

Report: 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

New Naratif is the trading name of and is published by Observatory Southeast Asia Limited, whose objectives are:

- Build a broader understanding and more diverse, complex view of the Southeast Asian region that helps contribute to solutions for important issues facing the people of the Southeast Asian region.
- Innovate on research, news, and culture publication in the Southeast Asian region, in content, form, and channel, and offer an outlet for talented Southeast Asian researchers, journalists, and artists.
- Promote the universal values of democracy, freedom of the media, and freedom of inquiry, information, and expression.

In its second year of existence, New Naratif has received accolades in Southeast Asia and globally for our stories on the region. Despite numerous political and financial challenges, our membership is growing and we have a steady pipeline of stories which reflect growing impact on the political discourse in Southeast Asia.

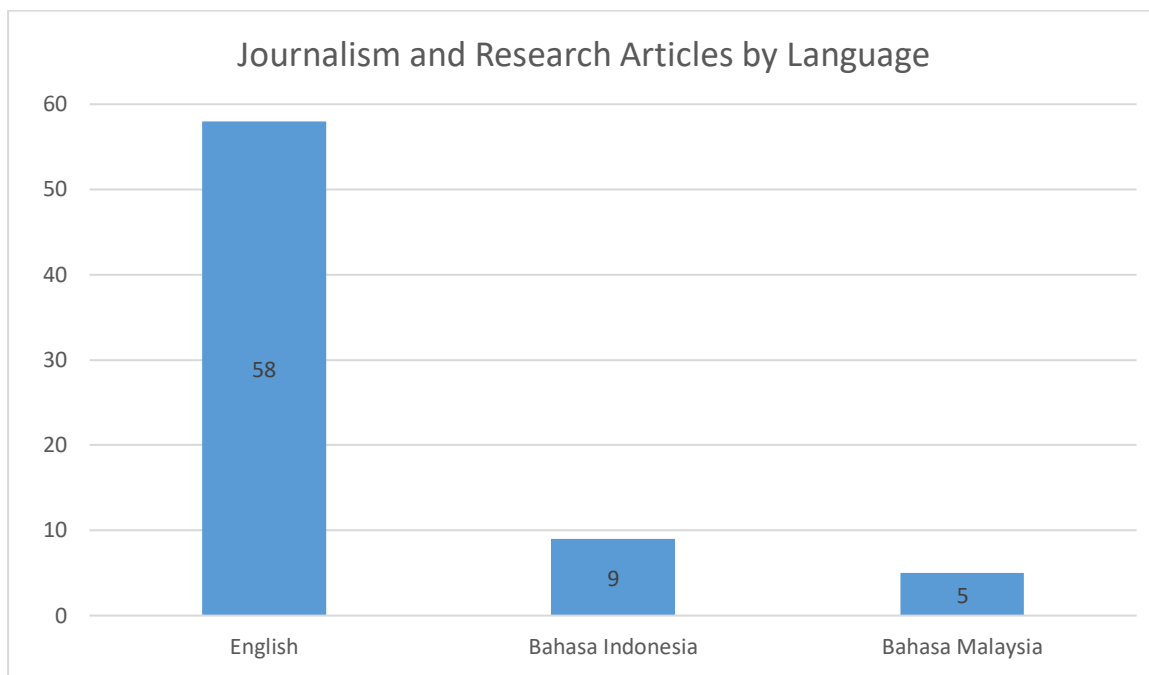
1. Content

Between 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020, a total of 94 pieces of content were published. This is in line with the total of 97 pieces published in the previous six months (accounting for the closure of New Naratif in the last two weeks of the calendar year). The 94 pieces include:

- 59 total journalism articles, including:
 - 45 unique articles, translated into one of two different Southeast Asian languages.
 - 14 translations
- 13 Research articles
- 12 Comics
- 2 Videos
- 8 Podcasts

Of the 72 prose articles,

- 58 are in English
- 9 in Bahasa Indonesia (BI)
- 5 in Bahasa Malaysia (BM)



New Naratif has published 94 items over 23 weeks¹, for an average of 4.09 items per week – well above of our target of two articles per week. Excluding translations of the same article, we have published 80 items, or 3.48 items per week.

2. Our Members

New Naratif's membership continues to grow. At the end of March 2019, we had 750 members; at the end of March 2020, we have 833 number of members. As noted in the previous report, we underwent significant churn in September 2019 as many crowdfunding memberships were not renewed. Thus, in September 2019, we lost 282 members. Apart from this one-off loss, however, we continued to grow steadily. We gained 481 members in the FY2019-20, and lost 398 members (or 116 when not including September 2019).

¹ New Naratif only publishes 50 weeks per year, with the last two weeks off.



3. Staffing

New Naratif is proud to be an organisation which prizes diversity. Our staff are majority female, and come from a wide range of ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. They are all Southeast Asian (or permanently resident in Southeast Asia), intimately connected with their local communities, and passionate about telling important, meaningful, and relevant stories about our home region.

We are supported by a network of ~150 contributors across Southeast Asia. Our relationship with our contributors goes beyond just the publication of content. Our contributors are a valuable source of information, advice, and also function as eyes and ears on the ground to help us identify important issues which we can address.

New Naratif's team has evolved in the period under review. In March 2020, we employed 9 people:

- Editor-in-Chief: Aisyah Llewellyn
- Comics and Illustrations Editor: Charis Loke
- Operations Manager: Chua Minxi
- Membership Engagement Manager/Malaysia Lead: Deborah Augustin
- Design Editor: Ellena Ekarahendy
- Bahasa Malaysia Editor/Podcasts Editor: Kelly Anissa
- Deputy Editor: Matt Surrusco
- Indonesia Lead: Ranto Sibarani
- Managing Director: Pingtjin Thum

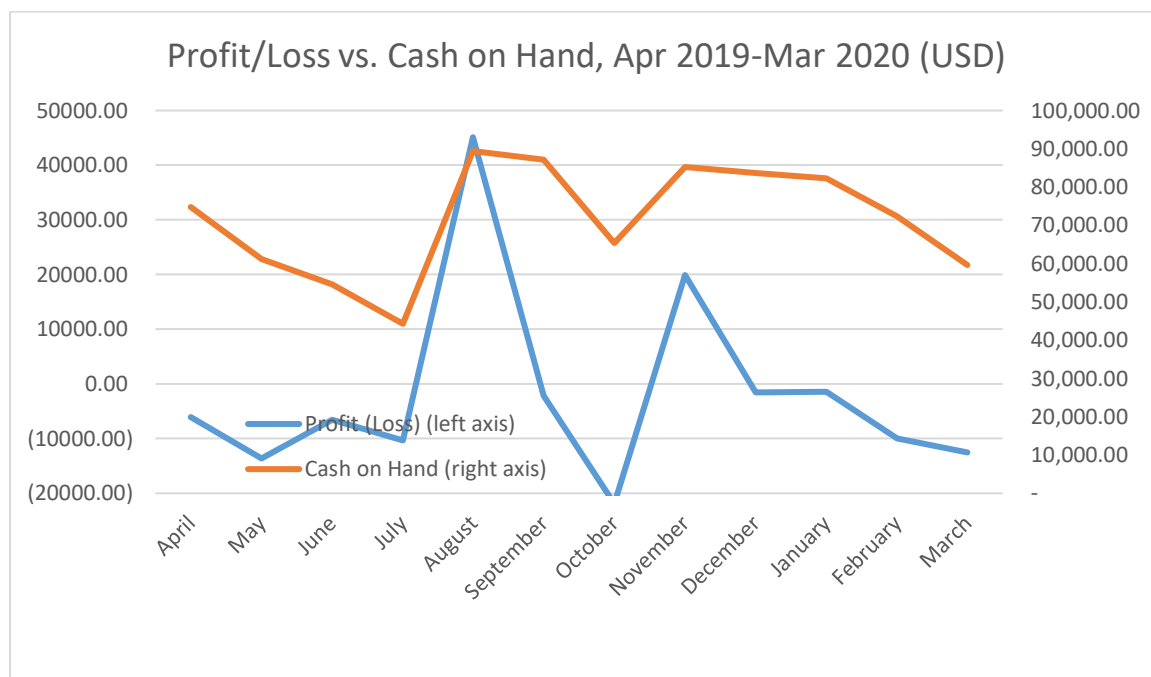
New Naratif is also committed to publishing in multiple Southeast Asian languages. Due to technological and funding limitations, we are currently publishing chiefly in English, Bahasa Indonesia, and Bahasa Malaysia.

New Naratif continues to look to expand the team and we plan to hire a Marketing and Engagement Manager and a Social Media Manager.

4. Finances

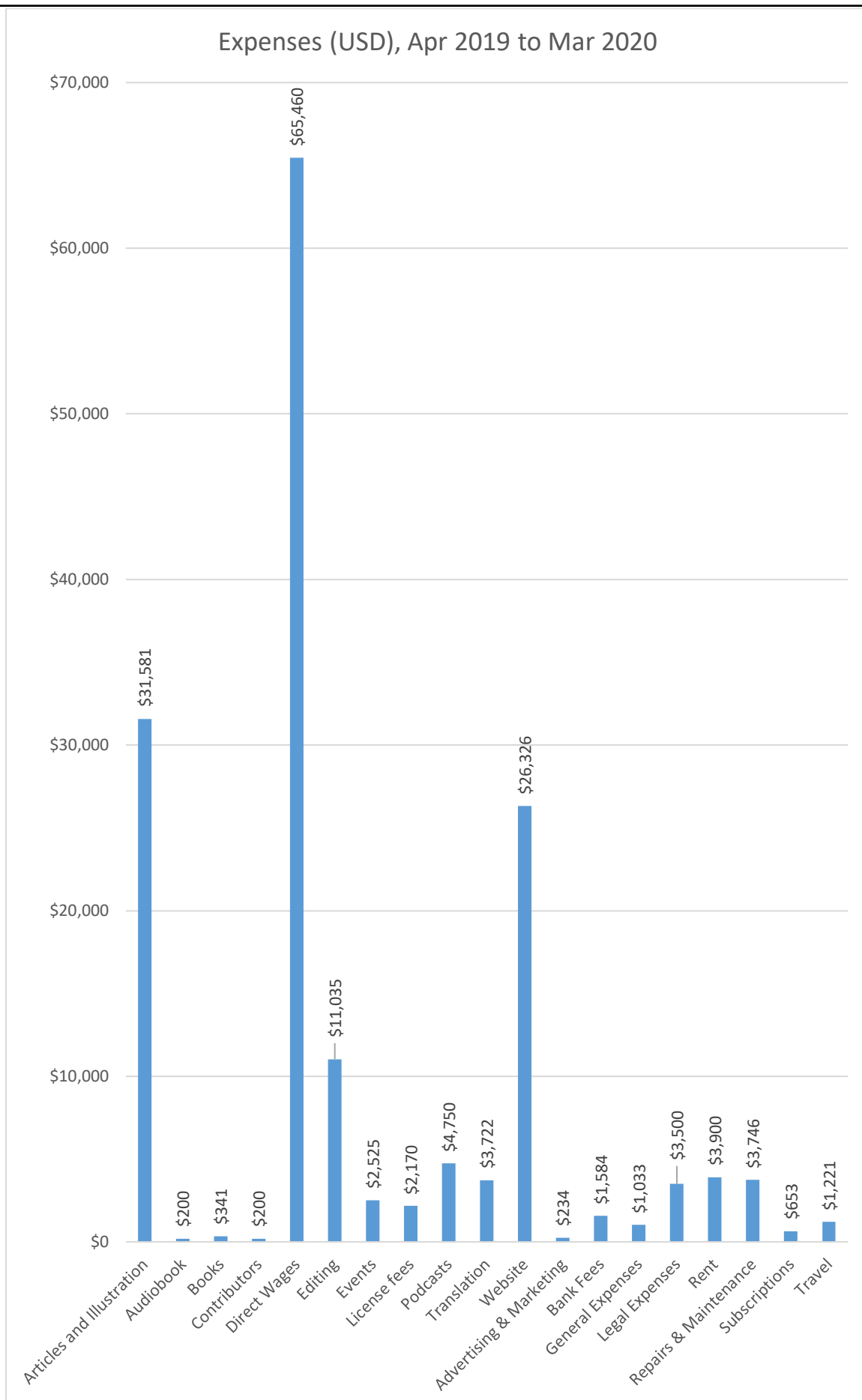
New Naratif is a non-profit organisation. We have adhered to the principle of sustainable funding, spending only what we have on hand.

At the end of this period, the world was beginning to be gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are unable to forecast how this will impact New Naratif's finances, but we anticipate that it will have an extremely negative impact on media revenue in general, which includes New Naratif. We are formulating plans to cope with the expected downturn. It continues to be of utmost important that we continue to expand our membership base, and find new grants and donations.



A chart showing a general breakdown of New Naratif's expenditures is overleaf.

For a full report of New Naratif's financial position, please see the attached State of Income and Expenses.



5. Challenges

a) Political

The political and regulatory environment for independent media remains overwhelmingly hostile. Apart from instances of violence and criminalisation, Southeast Asian journalists also regularly face obstacles in reporting, such as the lack of freedom of information laws, politically appointed editors, and widespread self-censorship. All ASEAN countries are in the bottom half of the World Press Freedom Index, from Malaysia (the most improved country in the past year) at 101 to Viet Nam at 175 (out of 180). Other major markets for *New Naratif* include Indonesia at 119, Singapore at 158, and Cambodia at 144. The lone bright spot in Southeast Asia (relatively speaking) is Timor-Leste at 78.

In summary, there is a very difficult legal, regulatory, and political environment for independent media in Southeast Asia, on top of a market that does not generally pay for news. Publishing in this region also carries significant political risk. *New Naratif* mitigates much of this risk by being incorporated as a private company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. Avoiding any Southeast Asian jurisdiction shields our work from political interference in Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, while we are committed to transparency, we will employ pseudonyms where necessary to protect our writers. We also have a policy where only one editor knows who the author behind the pseudonym is, to minimise any potential exposure. We are constantly reminded that our contributors face threats to their safety across Southeast Asia, and we will continue to do what we can to help our contributors remain safe while they do their jobs.

b) Financial

Long term financial sustainability remains a major challenge. However, we continue to grow every month. We continue to operate at a level that we feel is sustainable and, in the meantime, we will continue to apply for grants from various funding bodies.

6. Looking Forward

Over the next 12 months, New Naratif has three main aims:

1. Do a better job with marketing and general awareness of New Naratif, including the hiring of Marketing/Social Media Managers to facilitate this.
2. Make our product more relevant to the changing political situation in Southeast Asia.
3. Improve the functionality of our website, in particular improving user experience, language functionality, and the ability to display content.

New Naratif

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Statement of Income and Expenses for FY April 2019 to March 2020

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total (USD)
MEMBERSHIPS													
Gain	33	30	32	33	43	38	32	30	31	80	39	60	
Loss	7	14	11	9	0	282	0	11	8	39	0	17	
TOTAL	776	792	813	837	880	636	668	687	710	751	790	833	
INCOME													
Memberships	1,666.50	1,640.50	1,573.50	1,581.50	2,863.50	8,834.90	5,534.50	4,083.50	5,266.00	5,628.20	2,343.50	2,740.30	43,756.40
Donations	0.00	5,260.77	10.00	0.00	343.19	1,059.00	2,496.55	4,106.94	6,038.07	1,149.00	179.00	228.00	20,870.52
Book Sales	314.68	125.35	135.08	74.12	36.92	205.72	58.00	338.20	55.66	18.46	0.00	37.20	1,399.40
Events	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,034.58	0.00	118.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,153.40
Collaborations	0.00	0.00	0.00	280.00	156.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,307.69	0.00	0.00	2,743.87
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50,000.00	0.00	0.00	22,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	72,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	1,981.18	7,026.62	1,718.58	1,935.62	53,399.80	10,099.62	9,123.63	31,028.64	11,478.55	9,103.35	2,522.50	3,005.50	142,423.60
EXPENSES													
Articles and Illustration	3,239.00	3,549.00	2,360.00	4,060.00	1,250.00	2,127.81	1,970.00	2,850.00	2,245.00	2,375.00	1,825.00	3,730.00	31,580.81
Audiobook	0.00	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Books	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	341.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	341.15
Contributors	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Direct Wages	600.00	5,770.00	5,550.00	5,350.00	4,950.00	6,643.94	5,550.00	6,250.00	6,770.00	5,136.26	4,895.00	7,995.00	65,460.20
Editing	3,625.00	250.00	200.00	1,100.00	190.00	80.00	860.00	890.00	990.00	1,150.00	900.00	800.00	11,035.00
Events	24.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	273.49	270.00	617.44	0.00	1,076.63	41.00	0.00	222.00	2,524.76
License fees	66.16	66.02	210.18	66.27	96.85	96.26	107.86	106.48	106.31	106.68	1,013.73	127.18	2,169.98
Podcasts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,800.00	1,300.00	0.00	450.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,750.00
Translation	250.00	903.11	20.65	379.00	0.00	356.29	147.07	226.10	341.34	277.43	290.00	530.54	3,721.53
Website	0.00	969.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22,334.47	0.00	0.00	503.91	2,518.49	0.00	26,326.13
Advertising & Marketing	0.00	200.00	0.00	33.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	233.90
Bank Fees	97.27	143.83	86.70	108.84	47.11	103.02	263.31	158.84	160.29	168.92	108.86	137.45	1,584.44
General Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	212.00	621.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,033.00
Legal Expenses	0.00	3,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00
Rent	0.00	0.00	0.00	400.00	0.00	800.00	400.00	400.00	400.00	400.00	0.00	1,100.00	3,900.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	3,746.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,746.00
Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	152.80	0.00	0.00	652.80
Travel	0.00	278.00	0.00	135.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	558.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,221.39
TOTAL EXPENSES	7,901.63	19,575.22	8,427.53	11,633.01	8,407.45	12,977.32	33,550.15	11,093.42	14,110.11	10,312.00	11,551.08	14,642.17	164,181.09
OTHER INCOME/(LOSS)													
Currency Fluctuations/Revaluations	(86.49)	(1,094.25)	124.60	(584.25)	128.04	694.36	2,518.22	(22.53)	1,087.92	(224.55)	(956.22)	(920.72)	664.13
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(6,006.94)	(13,642.85)	(6,584.35)	(10,281.64)	45,120.39	(2,183.34)	(21,908.30)	19,912.69	(1,543.64)	(1,433.20)	(9,984.80)	(12,557.39)	(21,093.36)