

YOUTH.sg:

# The State of Youth in Singapore 2024

*Youth & Their Diverse Priorities*



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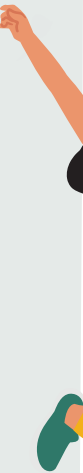
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NATIONAL  
YOUTH  
COUNCIL  
SINGAPORE

WE HEAR **Y**OUTH  
HERE FOR **Y**OUTH

At NYC, we believe in a world where young people are respected and heard and have the ability to influence and make a difference in 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.



## Our Vision

Thriving youth who are **future-ready and committed to Singapore**



## Our Mission

Create **opportunities for all Singaporean youth** to be **heard**, to be **empowered** and **be the change**



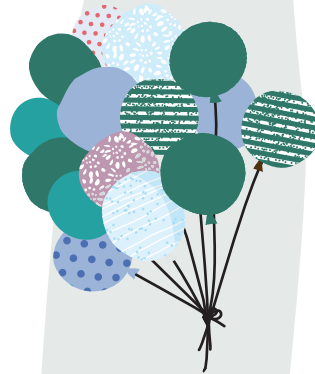
## Our Background

NYC was set up by the Singapore Government on 1 November 1989 as the national co-ordinating body for youth affairs in Singapore and the focal point of international youth affairs.

On 1 January 2015, NYC began its operations as an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and housed two key institutions: Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) and Youth Corps Singapore (YCS).

Together, the agency drives youth development and broadens outreach to young Singaporeans and youth sector organisations.

Visit [www.nyc.gov.sg](http://www.nyc.gov.sg) for more information.



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# Preface

The National Youth Survey (NYS) studies the major concerns and issues of schooling and working youths in Singapore. It is a time-series survey that tracks and provides updated analyses of national youth statistics and outcomes to inform policy and practice. To date, NYS has been conducted in 2002, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022. Findings and analyses from each cycle of NYS are subsequently published as YOUTH.sg: The State of Youth in Singapore (YOUTH.sg).

This edition of YOUTH.sg consists of five separate issues covering topics concerning the state of youth today:



## Youth & Their Diverse Priorities

shed light on the aspirations, values & attitudes driving youths



## Youth & the Future of Work

focuses on youths' education & employment related attitudes and future readiness



## Youth & Their Enduring Bonds

provides insights into the strength and quality of youths' social support



## Youth & the Power of Communities

delves into youths' sense of social cohesion and civic engagement



## Youth & Their Strides Towards Flourishing

highlights multiple aspects of youths' wellbeing and ability to thrive

Each issue features youth statistics and insights from the NYS. Together, the five issues of YOUTH.sg intend to shed light on and explore specific emergent trends and issues of youths.

**This publication has been put together by the Research team at the National Youth Council.**

### Notation

NA Not Available

### Notes

Percentages may not total up to 100% due to rounding.  
Survey figures may vary slightly due to sample weighting.

# Values & Attitudes

Youths are not afraid to stand up for ideals that they resonate with. The value orientations of youths towards the world around them reflect the essence of who they are as individuals and what they find to be important. These values inform the decisions that youths will make in their daily lives and at key points of transition. Their values and attitudes offer insights into the life youths envision for themselves and opportunities for advancement as individuals, communities, and as a nation.



# Values & Attitudes

In today's world, youth are presented with a vast array of opportunities, information and perspectives. Exposed to an abundance of choices, youths in Singapore must make important decisions about what they value and what they want to pursue in life to guide their way forward as they balance achieving their aspirations with the challenges of transitioning to adulthood.

Over the years, youths continue to grow more liberal and accepting of diversity. Reflecting their broadening worldview, young Singaporeans show a keen interest in a wide variety of issues which range from pragmatic concerns such as affordability, to those which concern the welfare of others around them, such as racism and inequality.

Despite their evolving views, Singaporean youth continue to maintain traditional values, particularly in their aspirations. Youths' top life goals have remained largely unchanged over

the past decade, with strong family ties, homeownership, and personal and career development taking priority.

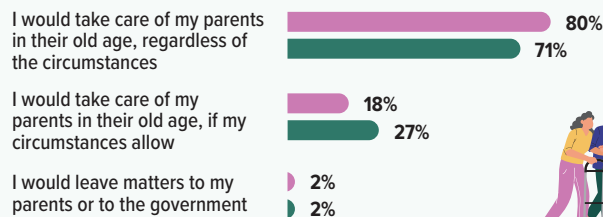
However, youths may face challenges in reconciling personal goals with family responsibilities. While the desire to care for parents remains high, an increasing number would consider doing so only if their circumstances allow. Attitudes towards marriage have also shifted, with it now being viewed more as a personal choice rather than a necessity. Many single Singaporeans find freedom and independence an attractive alternative to marriage, often prioritising career advancement and financial stability over marriage and family formation (Jones, 2012). Recognising the potential conflict between pragmatic considerations and familial duties, it is important to empower youth to envision and achieve synergy between these seemingly divergent priorities.

As youth strive to achieve personal ambitions, fulfil familial responsibilities, and shape their futures in Singapore, it is crucial to support them in this journey of discovery and transition. Recognising these nuanced perspectives can help in developing strategies that enable youth to successfully manage their diverse priorities and aspirations from personal growth to societal engagement and contribution on broader social issues.

Youth aspirations have remained diverse with consistent prioritisation over the past decade.

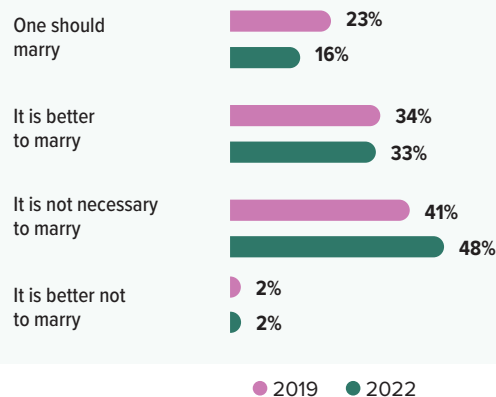


While the desire to care for ageing parents remains high, there's a slight shift in youths' attitudes towards filial piety, with an increasing proportion considering their circumstances, possibly due to financial concerns and uncertainties.



● 2019 ● 2022

The pursuit of diverse life goals and changing expectations of marriage may have contributed to delayed marriage plans, with more believing that marriage and parenthood is not necessary.



● 2019 ● 2022

## Part A: LIFE GOALS

### Section A1:

## LIFE GOALS

Youths' important life goals have remained largely unchanged over the past decade (Table A1). Across all age groups, youths share similar top priorities of home ownership, maintaining strong family relationships and acquiring new skills and knowledge (Table A2). Beyond these aspirations for one's future, over 8 in 10 youths still regard helping the less fortunate and contributing to society as somewhat and very important life goals (Table A3).



### How important are the following aspirations or life goals in your life?

**Table A1:**  
**YOUTHS' "VERY IMPORTANT" LIFE GOALS OVER TIME**

	2013	2016	2019	2022
	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)	(n=3,565)
To have a place of my own <sup>a</sup>	70%	70%	65%	66%
To maintain strong family relationships	74%	70%	68%	60%
To acquire new skills and knowledge	65%	62%	53%	50%
To have a successful career	61%	59%	51%	48%
To earn lots of money	46%	45%	36%	43%
To travel the world <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	41%	43%
To have a good personal spiritual/religious life	36%	31%	33%	32%
To help the less fortunate <sup>a</sup>	41%	41%	34%	32%
To contribute to society <sup>a</sup>	39%	40%	30%	28%
To get married	39%	36%	29%	25%
To have children	37%	35%	27%	21%
To discover, design or invent something new	17%	17%	16%	19%
To be actively involved in sports	18%	18%	21%	19%
To start my own business	22%	21%	14%	13%
To be actively involved in the arts	13%	12%	11%	11%
To be actively involved in local volunteer work	12%	10%	10%	10%
To migrate to another country	10%	11%	9%	9%
To be actively involved in overseas volunteer work	9%	8%	6%	7%
To be famous	6%	6%	4%	5%

**Notes**

a. Items are new to NYS 2013.

b. Item is new to NYS 2019.



**Table A2:**  
**YOUTHS' "VERY IMPORTANT" LIFE GOALS BY AGE**

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
To have a place of my own	62%	67%	66%	66%	66%
To maintain strong family relationships	64%	60%	56%	62%	60%
To acquire new skills and knowledge	52%	53%	50%	45%	50%
To have a successful career	62%	55%	43%	39%	48%
To earn lots of money	49%	48%	40%	39%	43%
To travel the world	37%	46%	46%	41%	43%
To have a good personal spiritual/religious life	33%	33%	29%	32%	32%
To help the less fortunate	38%	33%	31%	27%	32%
To contribute to society	33%	30%	27%	25%	28%
To get married	27%	28%	22%	24%	25%
To have children	20%	24%	17%	23%	21%
To discover, design or invent something new	22%	22%	19%	16%	19%
To be actively involved in sports	23%	20%	18%	17%	19%
To start my own business	14%	15%	12%	13%	13%
To be actively involved in the arts	15%	13%	10%	7%	11%
To be actively involved in local volunteer work	13%	11%	8%	8%	10%
To migrate to another country	8%	10%	9%	8%	9%
To be actively involved in overseas volunteer work	10%	9%	5%	6%	7%
To be famous	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%

**Note**

The upper-bound survey population figures are reflected in this table.



**Table A3:**  
**YOUTHS' LIFE GOALS**

	Not important at all	Somewhat unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
(n=3,565)				
To have a place of my own	1%	4%	30%	66%
To maintain strong family relationships	1%	5%	34%	60%
To acquire new skills and knowledge	1%	4%	45%	50%
To have a successful career	1%	6%	44%	48%
To earn lots of money	2%	9%	45%	43%
To travel the world	4%	12%	41%	43%
To have a good personal spiritual/religious life	15%	19%	35%	32%
To help the less fortunate	3%	12%	54%	32%
To contribute to society	3%	13%	56%	28%
To get married	10%	20%	46%	25%
To have children	16%	22%	41%	21%
To discover, design or invent something new	11%	28%	42%	19%
To be actively involved in sports	11%	25%	45%	19%
To start my own business	20%	35%	32%	13%
To be actively involved in the arts	21%	38%	30%	11%
To be actively involved in local volunteer work	12%	34%	44%	10%
To migrate to another country	27%	39%	25%	9%
To be actively involved in overseas volunteer work	26%	42%	25%	7%
To be famous	50%	32%	13%	5%



## Part B: ATTITUDES TOWARDS FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Section B1:

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTAL CARE

While the concept of filial piety has been evolving (Kuek, 2023), the desire to care for one's parents in their old age remains high. Majority of youths express that they would do so regardless of the circumstances, with an increasing proportion considering doing so should their circumstances allow (Table B1). With affordability being a top issue important to youth (Table C1), this slight shift in attitude towards filial piety could be attributed to concerns towards uncertainties and financial constraints (NYS FGD, 2022').



Which statement best describes your belief towards caring for your parents?

Table B1:

YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTAL CARE OVER TIME

	2013 (n=2,843)	2016 (n=3,531)	2019 (n=3,392)	2022 (n=3,565)
I would take care of my parents in their old age, regardless of the circumstances	86%	85%	80%	71%
I would take care of my parents in their old age, if my circumstances allow	13%	14%	18%	27%
I would leave matters to my parents or to the government	1%	1%	2%	2%

Table B2:

YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARENTAL CARE BY AGE

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
I would take care of my parents in their old age, regardless of the circumstances	71%	71%	70%	71%	71%
I would take care of my parents in their old age, if my circumstances allow	27%	25%	28%	27%	27%
I would leave matters to my parents or to the government	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%

\*Based on qualitative insights from NYS Focus Group Discussions conducted in 2023 with 48 NYS respondents.



Section B2:

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARRIAGE

In the face of competing priorities and a greater acceptance of singlehood and cohabitation (Tan, 2022; Tan & Goh, 2020), fewer youths view marriage as a necessity (Table B3).

Nevertheless, youths still hold the concept of marriage in high regard. Over 7 in 10 viewed marriage as an important goal in life (Table A3), and prefer to date with the intention to marry (Table B6). Youths want to be prepared, such as having financial stability and their own home, before marriage (Youth STEPS 2022).



### Which statement best describes your belief towards marriage?

**Table B3:**

#### YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARRIAGE OVER TIME

	2013 (n=2,843)	2016 (n=3,531)	2019 (n=3,392)	2022 (n=3,565)
One should marry	39%	30%	23%	16%
It is better to marry	35%	38%	34%	33%
It is not necessary to marry	25%	31%	41%	48%
It is better not to marry	2%	2%	2%	2%

**Table B4:**

#### YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARRIAGE BY AGE

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
One should marry	16%	18%	14%	17%	16%
It is better to marry	39%	34%	32%	30%	33%
It is not necessary to marry	43%	46%	52%	50%	48%
It is better not to marry	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%

**Table B5:**

#### YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARRIAGE BY MARITAL STATUS

	Unmarried Youths (n=2,639)	Married Youths (n=871)
One should marry	14%	23%
It is better to marry	33%	33%
It is not necessary to marry	50%	43%
It is better not to marry	3%	1%

Section B3:

## READINESS FOR DATING & MARRIAGE

With marriage increasingly seen as a choice rather than necessity, youths are likely under pressure to make the right choices in finding a partner and settling down. Meeting the right person remains the top barrier to dating (Table B6) while those who report that they or their partners have more important priorities than marriage (Table B7) are likely pursuing prerequisites such as financial stability and career advancement (Choo & Elangovan, 2019).



The following are statements relating to romantic relationships in Singapore. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

*(Based on a 7-pt scale where 7=“strongly agree”, 4=“neither agree nor disagree”, & 1=“strongly disagree”.)*

Table B6:

### SINGLE YOUTHS' READINESS AND BARRIERS FOR DATING OVER TIME (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	2019	2021	2022
	(n=1,985)	(n=1,459)	(n=1,229)
I have not met the right person yet	5.58 (1.29)	5.72 (1.20)	5.78 (1.20)
I prefer to date with the intention of marriage	5.29 (1.49)	5.31 (1.44)	5.47 (1.39)
I have more important priorities now (e.g., job, studies, self-discovery) compared to dating	5.25 (1.42)	5.35 (1.36)	5.35 (1.38)
Dating in Singapore is stressful (e.g., expensive, high expectations)	4.75 (1.48)	5.07 (1.38)	5.26 (1.31)
I am open to dating someone of a different background from myself (e.g., of another race, nationality) <sup>a</sup>	NA	5.06 (1.52)	5.06 (1.47)
I do not believe that dating someone is essential for me to lead a fulfilling life	4.23 (1.67)	4.69 (1.54)	4.80 (1.55)
I do not have the resources (e.g., time, money) to date	4.42 (1.64)	4.60 (1.54)	4.64 (1.58)
I am open to using a dating app or go online to meet potential romantic partners	3.98 (1.69)	4.40 (1.74)	4.43 (1.74)
I do not feel ready to be in a relationship	4.28 (1.58)	4.40 (1.59)	4.41 (1.62)
There are no opportunities to meet a potential partner in Singapore	3.92 (1.51)	4.21 (1.40)	4.27 (1.46)
My past experiences deter me from dating	3.59 (1.64)	3.87 (1.67)	3.90 (1.61)
I face pressure from family and friends to find a partner	3.32 (1.67)	3.61 (1.74)	3.72 (1.71)
Given a choice, I would choose to remain single	3.23 (1.68)	3.60 (1.60)	3.68 (1.63)
People around me (e.g., parents, friends) do not approve of me dating	2.47 (1.35)	2.39 (1.38)	2.39 (1.28)

#### Notes

The overall unmarried, single youth survey population figures are reflected in this table.

This question was not run in 2020.

a. Item is new to Youth STEPS 2021.

**Source:** Youth STEPS (National Youth Council & IPS Social Lab, 2019-2022).



The following are statements regarding marriage. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?  
(Based on a 7-pt scale where 7=“strongly agree”, 4=“neither agree nor disagree”, & 1=“strongly disagree”).

**Table B7:**

**DATING YOUTHS' READINESS AND BARRIERS FOR MARRIAGE OVER TIME** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	2019	2021	2022
	(n=1,100)	(n=1,057)	(n=1,058)
Marriage in Singapore is stressful (e.g., expensive, high expectations)	5.63 (1.30)	5.65 (1.24)	5.68 (1.28)
I have more important priorities now than marriage	5.25 (1.60)	5.21 (1.54)	5.04 (1.59)
My partner has more important priorities than marriage	5.00 (1.60)	4.81 (1.63)	4.75 (1.60)
I do not have the resources (e.g., time, money) to take up the responsibilities of marriage	5.04 (1.60)	4.82 (1.62)	4.73 (1.64)
I do not believe that being married is essential for me to lead a fulfilling life	3.88 (1.74)	4.34 (1.72)	4.47 (1.72)
I do not feel ready for marriage	4.42 (1.84)	4.19 (1.75)	4.23 (1.73)
There are no opportunities for me to have the married life I want in Singapore (e.g., unable to buy a flat)	3.87 (1.65)	4.03 (1.72)	4.13 (1.80)
I have not met the right person yet	2.43 (1.42)	2.29 (1.38)	2.37 (1.39)
People around me (e.g., parents, friends) do not approve of me getting married	2.39 (1.46)	2.27 (1.50)	2.37 (1.49)

**Notes**

The overall unmarried, dating youth survey population figures are reflected in this table.  
This question was not run in 2020.

**Source:** Youth STEPS (National Youth Council & IPS Social Lab, 2019-2022).

## Part C: SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Section C1:

### IMPORTANT YOUTH ISSUES

Youths express interest in a range of social issues (Table C1). Interest varies with life stage, with older youths being more focused on bread-and-butter issues such as affordability and work-life balance, and younger youths being more concerned by societal issues such as gender inequality and racism. Interest in mental health-related issues gained traction across all age groups (Table C2).



Which of the following social issues are important to you? Please pick up to 5 items.

**Table C1:**  
**YOUTHS' IMPORTANT SOCIAL ISSUES OVER TIME**

	2019 (n=3,392)	2022 (n=3,565)
Affordability of life in Singapore	62%	63%
Work-life balance	59%	57%
Mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression, etc.)	38%	46%
Racism and discrimination	34%	31%
Competition for jobs	36%	31%
Social inequality (e.g., income gap)	32%	29%
Global warming/environmental issues	41%	26%
Government transparency and accountability	28%	24%
Bullying and cyberbullying	20%	19%
Data privacy	20%	18%
Uplifting vulnerable groups (e.g., lower-income group, Persons with Disability) <sup>a</sup>	NA	17%
Lack of career-preparedness	17%	15%
Gender inequality	15%	14%
Accessibility to educational opportunities (e.g., exposure, resources) <sup>a</sup>	NA	13%
Fake news	15%	13%
Acceptance of non-traditional careers	9%	8%
Negative stereotypes of youths	9%	7%
Lack of youth representation on public issues	6%	6%
None	2%	1%

#### Notes

This is a new question introduced in NYS 2019.

a. Items are new to NYS 2022.

**Table C2:**  
**YOUTHS' IMPORTANT SOCIAL ISSUES BY AGE**

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
Affordability of life in Singapore	51%	62%	67%	69%	63%
Work-life balance	41%	56%	63%	64%	57%
Mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression, etc.)	45%	47%	48%	44%	46%
Racism and discrimination	37%	33%	27%	29%	31%
Competition for jobs	30%	33%	28%	31%	31%
Social inequality (e.g., income gap)	22%	25%	32%	32%	29%
Global warming/environmental issues	30%	22%	28%	24%	26%
Government transparency and accountability	17%	22%	28%	26%	24%
Bullying and cyberbullying	23%	18%	16%	21%	19%
Data privacy	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%
Uplifting vulnerable groups (e.g., lower-income group, Persons with Disability)	16%	18%	17%	15%	17%
Lack of career-preparedness	16%	19%	13%	14%	15%
Gender inequality	21%	13%	13%	10%	14%
Accessibility to educational opportunities (e.g., exposure, resources)	15%	14%	13%	12%	13%
Fake news	11%	10%	13%	15%	13%
Acceptance of non-traditional careers	7%	10%	9%	8%	8%
Negative stereotypes of youths	14%	9%	5%	4%	7%
Lack of youth representation on public issues	10%	7%	5%	3%	6%
None	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

**Note**

The upper-bound survey population figures are reflected in this table.





## Section C2:

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS JUSTIFIABILITY OF ACTIONS

Youths are increasingly tolerant towards a range of actions. With the exception of online vigilantism, there is greater acceptance of divorce, sex before marriage, abortion, and euthanasia (Table C3). Although younger youths in Singapore held relatively less conservative views than older youths (Table C4), they were generally still more conservative than youths from other countries (World Values Survey Association, 2022).



The following are some topics that people have differing views on. To what extent do you think each of the following is justifiable (i.e., right or acceptable)? (Based on a 10-pt scale, where 10=“always justifiable” & 1=“never justifiable”.)

Table C3:

### MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES OVER TIME (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	2013 (n=2,843)	2016 (n=3,531)	2019 (n=3,392)	2022 (n=3,565)
Divorce	4.44 (2.86)	4.58 (2.93)	5.62 (2.68)	6.22 (2.75)
Sex before marriage	4.32 (3.04)	4.66 (3.11)	5.51 (3.07)	5.82 (3.11)
Abortion	3.59 (2.81)	3.83 (2.95)	4.75 (3.00)	5.51 (3.12)
Euthanasia (i.e., intentionally ending a life to relieve pain)	4.09 (3.08)	4.20 (3.17)	5.11 (3.09)	5.29 (3.12)
Prostitution	2.89 (2.48)	3.02 (2.50)	3.68 (2.58)	3.93 (2.77)
Online vigilantism (i.e., exposing information of a person who committed a misdeed) <sup>a</sup>	NA	NA	4.13 (2.53)	3.78 (2.39)
Suicide	2.26 (2.22)	2.60 (2.38)	3.04 (2.42)	3.27 (2.53)
Using drugs for recreation <sup>a</sup>	NA	NA	2.33 (2.12)	2.74 (2.37)

**Note**

a. Items are new to NYS 2019.

Table C4:

### MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES BY AGE (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
Divorce	6.12 (2.71)	6.32 (2.77)	6.37 (2.80)	6.07 (2.70)	6.22 (2.75)
Sex before marriage	5.20 (3.15)	5.99 (3.08)	6.15 (3.20)	5.81 (2.96)	5.82 (3.11)
Abortion	5.78 (3.12)	5.73 (3.16)	5.71 (3.15)	5.01 (3.01)	5.51 (3.12)
Euthanasia (i.e., intentionally ending a life to relieve pain)	4.79 (3.02)	5.43 (3.12)	5.67 (3.18)	5.19 (3.09)	5.29 (3.12)
Prostitution	3.55 (2.68)	4.03 (2.75)	4.30 (2.88)	3.76 (2.70)	3.93 (2.77)
Online vigilantism (i.e., exposing information of a person who committed a misdeed)	3.91 (2.38)	3.85 (2.38)	3.78 (2.41)	3.65 (2.39)	3.78 (2.39)
Suicide	3.54 (2.66)	3.48 (2.57)	3.38 (2.53)	2.85 (2.34)	3.27 (2.53)
Using drugs for recreation	2.36 (2.08)	2.87 (2.35)	3.13 (2.64)	2.54 (2.27)	2.74 (2.37)

Section C3:

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER RACES

Youths continued to embrace diversity in their neighbourhoods and workplaces (Table C5). Younger youths (Table C6) and minority races (Table C7), in particular, expressed higher levels of openness.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5=“strongly agree”, 3=“neither agree nor disagree”, & 1=“strongly disagree”).

**Table C5:**

**MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER RACES OVER TIME** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	2013	2016	2019	2022
	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)	(n=3,565)
I am comfortable working together with someone of a different race	4.37 (0.65)	4.55 (0.62)	4.49 (0.66)	4.46 (0.74)
I am comfortable having someone of a different race as a neighbour	4.38 (0.67)	4.55 (0.63)	4.52 (0.65)	4.48 (0.70)

**Table C6:**

**MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER RACES BY AGE** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=711)	(n=802)	(n=963)	(n=1,090)	(n=3,565)
I am comfortable working together with someone of a different race	4.55 (0.72)	4.47 (0.74)	4.45 (0.74)	4.38 (0.74)	4.46 (0.74)
I am comfortable having someone of a different race as a neighbour	4.62 (0.64)	4.53 (0.67)	4.46 (0.74)	4.38 (0.70)	4.48 (0.70)

**Table C7:**

**MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER RACES BY RACE** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others	Overall
	(n=2,538)	(n=589)	(n=328)	(n=110)	(n=3,565)
I am comfortable working together with someone of a different race	4.42 (0.74)	4.49 (0.70)	4.64 (0.75)	4.61 (0.75)	4.46 (0.74)
I am comfortable having someone of a different race as a neighbour	4.43 (0.71)	4.55 (0.64)	4.69 (0.63)	4.65 (0.68)	4.48 (0.70)

Section C4:

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER NATIONALITIES

Acceptance towards other nationalities working or studying in Singapore has also been steadily increasing since 2013 (Table C8), with younger youths expressing higher levels of comfort (Table C9).



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5=“strongly agree”, 3=“neither agree nor disagree”, & 1=“strongly disagree”).

**Table C8:**

**MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER NATIONALITIES OVER TIME** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	2013	2016	2019	2022
	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)	(n=3,565)
I am comfortable working together with someone of a different nationality (i.e., from a different country)	4.11 (0.87)	4.44 (0.71)	4.41 (0.71)	4.44 (0.71)
I am comfortable having someone of a different nationality as a neighbour	4.06 (0.92)	4.39 (0.78)	4.40 (0.72)	4.42 (0.73)
I think Singapore should encourage people of other nationalities to come to work or study in Singapore	3.28 (1.17)	3.63 (1.14)	3.72 (1.07)	3.94 (0.98)
I think Singapore should encourage people of other nationalities who are professionals or skilled workers to become Singapore citizens	3.25 (1.20)	3.46 (1.20)	3.51 (1.13)	3.79 (1.06)

**Table C9:**

**MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER NATIONALITIES BY AGE** (WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=711)	(n=802)	(n=963)	(n=1,090)	(n=3,565)
I am comfortable working together with someone of a different nationality (i.e., from a different country)	4.60 (0.62)	4.50 (0.66)	4.40 (0.75)	4.33 (0.74)	4.44 (0.71)
I am comfortable having someone of a different nationality as a neighbour	4.59 (0.64)	4.50 (0.68)	4.39 (0.75)	4.30 (0.76)	4.42 (0.73)
I think Singapore should encourage people of other nationalities to come to work or study in Singapore	4.23 (0.85)	4.01 (0.95)	3.83 (1.01)	3.78 (1.01)	3.94 (0.98)
I think Singapore should encourage people of other nationalities who are professionals or skilled workers to become Singapore citizens	4.13 (0.93)	3.89 (0.99)	3.68 (1.08)	3.60 (1.11)	3.79 (1.06)

## Part D: ONLINE USE

### Section D1: ONLINE USE

As digital natives, young people are accustomed to a tailored online experience with greater convenience, productivity, and flexibility. While youths mostly go online for personal reasons such as for entertainment or out of habit, they are also just as likely to go online to communicate with others and stay connected to current affairs (Table D1 and D2). Compared to older youths, younger youths were more likely to connect and expand their social networks online (Table D3).



#### How often do you go online (on smartphones, computers, and other devices) for the following?

**Table D1:**  
**YOUTHS' DAILY ONLINE USE BY OVER TIME**

	2019 (n=3,392)	2022 (n=3,565)
For entertainment and leisure (e.g., watching videos, listening to music, reading)	84%	82%
Communicate with friends and family (e.g., using social messaging apps, social media, etc.)	84%	80%
Browse out of habit	74%	72%
Search for information that is not for school or work	67%	65%
Get news or information on current affairs	62%	61%
To follow the lives of others (e.g., friends, celebrities, etc.)	53%	47%
Play games	50%	46%
For convenience of daily tasks (e.g., food deliveries, banking and finance, etc.)	40%	44%
Post updates about yourself/your life (e.g., Insta-story, Snapchats, statuses, tweets)	25%	20%
Connect or network with new friends (e.g., make new contacts, online dating)	23%	19%
Buy things online	15%	17%
Learn new skills/hobbies (e.g., learn a new language)	19%	17%
Build career network and/or portfolio (e.g., LinkedIn, personal branding) <sup>a</sup>	NA	14%
Create and post original content (e.g., articles, pictures, videos, etc.)	14%	12%
Sell things online	9%	8%

**Notes**

Question is refined in NYS 2019

a. Item is new to NYS 2022.

**Table D2:**  
**YOUTHS' FREQUENCY OF ONLINE USE**

	Never	Every few weeks or less	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
(n=3,565)					
For entertainment and leisure (e.g., watching videos, listening to music, reading)	2%	4%	12%	15%	68%
Communicate with friends and family (e.g., using social messaging apps, social media, etc.)	3%	6%	11%	12%	68%
Browse out of habit	6%	9%	13%	17%	55%
Search for information that is not for school or work	4%	10%	21%	19%	46%
Get news or information on current affairs	8%	12%	20%	26%	35%
To follow the lives of others (e.g., friends, celebrities, etc.)	16%	19%	19%	19%	28%
Play games	21%	18%	15%	17%	29%
For convenience of daily tasks (e.g., food deliveries, banking and finance, etc.)	8%	19%	29%	19%	25%
Post updates about yourself/your life (e.g., Insta-story, Snapchats, statuses, tweets)	26%	36%	19%	9%	11%
Connect or network with new friends (e.g., make new contacts, online dating)	42%	29%	10%	7%	12%
Buy things online	7%	48%	28%	8%	10%
Learn new skills/hobbies (e.g., learn a new language)	24%	42%	17%	9%	8%
Build career network and/or portfolio (e.g., LinkedIn, personal branding)	34%	39%	13%	8%	7%
Create and post original content (e.g., articles, pictures, videos, etc.)	41%	34%	13%	6%	7%
Sell things online	46%	38%	9%	4%	4%



**Table D3:**  
**YOUTHS' DAILY ONLINE USE BY AGE**

	15-19 (n=711)	20-24 (n=802)	25-29 (n=963)	30-34 (n=1,090)	Overall (n=3,565)
For entertainment and leisure (e.g., watching videos, listening to music, reading)	89%	84%	83%	76%	82%
Communicate with friends and family (e.g., using social messaging apps, social media, etc.)	87%	83%	77%	75%	80%
Browse out of habit	73%	72%	73%	70%	72%
Search for information that is not for school or work	69%	67%	65%	61%	65%
Get news or information on current affairs	52%	58%	63%	66%	61%
To follow the lives of others (e.g., friends, celebrities, etc.)	53%	52%	47%	39%	47%
Play games	59%	47%	44%	39%	46%
For convenience of daily tasks (e.g., food deliveries, banking and finance, etc.)	33%	48%	47%	47%	44%
Post updates about yourself/your life (e.g., Insta-story, Snapchats, statuses, tweets)	31%	24%	16%	13%	20%
Connect or network with new friends (e.g., make new contacts, online dating)	23%	22%	18%	15%	19%
Buy things online	13%	16%	18%	20%	17%
Learn new skills/hobbies (e.g., learn a new language)	18%	20%	17%	13%	17%
Build career network and/or portfolio (e.g., LinkedIn, personal branding)	9%	18%	16%	13%	14%
Create and post original content (e.g., articles, pictures, videos, etc.)	18%	15%	9%	9%	12%
Sell things online	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%

**Note**

The upper-bound survey population figures are reflected in this table.

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## About the National Youth Survey

**The NYS represents a milestone in Singapore’s youth research with its resource-based approach that focuses on the support youths require for societal engagement (social capital) and individual development (human capital).**

The National Youth Indicators Framework (NYIF) (Ho & Yip, 2003) was formulated to provide a comprehensive, systematic, and theoretically-grounded assessment of youths in Singapore. The NYIF draws from the existing research literature, policy-relevant indicators, and youth development models. It spans six domains of social and human capital. Table I summarises the framework.

**TABLE I :  
NATIONAL YOUTH INDICATORS FRAMEWORK**

	<b>Social Capital</b> (Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002; Putnam, 2000)	<b>Human Capital</b> (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020; World Economic Forum, 2017)
<b>Definition</b>	Social capital refers to the relationships within and between groups, and the shared norms and trust that govern these interactions.	Human capital refers to the skills, competencies, and attitudes of individuals, which in turn create personal, social, and economic wellbeing.
<b>Domains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social support</li> <li>• Social participation</li> <li>• Values &amp; attitudes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>Focus</b>	The power of relationships	The human potential of young people

**NYS 2022 adopted a random (i.e., probability-based) sampling method to ensure responses are representative of the resident youth population aged 15 to 34 years old.**

The fieldwork period spanned November 2022 to February 2023. A total of 3,565 youths were successfully surveyed, of which 150 were surveyed at their households. Demographic proportions of NYS respondents adhered closely to the youth population.

**Table II** presents the profile of respondents from NYS 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022. Figures referenced in all tables in the publication were weighted according to interlocking matrices of age, gender, and race of the respective youth populations.



**TABLE II :**  
**PROFILE OF NYS RESPONDENTS**

		NYS 2013 (n=2,843)	NYS 2016 (n=3,531)	NYS 2019 (n=3,392)	NYS 2022 (n= 3,565)	Latest Youth Population <sup>a</sup>
<b>Age</b>	15-19	24%	23%	21%	20%	<b>20%</b>
	20-24	25%	25%	24%	22%	<b>22%</b>
	25-29	24%	25%	27%	27%	<b>27%</b>
	30-34	28%	27%	28%	31%	<b>31%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49%	49%	50%	50%	<b>50%</b>
	Female	51%	51%	50%	50%	<b>50%</b>
<b>Race</b>	Chinese	72%	72%	72%	71%	<b>71%</b>
	Malay	16%	16%	17%	17%	<b>17%</b>
	Indian	10%	9%	9%	9%	<b>9%</b>
	Others	3%	3%	3%	3%	<b>3%</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	Singaporean	90%	94%	93%	93%	<b>86%</b>
	Permanent Resident	10%	6%	7%	7%	<b>14%</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	74%	73%	74%	74%	<b>75%</b>
	Married	25%	26%	25%	25%	<b>25%</b>
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	1%	1%	1%	1%	<b>1%</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Buddhism	25%	24%	22%	21%	<b>26%</b>
	Islam	19%	20%	21%	20%	<b>20%</b>
	Christianity	19%	19%	20%	20%	<b>18%</b>
	Hinduism	6%	5%	5%	5%	<b>5%</b>
	Taoism/Traditional Chinese Beliefs	7%	6%	5%	4%	<b>6%</b>
	Other Religions	1%	0%	1%	0%	<b>0%</b>
	No Religion	23%	25%	27%	29%	<b>25%</b>
<b>Dwelling</b>	HDB 1-2 rooms	3%	5%	4%	6%	<b>4%</b>
	HDB 3 rooms	14%	14%	14%	13%	<b>11%</b>
	HDB 4 rooms	37%	38%	35%	30%	<b>34%</b>
	HDB 5 rooms, executive, & above	32%	29%	30%	33%	<b>29%</b>
	Private flat & condominium	9%	9%	12%	13%	<b>15%</b>
	Private house & bungalow	6%	4%	4%	4%	<b>6%</b>
	Others	0%	0%	1%	1%	<b>0%</b>

**Note**

a. Latest youth population refers to the most recent available data from the Department of Statistics (DOS) at the time of fieldwork – age, gender, race, nationality and dwelling (DOS, 2022a, 2022b and 2022c) as well as marital status, and religion (DOS, 2020a and 2020b).

# About Youth STEPS

## YOUTH STUDY ON TRANSITIONS AND EVOLVING PATHWAYS IN SINGAPORE (YOUTH STEPS)

NYC and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Social Lab have partnered to embark on the first national-level longitudinal study of youths in Singapore to better understand young people's experiences as they live, study, work, and play in Singapore.

Between 2017 and 2022, the Youth STEPS has explored youths' evolving life aspirations, values and attitudes, and achievements and mobility as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. A nationally representative youth panel of 17- to 24-year-old youths were recruited in 2017. By 2022, the study has successfully followed the lives of 2,620 youths across waves one through six. Annual survey fieldwork and data analysis are undertaken by IPS Social Lab.

In 2024, Youth STEPS continues to understand young people's experiences as they enter their late youthhood and make further progress on their aspirations. Findings from the longitudinal study generated invaluable insights to inform and improve policies and programmes for youth in Singapore. To find out more, read about the Youth STEPS findings [here](#).

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# YOUTH IN SINGAPORE: A BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

## Takeaways

Young people form a cornerstone of Singapore's social and economic landscape, representing a sizeable segment of the population. In 2023, Singapore's resident youth population (aged 15 to 34 years old) accounted for one-quarter of the resident population. The gender ratio has held steady with an even split. The ethnic background of our resident youth population remains diverse, and there is a sizeable proportion of youths who are holding Permanent Residency.



The demographic trends of our youths not only reflect the progress of our nation, but also the amalgamation of decisions they have made at each point of transition. Over the past 40 years, young people have been pursuing higher educational attainment and delaying marriage. In 2023, 58% of youths aged 25 to 29 years old in the workforce had attained at least a university degree and 87% of youths aged 20 to 29 years old were single.

Beyond a diverse demographic composition, the changes in attainment of milestones reflect the shifting landscape of Singapore's youth. In the YOUTH.sg publication, the National Youth Council explores time trends across both administrative data and perception data from the National Youth Survey to offer a holistic understanding of young people. These deeper insights serve to provide a comprehensive overview to inform youth development, policy, and practice.



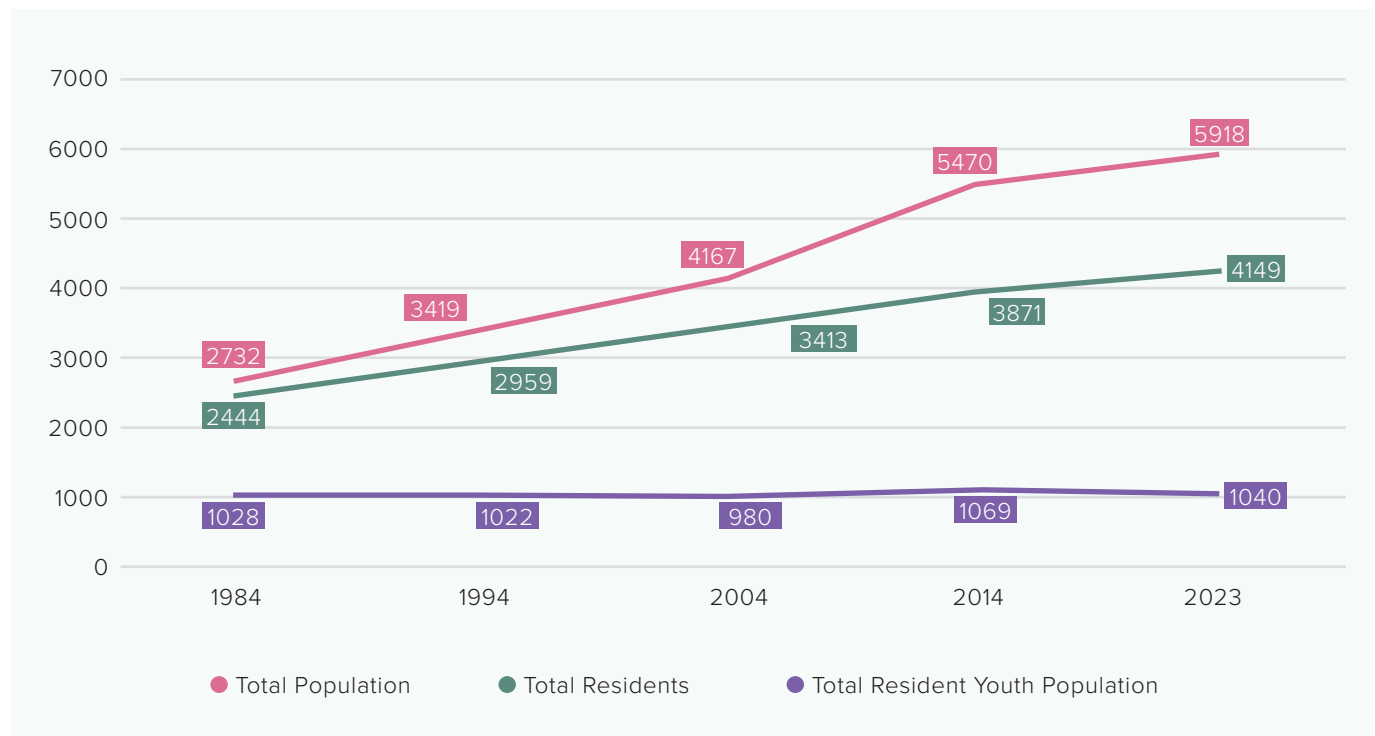
## Youth Population

As of 2023, Singapore's total population stood at 5.9 million, with a resident population of 4.1 million (Department of Statistics (DOS), 2023a). Within this, the resident youth population (aged 15 to 34 years old) comprised a sizeable proportion at approximately 1 million people (see Chart I). However, this youth demographic is shrinking relative to the overall population, as evidenced by

the rise in the median age of residents from 27 years in 1984 to 42 years in 2023. This demographic shift signalled significant societal changes, with the dwindling youth population and growing elderly cohort suggesting increased pressures on younger generations, as more face greater responsibilities in supporting an ageing society in the years to come.

**Chart I.**

### OVERALL POPULATION AND YOUTH POPULATION IN SINGAPORE IN '000 (1984–2023)



Source: Department of Statistics (2023a & 2023b)

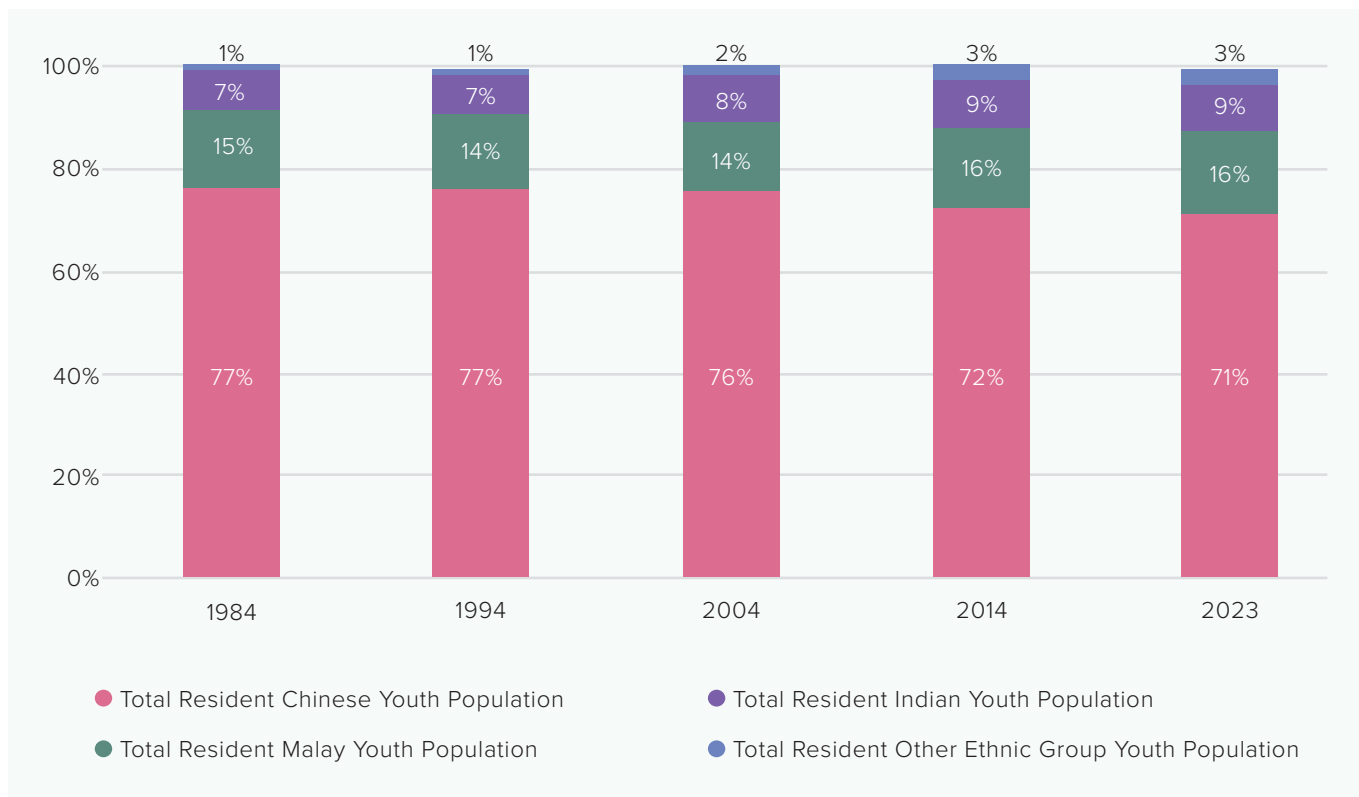
## Gender Profile

The gender ratio of the resident youth population remained relatively even across the past 40 years, mirroring the overall trends of Singapore’s resident population. In 2023, there was an even proportion of 50% males and 50% females (DOS, 2023b).

## Ethnicity and Permanent Residency Profile

Our resident youth population steadily became more diverse over the years. While Chinese remained as the majority ethnic group of youths in Singapore, there was an increase in the proportion of youths from other ethnic groups, from 23% in 1984 to 29% in 2023 (see Chart II). Contributing to our social diversity were our Permanent Resident youths, who formed a sizeable proportion (14% in 2023; DOS, 2023b & 2023c) of the youth population.

**Chart II.**  
**ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN OF THE RESIDENT YOUTH POPULATION IN SINGAPORE (1984–2023)**



Source: DOS (2023b)

## Educational Profile

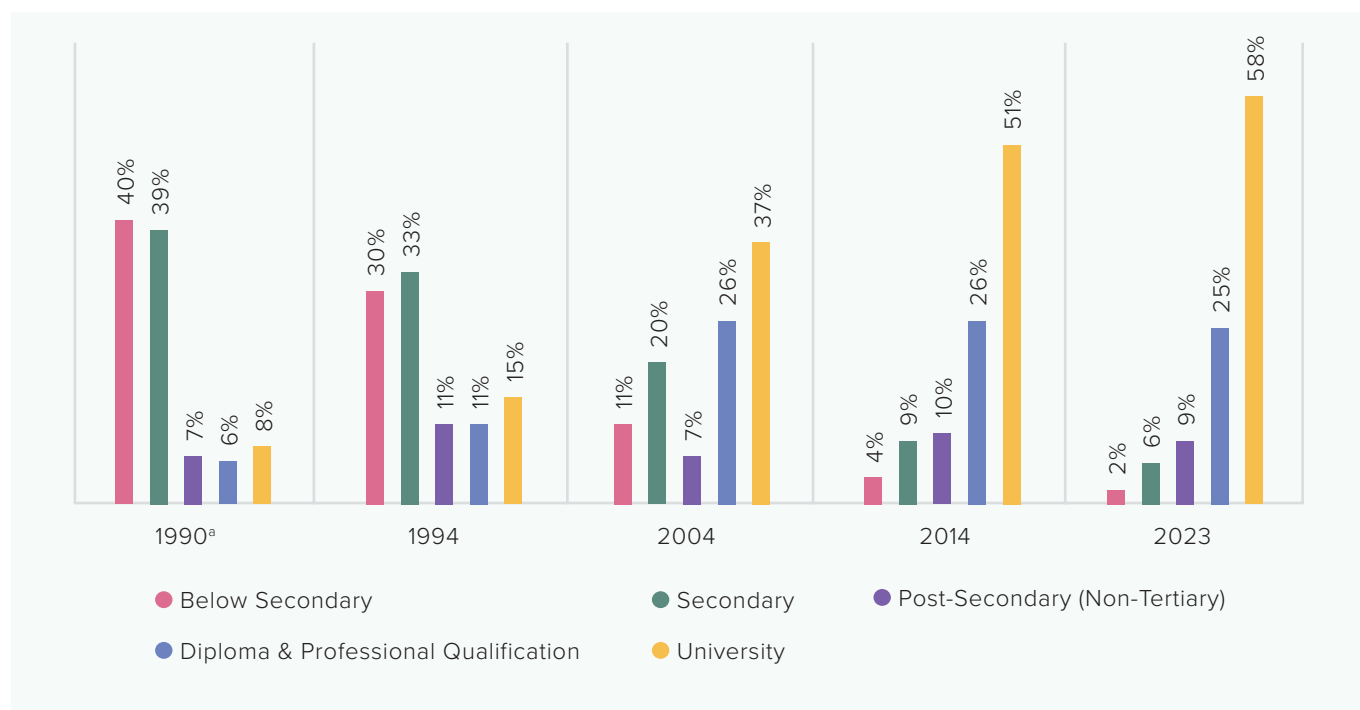
On the whole, Singapore youths had become more educated, with a majority now pursuing higher education beyond secondary-level schooling. The gross proportion of students enrolled in post-secondary (non-tertiary) institutions and above had steadily risen from 21% in 1990 to 92% in 2023 (DOS, 2023d). The majority of those aged 25 to 29 years old in the workforce now have at least a university degree, compared to 30 years ago where having a secondary or below educational attainment was more common (see Chart III).

## Marital Profile

The pursuit of diverse life goals, including attaining higher educational qualifications, alongside youths' evolving attitudes and concept of marriage may have contributed to the decision to delay or reconsider marriage plans. Over the last 40 years, the median age of first marriages has risen from 26.9 to 30.8 for grooms, and from 24.1 to 29.2 for brides (DOS, 2023f). Correspondingly, the prevalence of singlehood amongst youths aged 20-29 remained high, having risen from 69% in 1984 to 87% in 2023 (see Chart IV). The proportion of single youths aged 30-39 progressively increased from 17% in 1984 to 30% in 2023 (see Chart V).

**Chart III.**

### HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED OF YOUTHS AGED 25-29 IN THE LABOUR FORCE (1990–2023)

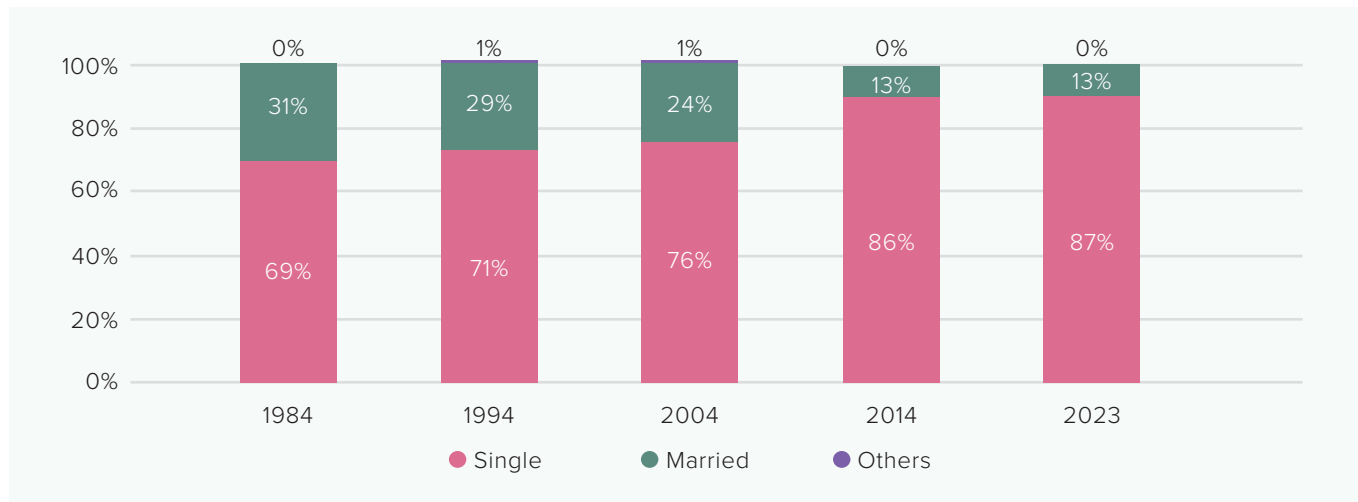


**Note**

a. 1984 data is not available  
Source: DOS (2023d)

Chart IV.

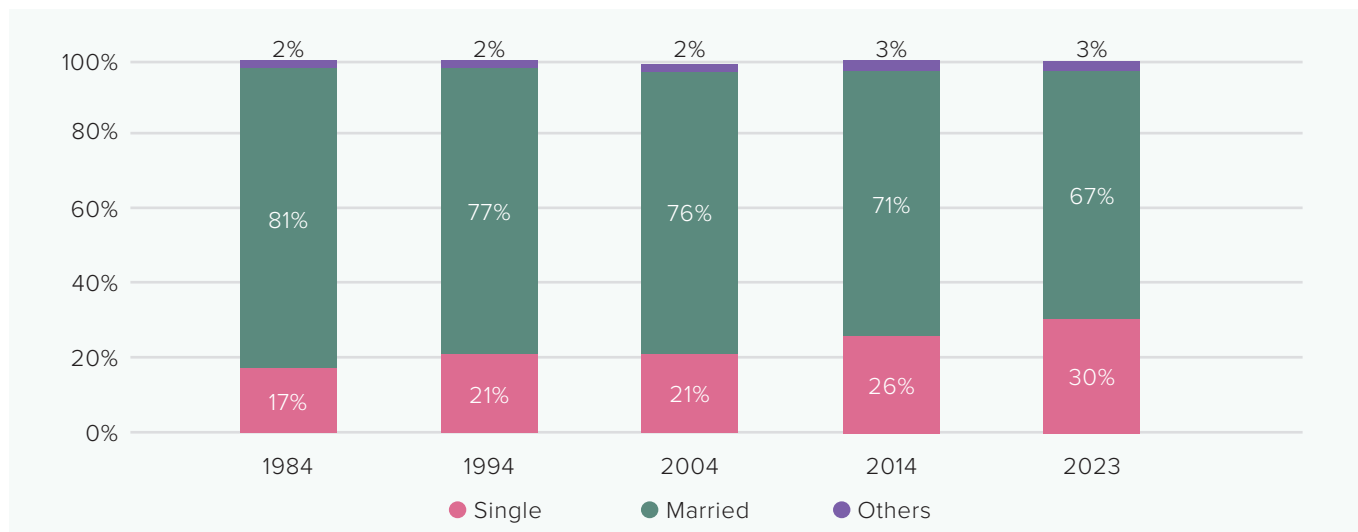
RESIDENT YOUTH AGED 20-29 YEARS OLD IN SINGAPORE BY MARITAL STATUS (1984-2023)



Source: DOS (2023e)

Chart V.

RESIDENT YOUTH AGED 30-39 YEARS OLD IN SINGAPORE BY MARITAL STATUS (1984-2023)



Source: DOS (2023e)



## Conclusion

Accounting for one-quarter of Singapore's resident population, our youth are an integral part of our nation. Amidst the backdrop of an increasingly aged and diverse population, youths themselves are driving broader societal trends shaping our demographic composition. In particular, the choices youths make in pursuing higher education and reconsidering marriage have shifted the landscape of Singapore's youth over time. These trends have bearing on our nation's happiness, prosperity and progress.

Efforts to understand and provide appropriate developmental opportunities for youths will require greater understanding of the context in which they live and work. Youths are navigating a world around them which is unprecedentedly complex, uncertain and rapidly evolving. For them to be able to seize opportunities, stay resilient

and adaptable in the face of unanticipated change and make informed decisions to guide their transitions into adulthood and beyond, the stakeholders around them should develop informed, timely and appropriate support.

The National Youth Council (NYC) seeks to provide a holistic and comprehensive understanding of young people, by bringing together administrative and perception data from the National Youth Survey (NYS). The NYS offers deeper insights into social and human capital indicators, which can inform youth development, policy, and practice. With this goal in mind, the YOUTH.sg publications will take on a topical approach to address youth trends and concerns in the areas of Values and Attitudes, Education and Employment, Social Support, Social Cohesion and Participation, and Wellbeing.

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