

# MIXED GROUPS

## WHO WE SPOKE TO?

After speaking to the individual Parents, Youth, PMEB and Seniors groups respectively, two groups consisting of a mix of all demographics were conducted. This was done with three objectives in mind:

1. To validate the points that each respective demographic group has made
2. To identify themes that are common across all demographics
3. To prevent any bias that may occur when speaking to a single demographic group

There were a total of two groups conducted. Respondents in this category consisted of 27 individuals aged 21 to 80.



Please refer to Appendix E for a more detailed breakdown of the respondents.

## THEIR PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE ARTS

### THERE IS A BROAD DEFINITION OF WHAT ART IS

Overall, the respondents defined the arts very broadly. This was in line with what we had found out in previous groups, where the definition of 'art' could range from niche, esoteric forms such as abstract art to broader definitions such as food, culture and architecture. Within the mixed groups, the respondents did not define the arts solely by art forms but also identified with what it represented, for example, a form of expression, a cultural DNA or an idea that is considered to be outside of mainstream culture.

“ My broad definition of art is just an avenue for an individual, a group of people to express themselves and it's open to anyone to appeal to them... I think the most important thing is that tool to allow someone to express himself. ”

Russell Shepardson, 37, Land Investment Consultant, Walton International, Father of 2

“ It is not something that is stereotyped as in  $a + b = A + B$ , it's something that diversifies in terms of people's thoughts. ”

Husaini Bin Hussin, 36, Project Manager, SMRT

“ Cultural DNA... I think the arts is what you are, what a person's spirit will be... you get a country which is strong in theatre or ballet or poetry... that will be the personality of the country. ”

Kiat, 42, Creative Partner, System Sovereign

“ To me arts should be something out of the ordinary... It's not... mainstream... It's meant to sit on the edge of comfort so that people get stimulated. ”

Noor Ashikin, 44, Head of LEWIS Pulse, APAC, Father of 2

“ To me art is form. The arts come in many ways. It comes in music I play in my home, when I go into the building, up on the paintings I put...”

Kelvin Tan, 34,  
Editor, Men's Health

“ I think in the big picture, I mean, I am talking about the environmental art, we are (a) garden city, and have a lot of these very nice buildings. But for smaller scale I think (arts) is inborn. Be it you are an artist...or ballet dancer. It is born in you.”

Lim Wee, 66,  
Taxi Driver

The respondents also noted that the definition of the arts is fluid and subjective, even within a family.

“ There is a difference between appreciation of the arts and what art is compared to... What my parents considered art, I may not consider art, and my daughter considers Barbie doll house art.”

Abir Barua, 45,  
Business Development  
(IT), father of 1

“ For me, I think it's very fluid, it's a spectrum and it's very subjective. To me, my son can draw something and it's a masterpiece to me.”

Melissa Rodrigues, Senior  
Corporate Communications  
Manager, Cerebral Palsy  
Alliance Singapore, Mother of 2

## **THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARTS**

Within the context of a mixed group, there was a wide range of values that the respondents associated with the arts, both intrinsic and instrumental. Across the board, creativity and expression were values that were most closely linked with the arts.

PMEBs and parents in particular, responded very positively to creativity as a value of the arts, and drew parallels with how creativity can help their children or themselves to be more successful. While the youth and seniors agree that creativity could also be a value of the arts, the youths in the groups resonated more with self-expression as a value while seniors saw the arts as a form of relaxation and therapy. The seniors also saw how the arts helped their grandchildren and wished that they had the opportunity to be more involved in the arts as well.

# CREATIVITY

The respondents felt that there was a close link between the arts and creativity. When the respondents talked about creativity, it was seen as an instrumental value that was linked to success, be it for the development of their children or advancement at work. Creativity was seen as a soft skill critical in a knowledge economy. This was observed most from the PMEBS and the parents in the mixed groups.

“ If you can show the benefits (of) how the arts can improve a child’s education, be it through critical thinking or lateral problem solving or just being creative and apply their learning to their economics and science; that could be an interesting approach to sway parents. But this is a very Singaporean approach...”

Kiat, 42,  
Creative Partner,  
System Sovereign

“ People that I know in product management positions, economics position, marketing experts ... I think they are all at the heart, creative thinkers. Creative thinking is what needs to be fed.”

Noor Ashikin, 44,  
Head of LEWIS Pulse,  
APAC, Father of 2

“ I think it is something that...stimulates thinking and makes you feel different.”

Yum Sin Ting, 35,  
Social worker

“ ...for a knowledge economy, what works is a mind that is inquisitive, a mind that is always looking for different solutions. It’s not about the ‘hand’ skills, not the doctor kind of skills, when you learn specific things... So in the knowledge economy, arts become very important.”

Abir Barua, 45,  
Business Development  
(IT), Father of 1

# EXPRESSION

Youths resonated more with 'expression' as a value of the arts. The arts were an avenue for them to express themselves and a representation of what they feel.

“ ...Coming from the Eurasian culture...we have a lot of musically inclined artists within the family... from what I hear, it was very much open, it was very much impromptu and whatever you play everybody accepted...they will sing and it was very free to express themselves.”

Melissa Shepherdson,  
37, Senior Corporate  
Communications Manager,  
Cerebral Palsy Alliance  
Singapore, Mother of 2

“ The value of art to me personally is the freedom to express. Although we are not quite there yet, but there is a start somewhere.”

Ng Wei Ling, 29,  
Stage Manager

“ I think art is an avenue or a vehicle... where people express their emotion and thoughts...whenever we produce an art form, it is essentially a representation of what we feel.”

Wilfred Teo, 24,  
Tertiary student,  
National University  
of Singapore

“ Art (is a form of) expressing themselves without saying they are sad, empty or anything. (It is a) more physical approach.”

Ng Jun Rong, 20,  
Student, Republic  
Polytechnic



# RELAXATION AND THERAPY

The arts were seen as a way to relax and a form of therapy, especially for the seniors.

“Actually the arts (is) another form (and) another way that humans relax.”

Kelvin Tan, 34,  
Editor, Men's Health

“When you see that piece of art that's very nice, I believe you will feel relaxed...”

Tang Keh Soon,  
60, Self-employed

“...you tell people like arts is good for your mental health, especially given Singapore's stressful society and you tell the parents that you know actually setting aside art on a weekly basis is really good for your childhood development.”

Cherry Chan, 35,  
Creative Partner,  
System Sovereign

“It's only later on with my old age when I retire (that) I start to appreciate other forms of studies, like arts. And when I look at my grandchildren today – I have a young talented girl, who takes up ballet, dancing, ice skating – and well, for the past month, just watching them, I realised that I missed a lot of those forms of expression.”

Robert Tan, 65,  
Retiree

# EMPATHY

Respondents who had a high involvement in the arts were able to articulate personal experiences of how the arts helped build empathy.

“ I think for creativity to thrive, you have to have the power of empathy. ”

Noor Ashikin, 44,  
Head of LEWIS Pulse,  
APAC, Father of 2

“ To be stimulated in my thoughts, see how other people think, learn how other people think because that's actually what the arts is about. ”

Shawne Wang,  
Deputy Editor,  
F\*\*\* Magazine

# IDENTITY (NATIONAL)

The arts were seen as contributing to community building, and on a larger scale, can help to forge a national identity.

“(Arts) build the community; it builds your tolerance to each other.”

Sulaiman Ismail, 36,  
Senior Project Manager,  
BBDO

“I think it's an expression of identity... I think it's how society defines itself... it's the definition of what our identity is. What being Singaporean is about.”

Abir Barua, 45,  
Business Development (IT),  
Father of 1

# CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking was also mentioned as a benefit of the arts. This was also in the context of a PMEB talking about how the arts can help him to be more successful in his workplace.

“As you get better in the arts, in general, you learn a lot more critical thinking and transferable skills.”

Noor Ashikin, 44,  
Head of LEWIS Pulse,  
APAC, Father of 2

## **BARRIERS TO THE ARTS**

The often cited barrier amongst all respondents – parents, youth, PMEBs and seniors – was the pragmatic mindset in society. The respondents felt that most Singaporeans were concerned with bread and butter issues. As the arts were not associated with such issues, they are thus thought to be less important.

# PRAGMATIC MINDSET OF SINGAPOREANS

“ Unless you got the resources (to) do what you like... unless you're very very talented. You cannot convert that into dollar and cents, this is the problem. ”

Lee Kin Tat, 65,  
Traditional Chinese Medicine  
(TCM) Practitioner

“ That's the pressure we have today...The thing is, in Singapore, there is no fall back. If you don't have a job, you're gone, you can't survive. ”

Abir Barua, 45,  
Business Development  
(IT), father of 1

“ It's a very real thing... You want to feed your stomach or you want to feed your soul, which is unfortunate. ”

Shawne Wang, 34,  
Deputy Editor, F\*\*\*  
Magazine

“ Art is not a bread and butter issue. Only a section of Singaporeans are privileged. The masses are only concerned about the bread and butter issue. ”

Ruth Chia, 65,  
Retiree

Consistent with the findings of the Parents group, the parents in the mixed groups also had pragmatic concerns about letting their children be more involved in the arts.

“ I think I’ll be open to (my son) wanting to do the arts, but I also worry (when) he grows up and graduates, can it support him. When he has a family, can he support his family? I mean I have to take care of my retirement. I’m not going to support him till he’s old... he has to find his own two feet and find a balance. ”

Melissa Shepherdson,  
37, Senior Corporate  
Communications Manager,  
Cerebral Palsy Alliance  
Singapore, Mother of 2

“ Now I’m a musician myself, I have to earn a living as a musician. It’s not as easy as I thought. If my child wants to study...I will allow but I don’t encourage them to walk my path. ”

Dedric Wong, 27,  
General Manager,  
Dingyi Music Company

One of the youths in the group, Ng Jun Rong, also said that even after he had expressed his interest to take up the arts because it taught him to be more self-confident and expressive, his parents objected and requested that he take up communication workshops instead, as they thought that the communication workshops will provide him with more skills in life. This has an impact on the next generation, where youths feel restricted in what they can do in life because of the pragmatic pressures of their parents and society.

“ From young, they want to be presidents. After that as we grow older, we get more and more matured and more and more restricted in our paths....as we go further and further into life, we go more and more into books. We study, study, study. So in the future we (are expected to be) doctors, lawyers... So I don't think people of my batch will think very much of (the arts). ”

Ng Jun Rong, 20, Student,  
Republic Polytechnic

“ My friend in UCL is also studying law, and he's a poet. I don't know if you all know Gerald Yam, he's published 3 books at this age, I asked him why don't you just be ...a poet? He was like 'no money' ”

Nicole de Silva,  
21, student

“ If you are in the arts stream, you are not good. That is the standard response (from parents)... When I was applying for university, I applied for politics and philosophy and they (went): can you go be a lawyer or something... You understand your parents want you to survive life but it's not helpful when you say I want to go into the arts, (they tell you) you must be a lawyer. ”

Shawne Wang,  
34, Deputy Editor,  
F\*\*\* Magazine



This is a vicious cycle that has to be broken in order to nurture a new generation who appreciates the arts.

“ A lot of us see the arts (and success as) both mutually exclusive. Like you can't have a vibrant art scene and do well economically... So once we stop seeing these two things as separate, then that's when things will improve. ”

Vishal Daryanormel,  
26, Publishing

“ It's a cycle you have to break, because when...our parents, when my parents migrated, the basic concern on their minds (was) to make sure that my kids have a safe future and the focus was on the roof of the house, enough to eat... so they didn't really bother about the arts. They grew up in that environment, they have grown distant from the arts and we pass on the same thing to our kid. So I guess my generation has to break that cycle. ”

Abir Barua,  
45, Business  
Development (IT),  
father of 1

# MAKING ARTS RELEVANT TO THE PUBLIC

While the common barrier to the arts amongst all demographics was the pragmatic mindset in society, each demographic group viewed the relevance of the arts differently based on their key concerns.

The key concerns and findings in the mixed groups were consistent with the individual demographic groups, where:

1. Parents saw the link between the arts and creativity and understood the value of creativity for their children
2. Youths saw art as a way to affirm their identities in a pragmatic society that drowns out their voices
3. PMEBS were rational when it came to the arts. They believed that arts are at the center of creativity and can help them achieve success at work.
4. Seniors saw the potential art had in documenting their stories and identity. At the same time, the arts were seen as therapeutic and helped to improve their wellbeing and outlook to life.

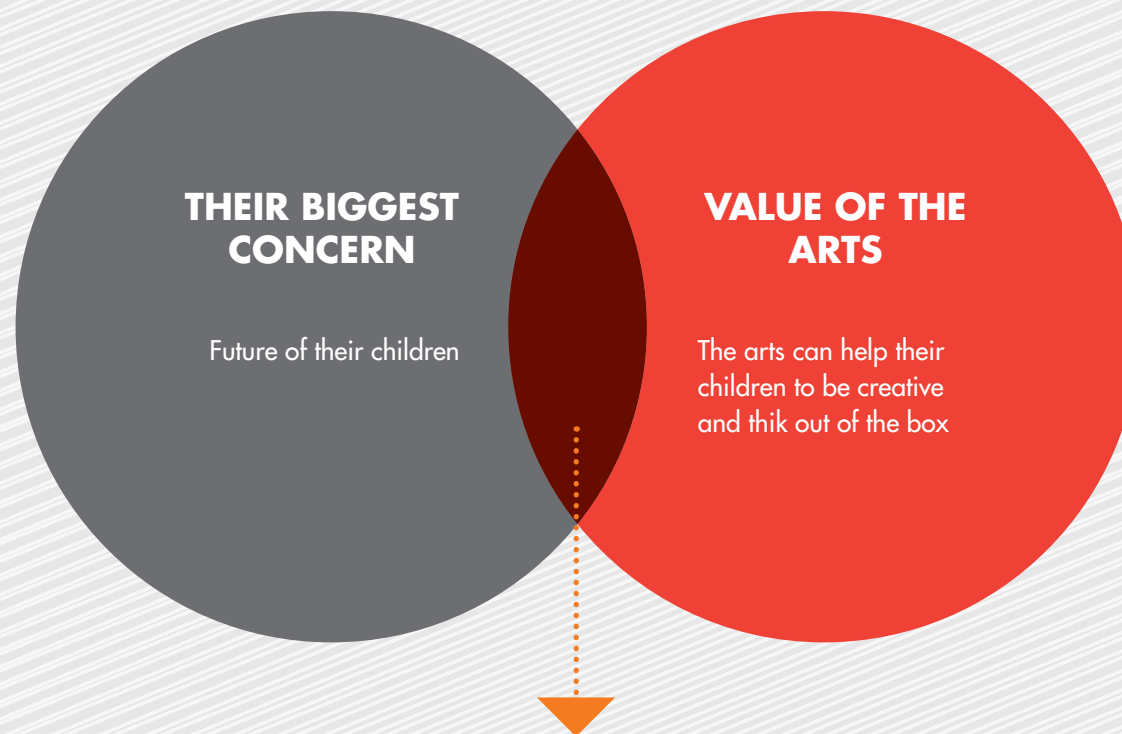
In order to make the arts relevant to these different segments of the public, there was a need to develop targeted messages for each segment to connect them to the arts.

## **MESSAGING APPROACH**

In developing the messages for each target segment, we looked at each of their key concerns, their perception of the value of the arts and how the arts can help address existing barriers and concerns.

# PARENTS

The greatest concern for parents is the future of their children. This group agreed that the arts had little value but there was value in creativity leading to the development of more well-rounded children. Therefore, we can address their concerns by connecting the arts with creativity as a value.

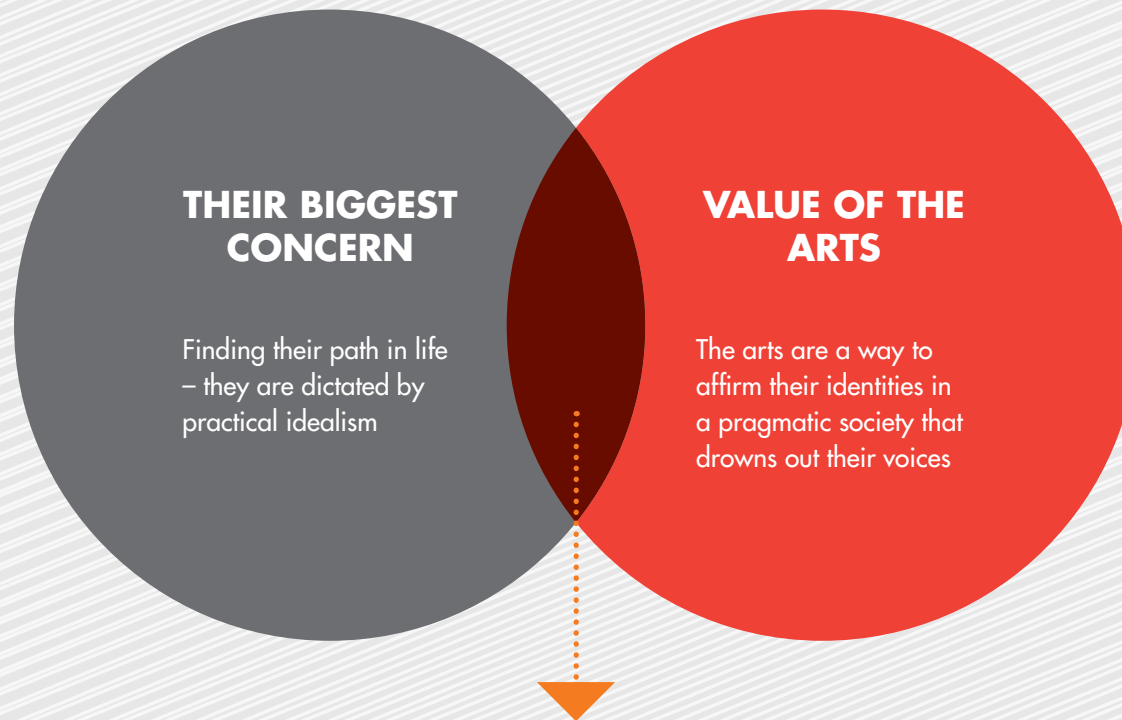


What we tell them

**THE ARTS ARE AT THE CENTER OF CREATIVITY,  
WHICH WILL LEAD TO A WELL-ROUNDED  
DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR CHILD**

# YOUTH

The Youth group was dictated by practical idealism when choosing what to do with their lives. They were living in a success driven society where their parents, peers and societal views mattered more than their own. The value of the arts for them was as a way to affirm their identities and give them confidence in a pragmatic society that drowns out their voices. We can address their concerns by positioning the art as a platform to give them a clear and balanced voice.

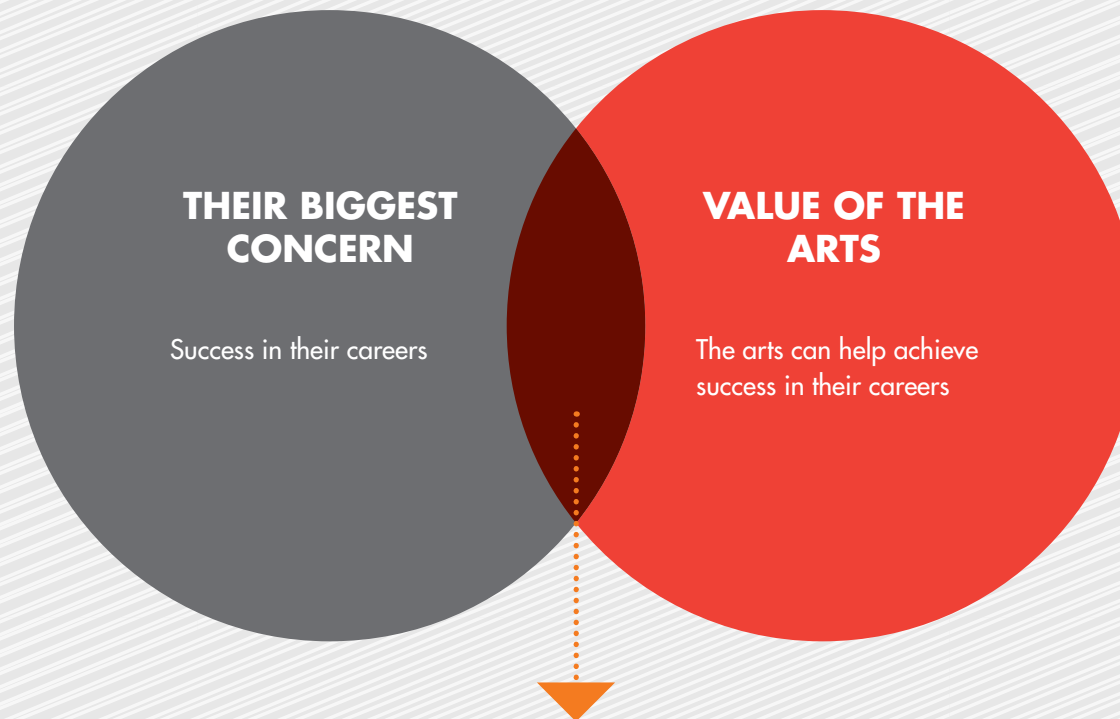


What we tell them

**THE ARTS GIVE YOU A CLEAR  
AND BALANCED VOICE**

# PMEBs

The PMEB group was concerned with success in their careers. They adopted a very pragmatic approach towards the arts, and those who saw value in the arts drew economic parallels for success in their careers. We can address their concerns by positioning art as a way to provide them with the soft skills and creativity that will help them be more successful at work.

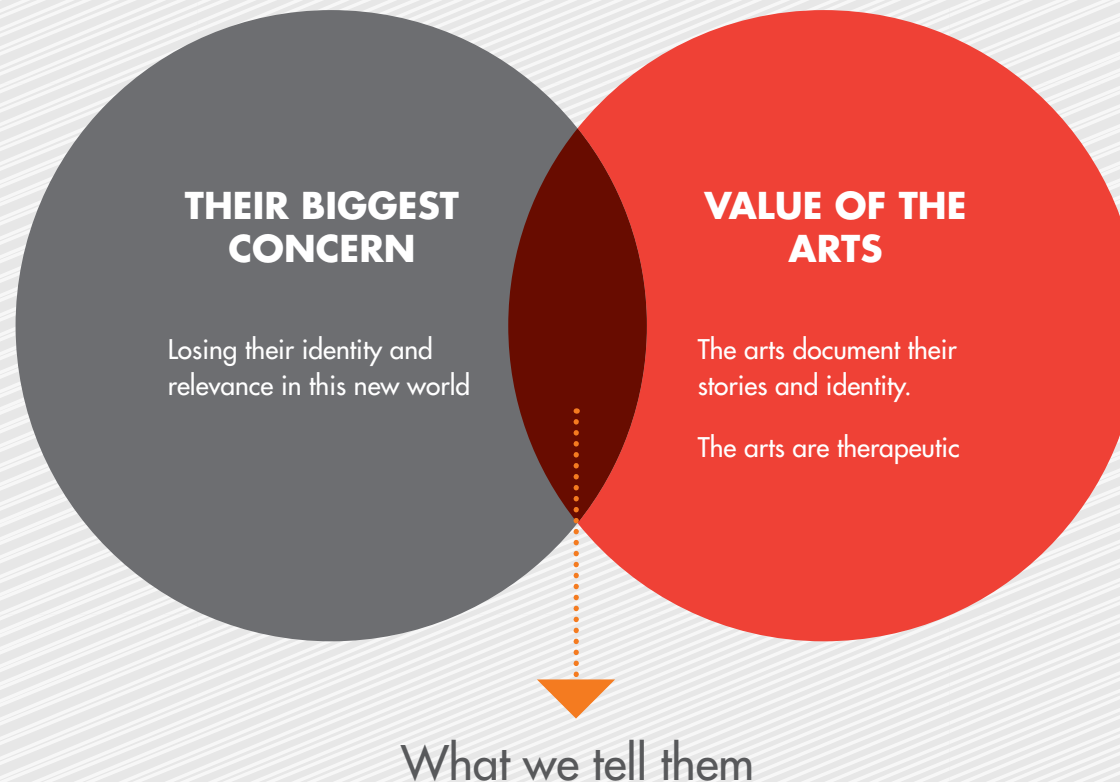


What we tell them

**THE ARTS PROVIDE YOU WITH SOFT SKILLS  
AND CREATIVITY, TO HELP YOU BE MORE  
SUCCESSFUL AT WORK**

# SENIORS

The Seniors group spoke a lot about the past and were concerned about losing their relevance and identity in this new world. However, they saw the value of art as a way to help document their stories and identity. They also talked about the therapeutic effects of the arts and how it had helped improved their well-being and outlook in life. We can address their concerns by positioning art as a bridge to our culture, past and present and using art as a way to help improve their well-being and outlook in life.



- 1. THE ARTS BRIDGE OUR CULTURE, PAST AND PRESENT**
- 2. THE ARTS IMPROVE YOUR WELL-BEING AND OUTLOOK TO LIFE**

# MESSAGING MATRIX

A messaging matrix has been created to help define the messaging about the arts to each of our different target segments.

	Parents	Youth	PMEB	Seniors
What's their biggest concern now <sup>1</sup> ?	Future of their children	Finding their paths in life – they are dictated by practical idealism	Success in their careers	Losing their identities and relevance in this new world
What value do they see in the arts <sup>2</sup> ?	The arts can help their children to be creative and think out of the box	The arts are a way to affirm their identities in a pragmatic society that drowns out their voices	The arts can help achieve success in their careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The arts document their stories and identities</li> <li>b. The arts are therapeutic</li> </ul>
WHAT DO WE TELL THEM <sup>3</sup> ?	The arts are at the center of creativity, which will lead to a well-rounded development for your child.	The arts give you a clear and balanced voice.	The arts provide you with soft skills and creativity, to help you be more successful at work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The arts bridge our culture, past and present.</li> <li>b. The arts improve your well-being and outlook to life.</li> </ul>
KEY MESSAGE <sup>4</sup>	<b>FEED YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVITY</b>	<b>FIND YOUR VOICE</b>	<b>FIND YOUR EDGE IN LIFE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>YOUR STORIES SHAPE THE FUTURE</b></li> <li>b. <b>ENRICH YOUR LIFE</b></li> </ul>
What this could lead to <sup>5</sup> ?	More children as active participants of the arts, resulting in a new generation of creative thinkers	Confident and mature youths whose voices help shape the future	A workforce which is innovative and equipped with both EQ and IQ	Active seniors contributing back to society by sharing their life experiences and stories



**<sup>1</sup> What's their biggest concern right now?**

Based on the research findings, these are the current key concerns of each of the target segments.

**<sup>2</sup> What values do they see in the arts?**

Based on the research findings, these are the key values of the arts that they found relevant to their lives.

**<sup>3</sup> What do we tell them?**

This is an approach of how we should frame our messaging and communications to each segment. It will help guide the development of specific creative messages for future campaigns.

**<sup>4</sup> Key Message**

These are the proposed consumer facing messages that we could use to communicate to each segment.

**<sup>5</sup> What this could lead to?**

This is a definition of what success would look like.