

SP Alliance & Network

# SP Alumni eNews

August 2024



**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:  
THE DYNAMIC  
DUO SHAPING  
THE LOCAL MUSIC  
SCENE**





## Afiqah Amir & Geraldine Foo

Co-Founders, AKAR CO.

Diploma in Media and Communication (2023)

# TAKING CENTRE STAGE

# IN THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

**What began as an academic venture has blossomed into a thriving business for Afiqah and Geraldine, the dynamic co-founders of AKAR CO. Their experience at SP was instrumental in shaping their path, marked by determination and a supportive community.**

### The Spark of Inspiration at SP

Afiqah and Geraldine's road to AKAR began during their time at SP, where they pursued a Diploma in Media and Communication. Their motivations for choosing this course were personal.

"I was interested in video editing when I was in secondary school. I started with apps like iMovie and was interested in content creation and media. This motivated me to drop the idea of going to Junior College and go to Polytechnic," recalls Afiqah.

Geraldine, too, was captivated by the world of media from a young age. "I was always interested in Media. Even when I was young, I was exposed to a lot of television shows and movies. The Media and Communication course struck me because it offered a mix of business and creative aspects. That's why I chose it."

Their experiences at SP were not just about academic learning but also about adapting to new challenges. "My time in SP went by fast, especially with the first year being during COVID. Everything was online, and the lecturers really supported us in adapting to online classes," shares Afiqah. This adaptability was a crucial skill that would later serve them well in their entrepreneurial journey.

### Getting Down to Business

The dynamic duo also honed their business sense through the course, which offered a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills, blending business practicality with creativity. Geraldine and Afiqah found the curriculum engaging and comprehensive, covering areas from marketing strategies to hands-on media production.

"It was like a buffet of everything. You learn about the business side of marketing and the creative aspects. That really stood out to me," says Geraldine. This holistic approach prepared them to tackle various aspects of the media industry, equipping them with the versatility needed to start their own company.



### From Classroom to Boardroom

The turning point for Geraldine and Afiqah came during the Batey Hackathon in 2021, a competition that challenged them to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions. Tasked with addressing a problem in the creative arts industry, the five-member team, originally known as dreamALIVE (rebranded as AKAR), entered the competition. As performers themselves, they had first-

hand experience with the challenges faced by emerging artists. Drawing on their combined expertise in music and dance, they proposed a business aimed at helping local talents kick-start their careers in the industry.

"We wanted to have a go at the accelerated introduction to entrepreneurship course and ended up winning silver, which gave us \$3k and mentorship. With support from SPINOFF and our mentor, Mr Tan Bee Thiam, we decided to start the company," says Afiqah.



SPiNOFF, SP's entrepreneurship centre, played a pivotal role in their journey. It provided them not only with funding but also with the confidence to pursue their business idea seriously. "SPiNOFF gave us the resources we needed to build that first step," Geraldine emphasises. The initial grant was used to hire a lawyer to draft an artist's contract, a crucial step in onboarding talent and legitimising their operations.

Despite the initial challenges, including a steep learning curve and the need to establish a network in the music industry, Geraldine and Afiqah's persistence paid off. "A lot of the things, such as the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) registration, Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) tax filing, and starting up a bank account, we had to learn from scratch," Geraldine notes. Yet, these obstacles only fortified their resolve and sharpened their business acumen.

## Supporting Local

AKAR is more than just a talent agency. This hybrid label combines talent management with creative content production and marketing. Geraldine and Afiqah leverage their skills and experiences to offer a unique platform for emerging artists in Singapore.

"We help emerging artists market their work and promote themselves. Our goal is to create content that helps artists build their brand and connect with their audience," explains Geraldine.

Their approach is multifaceted. AKAR provides talent management, guiding artists through the complexities of the music industry. They also produce high-quality content, from music videos to promotional materials, ensuring that artists have the tools they need to stand out.

## Continued Growth

After their time at SP, both Geraldine and Afiqah pursued further education, which significantly contributed to their business acumen. Afiqah studied arts management at LASALLE College of the Arts, a choice driven by her desire to better understand the local music scene and enhance her skills. "I decided to pursue my studies in an area which could help me fine-tune my skills as well as get the connections and know the industry better," she explains.

Geraldine, on the other hand, pursued a degree in psychology at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Her decision was influenced by her interest in understanding human behaviour, which she believed would help in crafting compelling stories and managing a creative business. "When you better understand people, you're also better at telling more relatable and compelling stories," she says.



## Reaching the Community

Afiqah and Geraldine's journey is not just a story of business success but also of personal growth and community impact. They have become integral figures in the local music scene, fostering a supportive environment for emerging artists. "When I go for gigs now, people come up to me and ask if AKAR is going to create a new show or pitch their ideas. It's really nice that there's a community reaching out to us and appreciating our work," Afiqah shares.

Their events, such as RE:surgence Vol. 1 and Field Trip! at Esplanade Annexe Studio, have been milestones that solidified their reputation and showcased their commitment to the arts. "RE:surgence Vol. 1 was significant. It brought together artists and industry partners, helping us rebrand AKAR and gain more recognition," Afiqah explains. Geraldine adds, "Field Trip! was a sold-out show and a significant achievement for us as a young company."

## Merging Dreams and Realities

Looking ahead, both co-founders are clear about their future aspirations. Afiqah aims to explore being a festival curator and continue her involvement in the music industry. Geraldine, on the other hand, dreams of making a mark in the film industry. "My far, far, far goal is to have my own feature film out by 30-35. It's possible but takes a lot of work and budget," she admits.

Their advice to aspiring entrepreneurs and SP alumni is rooted in their experiences. "Don't be afraid of rejection and failure. Take your time and don't rush. Learning from rejection helps you grow," advises Afiqah. Geraldine echoes this sentiment, emphasising the importance of making opportunities for oneself and treasuring the present.

Passion, perseverance, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Thanks to the supportive environment at SP and the tangible impact of initiatives like SPiNOFF, these two young SP alumnae are writing a story that inspires and resonates within Singapore's creative industry.

## Campus Updates



Source: 8 World, 12 Jul 2024

## SP Raises \$2.6 Million for Needy Students

More than 100 SP students will receive annual bursaries of \$2,500 each, funded by donations raised as part of the institution's 70th anniversary celebrations. SP, Singapore's oldest polytechnic, has raised over \$2.6 million in endowed donations to support students in need. Since 2013, SP has awarded over 110 bursaries each year, helping more than 8,000 students through the Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild Education Fund.

In addition, SP will contribute \$100,000 to the President's Challenge, a national initiative led by President Tharman Shanmugaratnam to support disadvantaged communities. Half of this amount comes from the raised funds, with the other half from SP's income. A symbolic cheque was presented to President Tharman at SP's 70th Anniversary Charity Golf and Gala Dinner, attended by around 1,000 staff, students, industry partners, alumni, and several President's Challenge beneficiaries. President Tharman commended SP for its contributions to talent development, economic progress, and its culture of giving.



Source: Lianhe Zaobao, 15 Jul 2024

## SP Student Aims to Revolutionise Cleaning with Technology

Chen Yuxin, a Diploma in Computer Engineering student at SP, has a deep appreciation for cleaners because her grandmother was a cleaner. This connection continued into her part-time job, where an office cleaner's small acts of kindness further deepened her respect for the profession.

Today, Yuxin, who is a passionate coder, aspires to join the environmental services industry after graduation to promote automation and ease the burden on cleaners and improve their working conditions. Motivated by this, Yuxin applied for and was awarded the National Environment Agency-Industry Scholarship, becoming one of nine recipients this year. Upon her graduation in 2026, she will join Lionsbot, a company that designs and manufactures industrial-scale cleaning robots, as a user experience designer.

## Polytechnics Launch New Work-Study Programmes



Source: The Straits Times, 17 Jul 2024

Local polytechnics have launched 10 new Work-Study Programmes (WSP) as part of the annual SkillsFuture Work-Study Exhibition. These programmes, offered by all five polytechnics, are designed to nurture talent in the digital, green, and care economy sectors. The new offerings include diplomas in Applied Generative Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Environmental Technology and Energy Sustainability, and Gerontology (Community Health and Social Care), with most set to begin in October.

Each polytechnic will offer up to three of these new programmes, reflecting the growing demand for specialised skills in these areas. During the event, Second Minister for Education, Dr Maimai Osman, highlighted the strong employment outcomes for work-study graduates, noting that more than 90% secure jobs within six months, often earning 33% more than before. He also pointed out the crucial role polytechnics play in meeting industry needs, and how the market recognises the value of work-study programmes.



## On-Campus Privileges



### SPORTS FACILITIES

Alumni access hours:

#### GYM@POOL

Weekdays : 12pm - 4pm | 6pm - 9pm

Saturday : 9am - 7pm

#### SWIMMING POOL

Weekdays : 9am - 4pm

Saturday : 4pm - 7pm

Please note your SP Alumni e-card and any form of identification is required for verification purposes. SP Sports Facilities may be closed due to curriculum or events without prior notice.



### SP LIBRARY

SP Alumni eCard holder is entitled to 20% off annual library membership fees.

Library membership is required to enter SP Library.

[Click here](#) to find out more.

#### OPENING HOURS:

[Click here](#) for more information.

## Off-Campus Privileges



### SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC GRADUATES' GUILD

10% discount for ala-carte menu at SPGG F&B outlets (SPGG Coffee Hub & The Restaurant)

Terms and conditions apply



### THE ESCAPE ARTIST

10% discount for the entire bill

Terms and conditions apply



### PLAY V-ROOM PTE LTD

10% off 1 VR headset per card

Terms and conditions apply



### LAO JIANG SUPERIOR SOUP

10% off total bill

Terms and conditions apply

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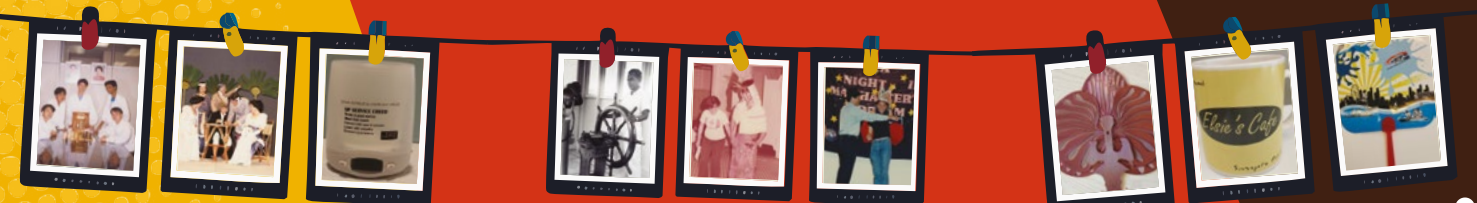
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Looking to pursue a Specialist or Advanced Diploma and get a head start on your career?

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CELEBRATING

70 Years of Memories:

Call for Contributions

[START SEARCHING FOR:](#)

#### 1 PHOTOGRAPHS:

Your snapshots from the 1950s to the early 1990s, capturing moments of triumph, camaraderie, innovation, and daily life within SP.



Submit using: Our SP Memories Contribution Form

#### 2 MEMORABILIA:

Objects associated with SP life, such as mementoes of significant events.

Send email with a photo of the object(s) to [SP\\_Memories@sp.edu.sg](mailto:SP_Memories@sp.edu.sg). We shall contact you to arrange submission.

Thank you for your contributions that will add to the stories and memories of SP's journey over the years.





# PolyGES

Graduate Employment Survey 2024



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- Graduates from:**
- Class of 2024 who have completed or are not liable for NS
  - Class of 2021 who have completed NS between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024
  - Class of 2019

We are gathering feedback on your Polytechnic experiences. Selected participants will receive a unique link in your email, SMS or mailbox. Share your experiences and stand a chance to win in our lucky draw!

For more information, please visit <https://ges.polytechnic.edu.sg> or [Click here](#).

For queries or to request your survey link, email [polyges@beacon.com.sg](mailto:polyges@beacon.com.sg)



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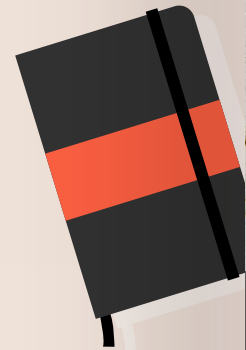
Email us at [ecg@sp.edu.sg](mailto:ecg@sp.edu.sg) for an appointment

## SP Alliance & Network

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[Update Here](#)



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[Click Here](#)



### Journeying with you beyond SP

Stay Connected @SPANalumni

Interested to partner SPAN? Reach out to us at [SPAN@sp.edu.sg](mailto:SPAN@sp.edu.sg).

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