

## #LifeHacks Meeting with Second Minister for Finance, and Second Minister for National Development, Ms Indranee Rajah

Session details: 8 October 2024  
WeWork Funan Room 5A

Notetakers: Gracia

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S/N	Notes/Questions	Follow-ups
1	<p><b>Panel Presentation</b></p> <p>Zunnurain opened the session, and lylia and Ezekkious shared the #LifeHack's panel recommendations: the (i) Financial Literacy Excellence Guide (FLEX) and (ii) Starter Savings Plan.</p> <p>Ezekkious said that the panel was presently exploring feedback to the recommendations submitted by the public through the Youth Policy Forum.</p>	
2	<p><b>Feedback from Minister Indranee</b></p> <p>Minister Indranee commended the panel's recommendations and said that the ideas would be helpful in addressing youths' concerns. She acknowledged the intention behind FLEX, which is to leverage and aggregate existing resources, such as information provided by different agencies. She said that this approach could help youths gain a broader understanding of how the overall system in Singapore is set up to support individuals, with key anchors such as the CPF system, and housing support.</p> <p>Minister Indranee agreed that it was important to encourage Singaporeans to save. While there were current initiatives such as the Child Development Account, sponsors and funders could also be sought to partner with the Government to explore matching financial incentives and schemes to encourage saving behaviour. The panel could also consider going beyond the Starter Savings Plan, to encourage the wider population to develop the habit of saving.</p> <p>Minister Indranee added that existing policies are crafted to ensure better financial health for Singaporeans. She said that there were three key tenets for ensuring housing affordability, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) savings,</li><li>(ii) CPF – salary and employer contributions to ensure retirement adequacy and guard against unforeseen medical costs, and</li></ul>	

	<p>(iii) loans – with repayment periods stretched over 20 to 30 years.</p> <p>Minister Indranee said that it was important to understand how the three tenets interact with one another across an individual’s life journey.</p> <p>In addition, the government provided assistance through generous subsidies and grants, and would make policy interventions where necessary.</p> <p>Minister Indranee highlighted that through the interplay of these three tenets and government support, Singapore’s housing was more affordable (4 – 5x median annual household income) compared to cities like London (9x), Sydney (13x) and Hong Kong (20x).</p>	
3	<p><b>Question and Answer</b></p> <p><b>Zunnurain asked how the panel could iterate beyond their initial recommendations and if there was space to collaborate with the Government.</b> Minister Indranee said there were definitely avenues of collaboration, and that the Government would benefit from the panel’s recommendation on incorporating engaging modalities and features that would capture youths’ attention.</p> <p><b>Elijah added that youths lacked time, which affected how they retained information. He said that LumiHealth was a good example of how gamification blended with incentivisation.</b> Minister Indranee said that youth consumption habits have now switched from long form articles to scrolling, and agreed that gamification and repetition would help with the retention of information. She suggested exploring the idea with IMDA and collaborating with developers and experts in the gamification space.</p> <p><b>Alicia acknowledged the enhanced housing grants and said she had observed a long waiting time for BTO housing.</b> Minister Indranee explained that Covid had disrupted our BTO construction schedule, leading to a reduced supply of flats in the early part of the pandemic as the foreign workers could not proceed with the construction activity. At the same time, the pandemic resulted in increased demand for housing, a reaction by some to enforced close proximity with household members. The increased demand coupled with the reduced supply of BTOs found an outlet in the increased demand for resale flats, which in turn drove up resale prices. While the supply of BTO flats had since been ramped up, Minister Indranee said that it would still take a while for the market to adjust and find an equilibrium. She added that the Government would intervene where</p>	

necessary, and cited policy changes such as the recent HDB housing reclassification framework to ensure that housing remained affordable.

**Francesca asked what some potential challenges were regarding the inclusion of the proposed FLEX Guide elements to the LifeSG app.** Minister Indranee said that the LifeSG app was intended to follow the life journey of Singaporeans spanning major milestones including childbirth, schooling and purchasing a house. Minister Indranee said that the panel was on the right track in terms of making the content interesting for youths. She said that incorporating small game elements was easier than building a full-fledged game, as individuals might not want to go through various levels of digital security to log onto a government app and play a game. Having a conversation with IMDA would help the panel to think about what gamification aspects could be included, alongside partnerships with the private sector that possessed the technical know-hows and capabilities. The game built must allow for information to be adjusted to suit different and evolving consumption habits (e.g., Gen Z vs Gen Alpha). While information was evergreen, the way it was transmitted needed to be rejuvenated constantly.

**Francesca asked if the Government might support the families of needy children and youths aged 13 to 25 years old who were not able to enter school or find jobs due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., caregiver duties).** Minister Indranee said that the fundamental strategy would be to get these children and youths back onto an education track to help them build and upgrade their skills. She said that the provision of monetary support was short term, as these children and youths would need basic education to progress. She said that it was imperative to bring in agencies such as Social Service Offices (SSOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to help address the families' needs and enroll the children and youths into school or vocational training.

**Marie asked what the Government's considerations were when focusing on cost-of-living topics, while not taking a top-down approach.** Minister Indranee said that it was useful to consider the point of view of the beneficiary, and to focus on building conditions to help Singaporeans be the "best version of themselves" as opposed to telling them what to do. She cited examples where residents had voiced their preference for upskilling courses rather than handouts, and said that emotional connection was first required to engender trust that the Government wanted to ensure that no Singaporeans were left behind.

	<p><b>Lauren asked how the panel might build a narrative that was aligned to what Minister Indranee shared about the interlocking nature of Singaporeans' financial journey.</b> Minister Indranee said that the life stage approach of the FLEX Guide was closely aligned with what the Government aims to achieve. She said that more had to be done to better explain the underpinnings of the foundational structure behind Singapore's key anchors such as CPF and housing. She also advised the panel that the life stage approach should be inclusive to cover Singaporeans from all walks of life.</p> <p><b>Gao Xian asked if the cost-of-living narrative could address fears about cost and not being able to save money.</b> Minister Indranee advised the panel to differentiate between Singaporeans who could not save, and those who could save but did not. For the lower-income groups who had little income or savings, the government would provide more assistance. She said that the narratives on cost-of-living changed over time with rising incomes. However, we could keep housing affordable relative to incomes by ensuring that people continued to see rising wages.</p>	
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**Attendance:**

<b>MCCY</b>	Jaishree Thangaraj Mandy Lim Kenneth Chua Shaun Teo Tan Lin Teck
<b>NYC</b>	Gracia Ong David Tay Hasliza Ahmad David Chua
<b>MOF</b>	Minister Indranee Rajah Kwa Chin Lum Farah Abdul Rahim Zhou XiaoJian
<b>MOM</b>	Jeremy Huang Faith Zheng Clara Chu
<b>MAS</b>	Rebecca Chua
<b>Advisors</b>	Francesca Wah
<b>Leads</b>	Amalina Abdul Nasir Muhammad Nabil Marie Teo Toh Guan Ru
<b>Members</b>	Peh Gao Xian Lauren Angelina Koek Wee Su-Ann

	Muhammad Zunnurain Bin Mohamad Zulkifli Elijah Chao Mohamad Arshad S/O Khaja Moinudeen Ezekkious Loo Tian En Loke Jun Hao Xian Yi Dusadidecho Alicia Muhammad Iylia Bin Mohammad Shukor Natalie Ng Xin Yi
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