

30 March 2022

Youths welcome Budget 2022 measures to promote a fairer and more inclusive Singapore but worry about rising cost of living

The National Youth Council (NYC) engaged with over 1,200 youths¹ to gather their feedback and sentiments on the Government's policy announcements in Budget 2022². Close to 90 per cent of youths engaged were aware of Budget 2022; the Goods and Service Tax (GST) increase, and higher wealth taxes were measures youths were most aware of. Around 60 percent of youths who were aware of Budget 2022, welcomed the Household Support Package and Assurance Package, but 1 in 3 were concerned that the support schemes would not sufficiently cushion the impact the GST hike may have on Singapore households.

2 More than half of youths engaged were concerned about rising cost of living. At youth engagement sessions, several youths pointed to external factors - higher commodity prices, geo-political issues, and businesses increasing prices to accommodate various tax and wage policies - as possible reasons for higher cost of living for Singaporeans.

Budget 2022 to strengthen the social compact

3 During youth engagement sessions on Budget 2022, youths cited the expansion of the Progressive Wage Model, enhancements to the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) Scheme and introduction of the Progressive Wage Mark Accreditation scheme as clear signals that Singapore is committed to uplifting lower-wage workers. These measures would address income inequality, provide upskilling opportunities for vulnerable workers, and promote a fairer and more inclusive society. Youths polled welcomed the continued COVID-19 related support for businesses even as the economy picks up, as well as collaborations between businesses and polytechnics and Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs) to boost students' employability.

Greener Singapore but cost is still a concern

4 Youths welcomed measures to address climate change, noting that the carbon tax increase was expected given our national agenda on sustainable development articulated in the Singapore Green Plan 2030. Some youths wanted more incentives for businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and some were concerned about the trickle-down impact the higher carbon tax would have on Singaporeans. When engaged further, youths suggested the need for more policy measures to support businesses and address any cost impact on Singaporeans.

¹ Polled around 1000 youths and engaged with over 200 youths aged 15 to 35 years.

² Ministry of Finance's Budget Statement (<https://www.mof.gov.sg/singaporebudget/budget-2022/budget-statement>) delivered on 18 February 2022.

Youth views on Budget 2022 shaped by different life stages

5 Youths prioritised national spending on healthcare, housing, and support for vulnerable groups, over security and external relations, and economic development. The desire for greater support was influenced by needs and desires across different life stages. Nearly half of older youths aged 30-34 years wanted more support for middle income and sandwiched households, specifically those with young children and elderly dependants to care for. Those in their early to mid-twenties wanted more support for jobseekers, part-timers and gig workers. To help them with their job search and in choosing the right careers, youths have asked for more on-the-job training and internship opportunities, career guidance and professional networking sessions. Younger youths were interested about updates on the Singapore Green Plan and more platforms for mental health support.

6 David Chua 蔡大卫, Chief Executive Officer, National Youth Council (NYC) 全国青年理事会行政总裁 said, “Efforts to uplift lower-wage workers and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by, or around 2050 resonated with youths’ aspirations for a greener and more inclusive Singapore. These aspirations have been captured consistently in our youth engagements and the latest measures will encourage even more youths to want to engage on national and social issues. More youths are coming forward to lead their own initiatives and make a difference in their communities. They view their efforts as complementing the Government’s shift to greater inclusiveness and social cohesion.”

7 On the concerns youths have raised, Mr Chua added, “Living with COVID-19 has brought uncertainty into our lives and our youths are most concerned about career prospects. There will be more career guidance initiatives through mentorship opportunities and way finding workshops, to help youths when they are still in school and as they transition to the working world. While youths acknowledge that support measures announced at Budget 2022 can address cost of living concerns, current geo-political issues have led youths to expect cost of living to rise. The NYC will work closely with government agencies to raise awareness on the suite of support measures to address these concerns. We will also press on with our mental health awareness efforts to ensure all youths can seek help and find support.”

8 More details on the policies and initiatives that will guide the direction Singapore is heading towards will be shared at NYC’s final post Budget engagement, *Budget 2022 - Conversations on Our Way Forward* today at 7.30pm. Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance & National Development and Mr Alvin Tan, Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry will speak about the rationale and considerations behind Budget 2022.

9 ANNEX A provides a list of youth profiles available for interviews.

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About the National Youth Council

At NYC, we believe in a world where young people between 15 to 35 years of age are respected and heard and have the ability to influence and make a difference to the world. Together with our partners, we develop future-ready youth who are committed to Singapore by instilling in them a heart for service, resilience and an enterprising spirit.

ANNEX A

Name	Details	Contact
Daryl Lee, Assistant Secretary, Keat Hong Youth Network	Daryl has volunteered with Keat Hong Youth Network (YN) since 2018, formally joining as a member in 2019. Since then, he has been involved in leading and initiating several projects, including Project HeartBeat (a frontline worker appreciation project) and Let's Save Tim the Turtle (Jurong Lake Clean Up). Since 2020, he has also led the YN's Youth Development Group, a Task Force that seeks to develop youths through expeditionary learning.	9007 6073
Liang Weiting	<p>Weiting is a second-year Economics and Public Policy & Global Affairs student. She serves as the Chairperson for NTUSU's Ministerial Open Discussions and Events (MODE) Organizing Committee, where she hopes to enhance communication between students and political officeholders.</p> <p>Her focus on social impact and community development has led her to take up roles as Honorary General Secretary with the Southeast Asian-focused non-profit organisation, SEAkors (NTU Chapter) and the Business Development Director with NTU Model United Nations Organizing Committee.</p>	9670 1588
V Dhanraj	<p>V Dhanraj serves as the President of the 31st Nanyang Technological University Students' Union (NTUSU) and is a third-year Public Policy and Global Affairs student in Nanyang Technological University (NTU).</p> <p>He is presently the Country Representative for the ASEAN University Students' Network (AUSN) and was the Economy Spokesperson for Singapore at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Voices of the Future conference in 2021. He has been involved in community service since 2015 and was profiled in two video interviews with Minister Lawrence Wong, as part of the Ministry of Finance's 2022 Pre- Budget video series.</p>	9638 9736
Arfah Malik	Arfah has recently completed her third year in Biomedical Engineering at Temasek Polytechnic. She has been on	8298 1675

	<p>the Dean's List and held leadership positions in various school clubs.</p> <p>Passionate about climate change and environmental issues, Arfah enjoys organising and volunteering for environmental causes and hopes that she can do more to tackle the issue of climate change.</p>	
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