

Gocas Lit Fest

ANNUAL REPORT



**ALWAYS
COMING
HOME**



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President's Report



Marina Salandy Brown
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

The year 2025 was one of both celebration and challenge. Our 15th annual festival in April was an occasion to applaud the hard work and the successes of the Bocas Lit Fest (BLF) over the past decade and a half — an extraordinarily fruitful time for Caribbean literature, in which the BLF's writer and reader development projects have played no small part. Under the theme "Always Coming Home", the 2025 edition exemplified the ways that the Bocas Lit Fest has become a family reunion for the Caribbean literary scene, and the biggest annual literary event — by number of events, number of participants, and audience size — in the Anglophone Caribbean.

The achievements of the Bocas Lit fest continue despite changing economic circumstances in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider world, and herein lies the challenge.

This was our first festival since 2012 without the support of a title sponsor, at a time when private-sector investment in the arts is in decline, and T&T government policy around culture and creative industries is rapidly evolving. These circumstances require us to adhere to our strategic plan and hasten our shift to a more diversified revenue base by thinking entrepreneurially, tightly managing existing resources and drawing on valuable, long-standing partnerships, while forging new alliances for the future.

As President of the Bocas Lit Fest, I am proud that we continue to adapt to a changing landscape while remaining true to our core mission and to our firmly held belief that literature is for everyone, and plays a unique and vital role in the social, cultural, intellectual, and economic development of our country and our region.

As this Annual Report shows, 2025 was a busy and generative year. After three years as CEO, Jean Claude Cournand stepped down to pursue other interests, and Georgia Popplewell was appointed as interim Managing Director. Meanwhile, outside the showcase April festival, our high-quality and engaging year-round programming at The Writers Centre, in collaboration with PaperBased bookshop, continued for writers and readers of all ages. The Bocas Secondary Schools Spoken Word Intercol revived one of our most transformative projects for a new generation of teenage writers and performers, and the varied creative writing training we offer under the Bocas Academy umbrella, form the most cohesive and consistent programme in the Caribbean region for shaping new literary talent.

As BLF strides energetically into the challenging future, the dedication and enthusiasm of our board of directors and the Bocas team are unwavering. I thank them, and I thank our sponsors and partners, old and new, who understand that their support for BLF is not merely a handout. Rather, it is an investment in the future, and an affirmation of our shared goal of a more engaged and creative society, where the talent of each individual is developed to its full potential.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marina Salandy Brown'.

Company Overview

Our Guiding Principles

Vision

The Bocas Lit Fest exists to develop and promote Caribbean writers and to grow Caribbean readers to realise the full potential of our literature in cultural, social and economic terms.

Mission

To be the Caribbean's premier literary arts organisation, dedicated to the development of all our people, the broadening of our culture and the expansion of the literary industry.

Board of Directors

Marina Salandy-Brown
President & Founder

Lucy Hannah
Vice President
Producer of global literary initiatives

Courtenay Williams
Treasurer
Attorney-at-Law

Stacy Ann Golding
Principal, S N Golding Financial Services Limited

Thackwray "Dax" Driver
Energy Consultant

Jacqueline Quamina
Consultant in Corporate Law
Governance and Banking

Leslie Clarke
Managing Director, Murphy Clarke Financial Limited

Julie Harris
Strategic Planning Director & Head of Creative Services
Lonsdale Saatchi & Saatchi

Georgia Popplewell
Managing Director



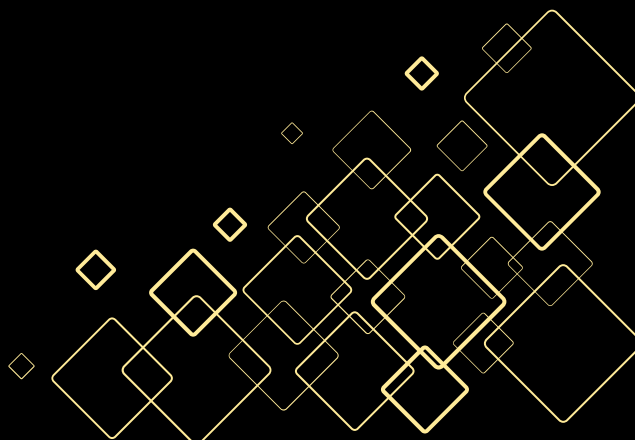
Our Team

2025 was a year of changes for the Bocas Lit Fest (BLF) team, with some significant departures and new arrivals, and a general streamlining of operations. As the year ended, the core team in place were as follows:



Back row, left to right: Neala Bhagwansingh, Social Media Manager; Maria Tappin, Festival Operations Manager; Simone Camps, Paper Based Manager; Patrice Matthews, Management Projects Consultant; S. J. Andrews, Children's Programme Coordinator; Marina Salandy Brown, Founder & President; Nicholas Laughlin, Festival and Programme Manager; Melvina Hazard, Children's Programmer Manager; Dwayne Dubarry, Assistant to the Managing Director; Jayden Phillips, Youth Projects Coordinator

Front row, left to right: Shivanee Ramlochan, Festival and Programme Manager; Joy Luk Pat, Marketing and Media Manager; Marielle Forbes, Youth and Hospitality Manager; Georgia Popplewell, Managing Director.



15th Anniversary Achievement Timeline

The Bocas Lit Fest transformed a pioneering vision into the Caribbean's premier literary platform. Multiple strategic initiatives over the past 15 years resulted in the region's most prestigious literary prize, the establishment of Caribbean literature on the world stage and alumni who have achieved the highest accolades internationally. The following highlights some of those initiatives and the incredible impact they have had.

	YEAR	MILESTONE	IMPACT
ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION	2011	Inaugural adult and children's Festival , Storytelling Caravan & OCM Bocas Prize	Established a benchmark of Caribbean literary excellence and reigniting interest in reading and writing for pleasure.
	2012	Inaugural CaribLit (Caribbean Literature Action Group) meeting and the BLF	Established a critical hub, supporting marketing, regional distribution, publishing, bookselling and financial sustainability for Caribbean writers.
	2013	Inaugural Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize (2013 – 2015) followed by The Johnson & Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize (2019 – 2021)	Supported a new generation of Caribbean writers who have achieved huge success in writing as a career.
	2014	Inaugural CODE Burt Award for Caribbean Young Adult Literature	The partnership resulted in high-quality, culturally relevant reading materials being injected into secondary schools around the Caribbean region.
	2015	First Citizens becomes the title sponsor of the National Poetry Slam	The Slam has become the largest and most influential Spoken Word event in the English-speaking Caribbean with cash awards of over TT\$80,000.
SEIZING NEW OPPORTUNITIES	2016	CineLit Partnership	Established a cross-cultural alliance with Latin American diplomatic missions, widening Spanish-English cultural exchanges in literature and film.
	2017	BLF receives welcome global recognition	Penguin Random House Writers' Academy names the BLF one of the 20 best literary festivals around the world.
	2018	Launch of The Writers Centre and <i>So Many Islands</i>	Establishment of a headquarters and year-round incubator for literary development. The Peekash Press imprint was brought "home" to support Caribbean publishing initiatives.
	2019	The Bocas Lit Fest curates the literary programme for Carifesta XIV	Caribbean writers from across the region participated in a rich and full daily programme of readings, discussions, book-selling & signing events.
	2020	Pivot to Digital Programming	Pivoted to a fully virtual festival during the global pandemic and provided much needed support and inspiration to international audiences.
NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE	2021	Launch of Bios and Bookmarks Digital Series and Scotiabank Write Away! Young Adult Programme (2021 – 2023)	Preservation of domestic heritage via the creation of a digital archive. Write Away! offers a rich repository of engaging digital content to support online English classes for secondary schools.
	2022	Bocas embarks on its first UK Tour & JB Fernandes sponsors the WeLit youth programme	Caribbean writing is showcased across four cities in Britain. Literature students gain an unprecedented appreciation and much inspiration.
	2023	Launch of Breakthrough Fellowships	Supporting a cohort of highly talented and motivated early-career Caribbean writers in completing their first books and placing them with international publishers.
	2024	Launch of Bocas Caribbean Literature Showcase	A pioneering programme which provides international delegates with opportunities to build connections between the Caribbean literary scene and global peers.
	2025	15th Anniversary Milestone	Over 100,000 children reached and massive surge in popularity results in a sold-out Poetry Slam event at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA).

The Festival

The 2025 Bocas Lit Fest, our milestone 15th festival, ran over four days at the start of May. The programme included 46 events for adults and young adults, following the long-established mix of readings, panel discussions, book launches, workshops and seminars, films, and musical and dramatic performances.

The 2025 festival theme, tied to the 15-year commemoration, was “Always Coming Home”, a phrase drawn from a poem by Richard Georges, winner of the 2020 OCM Bocas Prize. It reflected the festival’s reputation as a “homecoming” or “family reunion” for Caribbean writers and readers, and was the cue for a festival-wide focus on ideas of belonging, identity, community, and self-determination, in diverse events and formats.



The Bocas Lit Fest remains the biggest annual literary festival in the Anglophone Caribbean, by number of participants and audience size. The 2025 programme reflected the festival’s continued focus on Caribbean and diaspora authors. Participants included authors based in or with direct links to Anguilla, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Dominica, Jamaica, Haiti, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Guyana.

One of the highest profile events for 2025 was the opening night tribute to iconic T&T author Earl Lovelace, commemorating his 90th birthday. The inaugural Earl Lovelace Distinguished Lecture, delivered by Professor Kenneth Ramchand, was hosted at the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and accompanied by readings from Lovelace’s works and a specially curated exhibition of artworks organised by the Central Bank Museum.



Festival Photo Album



Prizes

OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature

The OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, always a festival highlight, attracted particular attention in 2025, its 15th year. Build-up to the milestone included a pre-festival social media campaign highlighting past genre and overall winners.

The prize was in focus at two of the festival's headline evening events, a showcase of past overall winners on Friday 2 May and the traditional prize ceremony on Saturday 3 May. In addition, a poster display in the National Library rotunda at the festival featured quotations from the 14 overall winners of the prize, 2011–2024.

OCM Bocas Prize 2025 finalists



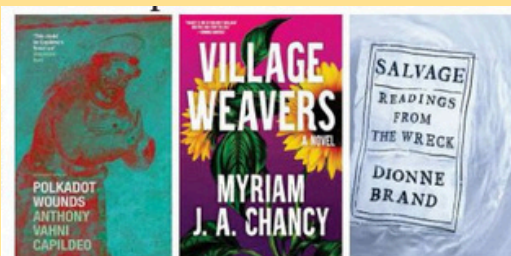
Anthony Vahni Capildeo



Dionne Brand



Myriam J.A. Chancy



2025 award-winning books of the OCM Bocas Prize

The overall prize for 2025 was won by US-based Haitian-Canadian writer Myriam J.A. Chancy, the first author of Haitian birth to take the award. Her novel *Village Weavers* was previously named winner of the fiction category. The poetry and nonfiction winners were, respectively, Trinidadian-Scottish Anthony Vahni Capildeo (*Polkadot Wounds*) and Trinidadian-Canadian Dionne Brand (*Salvage: Readings from the Wreck*). The winners were selected by a jury chaired by celebrated Jamaican author Erna Brodber. A total of US\$16,000 in prize money was awarded, sponsored by One Caribbean Media. For the 2025 round of the prize, the shortlists were increased to five books per genre category, giving a total of 15 books in contention.

Bocas Henry Swanzy Award

The 2025 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award for Distinguished Service to Caribbean Letters was announced at the festival media launch, and set a new precedent by honouring not an individual but an institution: *The Journal of West Indian Literature* (JWIL), based within the University of the West Indies.



The award was received at the prize ceremony by Lisa Outar, current co-editor-in-chief, and Evelyn O'Callaghan, past editor-in-chief.

Achievements of Caribbean Authors



Trinidadian-Scottish poet Anthony Vahni Capildeo won both the 2025 Windham Campbell Prize for their body of work to date, as well as the 2025 Saltire Book Award (Scotland's National Book Awards) in the poetry category for their collection *Polkadot Wounds*. The awards conferred cash values of US \$175,000 and £2,000, alongside bespoke commissioned art. Capildeo also won the 2025 OCM Bocas Prize for Poetry with their *Polkadot Wounds* collection.

Canisia Lubrin, overall winner of the 2019 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, was awarded the 2025 Carol Shields Prize for Fiction, worth US\$150,000, for her fiction collection *Code Noir*. The prize judges called St. Lucian-Canadian Lubrin's book groundbreaking, saying "Canisia Lubrin's prose is polyphonic; the stories invite you to immerse yourself in both the real and the speculative, in the intimate and in sweeping moments of history."



T&T author June Aming was shortlisted for the 2025 Deborah Rogers Award, derived from BLF's Hollick Arvon Prize, with her novel-in-progress "Yellow Is Not for Girls Like Me". The biennial award champions new voices in fiction and non-fiction, offering £3,000 for shortlisted authors. Aming was the only shortlisted author from the Caribbean this year and was a Bocas Breakthrough Fellow in 2024.

T&T author Rajiv Ramkhalawan was shortlisted for the 2025 Queen Mary Wasafiri New Writing Prize for Fiction, intended to "celebrate the most exciting new voices in life writing, poetry, and fiction from around the world." Ramkhalawan was previously a 2022 Bocas Emerging Writers Fellow for fiction, and his debut chapbook *The Birthday Cake* was published in 2024 by Peekash Press.

Trinidadian-Irish novelist Claire Adam's second book, *Love Forms* (Faber), earned a spot on the 2025 Booker Prize longlist. Adam was a featured writer at the 2019 Bocas Lit Fest.

The Snag: A Mother, A Forest, and Wild Grief by Tessa McWatt was shortlisted for the 2025 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. It went on to win the overall 2026 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature.

Programming for Children

Children's Festival

Parallel to the main festival programme, many activities for young writers and readers were offered in the Children's Library wing of the National Library. These included a special festival edition of the monthly Family Reading Circle, and the Bocas Storytime Open Fun House, featuring selections from the festival's archive of entertaining, educational video content for children up to age 12.



Family Reading Circle

Children's reading lives year-round at The Writers Centre, through the Children's Bocas Lit Fest Family Reading Circle (FRC). These interactive, read-aloud sessions are hosted by the Bocas Lit Fest in collaboration with Let's Read TT. The monthly family meet up encourages parents and guardians of children aged seven and under to develop the habit of reading for pleasure. It brings books to life for children, setting the foundation for a lifelong love of reading, and helping build crucial language, comprehension, and emotional skills.

A total of 184 children and adults participated in FRC events during 2025.



First Words

The First Words Young Writers' Development Programme provided mentorship by author Alake Pilgrim, for four children aged 7 to 12, to help them to develop their stories into books targeted to children.

The programme began in 2024 and was sponsored by the British Council, with 8 virtual sessions for each writer. In 2025, the Wainwright family sponsored a continuation, with a further 8 online sessions, getting each of the four books to the point of a final draft. There was a showcase of the works in progress in December 2025 at The Writers Centre.



Children's Bocas Lit Fest at FILSAI 2025

Melvina Hazard, Children's Programme Manager, and Bocas children's mascot Zelly attended the 2025 edition of the Feria del Libro de San Andrés, Providencia y Santa Catalina (FILSAI), the San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina Book Fair, from 17 to 21 September. The event attracted writers, editors and publishers from Colombia, Jamaica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Spain, Cameroon, and the Canary Islands.



Hazard participated in a series of literary events at FILSAI and, invited by the Banco de la República de Colombia's Centro Cultural de San Andrés, visited selected primary schools in San Andrés to lead story making workshops, a key practical aspect of the Children's Storytelling Caravan.

Programming for Youth

We Lit

We Lit, sponsored by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I since 2022, is based on the idea that English language and literature can be tools for self-empowerment in everyday life. The programme introduces students to books and literature relevant to their experiences, encourages them to write about their personal challenges and provides access to quality in-person and online workshops along with classes to improve their academic performance in English language and literature.



We Lit's creative output in the past year has been prolific and prodigious, including a July/August (JAVA) Workshop Series in which students developed spoken word and performance skills; a school tour in which our team visited 11 schools across Trinidad and Tobago, engaging over 600 students through spoken word, writing and performance workshops; and regular and sustained offerings of free lessons in CSEC English Language and English Literature and CAPE classes for Communication and Caribbean Studies.



Bocas Secondary Schools Spoken Word Intercol

The Bocas Secondary Schools Spoken Word Intercol, a multi-stage national programme was designed to identify, train, and showcase emerging spoken word poets at the secondary school level. The programme combined in-school creative development with a structured performance component and commenced with a schools tour where veteran spoken word performers and teaching artists conducted interactive workshops on writing and performance. It culminated in a vibrant competition showcasing youth performers from across the nation.



The finals of the 2025 edition were held at the San Fernando City Hall Auditorium, with 16-year-old Amaru Johnson of Naparima Boys' College, San Fernando emerging victorious .

Project Fusion Junction



This groundbreaking multimedia graphic novel project united 37 teens across three countries—Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, and Northern Ireland in a creative collaboration sponsored by the British Council.

Through a blend of virtual sessions and hands-on workshops at the National Library with GemX Studios' Everard McBain, participants developed three original novels from a shared theme, and celebrated their work at the 2026 Bocas Lit Fest.



Year-round Events at TWC

The Writers Centre

Located at 14 Alcazar Street, St. Clair, Port of Spain, The Writers Centre is more than the headquarters of the Bocas Lit Fest. Home to Paper Based Bookshop and Sleepy Cat Café, The Writers Centre is a hub for literary activity. In 2025, 540 guests visited the centre to attend workshops, seminars, book launches and signings, as well as activities for children and young adults.

A total of 12 special events were held at The Writers Centre, including one-on-ones with visiting writers Karen Barrow, Shani Mootoo, Amanda Smyth, and Lauren Francis-Sharma; a panel on T&T's Creole language to commemorate World Creole Heritage Month, presented in partnership with the Alliance Française; a celebration of the 40th anniversary of UK-based publisher Peepal Tree Press; BYOBB, our signature book-centred social; and a special Christmas open mic.

Bocas Academy

Launched last year, the Bocas Academy, continued to develop new writers in Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean region, as well as the wider Caribbean diaspora. With a dynamic, multi-level curriculum of writing workshops and masterclasses, Bocas Academy consolidates over a decade of experience in writer development, designed to nurture literary talent at every level.

Bocas Academy offered seven workshops and masterclasses in 2025, complementing the workshops and seminars offered at the 2025 festival. Our 2025 offerings included:

- *Vision Board Workshop for Writers, with Neala Luna*
- *Writers First: Write a Book, Get it Published! With Troy Hadeed, Melanie Archer, and Alice Besson of Paria PublishinG*
- *Masterclass: Writing Desire, with Leone Ross*
- *Crafting Zines 101 with Kriston Chen*
- *Masterclass: The Stories We Keep: Crafting Compelling Narratives, with Kevin Jared Hoseln*
- *Writing from the Archive, with Debbie Jacob*
- *Masterclass: Reimagining The Future Through Speculative Writing, with Brandon O'Brien*

Bocas Academy registrations were 83, which generated \$34,200 in income.



Peekash Press

BLF's publishing imprint produced a record seven titles in 2025: two full-length anthologies and five chapbooks which included:



- ***Unstitching Silence: Fiction and poetry by Caribbean writers on gender-based violence*** which was edited by Shivanee N. Ramlochan and Lucy Evan and featured new writing by ten Caribbean authors. This project was part of the multi-tiered project “**Representing gender-based violence: literature, performance and activism in the Anglophone Caribbean**”, supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council – AHRC.

- ***Writing for Our Lives: a Caribbean climate justice anthology***, which was edited by Diana McCaulay and Shivanee Ramlochan with new writing by 18 Caribbean authors, was published in partnership with the Cropper Foundation.
- In the final stage of our multi-year Bocas Breakthrough Fellowships writer development programme, Peekash Press published a chapbook of new writing by each of the five fellows:
 - ***Yellow Is Not for Girls Like Me*** by June Aming
 - ***The House of Never*** by Stephanie Koathes
 - ***About Kingston*** by Amílcar Peter Sanatan
 - ***Girl School*** by Rhea Manley
 - ***Tourism Is Our Business*** by Heather Barker



Bocas Book Bulletin

The monthly publication stands as the Caribbean's premier source for literary news covering author achievements, festival updates, and agency developments. Published on the first Sunday of each month in the Sunday Express, it has become essential reading for the region's literary community as well as a staple for the Express Newspaper.

Bocas Book Bulletin

A monthly roundup of news about Caribbean books and writers, presented by the Bocas Lit Fest

Fresh voices, bold stories

WELCOME to the latest installment of the Bocas Book Bulletin, a monthly roundup of news, interviews, and reviews from the Caribbean literary community. This issue features a special section on the 2023 OCM Bocas Prize for Poetry, highlighting the winners and runners-up.

New releases

Concrete Dreams (Peepal Tree Press) by Profoundly shaped Britain, grounded in Caribbean history, *Concrete Dreams* is an often painful exploration of identity it is explicated in the struggle for selfhood and its future. It is a work of art that is both a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

After Caliban (Duke University Press) by Eric of several Caribbean artists of the 1970s who gained prominence in the global art world through the lens of postcolonialism. The work is a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

Beyond Borders, the autobiography of business magnate Anand Lakshmi, is a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

The Hidden Island (Faber Publishing) by Alan Garner is a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

AS ACADEMY TO HOST JULY/AUGUST WORKSHOPS - The Bocas Lit Fest is proud to announce that the AS Academy will be hosting a series of workshops during the festival.

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Trinidadian-Scottish poet Anthony Voko Caplan has won a 2023 Saltire Book Award Scotland's National Poetry Award (Creative Poetry) for their collection *For the Love of the Sea*. The award is a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

Jamesian-born British writer Jacqueline Crooke was announced a 2023 winner of the Eboria Institute and writing residency at the Eboria Institute, London, for her forthcoming book *The Love of the Sea*. The award is a testament to the resilience of the Caribbean people and a call to action for a more just and equitable world.

Opportunities for writers - The Bocas Lit Fest, in association with the Caribbean Writers' Workshop, is offering a series of workshops for writers.

Write for the Eye: On Saturday, January 17, 2024, the Bocas Lit Fest will host a series of workshops for writers.

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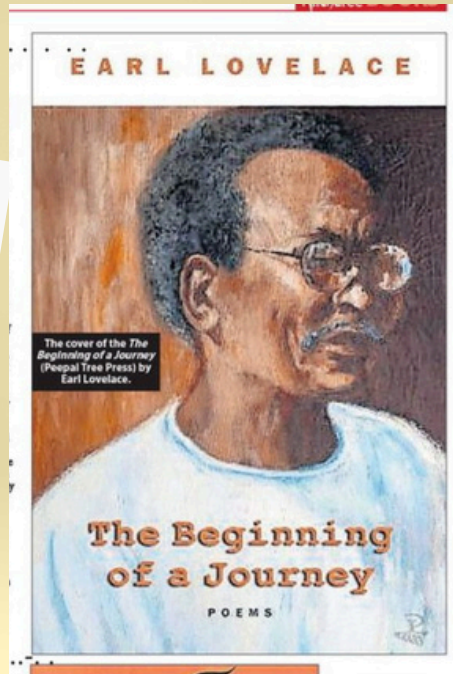
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The Beginning of a Journey
by EARL LOVELACE

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New Caribbean reads and global accolades

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Sustainable Development Goals

Through its focus on early literacy, environmental advocacy and sustained investment in the Caribbean Literary sector, the BLF demonstrates its alignment with specific UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

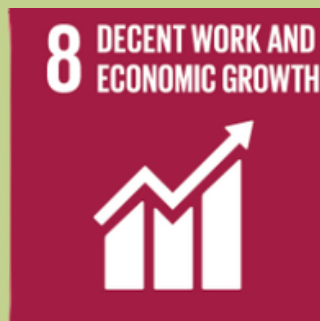


SDG 4: Quality Education

The Bocas Academy, WeLit and most of the BLF's youth and children's programming initiatives provide a rich source of writer development and academic support to students of literature, and reading and writing skills development in children.

SDG 8: Decent Work

The BLF continues to provide opportunities for local, regional and international writers both at home and at international festivals. The Peekash Press imprint publishes new titles every year and Bocas-supported writers are earning significant prize money, excelling in high profile international prizes.



SDG 13: Climate Action

The Bocas Lit Fest uses its platform to promote climate awareness. The topic has been the theme of its "Big Ideas" panels and also through literature and publications in collaboration with The Cropper Foundation and the climate-justice project ***Today Today Congotay!***

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The BLF remains a strong institution supporting and partnering other literary agencies. Paperbased Book Shop has performed remarkably well, as has the Sleepy Cat Cafe, all part of the thriving community at The Writers Centre.



SDG 17: Partnerships

Notwithstanding shrinking corporate sponsorships, the BLF has maintained essential partnerships, notably with One Caribbean Media and NALIS, that remain foundational to the annual festival and the OCM Bocas Prize.

15-Year Performance Metrics

100+

MASTER CLASSES
&
WORKSHOPS

15

PEEKASH
PRESS
PUBLICATIONS

EVENTS HELD AT

250+

SCHOOLS
THROUGHOUT
T&T

100,000+

CHILDREN
IMPACTED

13

CHILDREN AUTHORED
STORYBOOKS
PUBLISHED

\$2.68m

AWARDED IN BOCAS PRIZES

HOSTED

120

EVENTS FOR
ALL AGES

750+

LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
WRITERS FEATURED AND BLF EVENTS

Financial Report

In a year of serious challenges for NGOs and the arts and culture sector in Trinidad and Tobago, the BLF yet again demonstrated its resilience, drawing on long-term and strategic relationships with local and international sponsors and partners to compensate for the withdrawal of the title sponsor of 12 years, the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NGC).

Events of 2025 proved the importance of innovative income-earning initiatives, which should provide an increasing revenue stream for the organisation in coming years. Alongside monthly revenue from Paper Based Bookshop, BLF expanded the range of festival merchandise to include a highly successful limited-edition poster, and the Bocas Academy curriculum of paid workshops and seminars offered a steady revenue stream across the year, with significant potential for expansion

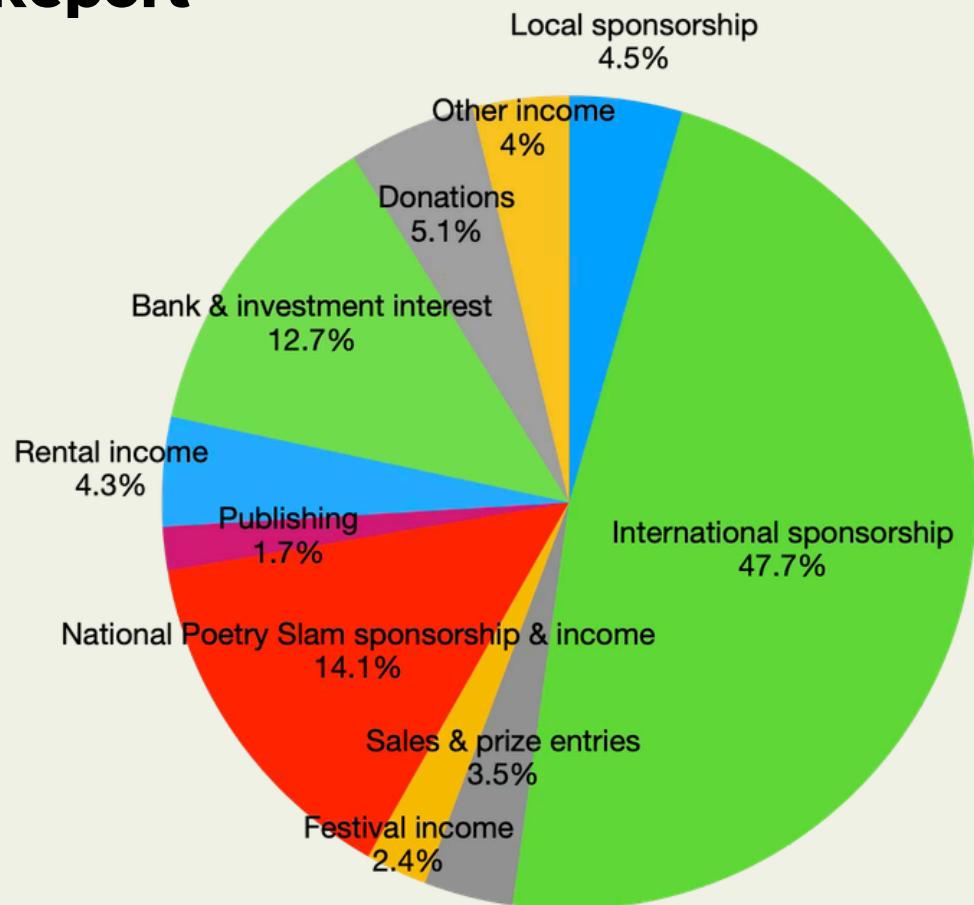
BLF's publishing arm also produced seven publications, each subsidised by project funding and providing sales income. A further step towards sustainability came in the form of ticket sales for festival and pre-festival events including the National Poetry Slam semifinals and finals and a special festival Friday night event.

While BLF remains committed to a rich and diverse offering of accessible and free events, an increasingly hybrid programming model that includes regular paid events designated as fundraisers will give loyal audiences the opportunity to contribute tangibly to the organisation's viability.

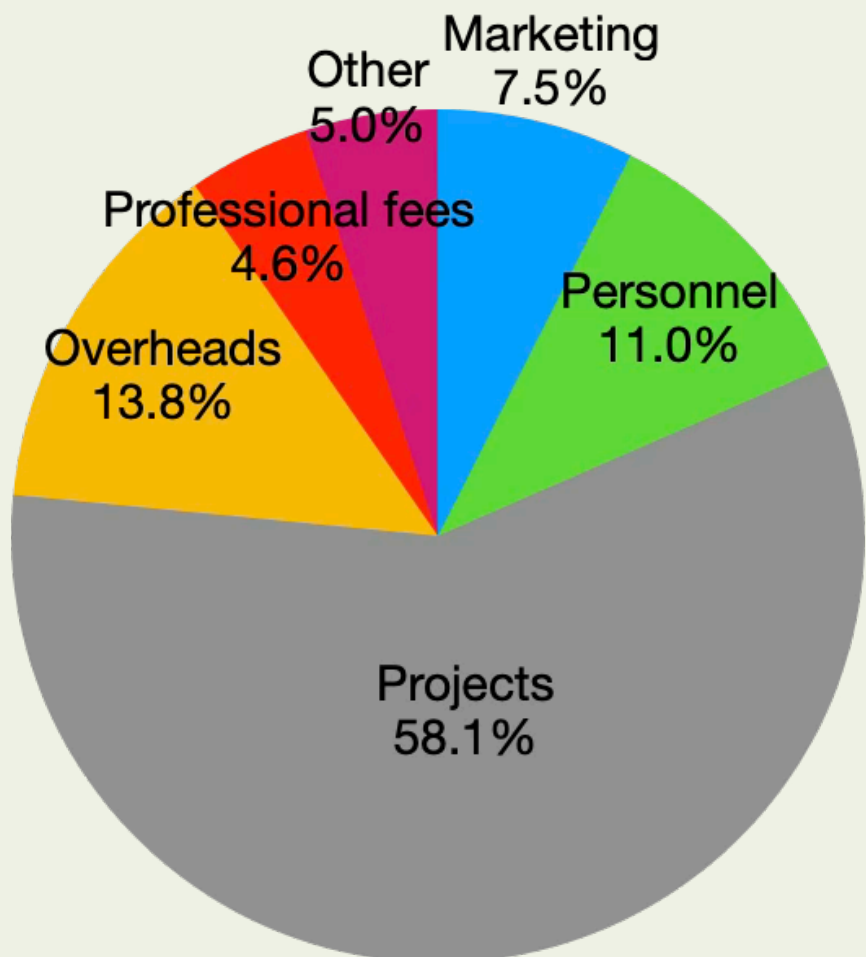
Meanwhile, the BLF executive team continued to streamline operations in the interest of fiscal responsibility. Overheads are partially covered by rental income at The Writers Centre, and while a fully staffed year-round team is essential to meet expected deliverables, a carefully planned recalibration of team members' working time and compensation helped reduce operational costs without affecting overall productivity. As a result, the ratio of direct project spend (including marketing) to running costs was 2:1, which we are happy to report.

Financial Report

Income 2025



Expenditure 2025



Strategic Partners and Sponsors

In the absence of a title sponsor for the 2025 festival, partnerships with local, regional, and international entities played an even more crucial role this year in supporting a rich festival programme appropriate to the 15-year milestone. A high proportion of programme costs this year (authors' travel and accommodation, appearance and performance fees) were covered by partners and donor not all of whom wished to be credited.

Main Sponsors



Sponsors



Programme and Diplomatic Partners



Sponsors in Kind



Media Partners



Print Partner

Hotel Partner



2026 Outlook

In 2026, the Bocas Lit Fest will move into the second half of its second decade. As we mature as an organisation in a rapidly changing cultural and economic climate, we will need to navigate a phase of significant evolution while holding fast to our original core mission. At the heart of this mission, and our institutional ethos, is the idea of literature as community, a theme which will be reflected and explored in our 2026 festival at the end of April.

Community-building will also be the key element of an exciting upcoming initiative, a series of one-day festivals to be staged around Trinidad and Tobago in the second half of the year, with the support of our new sponsor Methanex Trinidad. Building on past regional festivals in South and Central Trinidad as well as Tobago, these community festivals will take the signature Bocas mix of programming for all ages to four venues around the country, drawing on local talent.

The Writers Centre will continue to be a crucial hub for BLF's year-round work, a venue for readings, discussions, book launches, workshops, and more, alongside regular programming from BLF's bookselling arm, Paper Based.

Our work with children and youth is key to BLF's long-term sustainability. In 2026 we look forward to a continued vital relationship with the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I, sponsor of our We Lit youth initiative, and to the results of the groundbreaking Project Fusion Junction initiative, bringing together teenagers from T&T, Jamaica, and Northern Ireland in a multimedia creative exchange. Other 2026 projects include the launch of a new Tiny Libraries project, making books available to under-served readers in T&T, and a planned expansion of the Bocas Secondary Schools Spoken Word Intercol in the first term of the 2026–27 academic year.

Following the pattern of 2025, the coming year will also be a period of nurturing new partner relationships, locally, across the Caribbean region, and internationally, to expand the reach of the BLF and support our longtime goal of making new opportunities for Caribbean writers and the literary community more broadly.

Connect with us

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