



Students Bring Singapore's Forgotten Heritage to Life at TF-NUS Heritage Champions Showcase

Description

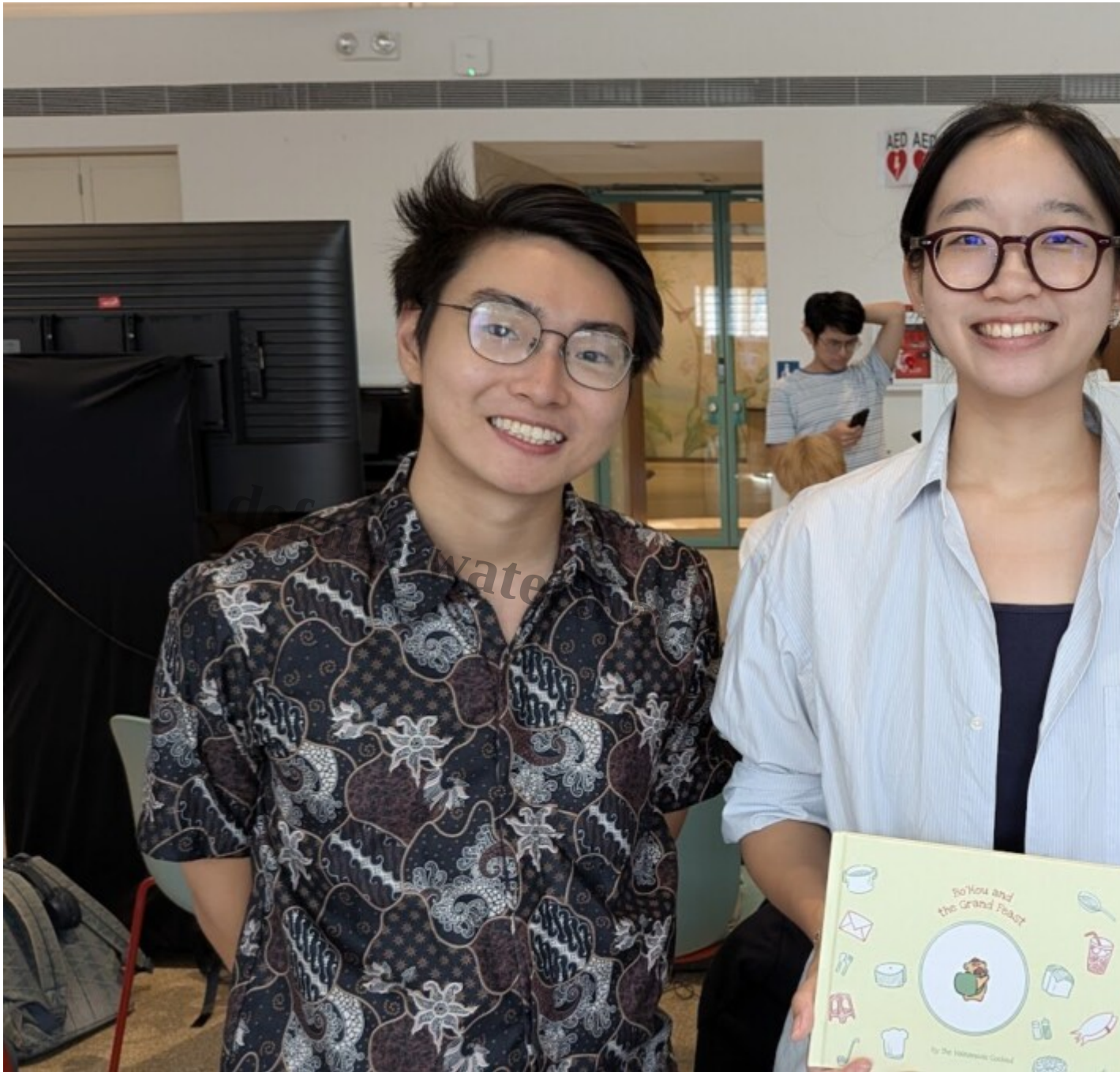
What do roadside ice cream carts, the Orang Laut and wartime recipes have in common? They are all threads of Singapore's heritage, and a new generation of young people is weaving them back into the conversation. The inaugural **TF-NUS Heritage Champions** Student Showcase, held on 5 September 2026, put 10 youth-led projects on display, with each one drawing more than a thousand members of the public into Singapore's lesser-known stories.



Panellists at the TF-NUS Heritage Champions Showcase. Image: GLOO Public Relations / TF-NUS Heritage Champions

Ten youth-led projects, one shared mission

The projects show just how creatively young Singaporeans are approaching heritage. One team produced a children's book about the fading world of roadside ice cream hawkers. Another retraced the journeys of the Orang Laut, the sea nomads whose history is often left out of textbooks. A third recreated meals from Singapore's wartime past, using food as a way into memory. Storytelling, technology and community activities run through all of them, each project a small act of preservation aimed squarely at today's audiences.



Students share their children's book on Singapore's roadside ice cream hawkers.
Image: GLOO Public Relations / TF-NUS Heritage Champions

Two years, two cohorts, 125 students

The showcase marked the culmination of the TF-NUS Heritage Champions programme, run over two years across two cohorts. In all, 125 students from institutes of higher learning took part. After heritage-preservation training by NUS Libraries, and with support from the National Heritage Board, the students formed teams and pitched proposals for community-based projects. The top five teams from each cohort received up to S\$7,000 and six months to bring their ideas to life. Between them, the 10 projects have since reached more than 1,000 people.

Ms Goh Hanyan, Senior Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, was the Guest of Honour, touring the exhibition and speaking with the young participants.



Participants of the TF-NUS Heritage Champions programme at the showcase. Image: GLOO Public Relations / TF-NUS Heritage Champions

Heritage that lives in the everyday

Associate Professor Natalie Pang, University Librarian at NUS, said the programme underlines the part young people can play in deciding which of Singapore's stories are remembered. "Singapore's heritage is not only found in monuments and historic buildings. It also lives in everyday experiences, memories, food, places and the stories of communities," she said. "When young people take

ownership of these stories and find new ways to share them, they help ensure that our heritage remains relevant and meaningful to future generations.â?•

Mr James Chan, Head of Programmes Office and Resilient Societies at Temasek Foundation, added that heritage â?comes alive and stays relevant when each generation finds its own way to reconnect with itâ?•. Mr Jervais Choo, Deputy Director for Organisation Design and Innovation at the National Heritage Board, said the programme had been â?an effective way of empowering youth to take ownership of heritage in Singaporeâ?•, pointing to the genuine connections students had forged with heritage communities on the ground.



A student team presents its illustrated heritage project. Image: GLOO Public Relations / TF-NUS Heritage Champions

What comes next

Buoyed by the response to its first run, NUS Libraries plans to continue the programme, with talks with potential partners under way. Further details are expected later, and more information will be shared via nus.edu/heritagechamps.



Visitors browse a student heritage project at the showcase. Image: GLOO Public Relations / TF-NUS Heritage Champions

If you enjoy this kind of homegrown culture, there is plenty more happening around town: the National Gallery is winding down with its new [Slow Saturday](#) sessions, there are free [Gallery Sketch](#) drop-ins for budding artists, and families can meet the giant pandas at [Panda Planet at River Wonders](#).

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