to cater to diversity of applicant profiles.
- Training faculty for EAE interviews and benchmarking to calibrate the selection process and ensure consistency in implementation.
- Establishing panels comprising NIEC's Senior Management for EAE interviews at all PET campuses.
- Implementing the harmonised discretionary admissions criteria/processes at all NIEC campuses. These included recognition of prior learning, use of aptitude assessment instruments to complement interviews. Additional considerations were also introduced for special cases (e.g. those with medical conditions).

Clear and Timely Internal Communications

The staff intranet provided a one-stop information platform where staff could find

updated information and access systems for applications. Under our knowledge management roadmap, an e-Registry system was set up in June 2020 to store official records in the centralised SharePoint for easy access and reference by staff to do their work.

Several NIEC-wide staff engagements are now a regular feature in NIEC's staff calendar. In place of physical gathering, a virtual Staff Recognition Day was held on 29 May 2020 to show appreciation to staff. We also congratulated and recognised those who received awards including teaching awards, long service awards as well as staff who were promoted. The annual Staff Townhall was held virtually on 20 November 2020 to engage staff on NIEC's performance and achievements for the year. Staff were also briefed on the strategic directions and challenges to prepare them for changes ahead. Some time was set aside for interactions and for staff to ask questions. Overall, the townhall was well attended with positive feedback. These platforms also provided opportunities for Director, NIEC to share the progress of the institution, to appreciate staff contributions and engage with staff.

Virtual staff welfare activities were also held periodically to promote staff participation in fun activities and team bonding. Staff at HQ also gathered virtually bimonthly for regular interactions and sharing across the HQ divisions. On an annual basis, each Division and Campus held a planning-cum-team bonding retreat. Besides having meaningful check-in session, these platforms served to keep staff updated on their Divisions' and Campuses' performance, directions and strategies as well as expectations of outcomes to be achieved. Staff were also involved in mapping out the work plans to garner a deeper sense of ownership, commitment and clarity on work. Key work plans for NIEC were presented annually to the NIEC Board of Directors' Executive Committee and endorsed by the NIEC Board.







8 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

NIEC believes that good corporate governance is critical to our performance and operations. Management has accordingly put in place a corporate governance structure with clear lines of reporting, responsibility and accountability, underpinned by effective internal controls and risk management systems.

Incorporated on 2 March 2018 as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee (Reg. No. 201807452K) under the Companies Act (Cap. 50) of Singapore, NIEC is a subsidiary of the NTU and affiliated to NIE. The governance of NIEC is specified in its Constitution.

Governance Evaluation Checklist

As a corporate entity and registered charity, NIEC's practices are closely aligned to the

principles and guidelines in the Code of Governance for Charities. Our Governance Evaluation Checklist can be found at the Charity Portal website (www.charities.gov.sg).

Policies to manage conflict of interest

Members of the Board and staff are required in their respective capacities to act at all times in the best interest of NIEC. Policies and procedures are in place to address potential

conflict-of-interest situations. Every Board Member shall observe the provisions of Section 156 under the Companies Act (Cap. 50) of Singapore relating to the disclosure of the interests of Directors in transactions or proposed transactions with NIEC or of any office held or property possessed by a Director which might create duties or interests in conflict with his duties or interests as a Director. Except as otherwise provided by NIEC's Constitution, a Director shall not vote on (or be counted in the quorum in respect of) any resolution of the Board or of a committee of Directors concerning a matter in which he/she is, directly or indirectly interested. For the purposes of this regulation, in relation to an Alternate Director, an interest of his appointor shall be treated as an interest of the Alternate Director without prejudice to any interest which the Alternate Director has otherwise.

Board of Directors

There were changes to the NIEC Board of Directors during the FY2020. With the appointment of Ms Lai Wei Lin as the Permanent Secretary (Law) in addition to her current appointment as Second Permanent Secretary (Education), there were changes to the oversight of portfolios at MOE. Ms Lai stepped down as Chairman of the NIEC Board with effect from 1 January 2021. Board Member Ms Melissa Khoo, also Deputy Secretary (Policy) in MOE, was appointed as Chairman of the Board with effect from 1 January 2021.

As at 31 March 2021, the NIEC Board comprised 11 members (and 1 alternate member) appointed by the Minister for Education. Board Members include academics, educators and professionals from the public service and private sectors. Each member is appointed on the strength of his/her experience and ability to contribute to NIEC, and brings with him/her independent judgment on

issues of strategy, performance, resource allocation, and risk and compliance, as well as valuable relationships and networks that are essential for the growth of NIEC. The NIEC Constitution expressly stipulates that Board Members shall not receive any remuneration for services rendered by them as members of the Board.

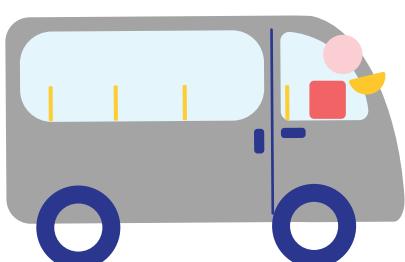
Board Meetings

In FY2020, three Board meetings and a Board Strategic Planning meeting were held. Besides providing strategic governance, the Board has oversight of NIEC's key performance outcomes and risk management and is accountable to MOE for the outcomes and use of NIEC's resources. In addition, the Board approves NIEC's operating and budgetary plans as well as strategic HR and finance policies.

Board Committees

Since 1 March 2020, three Board Committees were set up to assist the Board. These are the Executive Committee (ExCo), Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), and Professional Advisory Committee (PAC).

Membership of the Committees is carefully selected, with responsibilities distributed among Board Members, to ensure the effectiveness of each committee's focus and contribution. Where necessary, non-Board Members with expertise in their respective fields are co-opted to enhance the deliberations and decision-making process of the Board Committees. The responsibilities and authority of each Board Committee are set out in the written terms of reference which are approved by the Board. The Board Committees report their decisions to the Board regularly.



The roles of the Board Committees are briefly described below:

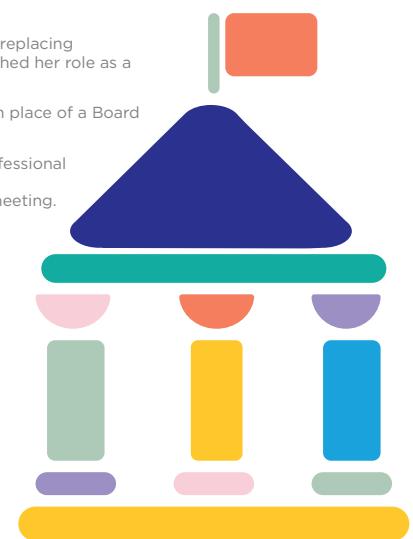
- ExCo provides oversight and policy guidance on strategic resources such as budget, remuneration framework, succession planning, talent development and manpower planning of NIEC.
- ARC oversees NIEC's internal controls, financial reporting and enterprise risk management.
- PAC assists the Board in guiding NIEC in EC industry trends, research directions, networking and benchmarking of best practices.

The attendance of Board members at Board meetings as well as at Committee meetings held in FY2020 are shown in the table.

BOARD MEMBER	CURRENT BOARD APPOINTMENT	DATE OF APPOINTMENT TO BOARD	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED			
			BOARD	ARC	EXCO	PAC
Ms Melissa Khoo	Chairman, NIEC Board Chairman, ExCo (with effect on 1 January 2021)	1 April 2019	4/4	-	2/2	-
Prof Christine Goh	Board Member Member, ExCo	9 October 2018	4/4	-	2/3	-
Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong	Board Member	14 March 2019	4/4	-	-	-
Ms Chan Yen San	Board Member Chairman, ARC Member, ExCo	14 March 2019	4/4	3/3	3/3	-
Mr Peter Lam	Board Member Chairman, PAC	14 March 2019	4/4	-	-	2/2
Mr Clarence Ti	Board Member Member, ARC	14 March 2019	4/4	3/3	-	-
Ms Low Khah Gek	Board Member Member, ExCo	14 March 2019	4/4	-	3/3	-
Dr Christine Chen	Board Member Member, PAC	14 March 2019	4/4	-	-	2/2
Prof Ho Lai Yun	Board Member Member, PAC	14 March 2019	4/4	-	-	2/2
Ms Zaiton Bte Mohd Ali	Board Member Member, PAC	14 March 2019	4/4	-	-	2/2
Dr May See	Board Member Member, ARC Member, PAC	14 March 2019	4/4	3/3	-	2/2
Prof Tan Ooi Kiang	Alternate Director to Prof Christine Goh	31 August 2020	1/1	-	-	-
Ms Lai Wei Lin	Chairman, NIEC Board Chairman, ExCo (Left NIEC Board on 31 December 2020)	14 March 2019	3/3	-	2/2	-

REMARKS:

1. Ms Melissa Khoo was appointed as Chairman, NIEC Board on 1 January 2021, replacing Ms Lai Wei Lin. Ms Khoo was also appointed as Chairman, ExCo and relinquished her role as a member in PAC on the same date.
2. The Board had a Board Strategic Planning meeting on 24 September 2020, in place of a Board meeting.
3. Prof Tan Oon Seng is not a Board Member of NIEC but co-opted into the Professional Advisory Committee as provided under Regulation 57 of NIEC's Constitution. Professor Tan is the Director of CRCD, NIE and he has attended 2/2 of PAC meeting.
4. ARC = Audit and Risk Committee, ExCo = Executive Committee and PAC = Professional Advisory Committee







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FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Audited Financial Statements FY2020

The financial statements of NIEC for FY2020 ended 31 March 2021 were audited by the auditors, Deloitte & Touche LLP. The financial statements of NIEC comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 March 2021, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in fund and reserve and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and the notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies. The financial statements of NIEC were properly drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, Chapter 50 (the “Act”), the Singapore Charities Act, Chapter 37 and other relevant

regulations (the “Charities Act and Regulations”) and Financial Reporting Standards in Singapore (“FRSs”) so as to give a true and fair view of the financial position of NIEC as at 31 March 2021 and the financial performance, changes in fund and reserve and cashflows of NIEC for the year ended on that date.

The NIEC Board approved the NIEC’s audited financial statements for FY2020.

Income and Expenditure

In FY2020, NIEC recorded a total income of S\$62.0 million (FY2019: S\$60.6 million) (including government grants), expenditure of S\$56.8 million (FY2019: S\$59.2 million) and net surplus of S\$5.2 million (FY2019: S\$1.4 million).



Balance Sheet

Total assets were S\$24.8 million (FY2019: S\$24.4 million). Total liabilities were S\$16.0 million (FY2019: S\$20.7 million).

Review and Changes in the Policy

There were no changes to NIEC's accounting policy in FY2020. NIEC is registered as a Charity and no fund-raising activity was carried out in FY2020.

Funding Sources

NIEC is principally funded by operating grants from MOE, SSG, WSG and from course and miscellaneous fees charged.

Memberships

Not applicable.

Future Plans and Commitments

There is no plan for capital investment in FY2021.

Note: The Audited Financial Statements of NIEC for year ended 31 March 2021 is not attached to this annual report.

GLOSSARY

ADECL	Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership
AECES	Association for Early Childhood Educators
AQM	Academic Quality Management
ASM	Academic & Student Management
AY	Academic Year
C&P	Curriculum & Programmes
CET	Continuing Education & Training
CRCD	Centre for Research in Child Development
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DECCE-T	Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education - Teaching
EAE	Early Admissions Exercise
EC	Early Childhood
ECDA	Early Childhood Development Agency
EdTech	Education Technology
EES	Employee Engagement Survey
F&A	Finance & Administration
FLD	Faculty & Leadership Development
FY	Financial Year
HR	Human Resource
IHLs	Institutes of Higher Learning
IP	Inclusive Practices
IT	Information Technology
ITE	Institute of Technical Education
M&C	Marketing & Communications
MOE	Ministry of Education
MTL	Mother Tongue Language

NIE	National Institute of Education
NIEC	National Institute of Early Childhood Development
NIEC (City)	NIEC campus located at NTUC Trade Union House
NIEC (ITE)	NIEC campus at Institute of Technical Education College Central
NIEC (NP)	NIEC campus at Ngee Ann Polytechnic
NIEC (TP)	NIEC campus at Temasek Polytechnic
NLB	National Library Board
NP	Ngee Ann Polytechnic
NTU	Nanyang Technological University
PET	Pre-Employment Training
RIC²E	Respect, Integrity, Care, Collaboration and Excellence
SAS	Student & Academic Services
SAP	Systems Applications and Products
SSG	SkillsFuture Singapore
SPOE	Strategic Planning & Organisational Excellence
SportSG	Sport Singapore
TNCC	Tampines North Community Club
TP	Temasek Polytechnic
WFH	Work-from-Home
WFO	Work-from-Office
WSG	Workforce Singapore

UNTIL OUR NEXT REPORT!





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