

Report: 9 September 2017 to 30 September 2018

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 first year of existence, New Naratif has slowly grown a strong reputation throughout 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.

Crowdfunding proceeded from 9 September 2017 to 2 September 2018. We had a total of 544 crowdfunding members who contributed a total of US\$42,710 after transaction fees and exchange rate losses. With these proceeds, we rebuilt the website, raising the paywall on 9 September 2018, and creating a new payment system and membership database.

In August 2018, Observatory Southeast Asia Sdn Bhd was registered, and in September 2018, New Naratif opened its Kuala Lumpur office, which will serve as our regional headquarters in Southeast Asia. We are in the process of registering the company in Indonesia.

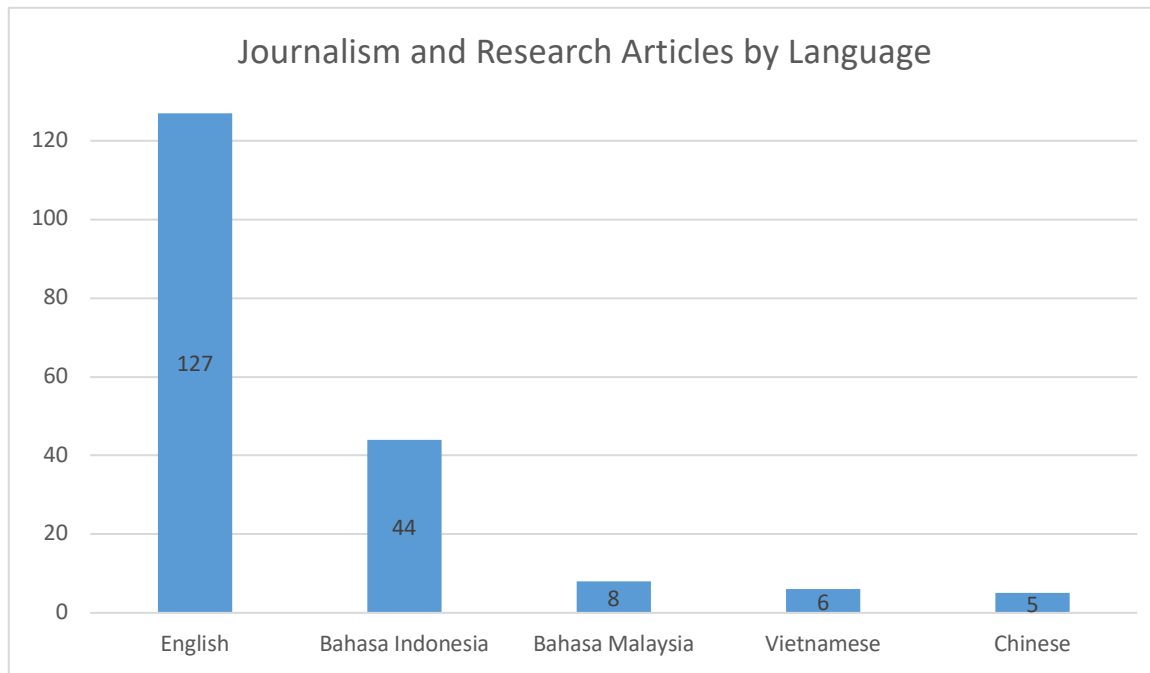
1. Content

The publishing of New Naratif started on 1 November 2017 and by 30 September 2018, a total of 210 pieces of content have been published:

- 171 total journalism articles, including:
 - 90 unique articles, translated into one of five different Southeast Asian languages.
 - 60 translations
 - 21 “Akan Datang” articles – a look ahead to the week’s most important stories in SEA.
- 19 Research articles, including 3 articles in Bahasa Malaysia
- 10 Comics

- 2 Videos
- 8 Podcasts, for over 7 hours of total audio content

Of the 190 journalism and research articles, 127 are in English, 44 in Bahasa Indonesia (BI), 8 in Bahasa Malaysia (BM), 6 in Vietnamese, and 5 in Chinese. While we have professional translations for the BI and BM articles, Vietnamese and Chinese translations are done by members of New Naratif whose support has extended beyond financial.



These articles cover a wide variety of subjects from across the region, from the underground music scene in Malaysia to declining press freedom in Myanmar.

Excluding the sample articles published before the website came online on 1 November 2017, New Naratif has published 210 articles over 45 weeks¹, for an average of 4.66 articles per week – well above of our target of two articles per week. Excluding translations of the same article, we have published 147 articles, or 3.26 articles per week.

Most Read Articles, Journalism (Unique Views)

- The Making of a Female ISIS Bomber: 18,227 (Bahasa Indonesia)², 5,654 (English)³
- North/South: 12,336 (Vietnamese)⁴, 9,578 (English)⁵

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

² <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/making-female-isis-bomber/share/cwguhze022c20ad33354cbe77cc9709996dd1/>

³ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/bagaimana-isis-mencetak-seorang-bomber-perempuan-pertama-di-indonesia/share/cwguhze022c20ad33354cbe77cc9709996dd1/>

⁴ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/bac-nam/share/cwguhze2db3545a41db81329326dbb11caff449/>

⁵ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/north-south/share/cwguhze8cee1a0fe765af425dc6f0b6169a6c07/>

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- Remembering Coldstore: Former Detainees Speak: 7,544 (English)⁶, 403 (Bahasa Indonesia)⁷

Most Read Articles, Research (Unique Views)

- How Malaysia's Election is Being Rigged: 17,716 (English)⁸, 3,959 (Bahasa Malaysia)⁹
- How Discrimination Kills Gay Men in Singapore: 7,056 (English)¹⁰
- Myths and Facts: Migrant Workers in Singapore: 6,184 (English)¹¹

Most Read Articles, Comics (Unique Views)

- The Select Committee on One Tight Slaps: 16,007¹²
- Malay in the Modern World: 10,362¹³
- No One Should Have to be Super in Order to be Human: 9,035¹⁴

We have hired a Membership Engagement Editor to better understand our membership, as well as consultants to help with our Search Engine Optimisation and with our website User Experience and User Interface Design.

As a trial, we will be publishing selected articles in a 650 page book to commemorate the first year of New Naratif. If this is successful, we will consider publishing periodical versions of New Naratif.

2. Our Members

New Naratif's crowdfunding period ended on 2 September 2018. We had 544 crowdfunding members who contributed a total of US\$42,710 (see Finances, below).

⁶ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/remembering-coldstore-singapores-former-detainees-speak/share/cwguhz/4e0ccd2b894f717df5ebc12f4282ee70/>

⁷ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/mengingat-coldstore-mantan-tahanan-berbicara/share/cwguhz/e7532dbeff7ef901f2e70daacb3f452d/>

⁸ <https://newnaratif.com/research/malaysias-election-rigged/share/cwguhz/df1a336b7e0b0cb186de6e66800c43a9/>

⁹ <https://newnaratif.com/research/bagaimana-pilihan-roya-di-malaysia-dialah-atur/share/cwguhz/df1a336b7e0b0cb186de6e66800c43a9/>

¹⁰ <https://newnaratif.com/research/how-discrimination-kills-gay-men-in-singapore/share/cwguhz/c4bca428211c2b48b81fd3b12afd2aa1/>

¹¹ <https://newnaratif.com/research/myths-and-facts-migrant-workers-in-singapore/share/cwguhz/e06f967fb0d355592be4e7674fa31d26/>

¹² <https://newnaratif.com/comic/select-committee-one-tight-slaps/share/cwguhz/b2303e95600891090f6519df2b23eb09/>

¹³ <https://newnaratif.com/comic/malay-in-the-modern-world/share/cwguhz/d045c59a90d7587d8d671b5f5aec4e7c/>

¹⁴ <https://newnaratif.com/comic/no-one-super-order-human/share/cwguhz/dccb1c3a558c50d389c24d69a9856730/>

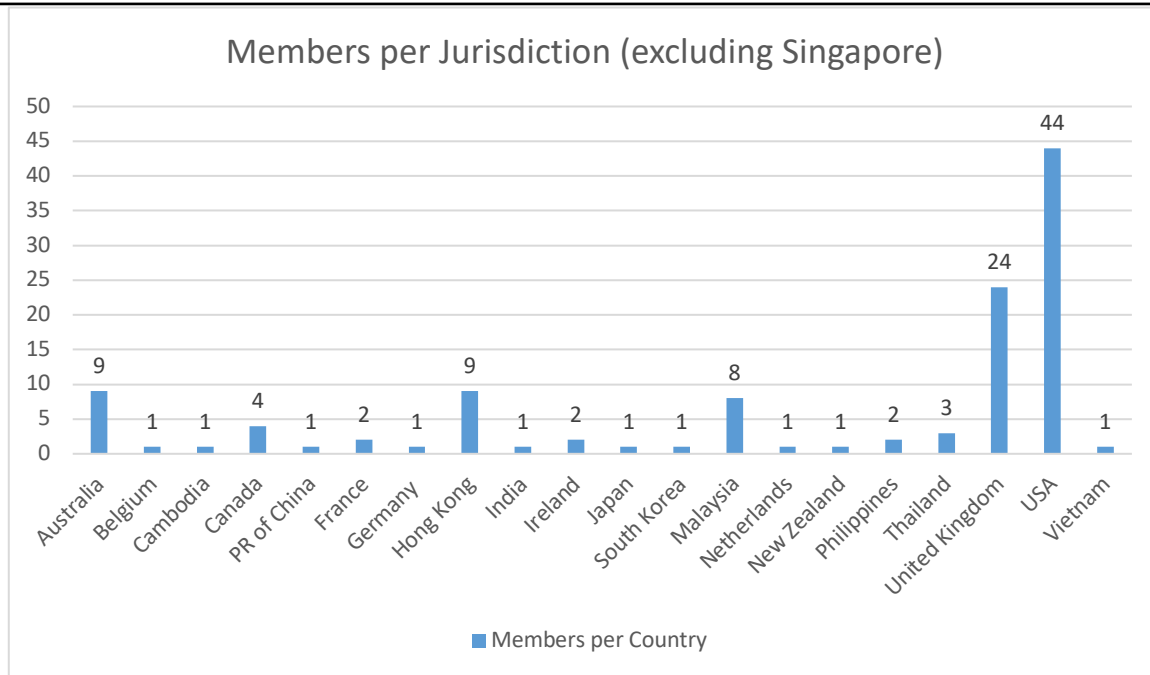
The crowdfunded donations were used to build a new website and backend, necessitating that subscribers re-enrolled themselves onto the database. They were given coupon codes to enable them to purchase new memberships for free, at the same level at which they supported us at in the crowdfunding campaign.

We aimed for 50% of crowdfunding members to re-enroll themselves, and we are pleased that we have met this target. In addition, we are accumulating new members. As of 30 October 2018, New Naratif is back up to 310 subscribers to the website. Crowdfunding members continue to trickle into the database at a regular rate, and we hope that most crowdfunding members will return to the site. From next year, their memberships will auto-renew. In this past year, we have only had 3 people terminate their memberships, and none asked for their money back.



Our members are domiciled in 21 countries. Of our 544 members, the majority (427) are registered as being domiciled in Singapore. The next most common countries are the United States of America (44) and the United Kingdom (24). We do not collect any information on our members beyond name, email, and their tax jurisdiction¹⁵, so we are unable to provide any further breakdown of membership.

¹⁵ Please see our privacy policy at <https://newnaratif.com/privacy/>



In October 2018, we hired a Membership Engagement Editor, Deborah Germaine Augustin, who is based in Kuala Lumpur, and who will be in charge of our relationship with members, organising events, and increasing engagement. We will be holding regular Open Meetings in Kuala Lumpur, as well as other events.

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 80 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.

Apart from our Editor-in-Chief, New Naratif does not pay any salary to our Directors (Managing/Research, Design, or Creative), who work on a pro bono basis. Our Editor-in-Chief began drawing a part-time salary in March 2018, following the receipt of a grant (see Finances, below).

New Naratif currently employs four editors, all on a part-time consulting basis. Our Editor-in-Chief, Kirsten Han, covers Singapore. We also have Consulting Editors for West Malaysia (Pauline Wong), North Sumatra (Aisyah Llewellyn), and Jakarta/Papua (Febriana Firdaus).

Febriana will be departing in November 2018, but we are finalising a new hire for Jakarta, along with new hires for Sabah and Cambodia. We continue to seek Consulting Editors for other major urban areas and majority-minority areas of Southeast Asia, in particular in Borneo/Kalimantan, Eastern Indonesia, and Philippines.

Aisyah Llewellyn doubles as our Regional Editor. Her remit will be to find stories which encompass more than one Southeast Asian region, and to draw upon our contributor network to find local voices who can tell those stories.

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. We run a newsroom that works on articles in multiple languages simultaneously, with the Editor-in-Chief leading the English language output, and two Deputy Editors in Bahasa Indonesia (Aisyah Llewellyn) and Bahasa Malaysia (Pauline Wong) taking charge of content in those languages respectively. We are finalising the hire of a sub-editor in Bahasa Indonesia.

Our Deputy Editors in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia both are in charge of outreach in those languages, and handle communications in our social media accounts in those languages.

New Naratif is looking to expand the team, especially a Design Editor and assistance for research activities.

4. Finances

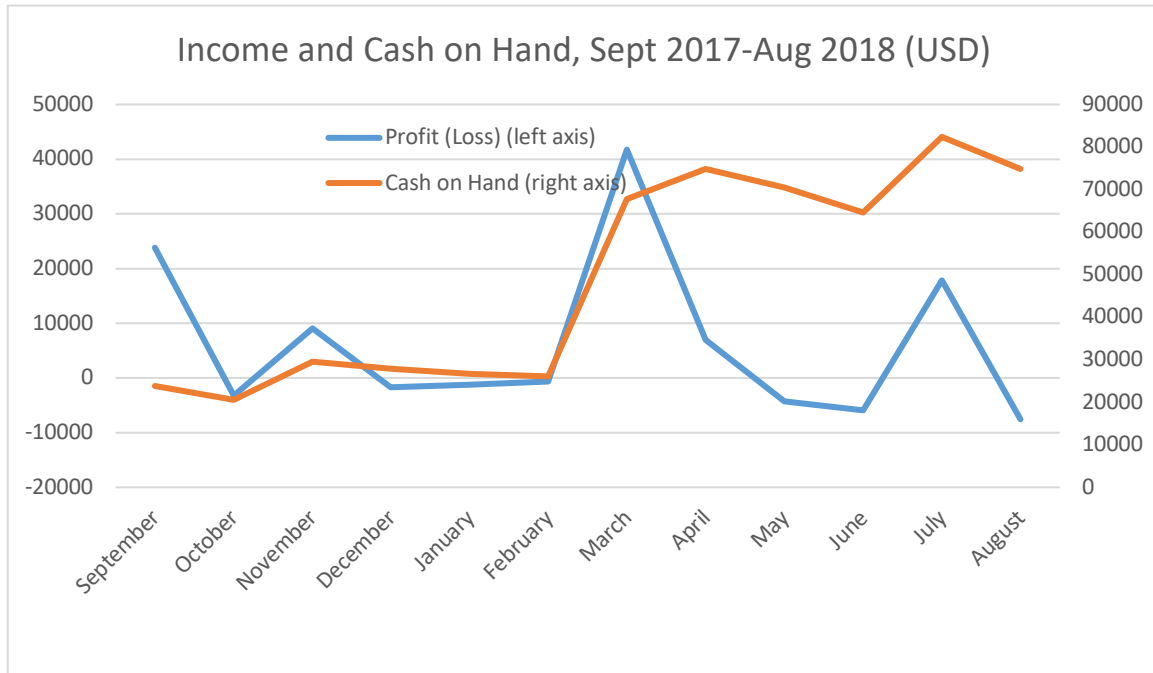
New Naratif is a non-profit organisation. We have adhered to the principle of sustainable funding, spending only what we have on hand. This principle allows us to tread water – we lost money in seven months of the year, but made money in five months, allowing us to finish the year with balanced books. It helped that our Editor-in-Chief worked unpaid until March 2018. This, however, is unsustainable due to increased staffing and publishing costs going forward. We will need to expand our membership base, and find new grants, and donations.

New Naratif's 544 crowdfunding supporters contributed a total of US\$44,238 (Approximately US\$42,049.66 after transaction fees and loss from currency exchange).

Support Level (US\$)	Members	Gross (US\$)	Net* (US\$)
52	481	25,012.00	24,000.00
102	24	2,448.00	2,410.00
302	19	5,738.00	5,600.00
552	20	11,040.00	10,700.00
Total	544	44,238.00	42,710.00

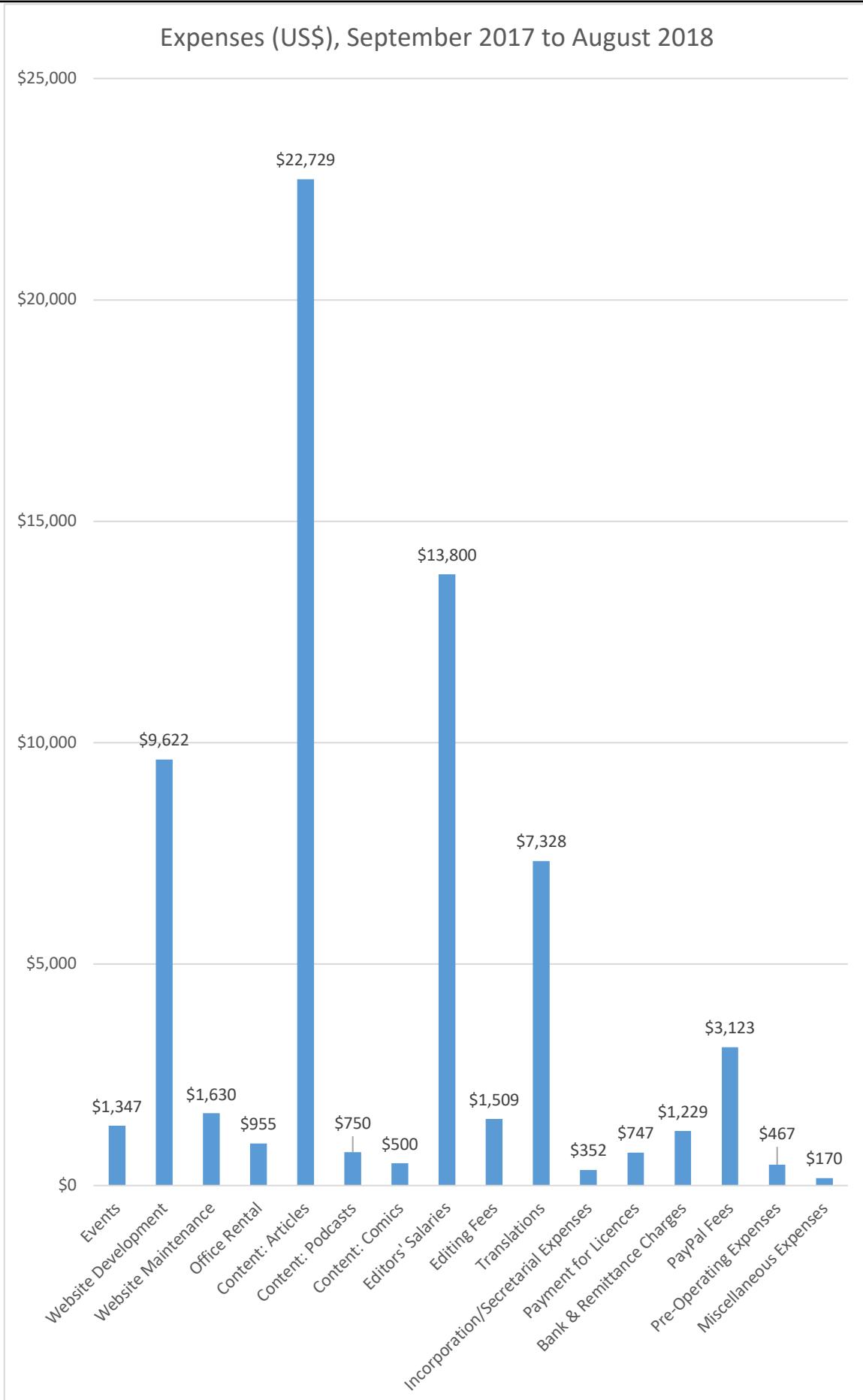
*Estimate

Thanks to the grant from Foundations Open Society Institute (FOSI), we were able to expand our team, complete the development of our website, and more than double our output of the number of articles on offer.



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

In April 2018, New Naratif's attempt to register a wholly-owned subsidiary in Singapore was rejected by the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) on grounds that we "would be contrary to Singapore's national interests."¹⁶ New Naratif's appeal against this decision was rejected by the Minister of Finance in late September 2018.¹⁷

In response to the rejection, we accelerated our timetable to open our Kuala Lumpur office, successfully launching it in October 2018. Our goal of opening an office in every Southeast Asian country remains, although it may be a long time before we can open an office in Singapore.

One of New Naratif's authors, Will Nguyen, was arrested and beaten by Vietnamese police while attending a public protest in Ho Chi Minh City.¹⁸ A Vietnamese-American, he was, fortunately, released after a short spell in jail and pleading guilty to charges of disturbing the peace. While this incident had a happy ending, it is a reminder 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 challenge. However, we continue to grow every month and we aim to increase our membership by another 500 members over the next year. 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. Increase our staff and expand our correspondent network across Southeast Asia to enable better coverage of issues which are relevant to the people of Southeast Asia.
2. Increase the amount and diversity of our content, in particular content with a transnational/regional focus and across multiple formats.

¹⁶ https://www.gov.sg/~/sgpcmedia/media_releases/acra/press_release/P-20180411-1/attachment/11042018_Media%20statement_Rejection%20of%20application%20by%20OSEA%20pte%20ltd%20to%20register%20as%20a%20pte%20ltd%20company%20by%20shares.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/finance-minister-rejects-appeal-by-historian-thum-ping-tjin-to-register-proposed-company>

¹⁸ <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/freewilly-detention-will-nguyen/>

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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 September 2017 to August 2018

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total USD
Members	204	38	47	23	35	12	43	60	33	18	16	11	540
Membership fees - PayPal	19,644.00	52.00	3,028.00	1,592.00	2,264.00	1,070.00	2,888.00	4,566.00	1,402.00	986.00	830.00	622.00	38,944.00
Membership fees - Others	2,330.00	104.00	104.00	52.00	52.00	52.00	-	52.00	666.00	-	354.00	-	3,766.00
INCOME													
Membership Fees	21,974.00	156.00	3,132.00	1,644.00	2,316.00	1,122.00	2,888.00	4,618.00	2,068.00	986.00	1,184.00	622.00	42,710.00
Donations	5,865.00	1,073.00	7,721.00	37.00	417.00	-	-	7,657.00	317.00	-	287.00	-	23,374.00
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	50,000.00	-	-	-	25,000.00	-	75,000.00
Total Income	27,839.00	1,229.00	10,853.00	1,681.00	2,733.00	1,122.00	52,888.00	12,275.00	2,385.00	986.00	26,471.00	622.00	141,084.00
OPERATING EXPENSES													
Events	1,233.00	-	-	-	-	-	114.00	-	-	-	-	-	1,347.00
Website Development	-	4,412.00	-	2,206.00	-	-	3,004.00	-	-	-	-	-	9,622.00
Website Maintenance	-	-	-	-	961.00	-	669.00	-	-	625.00	-	-	2,255.00
Rental	73.00	73.00	73.00	72.00	75.00	75.00	74.00	101.00	86.00	89.00	83.00	81.00	955.00
Payment to contributors													
- Articles	1,295.00	-	1,050.00	700.00	2,243.00	600.00	2,793.00	1,338.00	3,509.00	3,950.00	2,501.00	2,750.00	22,729.00
- Podcast	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	750.00	750.00
- Videos	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Comics	-	-	200.00	-	-	-	-	300.00	-	-	-	-	500.00
Consultancy fees to Editors	-	-	-	-	-	100.00	2,150.00	2,200.00	2,250.00	2,300.00	2,400.00	2,400.00	13,800.00
Editing Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	288.00	250.00	150.00	100.00	721.00	1,509.00
Translation Fees	-	-	268.00	269.00	337.00	155.00	1,396.00	720.00	726.00	293.00	1,976.00	1,188.00	7,328.00
Incorporation/Secretarial Expense	-	-	-	-	-	693.00	-	-	(341.00)	-	-	-	352.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	-	-	-	-	170.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	170.00
Payment for Licences	69.00	17.00	46.00	47.00	51.00	52.00	52.00	52.00	51.00	51.00	51.00	208.00	747.00
Bank & Remittance Charges	-	-	9.00	-	-	-	702.00	-	23.90	-	494.59	-	1,229.49
PayPal Fees	858.36	3.11	166.91	93.19	144.52	65.74	177.95	271.46	110.54	71.92	1,080.34	78.80	3,122.84
Pre-Operating Expenses	467.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	467.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,995.36	4,505.11	1,812.91	3,387.19	3,981.52	1,740.74	11,131.95	5,270.46	6,665.44	7,529.92	8,685.93	8,176.80	66,883.33
Net Income / (Loss)	23,843.64	(3,276.11)	9,040.09	(1,706.19)	(1,248.52)	(618.74)	41,756.05	7,004.54	(4,280.44)	(6,543.92)	17,785.07	(7,554.80)	74,200.67
Net Income / (Loss) before Grant													<u><u>(799.33)</u></u>