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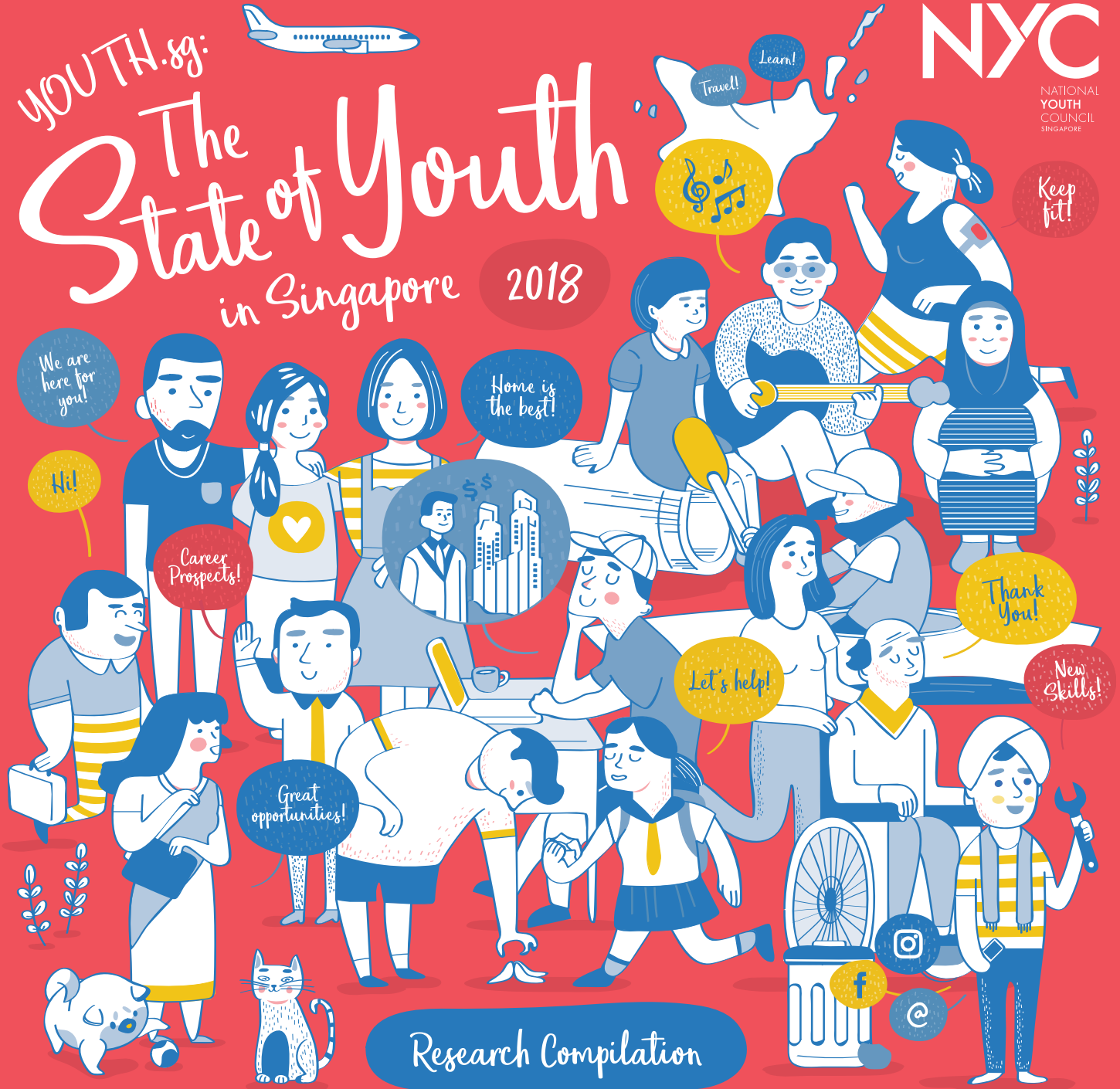
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Outward Bound
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YOUTH CORPS
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Published by the National Youth Council



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

About the National Youth Survey

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. Till date, the NYS has been conducted in 2002, 2005, 2010, 2013 and 2016.

The NYS represents a milestone in Singapore's youth research. With its resource-based approach, the NYS focuses on the support youths require for societal engagement (i.e., social capital) and individual development (i.e., human capital). NYS 2016 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 October to December 2016, and a total of 3,531 youths were successfully surveyed.

Our mission is to **Advocate** youth interests, **Connect** the youth sector and **Enable** holistic youth development – imbuing youth with the values and skills to thrive in a globalised world while keeping a strong Singapore heartbeat.

Advocate active youth citizenry – positive youth development, engagement, leadership and voice for causes and issues – through research, programming and recognition.

Connect the youth sector for increased youth outreach. We partner youth leaders, youth sector influencers and organisations to build a vibrant youth ecosystem to create more local and overseas opportunities for our youths.

Enable holistic youth development and build the youth ecosystem, through funding, capacity building, resources and training.

The National Youth Council (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.

Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, is the Chairperson of the 15th Council. The Council comprises members from diverse backgrounds such as the youth, media, arts, sports, corporate and government sectors.

Preface

With each wave of the National Youth Survey (NYS), starting from the first in 2002 to the latest conducted in 2016, we are reminded that youths in Singapore are not only subject to immense uncertainty living in a globalised nation, but are able to embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with such a reality. Reflected in the latest NYS are the findings that youths harness the promises of technology to keep themselves connected to the larger world around them, and also to deepen ties with their own existing personal communities. Despite exposure to diverse options and opinions, youths take measured and informed steps forward in adopting the new – all the while cherishing the traditional and standing by their core values. Although the world is only set to become more precarious in the future, young people remain hopeful, and are able to find meaning and purpose in the present.

Those who work with youth are then posed with the challenge to tap on reliable youth research in order to be better informed of youth trends and tensions. This is not an easy task – in the face of multifaceted youth and myriad developments as revealed by the NYS, it is a struggle to stay on top of emerging trends and navigate the shifting gaps in our understanding of youths. As for youth researchers, there is the need for our work to be nimble enough to inform policy in a timely manner, yet robust enough to anchor programmes upon, not just by the National Youth Council (NYC) but also by our youth stakeholders who are constantly designing and delivering youth programmes.

At the NYC, we aim to develop in-depth youth research that can be relied upon to craft youth policies that make an impact and programmes that meet youth needs. Every wave of the NYS builds upon the last, so that we may provide the sector with

relevant insights and informative trends that can complement their work. This project was led by the NYC Research team comprising Hasliza Ahmad, Jeanette Chen, Charlene Yeo, Suharti Mohd Sulaimi, Valerie Yee and Daniel Song.

We are ever grateful to Associate Professors Ho Kong Chong, Irene Ng, and Ho Kong Weng for their continued involvement in the NYS as pro-bono collaborators, advisors and co-authors. The years of invaluable commitment, support and wisdom they have given to this project have enabled it to flourish and grow into its role as a key Singapore youth study today.

We thank Dr. Leong Chan-Hoong and Mr. Varian Lim, Siti Nursila Senin, Sport Singapore, National Population and Talent Division of the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Manpower for joining us on this journey of understanding youth in Singapore and contributing to our knowledge of youths from their own unique lens and perspectives.

We also acknowledge the unwavering support of our Chief Executive Officer, David Chua and Director of Strategic Planning Office, Karen Lee, who entrusted us with the task of assembling the research compilation.

Lastly, we thank each generation of youths who have built and strengthened the National Youth Survey with their voices, and the readers of this publication for sharing our passion and interest in youth research.

Research Section
National Youth Council



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Youth Wellbeing & Aspirations

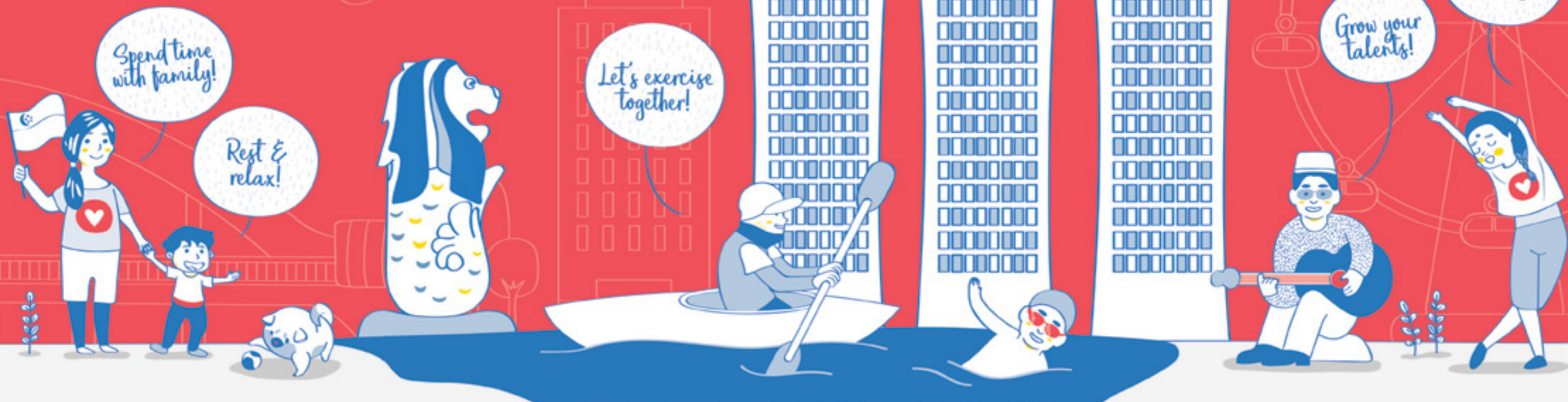
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The State of Youth in Singapore

Charlene Yeo

Research, National Youth Council



The State of Youth in Singapore

Youth are at the forefront of change. Constantly connected, cognisant and concerned about what is happening in the world, young people have myriad opportunities and choices lying ahead of them. But amidst increasingly furious and disruptive social, political and economic upheavals and rapid technological advancement sweeping Singapore and the larger world around us forward, youths today also face countless challenges.

When this generation of youth came of age at the turn of the millennium, the National Youth Council (NYC) pledged to nurture "World-Ready Youth" – young people imbued with the ability to thrive in a globalised environment while keeping a strong Singapore heartbeat. But the world has come an undeniably long way since then, and it is no longer enough to nurture youths who can seize and overcome today's opportunities and challenges. The vision for youth development at NYC has since transformed into developing youth to be "Future-Ready" – youths equipped with the resilience and enterprise to confidently take on whatever lies ahead and make a difference in the world.

Supporting NYC's youth development efforts is the National Youth Survey (NYS) and the accompanying YOUTH.sg publications. This research serves both as a map to chart out the state of youth in Singapore and as a compass to illuminate new directions for youth development. In its 5th iteration, the NYS 2016 builds on trends and insights established over the years from the NYS 2002, 2005, 2010 and 2013.

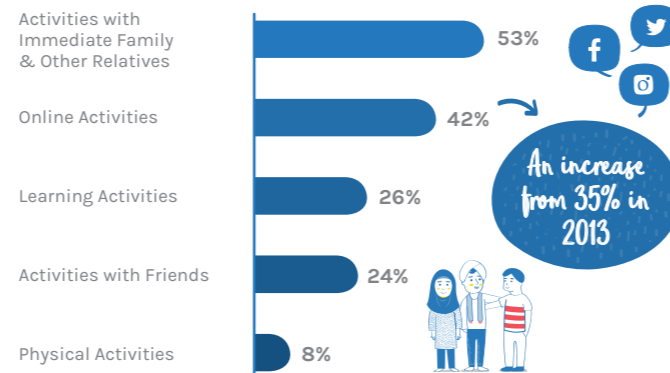
Constantly connected

It only takes the tap of a finger to open up a world of possibilities. As digital natives, technology and the internet serve as tools to bring youths to where they want to be. In 2016, 86% of youths use the internet daily on their computers and mobile devices to bring themselves up to date with current affairs, up from 63% in 2013.

Although screen time has the potential to socially isolate users, it seems that young people harness technology to stay close to their loved ones. While 42% of youths report that they spend

10 hours or more of leisure time a week on online activities, these activities also include maintaining contact with people around them. Nearly all youths report using the internet daily to access a social networking site (90%). The Credit Suisse Youth Barometer 2016 echoes the importance that young people place on keeping in touch – 82% of those they surveyed touted WhatsApp to be "in" while 73% said the same of Facebook. As for what they do with the rest of their time, 53% of youths spend 10 hours or more each week in activities with their family and 26% take part in activities with friends.

Outside of school and work, youths spend ≥10 hours a week on...



One way of understanding young people's connections to the larger world around them is through their participation in social groups. The NYS 2016 tells us that societal engagement is stronger than ever – 68% of youths report participating in at least one social group. In particular, young adults aged 30-34 years are participating more than before (2013: 57%; 2016: 63%). Together with strong social ties and more time spent online – both of which broker more opportunities for meaningful connections – youths in Singapore today have more diverse friendships. 80% report having a close friend of another religion, while close friends of a different race and nationality are also on the rise (2013: 53%; 2016: 60% and 2013: 42%; 2016: 45% respectively).

Section A brings further insight into the importance of social participation for young people. A/P Ho Kong Chong establishes social participation and the family as vital pieces in integrating youths into Singapore's ever diverse society. Participation in society also has the power to bring about wider positive change. The National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre delves into findings from the Individual Giving Survey which show that youth volunteerism has the power to enact change for the greater good of society and the nation, and Sport Singapore shares more on their efforts to encourage sports participation with youth in Singapore as means towards nation building.

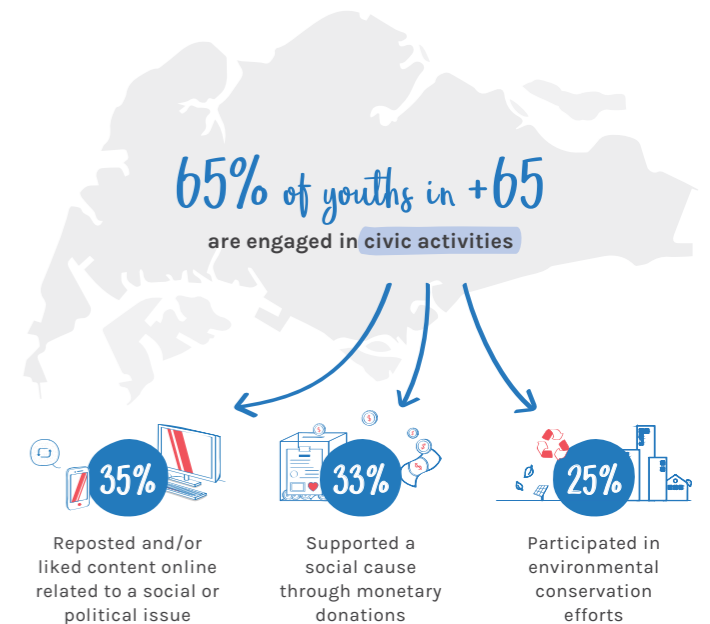
Cognisant and concerned

Constant access and connectivity exposes youths to vast amounts of information. Different possibilities and perspectives broaden their horizons and inspire them to dream. With the power of globalisation to transmit positive social values such as tolerance and altruism (Berggren & Nilsson, 2015), barriers and divides between young people are melting away. Positively, youths' comfort to work (2013: 4.37; 2016: 4.55 mean scores on a 5-point scale) and live alongside (2013: 4.38; 2016: 4.55 mean scores on a 5-point scale) people of other races has improved over the years. This rise in comfort is even greater when it comes to people of other nationalities (2013: 4.11; 2016: 4.44 mean scores on a 5-point scale for comfort working with someone of a different nationality and 2013: 4.06; 2016: 4.39 mean scores on a 5-point scale for comfort having someone of a different nationality as a neighbour). Younger youths (15-19) have higher than average comfort with people of other races and nationalities.

And while still conservative compared to other Western – and even some Asian – societies (World Values Survey, 2014), youths in Singapore are becoming more open to the justifiability of certain actions such as suicide and premarital sex, although it's likely that they'll be straddling these new and traditional values for some time yet (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

Confronted with new ways of seeing the world, youths want to ignite positive change in equally new and not necessarily conventional ways. 65% of youths report engaging in at least one civic activity in the past year, with a preference for activities that are online, such as reposting and/or liking content related to a social or political issue (35%), or activities tied to specific issues or causes, such

as supporting a social cause through monetary donations (33%). Youths in Singapore today are defining themselves as a purposeful generation, with 90% believing it 'very' and 'somewhat' important to contribute to society and 90% seeing helping the less fortunate as a 'very' and 'somewhat' important life goal. Traditionally thought to be on the sidelines, Singapore youths are showing themselves to be part of a global phenomenon of young people voicing out their views and being politically engaged online (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014).



Discerning and decisive

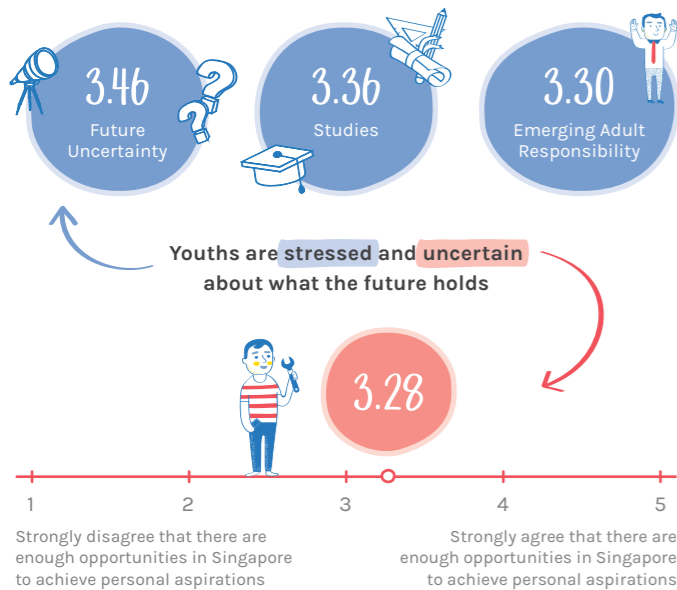
Opportunities and communities may transcend geographical borders and physical boundaries, but one thing that we can be certain of is that Singapore is still a place young people call home. National pride has risen in 2016, from a mean score on a 4-point scale of 3.18 in 2013 to 3.37 in 2016. Encouragingly, young people are anchored to their country. Overall, youths express high commitment to Singapore, believing that they have a part to play in developing the country (mean score of 3.31 on a 4-point scale), would support Singapore in times of national crisis (mean score of 3.30) and feel a sense of belonging (mean score of 3.30) to the country.

Considering that youths' top life aspirations have remained consistent over the years, it appears that the promises and potential of migration brought along by globalisation doesn't hold the most allure – yet. Looking at their top aspirations, youths appear to prioritise putting down roots in Singapore. Their top 'very important' life goals include homeownership (70%) and maintaining strong family ties (70%).

But it's not all play and no work. Youths also invest their time in improving their access to future opportunities, with 26% reporting that they spend 10 hours or more each week – outside of school and work – in learning activities. With 62% of youths placing learning and acquiring new skills as a 'very important' life goal, and 50% thinking that a Bachelor's degree is the minimum level of education needed to get a decent job, this points towards the high value that young people place on acquiring knowledge and education to help them achieve what they want.

In **Section B**, A/P Irene Ng and Nursila Senin explore where various educational pathways can lead youths towards, while the Ministry of Manpower sheds light on the current state of youths in the labour market.

Worried and realistic



Though many would consider Singapore a safe harbour, youths are not immune to the global instability making waves in their lives here. Young people are concerned about what the future holds for them. Their top stressors surround future uncertainty (mean score of 3.46 on a 5-point scale), studies (mean score of 3.36 on a 5-point scale) and emerging adult responsibility (mean score of 3.30 on a 5-point scale).

They continue to wonder whether there are sufficient opportunities for them in Singapore to achieve their aspirations (mean score of 3.28 on a 5-point scale) or have a good career (mean score of 3.37 on a 5-point scale).

With high stress and uncertainty as the 'new normal', our youths are steeled to weather what lies ahead. Wellbeing has improved from 2013. They are happier (mean score of 5.07 on a 7-point scale, up from 4.92 in 2013) and more satisfied with life (mean score of 6.89 on a 7-point scale, up from 6.79 in 2013). However, making the best out of life doesn't necessarily mean that youths would know what to do when life's challenges come their way – they are not entirely confident about their resilience (mean score of 3.29 on a 5-point scale) in the face of setbacks.

Answering the perennial question of how youths can be happier in **Section C** is A/P Ho Kong Weng's analysis which finds that family is at the heart of a young person's wellbeing alongside hopes for the future. Shedding more insights into family relationships in Singapore, Varian Lim and Dr Leong Chan-Hoong share findings from the Singapore Panel Study on Social Dynamics which highlight the difficulties faced in juggling family and work obligations while striving towards maintaining close family relationships. Finally, the National Population and Talent Division share more on the diverse and evolving family and social ties in Singapore.

Towards an uncharted future

Bearing in mind that the world youth live in is more amorphous than ever, how then can we understand what guides young people as they deal with the changes occurring today and navigate their lives ahead? To better meet their current worries and needs and help them move forward, we require a better understanding of their drivers and motivations. The next part of this chapter delves deeper into the youths who call Singapore home.

Understanding Youth in Singapore

Each generation of youth grapples with the labels and assumptions foisted upon them by the last, treading the fine line between self-fulfillment and self-fulfilling prophecy (Dimock, 2018). But how can these broad characterisations truly capture the multifaceted nature of youths, especially in the context of their complex everyday experiences and fast-evolving environments? What if there was a way to let young people tell us who they really are?

Determining what brings youths together and what sets them apart

The NYS comprises a comprehensive range of social and human capital indicators. From these indicators, we were able to map out 6 distinct dimensions¹ of values and aspirations which are held by youths in Singapore (**Table 1**).

In this section, we take a look beyond labels to understand what it is like being a youth in Singapore today.

• **TABLE 1: THE 6 VALUE & ASPIRATION CLUSTERING DIMENSIONS**

Clustering dimensions	Values		Aspirations			
	Multicultural	Liberal	Altruistic	Non-material	Material	Family
Example NYS indicators comprising the dimension	- I am comfortable having someone of a different race as a neighbour	- To what extent do you think divorce is justifiable?	- How important is it to contribute to society in your life?	- How important is it to be actively involved in the arts in your life?	- How important is it to have a successful career in your life?	- How important is it to get married in your life?
	- I am comfortable working together with someone of a different nationality	- To what extent do you think abortion is justifiable?	- How important is it to be actively involved in local volunteer work in your life?	- How important is it to discover, design or invent something new in your life?	- How important is it to have your own place in your life?	- How important is it to have children in your life?

Glossary

- Clustering Dimension : Clustering dimensions (i.e. values & aspirations) are general characteristics by which a broad population (i.e. youths) can be grouped into unique clusters based on their similarity and dissimilarity in these characteristics
- Orientation : A cluster could have high or low orientations on the clustering dimensions

Notes

¹ The 6 factor (i.e. dimension) solution was derived using Principal Component Factor Analysis. Altogether, the 6 dimensions had Eigenvalues above 1 and cumulatively explained 70.4% of the variance. All indicators comprising the dimensions had acceptably good loadings of above 0.6. Although the NYS contains a large number of values and aspirations indicators, those which did not load onto any of the dimensions were dropped from this analysis.

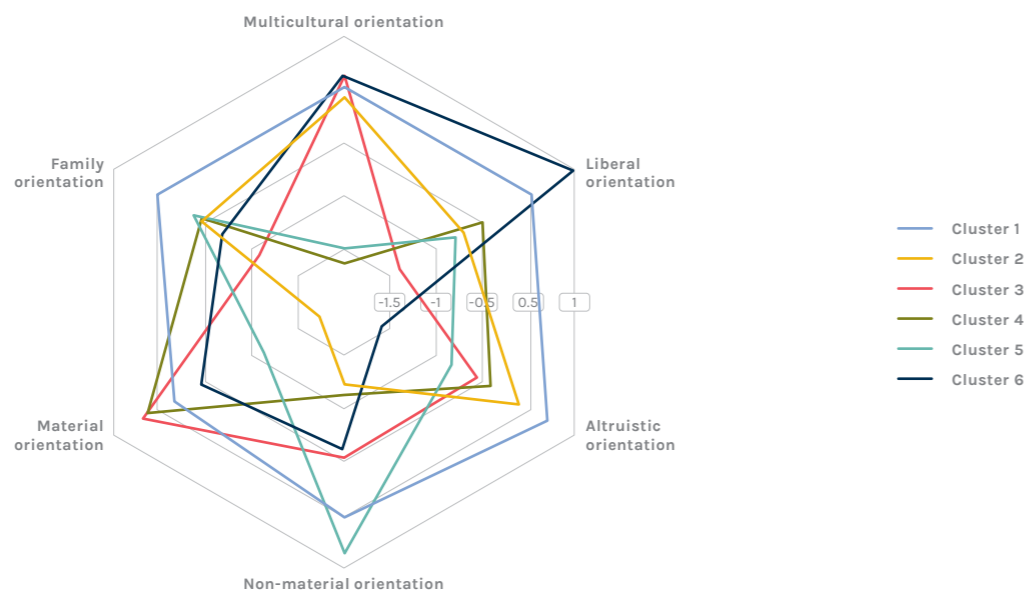
Further segmentation analysis² was conducted to plot out patterns of shared commonality and polarity in youths' orientations on these value and aspiration dimensions.

Through this analysis, youths with common orientations were clustered together to create homogenous groups. For example, a youth who values multiculturalism highly would be grouped together with other youths who also place high value on multiculturalism.

At the same time, this analysis also ensured that there would be heterogeneity between polarised groups. This would mean that one group of youths who value multiculturalism highly would be kept distinct from another group who value multiculturalism less.

From the clustering dimension orientations of the NYS 2016 respondents, 6 unique clusters of youths (**Chart 1**) were uncovered.

• **CHART 1: CLUSTERING DIMENSION ORIENTATIONS OF THE 6 CLUSTERS OF SINGAPORE YOUTHS**



	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6
Multicultural orientation	0.54001	0.41409	0.63079	-1.15606	-0.99866	0.61041
Liberal orientation	0.48222	-0.19483	-0.88300	-0.03360	-0.27892	0.95174
Altruistic orientation	0.71497	0.39090	-0.05592	0.08150	-0.31600	-1.06245
Non-material orientation	0.55722	-0.72731	-0.04529	-0.61709	0.82860	-0.12183
Material orientation	0.34994	-1.24498	0.67561	0.59902	-0.60534	0.03070
Family orientation	0.51502	0.02590	-0.58879	0.03859	0.12268	-0.21968

Notes

² The 6 clusters were developed with a statistical process called cluster analysis. Hierarchical cluster analysis was first conducted to define an initial number of clusters. This was followed by k-means cluster analysis, which identified the final 6 youth clusters through the grouping of NYS respondents into clusters based on their proximity to the cluster centroids.

Beyond telling us that there are distinct clusters of youths holding distinct sets of beliefs, values and aspirations can also shed light into one's current and future actions. Remaining relatively constant over one's lifetime, a person's values can influence their life goals, colour perceptions and attitudes toward the world around them, and shape their behaviours³ (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

To understand how Singapore youths currently perceive the world around them and act in their daily lives, further analysis⁴ was conducted to flesh out the key demographic, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics associated with each cluster. The result is a set of 6 youth profiles, each an inductive, archetypal portrait of the various youths in Singapore.

Making use of the youth profiles

Evenly spread out across the youth population⁵ (**Table 2**), these profiles can be found across all ages and backgrounds (**Table 3**). But with Singapore's increasingly colourful and diverse social fabric, can there really be only 6 profiles of youths in Singapore? In truth, there aren't. Each profile describes the average attributes of all the youths within each cluster. Not every youth in Singapore would fit completely into the profiles, and neither should we expect to trade in one label for another.

Taken together, these youth profiles and the national-level statistics in the *YOUTH.sg: The State of Youth in Singapore 2017 - Statistical Handbook* are the starting points by which we can begin to better understand, engage and serve youths in Singapore.

Creating the profiles

- Average scores were calculated for each cluster on a range of demographic, attitudinal and behavioural indicators from the NYS 2016. An archetype for each cluster was formed from these average scores. These archetypes were then compared against one another to identify their key characteristics.
- Key characteristics were assigned to each archetype when there was a significantly higher proportion of the cluster observed to be present for that characteristic compared to some, if not all, of the other clusters. Archetypal profiles were then constructed from these sets of attributes.

- Not only should these profiles be understood in light of one another, they should also be regarded in respect to the national averages represented in the *YOUTH.sg: The State of Youth in Singapore 2017 - Statistical Handbook*.

Are there other ways of segmenting youths?

- Youths are diverse and multifaceted, providing a multitude of ways to potentially segment and profile them. In A/P Ho Kong Weng's chapter, his analysis on zero-sum and non-zero-sum life goals is one other method of charting the different dimensions of youths' aspirations – illuminating the way for more perspectives on how we can better understand youths.

Glossary

- Cluster : A group of youths with similar values & aspirations
- Archetype : A typical example of the average youth from each cluster
- Profile : A set of key characteristics belonging to each archetype

Notes

³ Values refer to '(a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance'.

⁴ Cross tabulations and means comparisons were conducted on a range of NYS indicators against the 6 youth clusters.

⁵ Data from the NYS 2016 is representative of the youth population in Singapore as the demographic proportions and weighting follows closely to the latest youth statistics of that year.

• TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF YOUTH CLUSTERS⁶

	Cluster 1 Active Aaron	Cluster 2 Community Chloe	Cluster 3 Old School Oilly	Cluster 4 Sandwiched Sam	Cluster 5 Solo Sonia	Cluster 6 Liberal Lionel
n	690	545	598	613	578	508
%	20%	15%	17%	17%	16%	14%

• TABLE 3: AGE AND OCCUPATION BREAKDOWN OF YOUTH CLUSTERS⁷

			Cluster 1 Active Aaron	Cluster 2 Community Chloe	Cluster 3 Old School Oilly	Cluster 4 Sandwiched Sam	Cluster 5 Solo Sonia	Cluster 6 Liberal Lionel	Total
Age	15-19	n	230	124	173	72	106	98	803
		%	33.4%	22.8%	29.0%	11.7%	18.3%	19.3%	22.8%
	20-24	n	178	124	146	145	155	123	871
		%	25.8%	22.8%	24.5%	23.7%	26.8%	24.3%	24.7%
	25-29	n	147	138	132	178	150	151	896
		%	21.3%	25.3%	22.1%	29.0%	26.0%	29.8%	25.4%
30-34	n	134	159	146	218	167	135	959	
	%	19.4%	29.2%	24.5%	35.6%	28.9%	26.6%	27.2%	
Occupational status	Schooling	n	298	179	229	144	185	172	1,207
		%	43.3%	32.8%	38.2%	23.5%	32.0%	33.9%	34.2%
	Non-schooling ⁸	n	391	366	370	469	393	336	2,325
		%	56.7%	67.2%	61.8%	76.5%	68.0%	66.1%	65.8%

Notes

⁶ Due to rounding and weighting, the n sizes and percentages given here may not sum to 100% or the total sample size for NYS 2016 (n=3,531).

⁷ Percentages sum to 100% within each column.

⁸ Includes youths who are working full-time or part-time, unemployed, serving their National Service full-time or waiting for enlistment, homemakers and others.

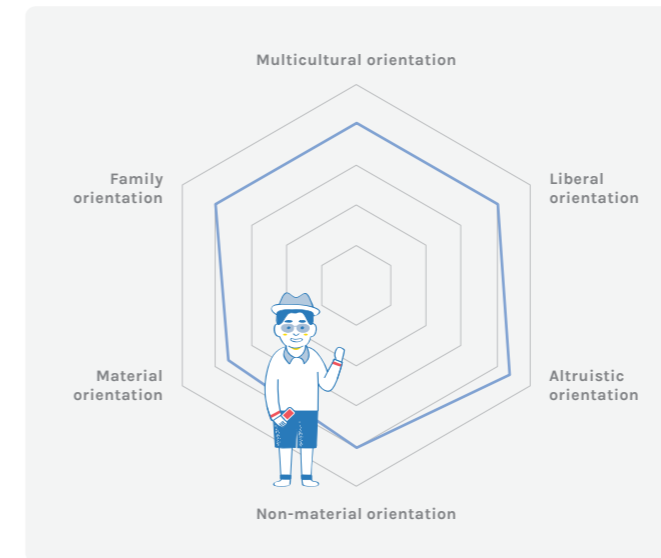
The 6 Youth Profiles

Meet the youths in Singapore

Cluster 1 - Active Aaron

Highly positively orientated on all value and aspiration dimensions (Chart 2), Cluster 1 is the Active Aaron profile. Youths belonging to this cluster are driven to achieve a wide range of personal goals and acquire new experiences. In doing so, they are actively engaged in a wide range of activities and are highly connected to their social networks.

• CHART 2: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF ACTIVE AARON

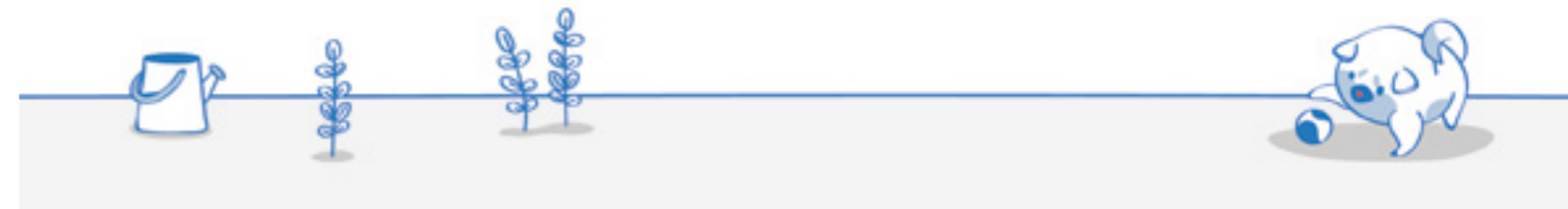


Active Aarons are highly embedded and rooted to Singapore. 56.9% report being 'very proud' to be a Singaporean and express high agreement towards being committed to Singapore. These positive sentiments towards their country are translated into their active contributions to society - 76.2% participated in both online and offline civic activities in the past year.

Not only are Active Aarons engaged in civic behaviours, they are also highly active within their social circles. 79.4% report belonging to at least one social group, such as an interest & hobby group or arts & cultural group. Nearly half (46.8%) of those active in their social groups held an official leadership position. Their participation is not just limited to local opportunities - 64.4% report having participated in school-based and/or non-school based overseas programmes such as expeditions or internships.

As can be expected from their widespread involvement in various activities and communities, Active Aarons have strong and diverse social networks. They have close ties with their large social circles. 28.3% report having 5 or more close friends and 31.3% spend 10 hours or more of their leisure time each week in activities with them. With their varied social experiences, it is no wonder that Active Aarons have the highest levels of friendship diversity across all the profiles. Most report having close friends of a different race (74.1% of Active Aarons compared to 60.2% of all youths in 2016), religion (88.9% compared to 80.2% of youths overall), nationality (60.3% compared to 45.3% of youths overall) and income group (91.6% compared to 84.6% of youths overall).

Despite their busy schedules, Active Aarons still find time to maintain strong family relationships. 55.1% spend 10 hours or more of leisure time each week in activities with their families. Family is



a priority for Active Aarons. They have a strong sense of filial piety (89.6% would take care of parents in their old age, regardless of circumstances) and conviction to start a family of their own (36.8% believe that one should marry).

Active Aarons' connectivity with community, friends and family spans both offline and online. Amongst all the profiles, they report having the highest rates of daily social media use for a range of activities. Similarly, daily internet use is also the highest for Active Aarons, which they use to get news or information on current affairs (90.1%) and access social networking sites (92.7%). With regular exposure to diverse people and perspectives, Active Aarons are more open and tolerant and tend to find certain liberal actions more justifiable than other profiles do.

Having had a great many opportunities in life thus far, Active Aarons are optimistic about what lies ahead. They aspire towards achieving a wide range of material and non-material life goals such as having a successful career (86.8% see this as a 'very important' aspiration) and contributing to society (79.9% view this as a 'very important' aspiration). Positively, 52.8% believe that there are enough opportunities for them in Singapore to achieve their goals. But they aren't taking their access to opportunities for granted; 36.4% spend 10 hours or more of leisure time a week in learning activities. In pushing themselves to achieve it all, Active Aarons report the highest levels of stress across the profiles.

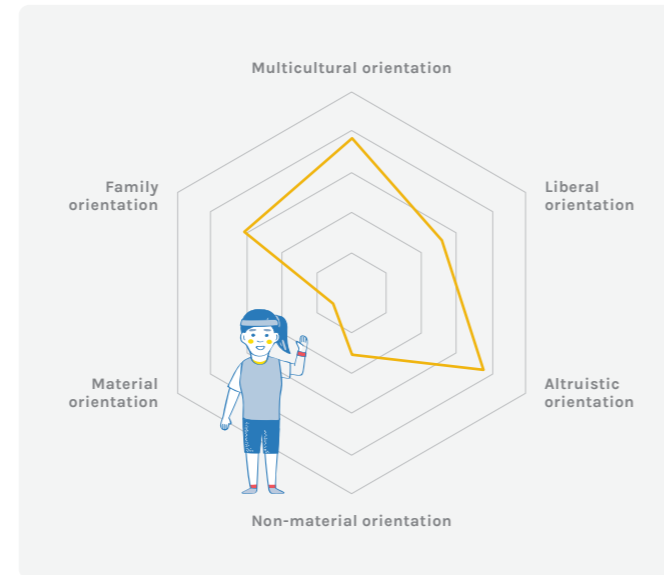
Nevertheless, they are in a position to cope with life's challenges. Active Aarons regard their lives and abilities positively, reporting high levels of wellbeing (highest mean scores of 5.33 on a 7-point scale for happiness and 6.89 on a 10-point scale for confidence in the future) and resilience (mean score of 3.40 on a 5-point scale) amongst the profiles.

Cluster 2 – Community Chloe

In comparison to Cluster 1, Cluster 2 does not display high positive scores across all orientations. Instead, their scores are higher for multicultural, altruistic and family orientations (**Chart 3**), earning them the name *Community Chloe*. Youths in this cluster are

motivated by the people and communities surrounding them, and make an effort to contribute in meaningful ways.

• CHART 3: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF COMMUNITY CHLOE



Compared to Active Aarons who take part in a wide range of civic activities, Community Chloes' efforts are more focused. Although they are highly altruistic, they appear to be more drawn to causes or issues they are passionate about. 70.6% participated in civic activities in the past year, particularly those related to donating to social causes (40.4%) or ethical consumerism (24.8%). Community Chloes may also appreciate engaging in dialogue on issues which are important to them. Although such civic activities are less popular amongst youths in general, Community Chloes have a slightly higher tendency to attend a discussion on social affairs (8.6%), contact a government official about an issue important to them (3.9%) or send a "letter to the editor" to a newspaper or magazine (1.3%) compared to the other profiles.

Not only do they make an effort to contribute to important causes, Community Chloes invest time in maintaining relationships. They spend 10 hours or more of leisure time a week in activities with family (55.9%) and their large social circles (31.4% report having 4 to 5 close friends and 72.3% spend up to 10 hours with friends each week). Of the 74.5% participating in social groups, they are more likely to be involved in groups which tend to have sustained and regular involvement, such as uniform, community or religious groups.

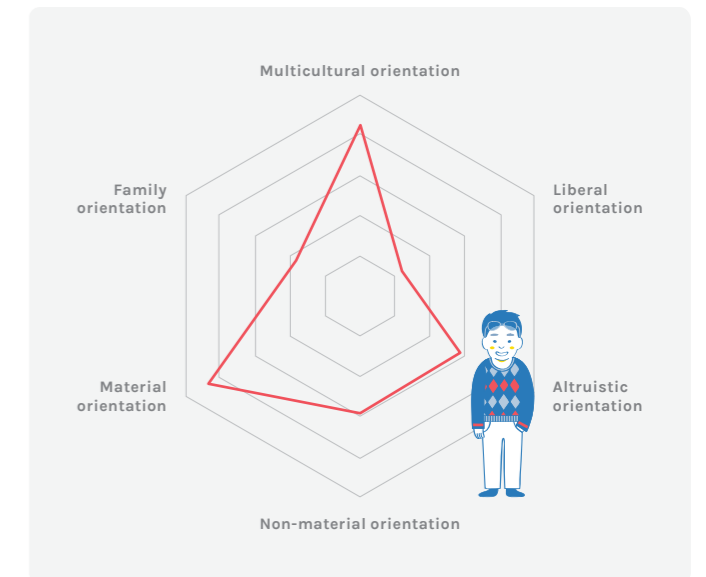
With their focus closer to home, Community Chloes' values are family-oriented (89.4% would take care of parents in their old age, regardless of circumstances). Despite having almost as many opportunities for exposure as Active Aaron (64.0% report having participated in school-based and/or non-school based overseas programmes), they prefer to shy away from stepping out of their comfort zone and into the spotlight. Compared to the other profiles, Community Chloes have lower desire to pursue non-material aspirations. Community Chloes are least likely to feel that it is 'very important' to be famous (0.2%), start their own business (2.2%), discover, design or invent something new (4.6%), or migrate (4.2%).

This lack of desire to explore new horizons may be due to Community Chloes being content and coping well with their lives in Singapore. Along with strong social support and ties, this profile reports higher levels of wellbeing (mean score of 7.29 on a 10-point scale for life satisfaction), higher resilience (mean score of 3.32 on a 5-point scale) and the lowest levels of stress. Altogether, they're optimistic about opportunities in Singapore to achieve their aspirations (52.0%).

Cluster 3 – Old School Ollly

Cluster 3 embraces traditional Singaporean values which emphasise multiculturalism and self-sufficiency (**Chart 4**). This profile's quintessentially pragmatic approach to life earns them the name of *Old School Ollly*. Youths belonging to this cluster are motivated by pragmatism, yet are able to balance work and play due to their optimism that life in Singapore is going well.

• CHART 4: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF OLD SCHOOL OLLY



The key attribute of Old School Ollies is their high national pride and commitment to Singapore. 57.3% are 'very proud' to be a Singaporean, and express strong agreement to being committed to Singapore. However unlike Active Aaron and Community Chloe, they participate less in civic activities (56.4% participated in the past year, which is the 2nd lowest amongst the profiles), alluding to them having other priorities in life.

Guided by their conventional outlook on life (finding a wide range of liberal actions less justifiable compared to other profiles, and 43.8% viewing a good personal spiritual/religious life as a 'very important' life goal), Old School Ollies appear to focus more on pragmatic pursuits instead. Their top 'very important' life aspirations are to have their own home (90.0%), have a successful career (85.8%), and earn lots of money (68.7%). In this light, other endeavours – such as participating in civic activities – may have

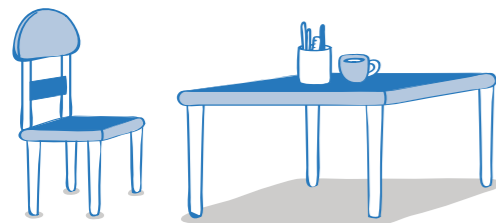
fallen by the wayside for the time being while they establish themselves personally and financially. Ultimately, Old School Ollies remain optimistic that there are sufficient opportunities in Singapore to fulfil their aspirations (51.2%).

Buoying Old School Ollies' sense of optimism is their stable, moderate levels of social support from family and friends. They may feel like they can rely on family in times of need and vice-versa; 54.2% spend 10 hours or more of leisure time a week with their family and 89.1% would take care of parents in their old age, regardless of circumstances. Singapore's diverse social landscape may encourage Old School Ollies' social capital to flourish. Their friendship networks are moderately diverse (31.9% are likely to participate in sports-related social groups and 78.6% have close friends from a different educational background) and they are 2nd only to Active Aarons in terms of comfort living and working alongside other races.

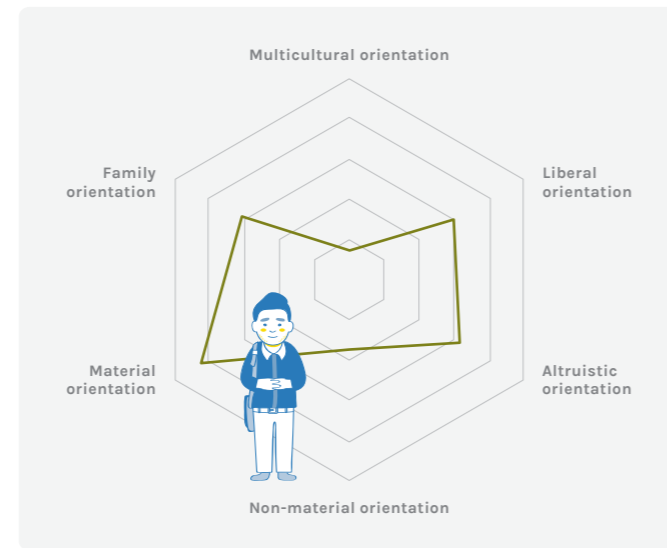
Hopeful of a bright future ahead, Old School Ollies have higher levels of wellbeing and satisfaction with life in Singapore (mean scores of 6.73 on a 10-point scale for confidence in the future and 6.99 on a 10-point scale for life satisfaction).

Cluster 4 – Sandwiched Sam

High on material aspiration orientation (Chart 5) and experiencing greater uncertainty, the Cluster 4 profile is named *Sandwiched Sam* as they are caught between their aspirations and perceived inability to achieve them. Like the previous cluster, youths here are motivated by pragmatism. Consequently, community concerns take a backseat to personal issues. But unlike Cluster 3, they feel less positive about their lives in Singapore.



• **CHART 5: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF SANDWICHED SAM**



Similar to Old School Ollies, Sandwiched Sams are practical. They allocate less time towards activities that do not have tangible personal advantages at the outset. Accordingly, Sandwiched Sams are seen to be less civically and socially active compared to the other profiles; only 58.7% participated in civic activities and 55.8% participated in a social group in the past year. Of those who participate in social groups, a vast majority (72.9%) had not held a leadership position.

With limited social and civic participation, their social networks are insular. Sandwiched Sams report having smaller social circles (40.5% report having only 2-3 close friends). Rather than spend time with friends (11.7% spend 0 hours a week in activities with friends), they turn to family instead (57.3% spend 10 hours or more a week of leisure time in activities with family). It comes as no surprise then that they have the lowest levels of friendship diversity amongst the profiles. Sandwiched Sams also express the

lowest levels of comfort in living alongside, working, or welcoming people of other nationalities to Singapore – which is a worrying trait given increasing acceptance of diversity amongst the rest of the youth population. In addition to lower levels of social interactions, Sandwiched Sams report having less overall exposure compared to the other profiles. 56.6% reported not having participated in school-based and/or non-school based overseas programmes. In terms of online exposure, the profile has the lowest rates of daily internet and social media use for a range of activities.

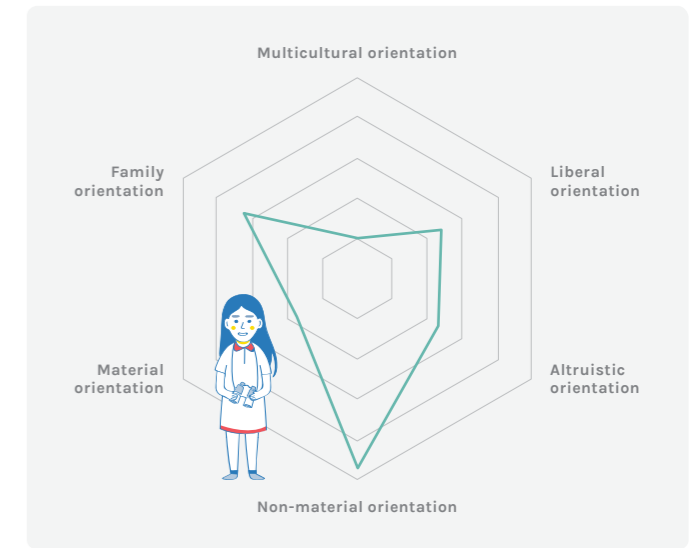
Sandwiched Sams' lack of exposure to information and opportunities along with their relatively lower social and cultural capital could foster their perception that there are not enough opportunities for them to achieve their aspirations. Only 37.1% feel that there are sufficient opportunities to attain their life goals in Singapore, which is the 2nd lowest of the profiles. Their aspirations are primarily material, such as home ownership. Feeling uncertain about the future, they appear to eschew participating activities with no immediate benefits (28.3% spend 0 hours a week in learning activities) and pathways that could be considered risky – Sandwiched Sams have the lowest aspiration to be actively involved in arts (39.5% say it is 'not important at all'), or discover, design or invent something new (18.9% report this is 'not important at all').

Fuelled by pessimism and overwhelmed by bread-and-butter issues, Sandwiched Sams do not appear to be coping well. They have high levels of stress, lower resilience and lower subjective wellbeing (future confidence is lowest amongst the profiles, with a mean score of 6.22 on a 10-point scale).

Cluster 5 – Solo Sonia

In possession of the highest non-material aspiration orientation of the profiles (Chart 6) and a propensity for independence and exploration, Cluster 5 sets itself apart as *Solo Sonia*. Youths in this cluster are trailblazers, like those in Cluster 1. But unlike Active Aarons, they do not feel like Singapore is where their dreams need to be achieved. Their actions reflect their weaker ties to their community and country.

• **CHART 6: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF SOLO SONIA**



Solo Sonias may not see themselves sticking around in Singapore. They report having low national pride (only 30.8% report being 'very proud' to be Singaporean – the lowest among the profiles) and lower commitment to Singapore. Correspondingly, they are less invested in civic society and have the lowest rates of civic engagement. Only 54.5% of Solo Sonias participated in civic activities in the past year compared to 76.2% of Active Aarons. Together with a lower sense of filial piety (22.7% would take care of parents only if circumstances allow, the highest reported amongst the profiles) and greater likelihood of being socially isolated (9.3% report having no close friends and 12.3% report having one close friend), Solo Sonias appear to be less rooted.

Instead, Solo Sonias look outside the box. Solo Sonias are more likely to go wherever their dreams may take them, even if it means leaving Singapore.

41.2% view migrating as a 'very' and 'somewhat' important life goal. This sentiment may be driven by the feeling that there are insufficient opportunities locally for them to achieve their aspirations (41.3% agree that there are enough opportunities). However this could also be attributed to Solo Sonia's appetite for exploration. Their top life goals tend towards taking the path less travelled, such as being famous (47.6% report this as being 'very' and 'somewhat' important), being active in the arts (53.6% feel this is 'very' and 'somewhat' important) and discovering, designing or inventing something new (71.8% view this as 'very' and 'somewhat' important).

Encouragingly, Solo Sonias remain driven and resourceful despite their bleak outlook and uncertainty over the opportunities and pathways available to them. They actively work towards achieving their goals and creating opportunities for themselves. They dedicate a moderate amount of their time on learning and entrepreneurial activities (61.4% and 24.4% spend up to 10 hours of leisure time a week in the respective activities).

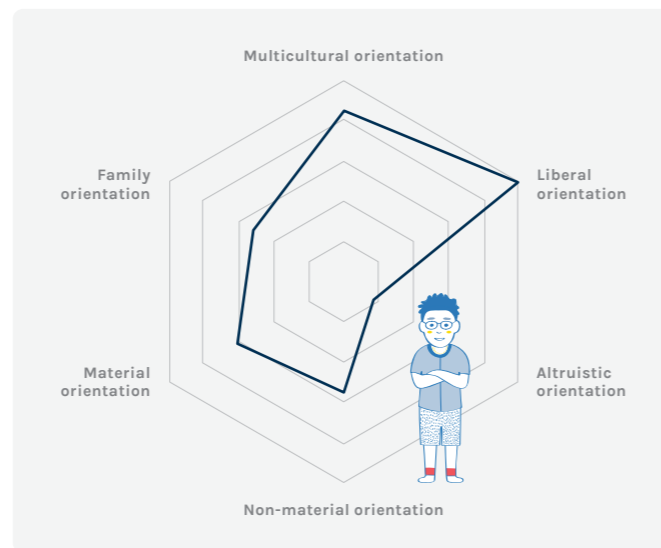
Disconnected from social support and doubtful about their chances to accomplish their aspirations, Solo Sonias are struggling with life in Singapore. They report the lowest level of resilience (mean score of 3.14 on a 5-point scale) and lower wellbeing (lowest mean scores of 4.85 on a 7-point scale for happiness and 6.49 on a 10-point scale for life satisfaction).

Cluster 6 – Liberal Lionel

Cluster 6 has the most positive liberal value orientation of all the profiles (**Chart 7**). In view of their high multicultural value orientation and wide exposure to diverse perspectives, Cluster 6 can be seen as *Liberal Lionel*. Although youths in this cluster are less altruistically motivated, they can still be rallied around causes which they find personally meaningful.

Liberal Lionels tend to have a less conventional mindset. Being highly open and tolerant, they are most likely to find a wide range of actions more justifiable than other profiles do.

• **CHART 7: CLUSTERING ORIENTATIONS OF LIBERAL LIONEL**



For them, it is less important to lead a life which adheres to tradition. 46.3% feel that it is not necessary to marry and 9.1% - the lowest among the profiles - find it 'very important' to lead a good personal spiritual or religious life.

This profile's broad-minded beliefs could be attributed to their high use of the internet to get news or information (89.6% do so daily) and overall high amount of time spent online (54.4% spend 10 hours or more of leisure time a week on online activities). Liberal Lionels' high exposure to the world around them could have informed their views towards how they – and others around them – could otherwise lead their lives.

On the other hand, this exposure may have also influenced their perception of the range of opportunities available to them. A little over a third (36.4%) feel that there are sufficient chances for them to achieve their aspirations in Singapore. As part of these tempered expectations, Liberal Lionels have lower aspirations on a wide range of life goals compared to the other profiles.

Uncertain over what Singapore has to offer them, a higher proportion of Liberal Lionels express disagreement that they are committed to Singapore. Cognisant of the key issues locally and around the world today, Liberal Lionels are discerning. They make use of their knowledge to form clear views and opinions. But they ultimately appear less driven to change the status quo. If they do engage in civic behaviours, they are less likely to do so out of altruism and are more disposed to act out of personal interest. They tend to be involved in civic activities which they find personally meaningful, such as contacting a government official about an issue important to them (4.1% have done so compared to 3.4% of youths overall) or ethical consumerism (26.4% compared to 18.1% of youths overall).

As comfortable as they may be with the way things are, Liberal Lionels seem to be discontent with life in Singapore. They report lower levels of wellbeing compared to the other profiles. Yet they have a higher level of resilience (mean score of 3.37 on a 5-point scale), which suggests that they are equipped to cope with whatever comes their way.

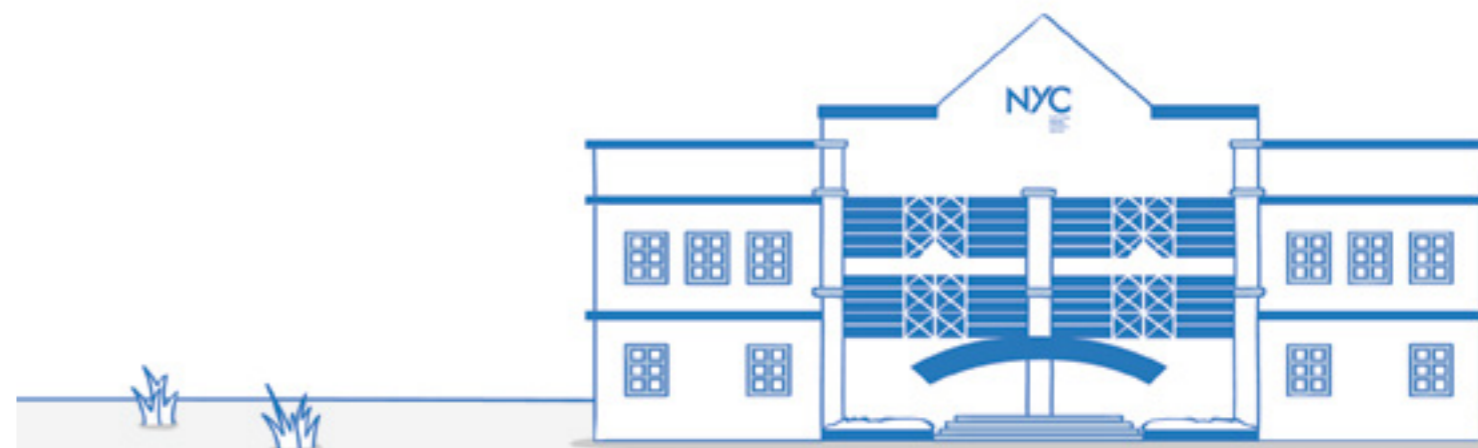
Conclusion

At NYC, we are committed to advocate for youths so that their voices are heard and they are empowered to take action on issues that matter. We aim to foster connections and linkages between people and organisations to engender meaningful

conversations and broker cooperation and understanding. We provide resources and spaces to enable the youth sector to move forward and enrich their work. But as we well know, these issues, conversations and even the nature of youth work change over time. To truly serve our youths, we have to keep pace with these changes and equip ourselves with a genuine understanding of the state of our youth today.

In sharing the findings from our research and insights from our contributors, NYC hopes to provide the youth sector and fellow youth developers insights into the pulse of youth. The NYS 2016 shows us that young people today have unsurpassed access to people and perspectives online, and they are leveraging on these opportunities brought about by globalisation. Despite their pursuit of personal aspirations, they remain connected to family, friends and their communities. Social bonds are stronger and more diverse, with youths desiring to make the world a better place for everyone. Encouragingly, youths still call Singapore home. Along with hopes and dreams, young people have worries and concerns. With our support, they can be better equipped to thrive. The youth profiles remind us that the young people we serve are diverse and unique. Regardless of whether our programmes and initiatives are targeted or inclusive, we must consider how we can better engage and uplift the different segments of youths.

Together, we can create a vibrant and purposeful youth sector and help youths in Singapore shape the future into the one which they envision.



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Youth & Society

Good job!



Stay lively!

Let's work together!



Hello neighbour!



Let's exercise!



Spend time with family!



Integrating Youth in Singapore

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Abstract

One interesting issue in Singapore is the relationship between its small size and its growing diversity among its residents. This relationship seems contrary to the popular perception of larger - rather than smaller - countries having greater regional cultural and ethnic diversities. The diversity in Singapore is a result of its status as both global city and city-state, which comes with a greater variety of views as well as a growing mix of different cultures among its residents. With an increasingly ethnically diverse and a rapidly ageing population, integration between different cultures and generations becomes an important social issue in Singapore, and all the more so for youths.

This chapter examines the issue of youth and integration from several angles. The social participation of youths and its implications for integration is discussed. The analysis shows that social participation is associated with interpersonal skills related to making friends and working well with others, and a person's multicultural orientation in terms of a respect for values and beliefs of other groups. Significantly, more frequent social participation is associated with increased friendship diversity in terms of having friends of different religions, ethnicities and nationalities. The chapter also explored family relations as the foundation for integration. The analysis indicated that intimate family relations form the basis of encouragement for diverse friendships among youths, as well as the basis for strong intergenerational ties between parent and child. Intimate family relations supported intergenerational ties and positively predicted whether care arrangements are likely to extend through transfer of responsibilities from parent to the child. Lastly, the issue of integration may also be approached by looking at how youths think as a generation and whether they identify with, and are integrated into Singapore society. The NYS 2016 shows that youths identified future uncertainties, health of a family member and emerging adult responsibilities as major stressors. The focus group discussions which followed from the NYS 2016 suggested that government initiatives which build a strong social safety net and having a good living standard in Singapore are elements which moderate the anxieties and frustrations arising from these stressors. Thus this balancing between life in Singapore and youth aspirations is something we can expect from our status as a global city and city-state. Singapore as a global city requires us to think about movements in and out of Singapore in search of opportunities, for Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans alike. This is part and parcel of our urban culture. And yet it is heartening to recognise that while our young people embrace the mobilities which stem from our status as a global city, the intimate relations they build with friends and family, as well as the social policies that are in place, will ensure their return.

Perspectives on Youth & their Relations in Singapore

In 2015, the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) published an article comparing youths in Hong Kong and Singapore. The lead paragraph of this article observed that "Hong Kong and Singapore share many similarities, but in recent years they have diverged in one important issue: the level of discontent among younger residents."

The two cities both used to have high levels of dissatisfaction with the government and the political status quo among the young. In Hong Kong, this remains the case. However, in Singapore, the ruling administration seems to have improved its standing (EIU, 2015). The article goes on to highlight the social policies which worked well, aligning youth to Singapore's polity and by extension the national community. A good relationship between youth and government ensures a variety of participative efforts that is essential for the governance of a society.

While this is a significant development, we should be cognisant of the other developments which have implications on youth and integration in Singapore. This introduction highlights three factors which shape young people and the relationships they form in Singapore. At the level of Singapore as a city, both in terms of Singapore's status as a global city and city-state, we want to see youth's approaches to diversity in the relationships they have. Second, in what ways does Singapore as an ageing society influence youth? And lastly, we end on a note on generational thinking¹ as this is applied to our youth growing up in Singapore and exposure to the resources which comes with this coming of age phase but at the same time the issues which youth face.

Singapore's status as a small city-state implies that the social participation of youth is an essential feature in the collective building of a cohesive society. How are Singapore's youth involved in various collective activities, and are there additional benefits

to youth development besides those derived from the activities themselves? Singapore's development into a global city implies that our economy performs as an important node or hub for the flows of activities, like financial services, and which in turn bring in a significant number of foreign born workers onto our shores. Singapore's status as a city-state is in turn a constant reminder that we have to pull together to survive and that this survival depends on developing good relationships with the countries in the rest of the world. Professor Tommy Koh's suggestion that "every citizen is a diplomat" (Lim, 2015) speaks to the duty we do as a citizen of a global city and city-state; that as we welcome more non-locals as workers and students through our activities of our economy and our schools, we must also make them feel welcome as part of Singapore's efforts to be friends with the world. What does the National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016 tell us about how Singaporean youth fare in their relations with others, even as Singapore grows more diverse?

Singapore as an ageing society will bring fresh challenges to youth and their social relations. An issue raised by Sng and Tan is the potential danger caused if voting tends towards age-based interests, resulting in a disproportionate share of resources going towards the elderly at the expense of the younger segments of the population (Sng & Tan, 2016). Academics in other countries have also brought up the growing attention on rights of children and youth in ageing societies (Zinnecker, 2001; Jans, 2004). Joining the debate, Koh and Ng (2016) suggest that current government spending has not shown any evidence of the weight tipping in favour of elderly spending at the expense of other age segments. Besides government resource allocation according to the priorities of the society, one important missing component has to do with the relations that young persons have with other age segments of the society. To the extent that relationships are strong, the different age groups can work in a harmonious way towards a balancing of age-related priorities. One way of

assessing relations between young and old is to start at the basic primary intergenerational group in any society, which is the family. We should look at the NYS 2016 to see the state of family relations and relationship strength of youths in Singapore.

And lastly, the NYS captures the youth segment of 15 to 34 years of age. Of this segment, a substantial proportion of the survey sample in the NYS 2016 belongs to an age group that has been popularised in the media as Generation Y or the Millennials, a generation which has come of age in the 21st century². As pointed out in Footnote 1, to move from a popular depiction of a generation to consider the possibility of generational thinking requires an age cohort to develop a sense of an identity "(Edmunds & Turner, 2002)" and the degree to which this particular age group develops shared dispositions, and particular ways of reacting especially in contrast to other groups (Woodman, 2013). Looking to the NYS 2016, we may not have all the factors to account for generational thinking, but a promising step in understanding this group is to see the issues that they are concerned about. This will be issues that they face as a generation by being in a particular societal context associated with a particular period in time.

Youths' Social Participation

One of the basic indicators that the NYS tracks over the years is the involvement of young people in different social groups. Of particular significance is the frequency of contact that youths have with such groups. Regular participation, defined in this chapter as having contact of at least a monthly meeting, allows the participants to maintain a set of social relations which are tied to the group activity. And if we conceive of youth as a period where youth step out of the comforts of their respective families and

become increasingly involved with society, then clearly such forms of social participation provide the basis for the integration of a new generation. And to the extent that social participation among youths is high and the effects of such participation positive, then it is reasonable to conclude that integration is successful and we have developed a new generation of youth who are socially involved in the management of different aspects of the country.

Table 1 shows the profile of youths with regular social group participation, where males (58%) tend to be more involved than females (50%). The role of schools in facilitating social involvement of its students can be seen when breaking down participation by age groups as the highest participation rate (75%) is registered among 15 to 19 year olds. 20 to 24 year olds suffer a significant decline of 24%, most probably because this occurs with school leaving and entry into the labour market. The reduced participation is also noted for older age groups. We see the role of schools more clearly in the economic status variable as full time students (68%) register the highest participation rate. Significantly, unemployed youths register high non-participation (65%), possibly due to an overall disconnection with other groups. In an early study, Carle (1987) suggests that youth unemployment often leads to a breakup of the young person's social network, loss of contact with friends, and a decline in one's social life.



Note

¹ The question of whether we should consider the concept of a generation depends significantly on whether a particular age group is capable of constituting itself as having a cultural identity (Edmunds & Turner, 2002, as cited in Buckingham, 2013). The possibility of a generational identity being associated with an age group is associated with many factors, such as the conditions they face as they come of age, the degree to which they develop shared dispositions, and particular ways of reacting particularly in contrast to other groups (Woodman, 2013).

Note

² Those born between 1981 (35 years of age at the time of the survey) and 1995 (21 years of age).

• **TABLE 1: PATTERNS OF SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG YOUTHS (%)**

	Group Participation	
	Not involved in any social groups monthly	Involved in at least one social group monthly
Gender		
Male	42	58
Female	50	50
Age Group		
15-19	25	75
20-24	49	51
25-29	55	45
30-34	52	48
Occupation Status		
Working full-time (employee)	53	47
Working full-time (self-employed)	38	62
Working part-time	54	46
Unemployed	65	35
Full-time Student	32	68
Part-time Student	56	44
National Service (full-time, or waiting for enlistment and not working part-time)	40	60
Homemaker	62	38
Marital Status		
Single	42	58
Married, without children	52	48
Married, with children	58	42
Divorced	69	31
In a relationship	51	49

• **TABLE 2: BENEFITS OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTHS (%)**

	Not involved in any social groups monthly	Involved in at least one social group monthly	Difference
Multicultural Orientation^a			
Respect values and beliefs of other groups	79.8	87.4	7.6
Knowledgeable about people of other races	43.7	50.8	7.1
Interpersonal Relationships^a			
Caring about other people's feelings	80.5	82.2	1.7
Good at making friends	53.9	61.6	7.7
Work well with others	69.5	77.9	8.4
Leading a team of people	46.0	54.9	8.9
Outward Orientation^a			
Public speaking	26.7	38.6	11.9
Adapt to change	66.6	72.5	5.9
Civic Engagement			
To be actively involved in local volunteer work ^b	6.6	13.7	7.1
To be actively involved in overseas volunteer work ^b	5.5	10.8	5.3
To help the less fortunate ^b	37.3	44.6	7.3
To contribute to society ^b	32.9	45.3	12.4
Worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in your community	1.7	5.5	3.8

Notes

a. Percentage of youths who agreed that the statements are "quite like me" and "very much like me".

b. Percentage of youths who indicated the life goals as "very important".

The importance we place on social participation among youths, is not only in the social relations they form in such groups, it is also in the benefits which can be derived from participation.

Table 2 provides a summary of these benefits in terms of multicultural orientation, interpersonal relationships, outward orientation, and civic engagement. We see regular participation having important benefits to individual development like public speaking (11.9% difference between those who are involved and not involved in groups), leadership (8.9% difference) and working well with others (8.4% difference). The important point to take away from this set of interpersonal skills is that these cannot really be taught within the classroom. Therefore, to the extent that these are learnt

interpersonally and in the everyday routines of group activities, then social groups provide an essential function to prepare individuals for their adult lives.

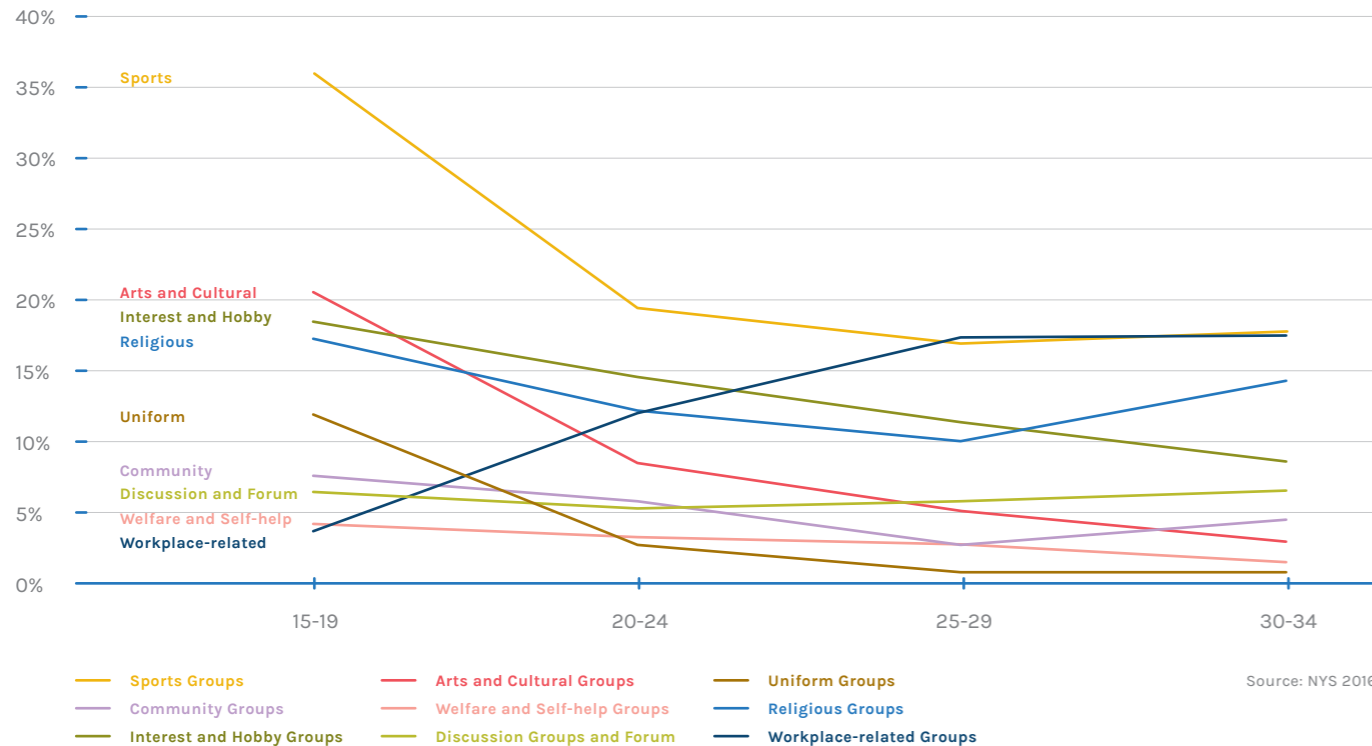
The difference between those who are involved and not involved is the highest for societal contribution (12.4%), suggesting that involvement in social groups is associated (not necessarily causal in nature) with the notion of working towards a greater cause. Associated items like local volunteering (7.1% difference) and helping the less fortunate (7.3% difference) also register significant differences. This is clearly important for society as the main beneficiaries of the voluntary sector are those who are weak and vulnerable.

The other socially important outcome is in our multicultural orientation. As the introduction to this chapter indicates, Singapore's growing social diversity makes it more important that we adopt a multicultural orientation. **Table 2** indicates that there are significantly higher percentages reported by involved youths with regard to respect for the values and beliefs of other groups (7.6% difference) and being knowledgeable about people of other races (7.1% difference).

In summary, there are three important points to make about youths and social participation. The first is the unintended benefits that group participation brings to the individual and society.

Perhaps with the exception of uniform groups which specifically train young people in leadership and other interpersonal skills, and workplace-related groups which may be assigned by superiors, young people join social groups like sports-related, arts and cultural, interest and hobby groups for the immediate benefits of such groups in fulfilling their immediate interests. The unintended consequences of such participation are the types of social and personal benefits outlined in **Table 2**. In the course of fulfilling these interests, youths are embedded in a social and normative environment where they learn new skills necessary in the promotion of such interests, as well as values necessary for teamwork to occur.

• **CHART 1: FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL GROUP ATTENDANCE BY AGE GROUPS (%)**



Note
This chart shows the percentage of individuals involved with a social group (either weekly or monthly) in the past 12 months, for that particular age group (i.e. 15 to 19 years old; Sports-related Group: 35.9% reported involvement, whereas 64.1% reported non-involvement). "Others" is not reported, as the percentages are less than 1%.

If there are clear social and personal benefits to youth social participation, can participation be sustained over time in our youths? **Chart 1** shows youths' involvement in the major social groups covered in the survey by the age of respondents. Perhaps because of the high degree of participation in sports-related groups for youths of schooling age (15 to 19 year olds), there is a rather drastic decline in sports participation for youths in their early to late twenties, with the onset of labour market participation and family formation. With the promotion of sports and healthy lifestyles in Singapore, this decline is arrested at around 18% for older youths in their late twenties and early thirties. A similar account can be made for arts and cultural groups and uniform groups. The high participation for this set of activities is again school-based, and the decline in participation from school (15 to 19 year olds) to work (youths in their twenties) is also quite drastic. There is a small core group of youths who persist in uniform groups, most likely in a volunteer capacity, in their late twenties and early thirties. Interest and hobby groups also show a decline.

A second, more stable pattern is observed in welfare and self-help, as well as discussion and forum groups. For different reasons, both activities garner a small group of participants ranging from 2% to 5% (welfare and self-help groups) and about 6% for discussion and forum groups.

The third pattern showing an increase with age is, naturally, workplace-related groups. As youths transit from school to work, more will be involved in work-based groupings. The percentage of youths in such groupings climb from early to late twenties, most likely because they are entrusted with more work-related responsibilities, and the percentage remains at around 18% for youths in their late twenties and early thirties. Lastly, community participation and religious involvements have shown a pickup for those in their early thirties.

The decline in youths' participation with increasing age may be a cause for alarm, but it is important to see how values, lessons and skills learnt in the formative years can be transferred to other domains. In focus group discussions (FGDs) run alongside the NYS 2010, we showed a chart of similar findings to a focus group comprising of tertiary students. A comment from one participant continues to be relevant:

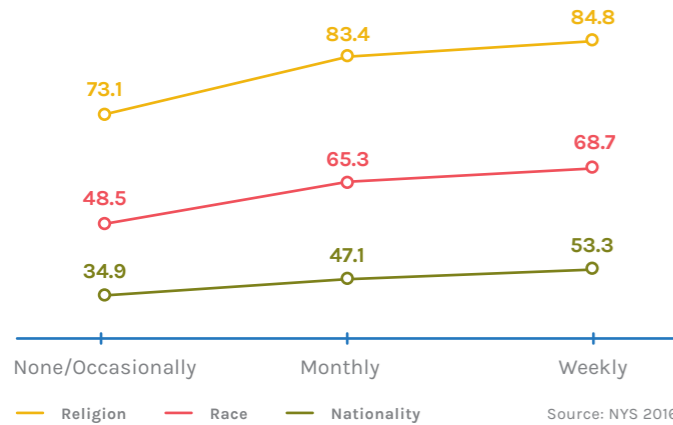
Maybe, some people at first glance they think it's bad [the decline in involvement and leadership with increasing age], but it's not always bad. You've served people in leadership positions at that age, but.. what I understand in this is that it [CCA leadership] fully transforms into personal leadership. At 15 to 19 years old, you are steering a group of friends, students, mentees. Midway, you are leading your own lives, you are a leader to yourself, it's about steering your own future and at 30 to 34, you are steering your family. So, you might not be in an official leadership position, but I think the leadership role is still being played. I hope at 30 to 34 your leadership position is in your family.

Female, NYS 2010 FGD, 2010, June 1

Friendship Diversity

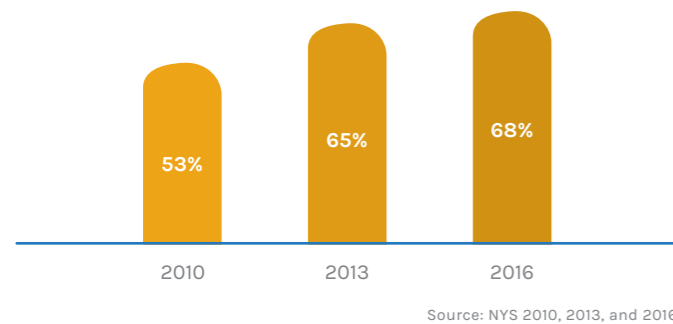
In **Table 2**, we noted that youths who regularly participate in social groups are more likely to be more knowledgeable about the practices of other races and also respect the values and beliefs of other groups. In **Chart 2**, we see the association between participation and diverse close friendships. We are mindful that this set of data is suggestive rather than confirmatory of the relationship between group participation regularity and its links to knowledge, respect and the formation of more diverse friendships. Nevertheless, the data leads us to think about how popular social groups like sports-related groups, arts and cultural groups, and workplace-related groups create a social environment where members encounter and interact with other members who are of different ethnicities, religions and even nationalities. The regular interaction with members who cooperate with one another over the achievement of common goals becomes the foundation of diverse friendship formation. Indeed, most social groups which have an open membership criteria and those which are larger in size have within these groups social diversity in terms of religion and ethnicity, and to a certain extent, nationality. Membership in such groupings require individuals to learn about, accommodate and embrace such differences.

• **CHART 2: FRIENDSHIP DIVERSITY & PARTICIPATION FREQUENCY**



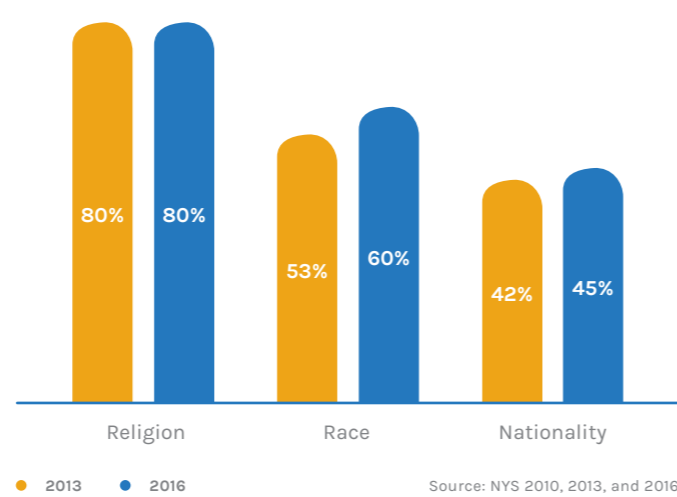
The NYS 2016 suggests that enhancing social participation of youth may be a way forward to building a more cohesive society through the establishment of more diverse friendships, connecting youths with different population segments. **Charts 3 and 4** show that both indicators, youths' social participation and youths' diverse friendships, show increases over time. And while the increase in youths citing diverse friendships may be due to a variety of reasons, one key reason for these diverse friendships seems to be the presence of youth participation in social groups which have open memberships with respect to ethnicity, religion and national.

• **CHART 3: YOUTHS' OVERALL SOCIAL PARTICIPATION^a**



Note
a. Figures represent youth who reported being in a social group regardless of the frequency of attendance.

• **CHART 4: YOUTHS' FRIENDSHIP DIVERSITY**



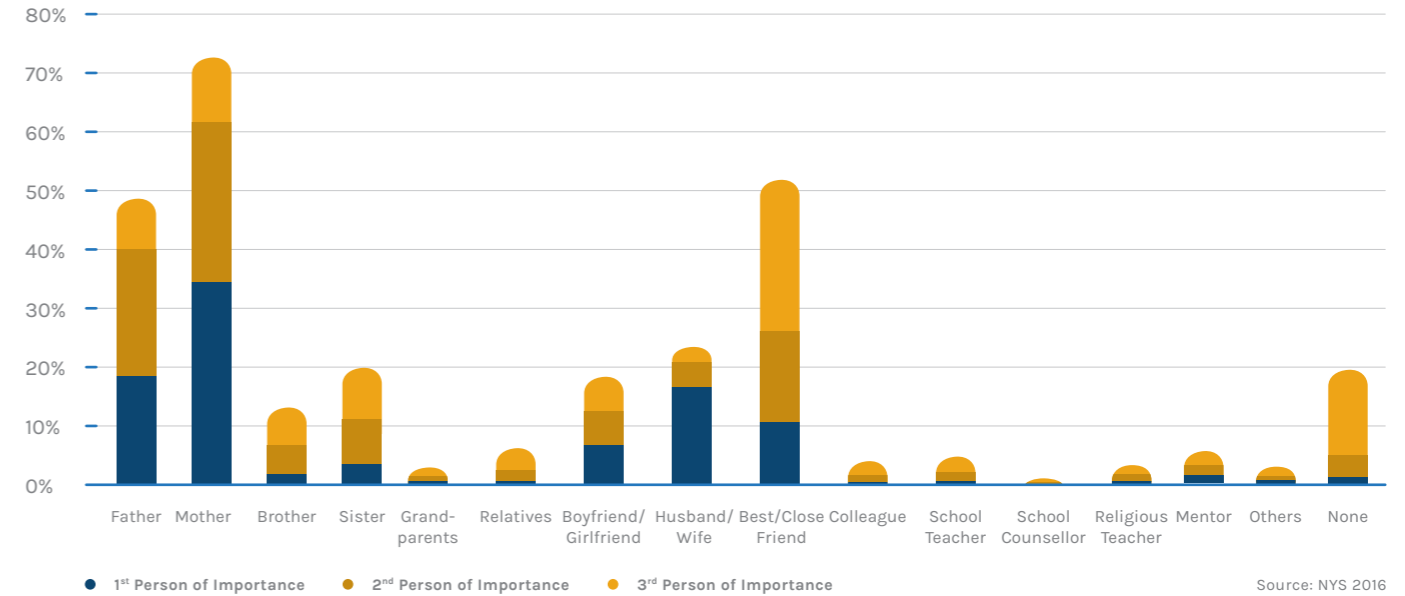
Youths & Family Relations

Besides the friendships and social contacts that youth form through different types of social participation, we turn our attention to the relations youth have with their families. In this section, we explore several themes relating to youth and family relations.

a. Evidence of the intimacy of the family

One indicator of the intimacy of the family to the young person is the degree to which parents are consulted by youths for important decisions. The family is the first primary group that we experience and grow up in. Family relations are expected to be nurturing and contribute to the socialisation and upbringing for the young child. Does this early experience in early childhood translate to the next stages of life? In **Chart 5**, we use the person the respondent cites as the one they turn to for advice when making important life decisions as an indicator of family relational intimacy.

• **CHART 5: IMPORTANT PERSONS YOUTHS TURN TO WHEN MAKING IMPORTANT LIFE DECISIONS**



We note from **Chart 5** that mothers represent the most important person which youths consult. The primary role of mothers as the caregiver of the family is well established in the literature [see Menaghan (1991) for a review of how women manage work and family roles and Ministry of Social and Family Development (2017) on gender roles among married working women]. And although best or close friends have a higher percentage when all three options are added, fathers have a higher percentage as the 1st and 2nd persons consulted, indicating the intimacy of the father-child relation.

For all three ranked persons, a member of the nuclear family was chosen as the first person consulted by 58.4% of respondents, as the second person by 61.9% and the third person by 34.6%. The percentage of respondents who chose a member of the nuclear family as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd person was 88.7%.

Note
³ Reliability analysis for Cronbach's Alpha on the Family Support (C6) and Family Challenge scales (C7) reveal that both scales are reliable. (Family Support (C6): $\alpha=.916$ (6 items), mean: 4.187; Family Challenge (C7): $\alpha=.737$ (7 items), mean: 4.097).

We wanted to see how the choice of selecting a family member in making important decisions is in turn associated with the way the young person is brought up (see **Table 3**). Two dimensions of this family upbringing is important - the ways in which the family supports the young person (measured by items such as attention, appreciation and doing things together) and the type of challenges the family pose for their children (as measured by items such as assignment of responsibilities, good use of time, desire to make family proud)³. The suggestion from the associations of family choice with Family Support and Family Challenge is that the bond between parent and child is nurtured through the parents supporting the child while at the same time providing the guidelines which help shape the child's life journey. We also wondered if the choice of consulting a nuclear family member is associated with the socioeconomic class background of the family. Our other concern is whether the role of the family as an important decision consultation source declines as the young person grows older.

The results are presented in **Table 3**. This model finds that Family Support explains whether youths consult a nuclear family member, with a higher mean increasing the odds by 1.839 times. A higher score for Family Support continues to predict higher odds of choosing to confide in a nuclear family member for important life decisions, holding socioeconomic class (using housing type as a proxy), parental education (both father and mother’s education), and the youths’ age groups constant. This suggests that a high degree of family support at home creates nurturing conditions which results in the young person turning to the family as a source of consultation for important life decisions. As intuitive as the understanding of this relationship may be, it is important to note that this relationship holds across different socioeconomic classes and age groups.

In addition, the analysis shows that in comparison to the 15 to 19 age group, youths in the 25 to 29 age group and 30 to 34 age group are less likely to confide in a nuclear family member (decreasing odds to .385 and .188 times respectively). The changing role of the family over the life course of youth is also interesting to explore. Constructing family consultation as a variable as an indicator of the role of the family, the findings in **Table 3** suggest that as the young person shifts from a teenager to a young adult, the degree of dependence on the family as a consultation source decreases. From a developmental perspective, this is what it should be - that as the young person ages, he or she begins to take on more personal responsibility. Going through National Service, institutions of higher learning, and the experience of work, work in tandem to confer more responsibilities to the youth. Other adult relationships also more likely take over from the family as sources of consultation.



• **TABLE 3: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING CHOOSING TO CONSULT A NUCLEAR FAMILY MEMBER FOR IMPORTANT DECISIONS**

Predictors	Model	Odds
n	2,756	
Family Support	0.609** (0.090)	1.839
Family Challenge	0.149 (0.103)	1.161
Housing Type (Base: 1-3 Room)		
HDB (4-5 room)	-0.095 (0.111)	0.909
Private (Apartment)	0.290 (0.199)	1.337
Private (Landed)	0.498 (0.293)	1.646
Father's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	-0.227 (0.203)	0.797
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	-0.104 (0.212)	0.901
Diploma and Professional	0.155 (0.258)	1.167
University	0.000 (0.230)	1.000
Mother's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	-0.131 (0.189)	0.878
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	0.112 (0.196)	1.118
Diploma and Professional	-0.257 (0.323)	0.774
University	-0.002 (0.229)	0.998
Age Groups (Base: 15-19)		
20-24	-0.037 (0.136)	0.964
25-29	-0.955** (0.132)	0.385
30-34	-1.671** (0.133)	0.188
Constant	-1.937	
R ²	0.211	

Notes Standard errors in parentheses
 **p<0.01, *p<0.05
 Other insignificant variables excluded from Table 3.

b. Family intimacy and diverse friendships

In the previous section on Youths' Social Participation, we looked at how youths' social participation and its links to friendship diversity in Singapore society represent important elements which can lead to stronger multiculturalism and a more cohesive society. What are some of the determinants of youth friendship diversity? Does the family play a role in socialising their children to accept diversity in

their friendships? This is perhaps so as family and home are the first places the young person turn to seek approval. We also test a common finding in the social sciences that minority ethnicities are more likely to cross ethnic boundaries in friendships. And lastly, we added socioeconomic class variables to see if friendship diversity is influenced by class.

• **TABLE 4: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING HAVING A CLOSE FRIEND OF ANOTHER RACE**

Predictors	Model	Odds
n	2,618	
Choose a Nuclear Family Member to Consult for Important Life Decisions	0.200* (0.087)	1.222
Race (Base: Chinese)		1.161
Malay	0.922** (0.123)	2.513
Indian	1.822** (0.205)	6.184
Others	1.168** (0.352)	3.214
Family Support	-0.262** (0.090)	0.770
Family Challenge	0.605** (0.102)	1.831
Housing Type (Base: 1-3 Room)		
HDB (4-5 room)	-0.082 (0.114)	0.922
Private (Apartment)	-0.021 (0.190)	0.979
Private (Landed)	0.078 (0.259)	1.081
Father's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	-0.208 (0.211)	0.813
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	-0.154 (0.220)	0.857
Diploma and Professional	-0.036 (0.267)	0.964
University	-0.354 (0.234)	0.702

• **TABLE 4: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING HAVING A CLOSE FRIEND OF ANOTHER RACE (CONTINUED)**

Predictors	Model	Odds
Mother's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	0.189 (0.194)	1.209
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	0.421* (0.200)	1.523
Diploma and Professional	0.493 (0.326)	1.638
University	0.528* (0.230)	1.696
Constant	-1.486	
R ²	0.121	

Notes

Standard errors in parentheses

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

This model found that youths who choose to consult nuclear family members for important decisions are also more likely to report having a close friend from a different race (with 1.222 higher odds). In addition, a higher mean in Family Challenge positively predicts having a close friend from a different race (with 1.831 higher odds), whereas a higher mean in Family Support does not (with 0.770 smaller odds). Thus, it is significant that all three indicators of the family environment, family as a source for consultation, Family Support and Family Challenge are all important in influencing diverse friendships, indicating the important role the family plays.

In comparison to Chinese youths, youths of minority ethnicities in Singapore - Malays, Indians and Others - have increased odds of having a close friend of a different race. Holding socioeconomic class, parental education and whether they consult a nuclear member for important decisions constant, it was found that Malay youths are 2.513 times more likely; Indian youths are 6.184 times more likely; and youths from Other ethnicities are 3.214 times more likely to have a close friend from a different race. Lastly, socioeconomic status variables (using housing and parental education as proxies) do not contribute to the model.

c. Family intimacy and care of ageing parents

A close set of family relations will lead to close inter-age relations between parent and child. Care-giving has a role reversal in this type of inter-age intimate relationship. The care the young person receives is repaid when the parent ages, where the care shifts to ageing parents. This relationship is clearly seen in **Table 5**, where respondents who indicated choosing a nuclear family member as a source for advice (an indicator of family intimacy) have higher odds (1.548 times) of expressing their belief in supporting parents in old age.

We looked at how the choice of taking care of one's parents in old age, regardless of the circumstances, is associated with the various socioeconomic influences on youth, as well their self-reported closeness with their family. In our sample, 85% of youths choose to take care of their parents in old age, regardless of the circumstances. Youths who choose a nuclear family member to consult for important decisions are more likely to choose to take care of their parents in old age (regardless of the circumstances), with the odds 1.548 times larger.

The model indicates that when scores in Family Support and Family Challenge increase by one unit, the odds are 2.057 times and 1.343 times larger respectively. Thus, a higher score in Family Support and Family Challenge predicts higher odds of choosing to take care of elderly parents.

This suggests that all three variables of a close and intimate family environment (consulting a family member, Family Support and Family Challenge) are all significant in explaining a young person's care of their ageing parents. The assumption of inter-generational connection between parent and child holds in both the early stages of the child's life and most probably in the person's adulthood when caring for ageing parents.

For housing type, in comparison to those living in HDB 1 to 3 room flats, youths staying in HDB 4 to 5 room flats have higher odds of choosing to take care of their elderly parents (1.472 times larger). However, as the majority of youths in our sample (67%) live in HDB 4 to 5 room flats, this finding correlates with the high percentage of youths willing to take care of their parents in old age.

In summary, the family continues to be an important social set of intimate relations for youths. Family members, especially the parents, are most frequently cited by youths as persons to consult for important life decisions. An environment where there is strong family support leads to relations of intimacy and advice-giving in parent child relations. We have found that evidence of such intimate family relations form the basis of encouragement for diverse friendships among youths, as well as the basis of strong inter-generational ties between parent and child. In addition, we found that intimate family relations positively predict whether care arrangements are likely to extend through transfer of responsibilities from parent to the child.

• **TABLE 5: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS PREDICTING CHOOSING TO TAKE CARE OF PARENTS IN OLD AGE, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES**

Predictors	Model	Odds
n	2,756	
Choose a Nuclear Family Member to Consult for Important Life Decisions	0.437** (0.117)	1.548
Family Support	0.721** (0.111)	2.057
Family Challenge	0.295* (0.133)	1.343
Housing Type (Base: 1-3 Room)		
HDB (4-5 room)	0.387** (0.141)	1.472
Private (Apartment)	0.179 (0.256)	1.196
Private (Landed)	0.120 (0.368)	1.128
Father's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	0.022 (0.269)	1.023
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	-0.022 (0.283)	0.978
Diploma and Professional	-0.342 (0.333)	0.711
University	-0.130 (0.307)	0.878
Mother's Education Level (Base: Below Secondary)		
Secondary	0.038 (0.250)	1.039
Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary	0.014 (0.260)	1.014
Diploma and Professional	0.022 (0.434)	1.022
University	0.448 (0.311)	1.566
Constant	-2.837	
R ²	0.116	

Notes

Standard errors in parentheses

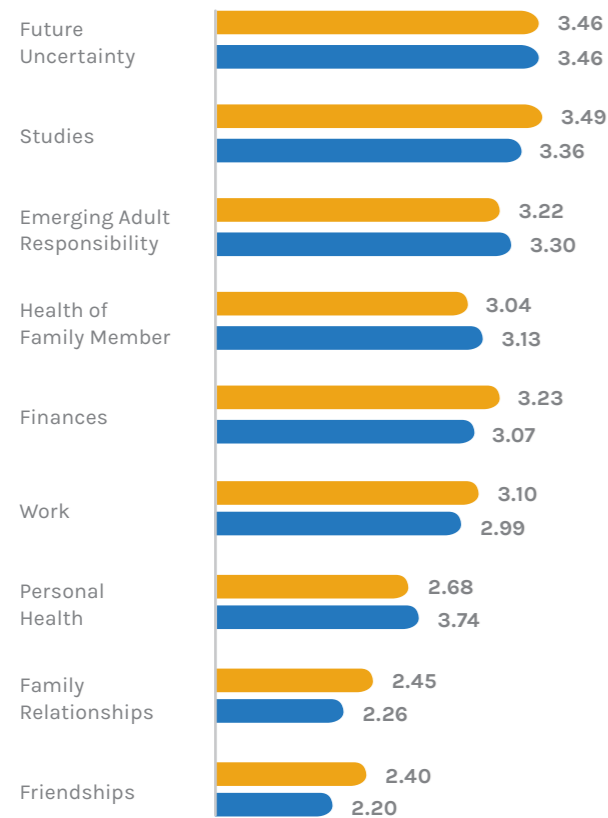
**p<0.01, *p<0.05



Youth Stressors & Generational Thinking

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, youths surveyed in the NYS are 15 to 34 years of age. Of this segment, a substantial proportion of the survey sample in 2016 belong to a group that has been popularised in the media as Generation Y or Millennials. We had suggested that if we look into the issues that our respondents are concerned about, this may well be issues that they face as a generation.

• **CHART 6: COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES FOR STRESSORS 2013 & 2016**



● 2013 ● 2016

Source: NYS 2013 and 2016

From the list of stressors summarised in **Chart 6**, two issues can be highlighted for further analysis. The first is the health of the family member, where the mean scores increased from 3.04 to 3.13. **Table 6** indicates that the more significant changes occurred among the 15 to 19 year olds and the 20 to 24 year olds. As Singapore ages, this concern will remain high for youths.

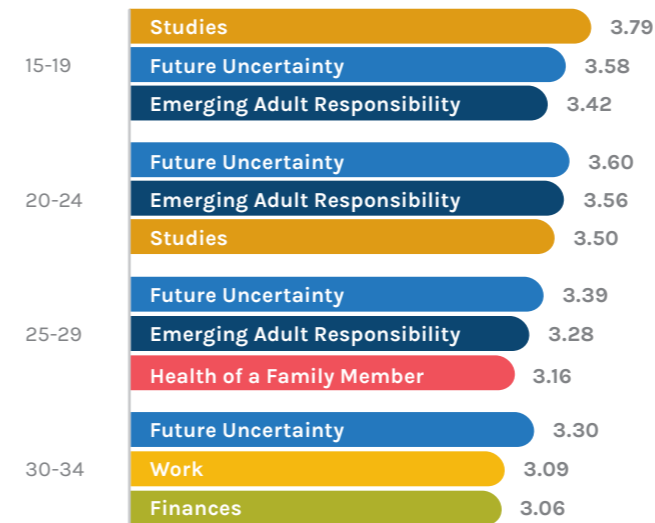
The other concern faced by youths in Singapore is the worry about future uncertainties. The means for this particular indicator remained at a high of 3.46 for both 2013 and 2016, suggesting a more permanent worry for young people in Singapore.

• **TABLE 6: MEAN SCORES FOR HEALTH OF A FAMILY MEMBER & FUTURE UNCERTAINTY AS STRESSORS BY AGE GROUP RATE**

	Age Groups					Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34		
Health of a Family Member						
2013	2.96	2.98	3.14	3.07	3.04	
2016	3.21	3.19	3.16	3.00	3.13	
Future Uncertainty						
2013	3.53	3.58	3.48	3.26	3.46	
2016	3.58	3.60	3.39	3.30	3.46	

Concern about future uncertainty remained the top three stressors for all four age groups. It was the second highest stressor for 15 to 19 year olds (behind studies), and the highest stressor for 20 to 34 year olds.

• **CHART 7: TOP 3 STRESSORS BY AGE GROUP**



• **CHART 8: PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES IN SINGAPORE TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS & HAVE A GOOD CAREER**



This concern with future uncertainty may be linked to the growing aspirations of Singaporeans and a worry about whether there are sufficient opportunities in Singapore for them to attain their life goals or have a good career. **Chart 8** shows both indicators having a fairly low mean. For perceived opportunities to attain aspirations, the mean has decreased from 3.73 in 2010 to 3.28 in 2016. The mean of 3.37 for career opportunities in 2016 is slightly higher than a neutral score. These figures indicate that uncertainty over broad aspects of the future is a concern faced by youths of all age groups in Singapore.

While the NYS 2016 indicates the possible divide between the growing aspirations of our youths and their perceptions of the opportunities which are present in Singapore, a number of points raised during the FGDs which followed the NYS 2016 provide a more detailed backdrop which moderates the possible frustrations which arise from this divide.

The first has to do also with the worries in the instabilities outside Singapore in contrast with the perception of efficient management system in place locally:

"My wife is Thai, and I think in Southeast Asia, a lot of people like Singapore... I think... me and my wife, especially my wife, thinks that Singapore is a lot more stable. The infrastructure they are a lot more consistent. Corruption is not high."
Male, 31, NYS 2016 FGD, 1 March 2017

There is a general perception among FGD participants that there are already many beneficial policies in place:

"But in the past few years, I think there [were quite a few] things happening like new universities which [will contribute] to the happiness level... [and] the \$500 extra [SkillsFuture Credit] as well as the GST voucher [which I love]."
Female, 26, NYS 2016 FGD, 10 March 2017

"Perhaps... one of the things which is also relative to... [other] countries in the world... when times are bad, maybe they [scale] back on social benefits... in our case, even though we expect times to get [bad] over the next four years, the social safety net is still more or less in place, and in fact supposedly increasing."

Female, 26, NYS 2016 FGD, 10 March 2017

The general perception that Singapore is a good place to live for young Singaporeans then allows them to view, rationalise and calculate their aspirations with this general perception in mind. This is the distinction between migration, which participants view as more permanent, and venturing abroad to gain experience and then come home:

"I think there should be [a distinction between] the desire to migrate as a life aspiration versus going abroad. [The former is going abroad] for a couple of years and then coming back... I will say yah, I will definitely go for ten years or whatever number of years but I will probably come back."

Female, 32, NYS 2016 FGD, 1 March 2017

Conclusion

Thus this balancing between life in Singapore and youth aspirations is something we can expect in Singapore. This is a balancing between our status as a global city and city-state. Singapore as a global city requires us to think about movements in and out of Singapore in search of opportunities, for Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans alike. This is part and parcel of our urban culture. And yet, it is heartening to close this chapter on a promising note to recognise that our young people also embrace our status as a city-state, and that the intimate relations they build with friends and family as well as the social policies that are in place will ensure their return.



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Shifts in Youth Volunteerism in Singapore

National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre



Abstract

We live in a world that is changing dramatically. Macro forces such as the rise of individual empowerment, the changing nature of work, and digital disruption have led to more youths stepping up and exploring new ways to volunteer. Youth have a high interest in volunteerism and are also increasingly involved in informal volunteerism, where they make direct impact on their own without going through conventional routes such as non-profit organisations. Volunteering is also seen as a social activity, and workplace and skills-based volunteering are seen as good gateways to engage more young working adults to volunteer. In this chapter, we explore how the present trends in youth volunteerism landscape are aligned with and could be propelled by these macro forces around them. We will then put a spotlight on an emerging trend which has gained much popularity among youth in recent years: ground-up movements. With their youthful appeal as nimble entities that are close to the ground and are constantly searching for innovative ways to provide direct help, ground-up movements are viable ways to engage more youths to volunteer.

"There has never been a time of greater promise, or greater peril."

Klaus Schwab on Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution

We live in a watershed moment in history, with tectonic shifts happening simultaneously on multiple fronts. Massive demographic shifts, geopolitical volatility, prolonged financial crisis, environmental threats, and digital disruption have unprecedented implications on how people live, work and play. These shifts have sparked three trends which have immediate relevance in shaping how people give in Singapore now and in the near future: the rise of individual empowerment, the changing nature of work and digital disruption.

Empowerment, defined as "the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes", revolutionises individual capacity to create societal change (World Bank Institute, 2007). The decentralisation of action away from state and corporate actors to individuals and groups, coupled with an increasingly easy access to knowledge and widespread availability of technology, has the potential to spark "self-determined change" from the ground (ibid). In fact, the United States' National Intelligence Council (2012) foresees that individual empowerment would be key to solving the mounting global challenges in the next 15 to 20 years.

In Singapore, individual empowerment manifests itself not just in a population that is "increasingly vocal and conscious of social issue" (Prakash, 2014), but also one with a stronger bent towards action to rectify what is not right in the society. It becomes almost like a duty for individuals to stand up, speak up and make change happen (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre [NVPC], 2017). This gives rise to a Singaporean civil society characterised by evolving values, changing markers of identity and increasingly vocal public debates.

On the work front, *the nature of work is changing*. The traditional notion of employees holding one job and following 9 to 5 workdays will no longer be the norm. More people in Singapore gravitate towards freelancing work to balance the need for income and freedom to explore personal interests. As of 2016, there were about 200,000 freelancers in Singapore, with more companies tapping into this growing flexible workforce (Seow, 2017). A case in point is

Uber, which recently reported to have crossed 1 million active riders mark as it celebrates its 4th anniversary in Singapore (Cheok, 2017). Most of its "tens of thousands" drivers are part-timers, in-between jobs, or transient in nature.

Taking these examples of the sharing economy into account, the norm will soon be for a worker to hold multiple gigs, working while in commute, and flexibly integrating their professional and personal lives. While today's freelancers are doing so on a part-time basis, there is a nascent but growing trend of 'full-time freelancers', especially among youths who are attracted by the lucrative income and the flexibility it affords. Presently, Uber and Grab estimate between 20 to 30% of their drivers to be below 30 years old (Cheng, 2017).

The growing interest in sharing economy would also mean better utilisation of resources. There are already platforms enabling one to sell portions of your home-cooked food to others, helping to reduce food wastage. This concept of maximising current under-utilised resources could easily be extended to help others who are in need of these resources, e.g. transport for isolated elderly and food for those in need.

All these are happening against the backdrop of *digital disruption*. Smart Nation found its way to the Prime Minister's National Day Rally agenda this year, underscoring the government's seriousness in harnessing the promises of digital to "improve living, create economic opportunity and build a closer community" in Singapore by 2025 (Smart Nation and Digital Government Office, 2017).

This paves the way towards vastly different ways in which we live, work and play in the next decade. Big data will revolutionise how we move about, do business and provide care within the community by making better predictions of human behaviours. For instance, healthcare data could enable personalised medical plans to be developed based on the different needs of individuals. We will also 'experience' the world in different ways. Virtual reality and augmented reality will become more commonly used across products and services as diverse as consumer products to social causes.

The Rise of Millennials – A Generation That Gives

These trends have significant impact on how youth give in Singapore, even as youths themselves continue to shape these trends through their lived reality. Research on Millennials have invariably characterised this generation, defined as those born between 1980s to 2000s, as value-driven digital natives. This represents not just a demographic shift but also a shift in perspectives, attitudes and behaviours.

Born in the era of digital revolution marked by the advent of personal computers, the internet and infocomm technology, Millennials have the unenviable moral imperative to deploy the massive potentials of digital for the good of businesses and society – while contending with the perils of technology. This is amplified even further in the age of digital disruption with new possibilities like work automation and human substitution entering the picture.

With such massive power in their hands, it is gratifying to learn that Millennials are value-driven and are strongly influenced by a sense of purpose, societal contribution, and greater accountability for many global issues (Deloitte, 2017). This internal moral compass possibly drives them towards a greater propensity to take action as compared to their predecessors.

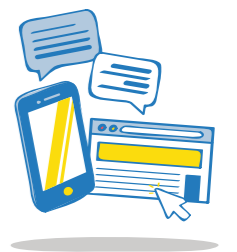
This also translates to their career choices. Millennials tend to gravitate towards meaningful work, specifically towards companies with strong sustainability and social values (PwC, 2011). They also believe that the workplace provides them an avenue to influence tangible social impact (Deloitte, 2017). Instead of relying on the state or corporate actors, Millennials see themselves as agents of change who are empowered to be an actual force of good. This perspective remains the same even as we enter the gig economy and Millennials are faced with more flexibility in determining how they apportion their time between working, living – and perhaps giving. The idea of a sharing economy will also help

propel Millennials' giving as it makes it easier for them to volunteer with or donate their current resources, especially maximising the use of their under-utilised resources.

Estimated to make up half of the global workforce by 2020 (PwC, 2011), the choices and actions of Millennials will bring about transformative implications in families, workplaces and society, including how they do good.

In the next section, we will take a closer look at one aspect of doing good – volunteerism – among Millennial youths in Singapore. We will draw insights from the Individual Giving Survey (IGS), which is National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)'s flagship study of giving among individuals in Singapore. It provides both a landscape view of giving, including volunteerism and philanthropy, and an in-depth understanding into the profiles, behaviours, and preferences of givers, former givers, and non-givers. Started in 2000 as a study on volunteerism, each run of this biennial study is based on a random and nationally representative pool of respondents and allows for year-on-year comparison.

In this study, volunteering is defined as activities done out of one's own free will without expecting financial payment to help others outside their household, family, relatives or friends. This can be done formally through organisations (e.g. charities) or informally without going through any organisation. It excludes compulsory community work such as Values in Action, Community Involvement Programme in schools (except where it exceeds the compulsory hours), as well as acts of kindness such as giving up one's seat on public transport.



Current Landscape of Youth Volunteerism in Singapore

The national volunteerism rate in Singapore has grown significantly over the years. The IGS 2016 found that 35% of the general population in Singapore volunteered at least once in the past year, as compared to 17% in 2008. This positive trend is mirrored among the youth population aged 15 to 34, whose volunteerism rate has consistently been on par with or slightly higher than the general population (NVPC, 2016) (Chart 1). This indicates that youths in Singapore are becoming increasingly involved in society, mirroring the global trend of youths stepping up and stepping in.

Youth commonly go through the major life stages of school and work. In the Singapore context, 15 to 24 year old youths would typically undertake their education in secondary schools through to tertiary institutions like polytechnics, ITEs or universities. Following this, those aged 25 to 34 are likely to be growing their careers. These are vastly different experiences which demand different sets of priorities and resources, and in turn shaping youth volunteering behaviour, participation style, preference, motivation and barriers.

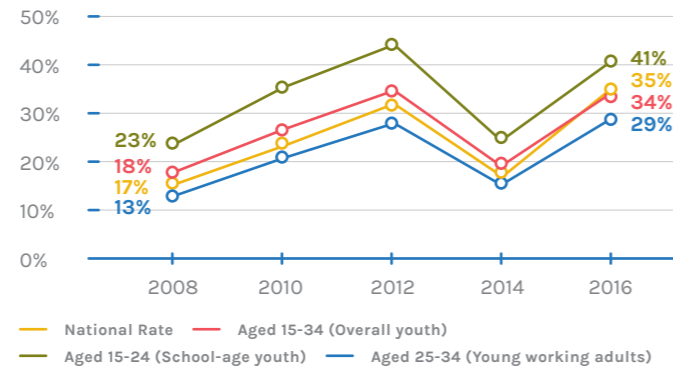
Understanding these differences will help to sharpen our understanding of and engagement with each youth sub-group. This section will therefore adopt a dual lens of analysis as we review youth volunteerism in Singapore based on the IGS – firstly viewing those aged 15 to 34 as a single ‘youth’ group vis-à-vis the general population, and secondly zooming into sub-group differences between youths who are school-age (15 to 24 years old) and young working adults (25 to 34 years old).

Volunteerism rate

34% of youths in Singapore volunteered in 2016, as compared to 18% in 2008. The volunteerism rate among school-age youth is consistently higher compared to the general population and the young working adults across the years (NVPC, 2016) (Chart 1). In fact, data from IGS 2008 to 2016 shows that youth volunteering rate is almost always one of the highest across all age groups. However, as they transition into the workforce, many youth volunteers drop off, resulting in a noticeable dip in volunteerism rate among young working adults. This may reflect their shifting

priorities as they focus their time and resources to build their career and/or family, leading to the crucial question of how volunteerism could be sustained over life stages.

• CHART 1: VOLUNTEERISM RATE OVER TIME



Frequency and hours spent volunteering

Despite the high rate of youth volunteerism, the frequency and hours spent volunteering are generally low among youths. While volunteerism tends to be done occasionally for the general population, the irregularity is even more so among those aged 15 to 34 and this pattern is consistent across the years. In 2016, 74% of youths who volunteered did so occasionally, compared to 64% of the general population who volunteered (Table 1). The average number of volunteer hours contributed by youths in a year have also been consistently lower than that of the national average, ranging from 13 to 50 hours less across the years of IGS (Chart 2). This reflects the preference among youths for occasional volunteering and hence shorter volunteering hours in a year.

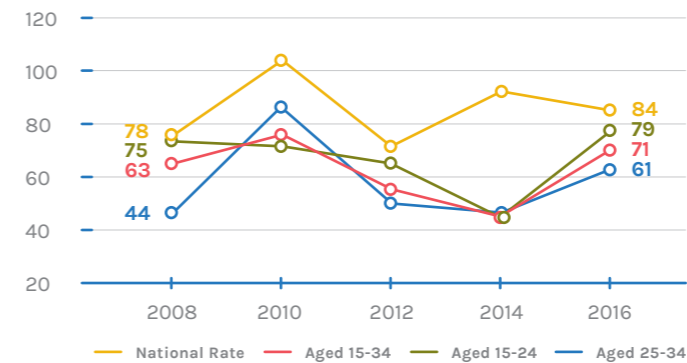
Diving into the sub-group comparison across the years, we find more young working adults to be regular volunteers – defined as volunteering on a weekly or monthly basis – compared to school-age youths (Table 1). This, however, does not always correspond with the average number of volunteering hours. Despite volunteering more regularly, young working adults contribute fewer volunteering hours compared to school-age

youths (NVPC, 2016) (Chart 2). This could be a reflection of the type of volunteering activities that they take part in, where school-going youths tend to take part in occasional volunteering activities that could last for longer hours in total, while young working adults tend to take part in regular volunteering activities that are shorter in length.

• TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF VOLUNTEERING OVER TIME

	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
National Rate					
Regular (Weekly and Monthly)	46%	44%	27%	36%	35%
Occasionally	54%	56%	73%	64%	64%
Aged 15-34					
Regular (Weekly and Monthly)	40%	41%	23%	26%	26%
Occasionally	60%	59%	77%	74%	74%
Aged 15-24					
Regular (Weekly and Monthly)	40%	34%	24%	22%	14%
Occasionally	61%	66%	77%	78%	86%
Aged 25-34					
Regular (Weekly and Monthly)	44%	50%	23%	30%	39%
Occasionally	57%	50%	77%	70%	61%

• CHART 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS OVER TIME



Volunteering activities

Youth in Singapore have similar preferences to the general population when it comes to volunteering activities. In IGS 2016, the top five most popular activities for youths are human services (e.g. befriending, mentoring), fundraising, education-related (e.g. tuition, reading), volunteer coordination (e.g. training and briefing volunteers) and green efforts (e.g. environment protection, haze relief). There are some variations worth noting, where we see a higher proportion of youths who participate in fundraising activities (26%) compared to the general population (17%). Conversely, there is a higher proportion of general population (15%) participating in general services and administration compared to youths (8%)(NVPC, 2016)(Table 2).

At the sub-group level, age-related differences become more apparent. The top volunteering activities for school-age youths are human services, fundraising, education-related, volunteer coordination and green efforts. On the other hand, the top activities for young working adults are human services, fundraising, general services and administration, health-related (e.g. nursing, therapy), professional and managerial services (e.g. legal, finance), and skilled trade services (e.g. electrician, hairdresser). Apart from the top two activities of human services and fundraising, the rest of the activities preferred by the two sub-groups are different, reflecting divergent interests and priorities unique to their respective life stages (Table 2).

Notably, school-age youths have a preference for green efforts, which could possibly be due to their increasing awareness of global issues such as climate change and haze. The nature of environmental activities like beach clean-up, popular in schools, could also explain the longer hours and the occasional nature of volunteering for this group. On the other hand, young working adults have a greater preference for professional and managerial services and skilled trade services. An example could be a volunteering project to help a non-profit organisation (NPO) on specific aspects of their organisation, such as implementing communication plans, which could be undertaken on a regular basis but in relatively short hours. This could reflect their interest in using their workplace skills to help, and perhaps influence, the cause they support.

• **TABLE 2: TOP 5 VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES AMONG VOLUNTEERS**

	National Rate	Aged 15-34	Aged 15-24	Aged 25-34
1.	Human services (48%)	Human services (44%)	Human services (56%)	Human services (31%); Fundraising (31%)
2.	Fundraising (17%)	Fundraising (26%)	Fundraising (21%); Education related (21%)	General and administrative (14%)
3.	General and administrative (15%)	Education related (14%); Volunteer coordination (14%)	Volunteer coordination (20%)	Health related (13%)
4.	Green efforts (14%)	Green efforts (11%)	Green efforts (16%)	Professional and managerial services (12%); Skilled trade services (12%)
5.	Education related (13%); Volunteer coordination (13%)			

Volunteering channels

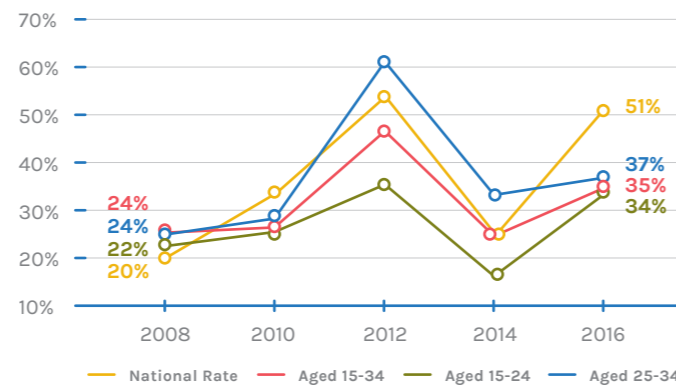
More people in Singapore are providing direct help to the beneficiaries or the cause that they support instead of going through the conventional route of serving through formal organisations, such as NPOs, companies and others. We term this "informal" volunteering. The informal volunteerism rate among volunteers increased from 20% in 2008 to 51% in 2016, seeing a rebound to the 2012 rate after a dip in 2014. This is also mirrored among youths, where informal volunteerism rate among youth

volunteers increased from 24% in 2008 to 35% in 2016 (NVPC, 2016) (Chart 3).

Informal volunteerism may be triggered by national events. The passing of the late Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, for example, brought out the best of Singaporeans when individuals and business owners provided assistance to those queuing to pay their last respects. The haze period also brought about a moment of solidarity when people from all walks of life came together to give out masks to strangers in need. Informal volunteerism could also be a response to pressing social needs, as evident in direct appeals for help by and for individuals in need, commonly done through social media.

On the other hand, the rate of informal volunteerism has generally been higher among the older young working adults than the school-age youths (Chart 3). This may again reflect their differing life circumstances where the young working adults could have more capacity and resources to start or organise initiatives to provide direct help.

• **CHART 3: INFORMAL VOLUNTEERISM RATE AMONG VOLUNTEERS OVER TIME**



Another way to understand volunteering channels is to look at who the person volunteers with. According to IGS 2016, youths are generally similar with the general population in terms of who they volunteer with, from friends as the most popular option, to colleagues, to family, to neighbours and then relatives. However, it is important to note that a smaller proportion of youths (19%) volunteer alone as compared to the general population (27%) (Table 3). This implies that the social aspect of volunteering could be more important to youths than other groups (NVPC, 2016).

As we compare school-age youths with young working adults, we realise that the social aspect of volunteering could be even more important to young working adults. 15% of young working adults volunteer alone while 22% of school-age youths volunteer alone (Table 3).

Furthermore, young working adults volunteer with a more diverse group of people as compared to the school-age youths. Most school-age youths tend to volunteer with friends (71%), with a smaller proportion volunteering with colleagues and family. On the other hand, young working adults volunteer with a range of people, with almost half volunteering with colleagues and friends, one-third with family, about one in seven volunteering with neighbours and a much smaller proportion with relatives (Table 3). This suggests that young working adults can be engaged through a wider social network than school-age youths.

By diving into the age sub-groups, we also uncover that the workplace can be a good gateway to engage young working adults. Almost half of the young working adults volunteer with their colleagues (48%); this is much higher than among the general population (29%) (Table 3). Also, more among the young working adults volunteer through their employers (36%) as compared to the general population (19%) (Table 4).

• **TABLE 3: PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED WITH**

National Rate	Aged 15-34	Aged 15-24	Aged 25-34
Friends (41%)	Friends (58%)	Friends (71%)	Colleagues (48%)
Colleagues (29%)	Colleagues (28%)	I went alone (22%)	Friends (45%)
I went alone (27%)	I went alone (19%)	Colleagues (9%)	Family (30%)
Family (24%)	Family (16%)	Family (3%)	I went alone (15%)
Neighbours (5%)	Neighbours (7%)		Neighbours (14%)
Relatives (2%)	Relatives (2%)		Relatives (4%)
Others (1%)			

• **TABLE 4: VOLUNTEERED THROUGH THEIR EMPLOYERS**

	2016
National rate	19%
Aged 15-34	19%
Aged 15-24	3%
Aged 25-34	36%

Motivations and barriers

Generally, the top motivations and barriers for the two sub-groups of youths are similar. Youth volunteers are motivated by bigger goals – to make the world a better place (17%) and to become a better person (17%). They also see volunteering as part of a broader effort of promoting important human values in society (12%) (NVPC, 2015) (Table 5).

• **TABLE 5: TOP 5 MOTIVATIONS AMONG YOUTH VOLUNTEERS**

1.	I helped make the world a better place	17%
	Volunteering helped me become a better person	17%
2.	I helped promote important human values in society	12%
3.	It helped establish a good example for the next generation	9%
4.	Volunteering helped to strengthen bonds within the community	7%
	Volunteering helped me put my time to good use	7%
5.	Volunteering helped me develop or hone my skills	6%

Conversely, lack of time is cited as the top barrier to volunteering among 92% of youths who are former volunteers, defined as those who used to volunteer but have stopped doing so for the past one year. Closely related to this is tiredness, possibly due to juggling various commitments, which affected 24% of former volunteers (NVPC, 2014) (Table 6).

• **TABLE 6: TOP 5 BARRIERS AMONG YOUTH FORMER VOLUNTEERS**

1.	No time	92%
2.	Tired/burnout	24%
3.	Too much responsibility in volunteer work	9%
4.	Lack of guidance/training	7%
	Lack of family support	7%
5.	Meaningless/bored	6%

Most non-volunteers (78%) also found time – or the lack of it – to be a deterring factor. Apart from time, lack of awareness and knowledge seems to be another barrier. 24% of non-volunteers said that they have not been approached and 22% said they have not thought about it, compared to 17% who say that they have no interest. Youth organisations and NPOs could capitalise on this by organising outreach activities to youth non-volunteers to generate awareness, create stronger interest, and provide easily accessible information (NVPC, 2014) (Table 7).

• **TABLE 7: TOP 5 BARRIERS AMONG YOUTH NON-VOLUNTEERS**

1.	No time	78%
2.	I have not been approached	24%
3.	I have not thought about it	22%
4.	Boring/no interest	17%
5.	Don't know where and how to get involved/I need someone to organise an activity for me	16%

A Snapshot of the Current Landscape

In the previous section, we have established that youth volunteers are a unique group with volunteering preferences that are quite distinct from the general population. Comparing the data over time, youth volunteers today are also slightly different from their predecessors, signalling an outlook shift among the Millennials.

Youth volunteers today display a healthy interest in volunteerism, with higher volunteerism rate relative to the general population, but engage in volunteering activities with relative less frequency and regularity. School-aged youths are less regular in doing their volunteering activities, but spend longer hours, while young working adults serve more regularly but contribute shorter hours. They are interested in a wide range of causes and activities, with school-age youths more partial towards green efforts, and young working adults preferring skills-based volunteerism.

We also note that youth see volunteering as a social activity. Across age groups, youth prefer to volunteer with people in their social network, with school-age youths almost exclusively preferring to do so with their friends, and young working adults being more open with their companions, but slanting towards their colleagues and friends – possibly for practical reasons. This presents us with opportunities to engage young working adults with volunteering opportunities at their workplaces, which would make it easier for them to volunteer with their colleagues and apply their skills for causes they are interested in. For school-age youths, schools and youth organisations continue to be promising avenues to work with to encourage youths to volunteer with their group of friends. Taking advantage of the widespread digital penetration, this offline effort can be complemented with an outreach via various social media, especially on mobile.

Lastly, informal volunteerism is on the rise among youth volunteers. This could be a reflection of a growing sense of individual empowerment among Millennials and a desire to make direct, tangible change in society on their own, without going through the conventional route of NPOs. Youth tend to be idealistic in nature, gravitating towards volunteering for reasons bigger than themselves such as making positive changes in society and the

world at large, as well as leaving a good legacy and values for the next generation. Despite this, many are deterred by practical constraints like lack of time and feeling tired juggling their various commitments. It is worth exploring ways to make volunteering more bite-sized and more accessible for them to lower this barrier.

It is clear that the present trends in the youth volunteerism landscape are aligned with, informed by and could be propelled by macro forces around them. The freelancing culture enables flexibility in youths' use of time. The sharing economy enables youths to use their resources to the fullest, sharing their current under-utilised resources with those in need of them. Both of these allow youths to weave volunteering easily into their personal and professional lives. This thus makes giving of time and resources more accessible to youths and helps with barriers like lack of time and changing priorities. These are further propelled by the digital disruption, where digital advancement has helped with the ease of outreach through the likes of social media, to enabling the sharing economy to take off, to even transforming how volunteering can be done with automation, virtual reality and augmented reality in the future.

The rise of individual empowerment, freelancing culture and the sharing economy will continue to gain momentum going forward, while digital disruption could provide unprecedented game-changing opportunities.

While the way youth volunteer may largely remain the same, we can expect youth volunteerism in the future to become (1) more direct and ground-up in approach, (2) more social in nature, (3) flexible and modular, and (4) shift towards digital spaces. Already a wide range of 'new' volunteering trends are emerging at the margins, such as micro-volunteerism, on-demand help provision, crowdfunding, giving circles, ground-up movements and social enterprises to name a few (NVPC, 2017).

In the next section, we would like to put a spotlight on an emerging trend which has gained much popularity among youth in recent years: the ground-up movement.



Whither Youth Volunteerism in Singapore?: The Rise of Ground-Up Movements

Key characteristics

Ground-up movements — also referred to as ‘ground-up initiatives’ or ‘affinity groups’ — is an umbrella term that covers a gamut of initiatives. It is generally understood as a form of active citizenry where members of the community come together to start an initiative to address a cause they care about. Friends who come together to deliver groceries and hot meals to low-income seniors in rental flats, students from school co-curricular activities groups organising ad-hoc fundraising concert for particular beneficiaries, and a young person initiating social media advocacy for overseas refugees, are all considered to have initiated ground-up movements.

The diverse nature of ground-up movements makes it challenging to pin down an exact definition, but we could postulate several key characteristics. **Firstly**, ground-up movements are generally not-for-profit voluntary projects. **Secondly**, like a typical start-up, they are self-initiated by individuals or groups of friends, nimble in their approach, informally structured, and may or may not grow to become registered organisations. **Thirdly**, they provide niche interventions in specific areas that have not been adequately addressed, often doing so in unconventional ways.

How then do we make sense of ground-up movements vis-à-vis the existing support and services rendered by the more than 2,000 registered charities in Singapore? Would more hands on deck result in overlap, and ultimately inefficiency and redundancy, in services provided?

We argue that registered charities and ground-up movements could complement each other in the same giving ecosystem by occupying different ends of the same needs spectrum. As Singapore society becomes more complex, the diversity of needs in the society arguably points towards a long-tail distribution model. The Long Tail theory, postulated by Anderson (2008) and often used in the business and marketing sense, argues that service providers are shifting their focus away from a small number of ‘mainstream’

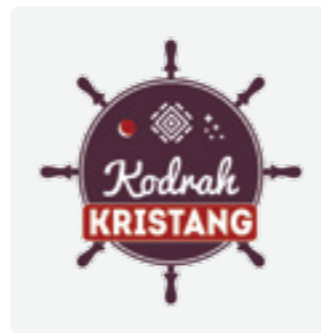
products or customers, to serving a larger number of ‘niche’ products or customers.

In the social sector context, the peak of the curve represents needs of ‘conventional’ beneficiaries such as the elderly, children, youths and low-income families, whose needs are catered to by registered charities. The tail end of the curve is accounted for by the less conventional, specific areas of need which are plugged (or discovered) by ground-up movements.

All these characteristics do not necessarily coexist in a single initiative, and the following case studies in Singapore attempt to illustrate the diverse nature of ground-up movements.

Case study #1: Kodrah Kristang

Kodrah Kristang is a youth-led initiative to revitalise an endangered Portuguese-Eurasian language unique to the Southeast Asian region. Language preservation, notwithstanding such a specific minority language, is not a cause that NPOs would typically adopt. The founders of Kodrah Kristang, either native speakers or advanced learners of Kristang themselves, started this as a passion project that leverage on their unique skill-sets to revive this unique language.



Their efforts take on multiple strategies and approaches, which they assign to different members of the core team based on the job fit the task requires. This includes having a member, who is undergoing National Institute of Education training to become a teacher, work on the curriculum of their Kristang language classes and helm the bulk of the actual teaching during classes. Another core member who is a linguistics graduate worked on developing their Kristang Online Dictionary, and another who is interested in the Arts, animation and storytelling led the development of their first professionally developed Kristang board game.

Within a short period of 2 years, they have grown from a 6-man team organising free Kristang lessons for public, to drafting up a 30-year-old revitalisation plan under the guidance of The Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang). They have already staged their first Kristang Language Festival, where they launched the aforementioned dictionary as well as the first Kristang board game for people to learn about Kristang heritage. Spoken by less than 100 native speakers in Singapore just a few years ago, they have now reached to about 5,000 people locally who are keen to learn more about Kristang.

Case study #2: Park \$2 Project

Ground-up movements could take place virtually, and in many cases, online is the only space they exist in. With Singapore having one of the highest social media penetration rates in the world, social media can be a force to do good and galvanise giving efforts among the public.

One example of this would be the ‘PARK \$2 Project’ Facebook Group. PARK stands for Project Act of Random Kindness, where they believe in “changing the world through acts of random kindness, one at a time.” The group’s efforts focus on leveraging on the multiplier effect, and doing more with less by pooling everyone’s resources to support ‘random’ good causes.

The group of volunteers who manage the Facebook Group frequently share messages about kindness on the webpage. The Group has become a gathering place where people looking to contribute used (and even brand new) items for a good cause come to find others who might need them. Apart from that, the administrator of the Group also responds actively to people

seeking help with resources, often tagging other ground-up leaders or individuals to help or to give advice. The Group also shares ad-hoc volunteer events on their page to gather volunteer support for organisers as well as provides opportunities for members who are looking for ad-hoc activities. With the power of social media, they have attracted more than 12,000 members who are interested to look for opportunities and ways to give.

Case study #3: Project Goodwill Aid

Project Goodwill Aid focuses on distributing groceries and essential items to low-income families and elderly living alone in rented flats. The project and events organised are labour-intensive and requires customised intervention such as collecting medicine for certain low-income families or seniors. The founder of Project Goodwill Aid used to struggle in balancing her full-time job with managing an initiative that required such heavy commitment. At one point, she even thought of leaving her job to dedicate her entire time towards her initiative.

Corporate support, especially the strong support of her boss, changed the situation. Her current supervisor understands her commitment to Project Goodwill Aid and has given her extended time off during lunch hours to work on her project if she needs to. They even actively help to promote what she is doing amongst other stakeholders to draw more support for her charity projects. The company sees its support of its own employees in their voluntary projects as a form of giving back as well. This illustrates how ground-up movements could be very much in tandem with the realities of working life, even as we contemplate the changing nature of work in the near future.



What Could be Done to Encourage Youth Volunteerism through Ground-Up Movements?

The case studies highlight the diverse characteristics of ground-up movements, such as skills-based volunteerism, digital promises, and corporate as a gateway to giving, and illustrate how they could intersect with the key giving trends discussed earlier. Ground-up movements could be an effective way to engage youths to actively contribute to society. However, as an informal non-profit group seeking to address a niche need in society, these initiatives face multiple barriers, primarily in the areas of funding, volunteer recruitment and capability development.

Funding is a perennial concern, be it in the beginning to get the initiative off the ground, or when it seeks to scale up to increase impact. As ground-up movements tend to be spontaneous, founders who want to bring their initiatives to life quickly would usually tap into their personal funds or source for support through their personal network. Others may choose to apply for available grants offered by public agencies. While there are increasingly more funds available to support such ground-up initiatives, each has unique eligibility criteria, funding quantum, application process and fund disbursement processes. Such massive amounts of information could overwhelm potential applicants, especially those who are unfamiliar with the landscape.

It is also challenging to recruit volunteers to support or sustain ground-up movements, especially those that are event – or activity-based. Recruitment is usually limited to the founders' immediate circle of friends or family, where success is dependent upon the strength of their social network and sphere of influence.

Furthermore, youths looking to start a ground-up movement often need advice in the technical know-how of event planning, marketing and publicity, and regulatory guidelines such as permit application processes for their events and activities. Capability building on tactical and strategic areas of growth could help founders to achieve the impact they envision for their initiatives.

While we see a growth of individual empowerment and an increasing interest in social concern among youths, more could be done to lower the barrier of entry for youths who would like to initiate ground-up movements. Various stakeholders could support ground-up movements' fundraising activities, providing support or mentorship, and provide capability building.

To help new players navigate the landscape, organisations which support youth work and are familiar with the space could help them identify the types of grants, linking them with subject matter experts, or refer them to organisations or corporates to explore potential partnerships. Education institutions and corporates could include ground-up movements as possible partners for their service learning projects and corporate giving activities respectively, instead of restricting this to 'established' non-profits. On top of helping ground-up movements with their volunteer recruitment, this could broaden students' and working professionals' exposure to various forms and types of social action initiatives, and perhaps even inspire them to start their own ground-up initiatives.

Way Forward

We cannot divorce the present landscape of youth volunteerism in Singapore from the bigger changes happening at the social and global level. Macro forces such as the rise of individual empowerment, the changing nature of work, and the disruptive potentials of digital have led to more youths stepping up and exploring new ways to volunteer that fit into their current lifestyle marked by greater mobility and flexibility. Inevitably, this would change how giving could be done in Singapore.

Ground-up movements feed very well into this scenario, with their youthful appeal as nimble entities that are close to the ground and are constantly searching for innovative ways to improve the status quo, be it through creative ways of addressing conventional issues, or exploring new ways presented by online and digital media. Ground-up movements could be a viable form of informal giving for youths, which complement existing charities in the giving ecosystem. As this trend continues to gain popularity among youths in Singapore, organisations supporting youth work can build this momentum further by recognising, encouraging and advocating for more youths to proactively start their own initiatives for good.

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Vision 2030: Empowering Youth to Live Better through Sport

Sport Singapore







Abstract

In the past five years, Sport Singapore (SportSG) has been changing the way people play and perceive sport as a result of the release of the new master plan for sport in 2012, *Vision 2030: Live Better Through Sport*, to recast sport as a strategy to reap social dividends and support nation building.

Through new initiatives such as ActiveSG, SportCares, Team Nila and Singapore Sports Institute, SportSG has created avenues and opportunities for youths to develop both their practical capabilities and social capital through sport.

Results of the 2016 National Sports Participation Survey show that recent efforts have led to strengthening beliefs among people about the value of sport to the nation: even sedentary respondents believe strongly that sport can have a unifying influence on Singapore. There is also an overall rising trend seen in regular sport participation by youths over the past five years (from 50% in 2011 to 63% in 2016) due to a more comprehensive approach to programming and activity design. The composition of Team Nila volunteers also shows a good percentage of involvement from youths.

• **TABLE 1: PROFILE OF TEAM NILA VOLUNTEERS**
– BREAKDOWN BY AGE

	 AGE < 20	 AGE 20-34	 AGE 35-54	 AGE 55+
Team Nila	49%	30%	16%	5%
National Population	22%	21%	32%	25%

Source: Yearbook of Statistics 2016, Singapore Department of Statistics

Background on Vision 2030: Live Better Through Sport

In mid-2012, SportSG published a new long-term master plan for sport after eight months of widespread public consultation involving the public sector, the private sector, grassroots leaders, special interest groups, national sports associations and impassioned individuals from all walks of life.

The master plan, *Vision 2030: Live Better Through Sport*, outlined operational strategies for sport management and development through 2030, but it also redefined the vision, mission and purpose for sport in the nation and for SportSG itself.

Vision 2030 recast sport as a strategic resource for Singapore. Thus, instead of focusing on developing strategies to promote sport, *Vision 2030* was designed to serve the broader national priorities, including a focus on developing the children and youth of Singapore. SportSG was no longer working solely to get more youths to play sport: we wanted to activate sport for social good. This change in strategic purpose had broad implications for the

way SportSG has developed its venues and programming for the youth of the nation (13 to 35 year olds) as well as for pre-teens and children.

Through *Vision 2030*, SportSG continues to enable greater health and wellness among Singaporeans, to build a more inclusive and integrated society and to inspire a shared spirit of pride in our national identity. In advancing these national traits and norms through sport, we move our youths closer to becoming whom we wish to be: A caring people. A cohesive society. A confident nation.

Strategic themes of Vision 2030

- **Future Ready through Sport**

Through well-designed programmes, clinics and activities, sport would help prepare people and communities for an increasingly complex future. Through sport, they would learn good values, healthy habits and essential life skills.

- **Sport as a National Language**

Sport is a language of connection. Whether people are playing or watching from the stands, sport provides a common language for people to be inspired together and to celebrate our Singaporean identity.

- **Sport without Boundaries**

Everyone is given opportunities and access to enjoy sports, regardless of skill, age, ability, education or financial status. Innovation and modified sport will enable all to play.

- **Organising for Success**

SportSG is the national agency for sport; but it is through partnerships with other organisations that we can create a holistic, efficacious ecosystem to serve our people and communities.



Channels for Youth Participation in Sports

According to the 2016 National Sports Participation Survey¹, the average sports participation rate has risen significantly over the past five years, with 61% of the total population now participating at least once a week compared with 42% in 2011. Among youths aged 15 to 34, the weekly participation rate was slightly higher at 63% compared with 50% in 2011. The improved participation rates are expected to remain on an uptick as new strategic programming continues to produce desired results. Among the most relevant channels being used to motivate youths to lead more active lives through sport are:

- **ActiveSG**, our national movement for sport and physical activity, was formed through our revitalised network of venues and innovative programmes. Tapping on the basic human need to belong, ActiveSG has created environments where people can come together with family and friends, as well as complete strangers, to enjoy themselves through sport. Since its launch in April 2014, ActiveSG has signed up 1.2 million members through its new membership technology, with youths making up over 50% of the membership. It is a cornerstone of work being done to create a nation who is "Future Ready Through Sport". In the past year, ActiveSG has launched 9 academies and clubs to introduce children and youths to a wider variety of sport. Another 16 academies are in development. With a promise of "Sport and Much More", ActiveSG has developed holistic programmes to develop a participant's physical literacy as well as their values and character. As these children and youths mature through this new system for sport engagement, they will be able to enjoy lifelong participation in sport. ActiveSG has become an essential partner to ministries, public agencies and corporates who seek to use sport to achieve their desired outcomes.
- Designed specifically to use sport for social good, the **SportCares Foundation** focuses on providing opportunities and access for Singapore's vulnerable individuals and communities. Previously, SportSG had no channel to use sport for philanthropy or to reach people who love sport but had been largely underserved.

Four years later, we now have prosocial sport programmes and a solid understanding of "Sport Without Boundaries" to empower impoverished and at-risk children and youths. SportCares has been filling an important gap for low-income children and youths who typically cannot afford to pay the fees charged by commercial sports vendors, and at-risk youths who are often turned away due to behavioural problems. To date, SportCares has touched the lives of more than 12,000 children and youths through its prosocial sport programmes, with the greatest focus on youths aged 14 to 20 years old. They have thrived in SportCares because the programmes and activities gave them a place to belong to and a new valued sense of identity and even youths who have gone on to National Service remain in contact with SportCares staff. To facilitate greater connection and integration with the community, youths who wish to remain in the sports programmes are asked to perform 40 hours of community service a year. In the past year, SportCares has also extended our reach to provide programming and dedicated gyms for people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

- **Team Nila**, our movement for volunteerism, began with a big idea: train and treat volunteers with respect and reward them with opportunities to serve community and nation, and to present varied occasions for social mixing. Volunteers came from all walks of life, all races and all ages when SportSG issued its first call for volunteer training in early 2014 in preparation for the 28th SEA Games and the 8th ASEAN Para Games (APG). Of 14,000 current Team Nila volunteers, 49% of the volunteers are under the age of 20 years old and an additional 30% are between 20 to 35 years old. Beyond the SEA Games and APG, where youths got to be part of an historic and national event, youths continue to volunteer with SportSG and other social causes in Singapore. As they serve, they continue to learn new skills, which helps to grow the capability and capacity in the sport ecosystem. Moreover, their volunteerism brings them face to face with people from different parts of Singapore, different schools, different religions and different socio-economic backgrounds. Together, they bring energy and experience

Note

¹ The 2016 National Sports Participation Survey was conducted throughout 2016 among 9,179 Singaporeans or Singapore Residents aged 13 years and older; some 2,877 were youths in the 15 to 34 year old category. In this chapter, figures related to youths refer to data from these 2,877 respondents.

to new projects and events and a deepening sense of ownership for growing Singapore's sporting culture. Team Nila's broadening efforts to serve the community demonstrate how "Organising For Success" can produce greater impact for Singapore.

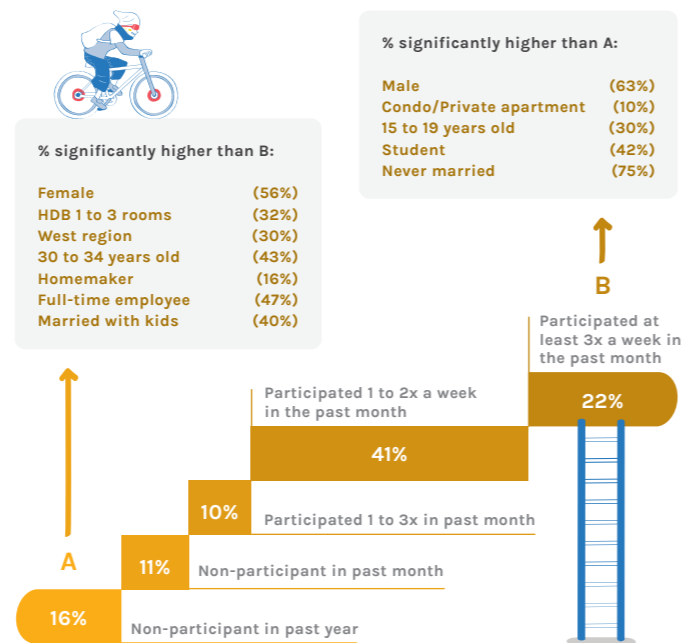
- **Singapore Sports Institute (SSI)** provides comprehensive, structured high performance support, including sport science and medicine, for athletes pursuing sport excellence. The days of focusing solely on training have evolved to developing the "Village Around the Athlete" – a holistic approach that enhances their psyche through the daily training environment in addition to nurturing their confidence for life after competitive sport. An estimated 90% of our high-performance athletes (approximately 1,150 athletes) are under the age of 35. Younger athletes (still in secondary school, junior college or university) now benefit from the new National Youth Sports Institute (NYSI) in addition to the support provided through the SSI. NYSI supports athletes through the Ministry of Education, institutes of higher learning and the National Sports Associations. The development of young high-performance youth athletes links to the Vision 2030 theme of "Sport as National Language" and their stories can inspire their peer groups with their resilience as they overcome challenges in the pursuit of their dreams, and motivate them to stay active and adopt healthy lifestyles. Heading into the 2017 SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games, the 2018 Asian Games and the next Olympic cycle, talented athletes are receiving more concentrated support than ever before.

- Coaches are essential force multiplier roles in developing a strong connection between sports participation and the ethos and skills for life. **CoachSG**, a coaching academy under the SSI, seeks to develop the technical competencies and leadership qualities of coaches – and work with their employers to develop an attractive career pathway. An enhanced national registry of coaches will be introduced in 2017, requiring a continual commitment to professional upgrading by coaches. For children and youths, CoachSG has developed the Game for Life framework and playbook for character development that is endorsed by local schools, the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the International Olympic Committee. Going forward, CoachSG will be working with companies to use sport for team development at the corporate level. Through the multiplier effect of CoachSG, the youth of Singapore will receive regularly reinforced teaching in values that are good for life.

Sport Participation Trends among Youths

From the recent 2016 National Sports Participation Survey, 73% of youths reported participating in sport or recreational physical activities at least once in the past month; about 6 in 10 of the sport-playing youths participated at least once a week generating a weekly participation rate of 63% (see **Chart 1**). Among younger youths aged 15 to 19, this rate was substantially higher at 73%. Findings from the National Youth Survey 2016 similarly showed a strong interest in sports amongst youths. When it comes to social group participation, sports-related groups were found to be the most popular amongst respondents aged 15 to 34, with 27% reporting having participated in a sports-related social group in the past year. Sports-related groups are consistently one of the top three social groups that young people across all age groups are engaged in.

• **CHART 1: SPORTS PARTICIPATION LEVEL & DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AMONG 15-34 YEAR OLD SEGMENT**



In the 2016 National Sports Participation survey, a love of sport was cited as their #1 motivation to play, followed by a desire to be physically, mentally and emotionally well. Of the youths surveyed who had not participated in the past year, half of the respondents claimed to have no interest in sports. The remaining half cited a lack of time due to responsibilities at work and home.

Among the least active youths are 30 to 34 year old working mothers, living in HDB 1 to 3 room flats; this suggests that work and primary childcare responsibilities limit the time available for sport and physical exercise. To address this de facto barrier to participation, ActiveSG has been developing programmes for parents to do sport with their children. Similarly, SportCares is working with Salvation Army to run fundamental movement skills classes for parents and children, aiming to teach physical literacy and entrench more active living within the families. In the

next two years, SportSG anticipates a strong, steady increase in the participation of women in sport and other forms of physical activities. We believe these programmes will resonate with families looking to strengthen the bonds between children, parents and grandparents.

Male students (15 to 19 years old) are the most active in sport. For males in this age group, team sports remain the top choice (see **Table 2 and 3**). Due to the size of the teams, football and basketball offer the best opportunities for social integration and inclusion. Youths commonly play organised team sports in school or informal pickup games in the estate. Riding on this preference, SportCares runs a multi-venue football programme called Saturday Night Lights, where the tournament teams comprise players from different venues. These mash-up teams also serve to reinforce social mixing, teamwork, respect and communication.

• **TABLE 2: USUAL COMPANION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY GENDER & LIFE STAGE**

	Male Youths		Female Youths	
	Student	Full-time Employee	Student	Full-time Employee
	Base: 673	Base: 709	Base: 453	Base: 496
Participate alone	28%	43%	34%	54%
Participate with family member	7%	15%	20%	28%
Participate with friend/colleague	77%	57%	61%	28%
Friend/colleague is of a different race	80%	73%	68%	58%

• **TABLE 3: TOP 10 SPORTS PARTICIPATED IN BY GENDER & LIFE STAGE**

Male Youths		Female Youths	
Student	Full-time Employee	Student	Full-time Employee
Base: 673	Base: 709	Base: 453	Base: 496
Jogging/Running (22%)	Jogging/Running (31%)	Jogging/Running (29%)	Jogging/Running (29%)
Football/Soccer (21%)	Football/Soccer (18%)	Badminton (14%)	Walking (17%)
Basketball (19%)	Badminton (11%)	Swimming (14%)	Swimming (13%)
Badminton (11%)	Other workout* (11%)	Walking (10%)	Yoga (8%)
Other workout* (10%)	Basketball (9%)	Netball (8%)	Other workout* (8%)
Swimming (8%)	Swimming (9%)	Basketball (7%)	Bicycle Touring (5%)
Bicycle Touring (5%)	Walking (9%)	Dance Sports (5%)	Badminton (5%)
Weightlifting (4%)	Weightlifting (5%)	Other workout* (5%)	Dance Sports (4%)
Frisbee (3%)	Bicycle Touring (5%)	Bicycle Touring (4%)	Treadmill (4%)
Walking (3%)	Bowling (4%)	Volleyball (3%)	Weightlifting (2%)

Note
*Other workout or exercises with equipment in Gym/Home Gym/Indoor or Outdoor Fitness Corner

Even as students, females already demonstrate a preference to exercise alone compared to males (see **Table 3**). Females also tend to indicate a preference of solo sports with a low barrier of entry, for example, Jogging/Running, Walking and Swimming are within the top 5 sports for both female students and working youths (see **Table 2**). The ActiveSG clubs and academies will endeavour to encourage more team sport participation by providing more opportunities to train and play. SportSG is also looking to the national sports association to use their networks to encourage girls and women to remain active in team sports. Singapore's enduring strength in netball and the rise of the national women's rugby team shows our potential to perform well in the region and inspire another generation of competitive women athletes.

As youths transit to the corporate world, they make adjustments to their choice of sport. Running or jogging ranks 1st, likely due to convenience. It can be done alone or with friends, anywhere, anytime. To continue to encourage participation in team sports, ActiveSG is working with the business sector to form corporate

leagues. Not only would such leagues help maintain employee fitness, the sport can be utilised for team building and corporate bonding. As the leagues take root and grow, we hope to see a retention of interest in team sports by youths in their 20s and 30s.

Of great encouragement overall has been the evidence of impact of the new strategic initiatives on the significance that people attach to sports in their lives. It is increasingly clear that sport can play a strong role in developing a culture of social inclusion and integration. The findings on belief in the value of sport for nation building were universally strong – but strongest among student youths (see **Table 4**). Even people who didn't lead active sport lives believed in the power of sport to do good for Singapore. With prudent planning and open dialogues with youths about their aspirations for the future, we can create programmes that better serve their needs and maintain their beliefs. Team Nila, with its commitment to public service and social mixing, would be an ideal channel through which to further develop this spirit of optimism among the youth.

• **TABLE 4: RESPONSES ON THE VALUE OF SPORTS FOR NATION BUILDING**

	Male Youths		Female Youths	
	Student	Full-time Employee	Student	Full-time Employee
	Base: 673	Base: 709	Base: 453	Base: 496
Sports can bring people together regardless of background	92%	89%	93%	89%
Watching or participating in sports events can promote community bonding	84%	85%	86%	81%
I believe sports and physical exercise provide an ideal platform for social mixing and integration	87%	84%	85%	84%

Looking Forward

With the release of Vision 2030, SportSG began to chart a new journey for sport and the nation for the next two decades. Since SportCares launched its first prosocial football programme for vulnerable youths in March 2013, and ActiveSG received its first member in 2014, SportSG has increasingly activated sport for social development: health and wellness, a caring and cohesive society and a confident, resilient people and nation. The full impact of the Vision 2030 initiatives have yet to be felt and measured – and more innovation is coming. Active Health, a new concept that

has been run on a trial basis among SportSG staff, will empower citizens with the information, technology and people support to take more responsibility for their health so that they can embrace and enjoy life's most significant moments at every life stages. For youths who are already in the workforce, Active Health will help them retain the level of fitness and physical activity they experienced in school. For working mothers, Active Health will help them balance their lives by tracking their progress and providing them with timely advice on how they can live better through sport.



Youth & Development



Educational Pathways, Youth Wellbeing & Outlook

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Abstract

Focusing on students aged 15 to 18 in the National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016, this chapter examines the role that educational paths play in mediating the effects of youths' parental and personal background on their developmental outcomes. These include outcomes related to wellbeing such as self-esteem, resilience, practical and relationship stressors, outlook-related outcomes such as educational aspiration and future outlook on family, happiness and money. Four key insights were found. One is the clear advantage of having educated or higher socioeconomic status (SES) parents on youth development. The second insight is that part of the relationship between SES and the youth outcomes is through parents placing their children in more desired educational paths, and resulting in the early settlement of aspirations by education paths. Third, the Integrated Programme (IP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme appears to have become a premier pathway that yields not only superior academic outcomes, but also privileged developmental effects. Fourth, the Normal/ITE path might be shedding some of its stigma, and students in this path seem to be gaining confidence in themselves and their future. These findings suggest a continued role for education and youth policies in promoting social equity for the benefit of youths' wellbeing and future.

Introduction

As youths progress through the education system and spend an increasing amount of time in school, the spheres of influence affecting their developmental outcomes increasingly extend beyond the family to the school.

In terms of educational pathways, several studies in the European context found that early ability tracking in schools leads to social segregation and inequality of educational and occupational outcomes (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2005; Hindriks, Verschelde, Rayp, & Schoors, 2010; Triventi, 2013). Besides youths' socioeconomic outcomes, other research have also investigated the effects of a differentiated education system on psychological outcomes. In Belgium, for instance, students' self-esteem was found to be lower in technical and vocational schools than in general schools (Van Houtte, 2005). In Singapore, Liu, Wang, and Parkins (2005) examined Singaporean students' academic self-concept and found that students from the Normal Academic (NA) stream had a more negative perception of their academic effort and competence than students from the Express stream. However, the longitudinal study also highlighted that the latter group's academic self-concept decreased over time, while the reverse was true for NA students. In their analysis of educational pathways and youth development using National Youth Survey (NYS) 2013, Ng & Cheong (2015) found that parents' educational advantage exerts a large influence on the youths' educational aspiration, self-esteem, relational competence, overseas learning experience, and stress over finances, but not organisational competence and stress over studies and future uncertainty. These effects were partially mediated by education pathways.

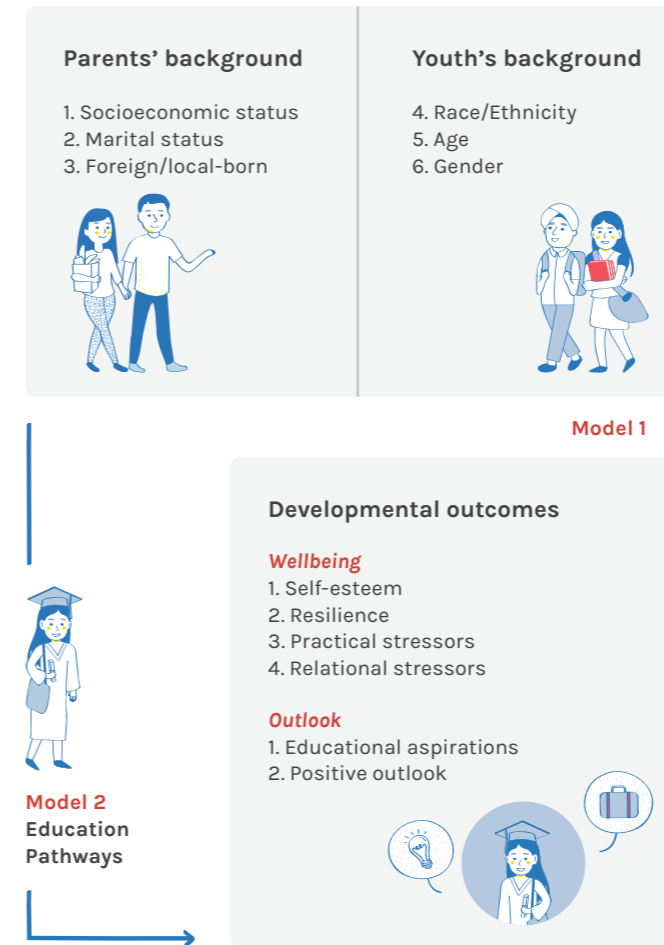
Understanding how the different educational pathways within the Singapore system lead to different educational and psychosocial outcomes for youths is important in ascertaining their impact on social inequalities as a whole. This chapter examines the role that educational pathways play in mediating the effects of youths'

parental and personal background on various developmental outcomes for students aged 15 to 18. It builds on the previous analysis using NYS 2013, which had focused on educational aspiration, self-esteem, organisational and relational competence, overseas learning experience, and practical and relationship stressors. With new variables introduced in NYS 2016, the present analysis focuses our research question on wellbeing and future outlook, thus dropping competence and learning experience, and adding resilience and future expectations. In Resiliency Theory, the concept of resilience provides a strengths-based approach to understanding youths' positive development despite risks (Zimmerman, 2013). Other research shows that being optimistic and having a positive outlook help adolescents to cope with stress (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986; Scheier & Carver, 1992) and improve their life satisfaction (Wu, Tsai, & Chen, 2009). Thus, this chapter's interest in educational aspiration, self-esteem, resilience, stressors, and outlook provides an examination of the factors associated with a range of current and aspirational wellbeing outcomes.

The mediating role of educational paths between family socioeconomic status (SES) and youth outcomes is studied through a two-step multivariate process. First, in Model 1, the set of background variables are regressed on each of the youth outcomes without the educational pathways. Then, in Model 2, the set of variables representing the educational pathways is added. A significant decrease in the coefficients of the background variables suggests that educational pathway significantly mediates the effect of that background variable.

A pictorial depiction of the empirical model tested in this chapter is provided in Figure 1. For variables that are rank ordered (namely education aspiration, practical stressors, relationship stressors, and positive outlook), ordered probit regression is used. For self-esteem and resilience, which are treated as variables on a continuous scale, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is used.

• FIGURE 1: TWO-STEP EMPIRICAL MODEL OF DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES



All analyses control for the same set of background variables, which include parents' socioeconomic status, marital status, and immigrant status; and youths' ethnicity, age, and gender. Before the above two-step regression analysis, the background variables are regressed on educational pathways to understand the relationship between the background variables and educational pathways. As educational pathways are in five non-ranked categories, multinomial logistic regression is used.

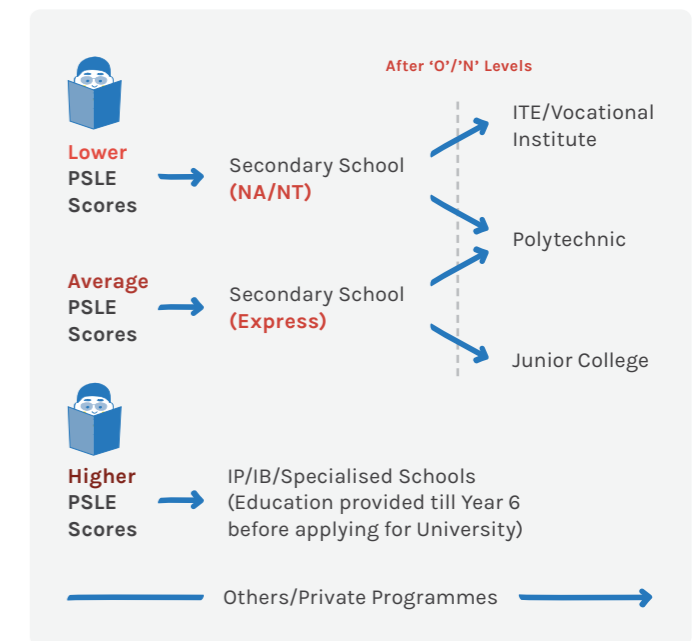
Data & Methodology

Survey data and educational pathways

The study focuses on youths aged 15 to 18 in the NYS 2016. The age range was chosen to represent the various educational pathways of school-going age youths as illustrated in Figure 2.

The most common pathway to a local public university (and one which can perhaps be taken as the default) for most students is the group that enters the secondary school Express stream in a standard programme and then progresses to junior college (JC) after the GCE 'O' Level Examination taken at the end of Secondary 4. Another group of students with lower average Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results enter the Normal Academic (NA) or Normal Technical (NT) streams. This group typically goes on to the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) after the GCE 'N' Level taken at the end of Secondary 4 or 5.

• FIGURE 2: EDUCATION PATHWAYS



Besides JC and ITE, a large group of students also enter polytechnic after the GCE 'O' Levels, and for some, after their GCE 'A' Levels. However, as we restrict the sample to youths aged 18 and below, the sample in this study excludes polytechnic students who enter after GCE 'A' Levels, which is usually taken at age 18.

Yet another group of students, usually those with the most outstanding PSLE results, enter the Express stream into the Integrated Programme (IP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme which take them through till Year 6 when they apply for university.

Finally, a small group of students are in private programmes. These may include home-schoolers or those who have dropped out of the standard school system. As the results will indicate, this group is a diverse mix.

The overlapping pathways are complex and there is fluidity in some students crossing the different pathways. However, the five categories of education paths in **Figure 2** represent the main and common tracks that students experience, and thus form the main classification system for the educational pathway variable used in the empirical analysis. The most common pathway to University of the Express stream to JC is the base category against which the other pathways are compared. This can be called the "standard" track or path. The other categories are then (a) elite: IP/IB, including also specialised schools, (b) polytechnic: Normal or Express to Polytechnic; (c) vocational: Normal to ITE, and (d) other: private.

This five classification system provides a sufficient sample size to explore the dynamics of not only being a student in the different secondary level streams, but also the post-secondary routes of ITE, polytechnic, JC, and the through-train IP/IB. The educational experiences in these post-secondary settings are very different for a 17 or 18 year old, and could lead to very different educational and psychosocial development. For example, polytechnic life is probably the most independent, and therefore might afford greater freedom to a 17 year old who enters polytechnic instead of ITE, JC or IP/IB.

The age range 15 to 18 excludes university education, which students enter only after age 18. The total sample size is 712 youths.

Other independent variables

Parents' background

Two measures of parents' SES were first considered: parents' highest qualification and housing type. Housing type was found to be more strongly correlated to education paths, as results will later show. However, the results from either housing type or parents' educational attainment on youth outcomes were similar. For comparability with the NYS 2013 findings, parents' highest qualification was used as a proxy for SES in the subsequent regression models.

Parents' highest qualification was based on the highest educational qualification which either of the parents have attained. That is, where the father's qualification was higher than the mother's, father's qualification was used and vice versa. The level of education was rank-ordered to eight levels as follows: (1) PSLE and below, (2) GCE 'N' Levels, (3) GCE 'O' Levels, (4) ITE/Vocational Institute (VI), (5) GCE 'A' Levels/Post-secondary, (6) Diploma, (7) University graduate or other professional qualifications, and lastly (8) Postgraduate.

The second measure of parents' SES was housing type. This variable was rank-ordered into the following seven levels: (1) HDB 1 to 2 rooms, (2) HDB 3 rooms, (3) HDB 4 rooms, (4) HDB 5 rooms, (5) HDB Executive/Maisonette/HUDC/DBSS/Executive condominium, (6) Private flat/Condominium, and (7) Landed property/Others.

Family structure affects youths' development (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Painter & Levine, 2000), and single parenthood was proxied by a dichotomous variable if parents were divorced, separated, widowed or single. The base group contains married parents.

To study the effects of whether one was a new Citizen or Permanent Resident, two dummy variables were created: (1) for respondents with one parent born in a foreign country, and (2) for respondents with parents who were both born outside of Singapore. These two dummy variables were thus compared against the base group of respondents whose parents were both born in Singapore.

This specification was selected to be more reflective of the current demographic dynamic than a Citizen-Permanent Resident dichotomy, because many youth citizens today might be new Citizens who are first or second generation immigrants.

For a consistent sample, cases with missing values in any of these demographic variables were dropped from the regressions.

Youths' background

Race/ethnicity was specified with two dummy variables for minority races: (1) Malay and (2) Indian. These were compared with Chinese and 'Others' which were combined as the base group.

Gender and age are dichotomous variables. The age dummy equals one if the respondents are aged 17 to 18. Gender equals one for female respondents.

Dependent variables

Self-esteem

For self-esteem, the respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements about themselves. The three statements were: 1) "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself", 2) "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and 3) "I feel I do not have much to be proud of". The respondents then chose their responses based on a five-point Likert scale, namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The third statement was reverse coded such that a higher value indicated a higher esteem score. The self-esteem scale was generated by taking the mean value of the answers to the three statements ($\alpha=.70$).

Resilience

For resilience, the respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with six statements about themselves. The six statements were: 1) "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times", 2) "I have a hard time making it through stressful events", 3) "It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event", 4) "It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens", 5) "I usually come through difficult times with little trouble", and 6) "I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life".

The respondents then chose their responses based on a five-point Likert scale, namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Statements (2), (4), and (6) were reverse coded such that a higher value indicated a higher resilience score. The resilience scale was generated by taking the mean value of the answers to the six statements ($\alpha=.73$).

Youth stressors

A series of Likert scale questions were used to track how the respondents viewed various life stressors. Out of the total of nine stressors in the questionnaire, five stressors that had significant results were extracted for reporting in this chapter. These include three practical stressors, namely finances, studies, and future uncertainty; and two relationship stressors, namely family relationships and friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships). The Likert scale comprised the following options: (1) not at all stressful, (2) a little stressful, (3) moderately stressful, (4) very stressful, and (5) extremely stressful.

Educational aspirations

The respondents were asked about the highest level of education that they perceived they could achieve and this question was used as a measure of their educational aspiration. The educational aspirations were rank-ordered into four categories: (1) GCE 'N' or GCE 'O' Levels/ITE/VI/GCE 'A' Levels/Post-secondary, (2) Diploma, (3) University graduate or other professional qualifications, and (4) Postgraduate.

Positive outlook

The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with nine statements about their future outlook with regards to specific issues. The respondents then chose their responses based on a five-point Likert scale, namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Out of these nine statements in the questionnaire, three that had significant results were extracted for reporting in this chapter. These were outlooks with regards to having a nice family in 10 years time, being afraid that life will be unhappy, and expectations of not having enough money. The negative statements were reverse coded such that a higher value indicated a more positive outlook.

Summary Statistics

Table 2 provides the summary statistics of the independent variables. A majority (39.18%) of the sample was either in the Express stream in secondary school or in regular junior colleges, followed by Normal/ITE (21.64%), polytechnic (16.97%), IP/IB (13.86%), and others (8.35%). There were higher proportions of respondents in the Normal/ITE and IP/IB streams in comparison to the NYS 2013 data.

Compared to the 2016 youth statistics, Malays were slightly under-represented and youths of other ethnicities were over-represented in the sample. There was also an over-representation of females in the sample. The majority (27.11%) of the respondents had parents with a Bachelor's degree. The other more common qualification types of parents were 'O' Levels (17.56%), Postgraduates (15.59%) and Diploma holders (14.47%).

• **TABLE 2: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

	n	%	Youth Statistics in 2016 (%)*
Education Types	707		
Secondary School (NA/NT)/ITE/Vocational Institute (VI)	153	21.64	
Secondary School (Express)/Junior College (JC) (Regular)	277	39.18	
Polytechnic	120	16.97	
Integrated Programme (IP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)/Specialised School (Sec/JC)	98	13.86	
Private Programmes ('O' Levels/'A' Levels/IB)/Others	59	8.35	
Ethnicity	712		
Chinese	517	72.61	72
Malay	92	12.92	16
Indian	68	9.55	9
Others	35	4.92	3
Age	712		
15	102	14.33	
16	213	29.92	
17	200	28.09	
18	197	27.67	
Gender	712		
Male	280	39.33	49
Female	432	60.67	51

• **TABLE 2: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (CONTINUED)**

	n	%	Youth Statistics in 2016 (%)*
Parents' Highest Qualification	712		
PSLE and below	68	9.55	
GCE 'N' Levels	25	3.51	
GCE 'O' Levels	125	17.56	
ITE/VI	45	6.32	
GCE 'A' Levels/Post Sec	42	5.90	
Diploma	103	14.47	
Bachelor's degree/Others	193	27.11	
Post Grad	111	15.59	
Housing Type	672		
HDB 1-2 rooms	29	4.32	
HDB 3 rooms	91	13.54	
HDB 4 rooms	202	30.06	
HDB 5 rooms	161	23.96	
HDB Executive/Maisonette/HUDC/DBSS/Executive Condominium	83	12.35	
Private flat/Condominium	104	15.48	
Landed property/Others	2	0.30	
Parents' Marital Status	712		
Married	644	90.45	
Single parent	68	9.55	
Parents' Immigrant Status	712		
One parent not born in Singapore	156	21.91	
Both parents not born in Singapore	117	16.43	

*Source: Yearbook of Statistics 2016, Department of Statistics

A majority of the sample stayed in HDB 3 to 4 rooms flats (43.60%) followed by HDB 5 rooms/HDB Executive/Maisonette/HUDC/DBSS/Executive Condominium (36.31%). The percentage of respondents staying in HDB 1 to 2 rooms flats was 4.32% while 0.30% of the respondents stayed in landed property or other property types.

A small but significant proportion (9.55%) of respondents had single parents. A high proportion of parents were foreign-born. With 21.91% of the respondents having one parent who was

foreign-born and 16.43% with both parents who were foreign-born, 38.34% of the sample youths had at least one foreign-born parent.

Table 3 gives the summary statistics of the dependent variables. A majority of the sample aspired to obtain at least a University Degree or other Professional Qualifications (50.71%), followed by an even higher qualification of a Postgraduate Degree (29.26%). 14.35% aspired towards a Polytechnic Diploma, leaving only 5.68% who aspired to qualifications lower than a diploma.

• **TABLE 3: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	%	n
Educational Aspirations						704
'A' Levels/Post-secondary/ITE/'O' Levels/'N' Levels/PSLE					5.68	40
Diploma					14.35	101
University Graduate/Other Professional Qualifications					50.71	357
Postgraduate					29.26	206
Self-Esteem	3.59	0.75	1	5		704
Resilience	3.21	0.60	1	5		704
Practical Stressors						
Studies	3.84	1.03	1	5		698
Finances	2.85	1.17	1	5		637
Future Uncertainty	3.59	1.20	1	5		688
Relational Stressors						
Family Relationships	2.24	1.10	1	5		693
Friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships)	2.53	1.03	1	5		699
Positive Outlook						704
Nice family in 10 years time	3.69	0.88	1	5		
Life will be happy	2.51	1.11	1	5		
Have enough money	3.14	1.08	1	5		

The youths in the sample ranked themselves a mean of 3.59 for self-esteem, a moderate level on the Likert scale that hovers between "agree" and "neither agree nor disagree" with the three statements about themselves. Similarly, with regards to resilience, the respondents rate themselves moderately, with a mean of 3.21.

Among the five types of stressors, respondents were more stressed over practical matters. All the practical stressors were scored higher than the relational stressors, topmost of which was studies (3.84) followed by future uncertainty (3.59). Relationship stressors scores were lower, with the lowest being family stressors (2.24) and next lowest stress over friends (2.53). Stress over finances was in the middle ground, with a score of 2.85.

In terms of future outlook, the youths in the sample are moderately optimistic about having a nice family in 10 years time and having enough money, with means of 3.69 and 3.14 respectively.

However, they are less optimistic about having a happy life, with a mean of 2.51, which falls between "disagree" and "neither agree nor disagree" on the Likert scale.

Findings from Multivariate Analysis

The multivariate analysis starts by examining the independent relationship between students' education pathways and the background variables. **Table 4** reports multinomial logistic regression results for the categories of education pathways in columns and the background variables in rows, such that each cell represents the likelihood of being in the particular pathway given the background characteristic.

• **TABLE 4: MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' EDUCATION PATHWAYS**

	NA/NT/ITE	Polytechnic	IP/IB/ Specialised Schools	Private Programmes/ Others
n	667	667	667	667
Housing type	-0.50*** (0.11)	-0.13 (0.11)	0.39*** (0.11)	0.11 (0.13)
Parents' highest qualifications	-0.22*** (0.056)	-0.098 (0.062)	0.25*** (0.088)	-0.087 (0.077)
Single parent family	0.16 (0.38)	0.12 (0.44)	-1.04 (0.78)	0.30 (0.52)
One parent is foreign-born	-0.55* (0.29)	-0.29 (0.31)	-0.78** (0.38)	-0.23 (0.41)
Both parents are foreign-born	-0.48 (0.36)	-0.63 (0.41)	0.27 (0.35)	0.49 (0.44)
Malay	1.84*** (0.36)	0.49 (0.48)	-1.15 (1.06)	2.25*** (0.44)
Indian	0.99*** (0.37)	0.13 (0.47)	-0.153 (0.488)	0.54 (0.52)
Female	-0.84*** (0.24)	-0.71*** (0.27)	-0.46* (0.28)	-0.45 (0.32)
Age between 17-18	0.80*** (0.24)	5.395*** (1.015)	0.64** (0.27)	1.06*** (0.32)

Notes Standard errors in parentheses
 *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01
 ^ The base category is Express/JC.

Using both parents' highest qualification and housing type as measures of the respondents' socioeconomic background, housing type has stronger effects than parents' education in terms of coefficient sizes. However, the statistical significances are the same. With asterisks indicating the statistically significant results, the coefficients of housing type and parents' highest qualification show that compared to Express stream and JC students, students in the Normal and ITE track more likely lived in smaller flats and had lower educated parents, whereas the students in the IP/IB track more likely lived in bigger housing and had higher educated parents. Given the similarity in results of housing type and parents' education, in subsequent analysis, housing type is dropped, and parents' highest education is used as the sole proxy for socioeconomic status for comparability with the NYS 2013 findings.

The coefficients of the other independent variables show that females were overall more likely to be in the Express/JC education track. Students from minority ethnicities were more likely to be in the Normal/ITE track and/or other/private tracks. In the NYS 2013 analysis by Ng & Cheong (2015), respondents whose parents were both born overseas were less likely to be in the Normal or ITE track or in the IP/IB track. However, this effect is not statistically significant in NYS 2016. Instead, respondents with one foreign-born parent were less likely to be in the Normal or ITE track or in the IP/IB track.

Determinants of wellbeing outcomes

Now turning to the two-step empirical model being tested in this chapter, we are interested in the determinants of youth developmental outcomes.

Table 5 gives the results of the first wellbeing outcome, self-esteem. In contrast to the findings of the NYS 2013, which found significant effects of education types on self-esteem, one's education pathway is no longer a determinant of self-esteem. Parents' education, however, remains a significant predictor of self-esteem. Respondents with more educated parents had higher self-esteem, mediated very slightly by their education pathways. The only other variable that had a correlation with self-esteem was gender, whereby females were more likely to have lower self-esteem. The effect of gender remained significant even after education pathway was controlled for.

• **TABLE 5: OLS REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM & RESILIENCE**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Self-Esteem	Self-Esteem	Resilience	Resilience
n	699	699	699	699
Parents' highest qualifications	0.029** (0.013)	0.027** (0.014)	0.020* (0.01)	0.012 (0.011)
Single parent family	-0.12 (0.098)	-0.12 (0.098)	-0.056 (0.078)	-0.040 (0.078)
One parent is foreign-born	0.038 (0.071)	0.046 (0.072)	0.053 (0.057)	0.061 (0.057)
Both parents are foreign-born	0.11 (0.084)	0.12 (0.084)	0.060 (0.067)	0.058 (0.067)
Malay	-0.026 (0.088)	0.0098 (0.093)	-0.093 (0.071)	-0.068 (0.074)
Indian	0.079 (0.099)	0.090 (0.100)	-0.17** (0.079)	-0.15* (0.080)
Female	-0.11* (0.059)	-0.100* (0.060)	-0.13*** (0.047)	-0.14*** (0.047)
Age between 17-18	-0.006 (0.058)	-0.035 (0.063)	-0.005 (0.046)	-0.023 (0.051)
NA/NT/ITE		0.025 (0.084)		-0.060 (0.067)
Polytechnic		0.11 (0.092)		0.052 (0.073)
IP/IB/Specialised Schools		0.12 (0.091)		0.14* (0.073)
Private Programmes/Others		-0.15 (0.11)		0.089 (0.089)

Notes

Standard errors in parentheses

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

^ The base category is Express/JC.



Turning next to resilience, **Table 5** reveals that educational pathways matter to resilience. In Model 1, parents' education positively correlates with higher resilience, but the significant relationship disappears when education pathways were added in Model 2. This indicates that the effect of parents' SES on resilience is fully mediated through education pathway. The coefficient for parents' education also decreases from 0.020 to 0.012, hence education pathways absorb 40% of the association between SES and resilience. Correspondingly, students in the IP/IB track were found to have a higher level of resilience, and there were no other significant correlations between education tracks and resilience. Indian and female youths rated their resilience lower, and these effects remained significant even in Model 2.

Do youths from different backgrounds perceive their stress differently? Looking first at practical stressors, the findings reveal multiple determinants of youths' stress over finances (**Table 6**). Those with less educated parents were more stressed over finances, an effect that remained significant even after education pathways were controlled for in Model 2. Correspondingly, students from the IP/IB track were less stressed over their finances, while the reverse was true for private students. Malays and youths from single parent families were also more stressed over finances, unlike those whose parents were both born overseas.

Youths from different SES backgrounds did not differ in terms of stress over studies or future uncertainty (**Table 6**). However, in Model 2, it appears that youths from different education pathways experience stress over studies and future uncertainty differently. Students from the Express/JC track rated themselves as being more stressed over their studies, in comparison to their counterparts from all other education streams. This finding differs

from the NYS 2013 results, which found that only polytechnic and private students were less stressed than the Express/JC students. With regards to future uncertainty, students from the IP/IB track and polytechnics were less likely to be stressed.

Students from different ethnicities also experienced different levels of stress. Indians were more stressed than Chinese over their studies, an effect that remains significant in Model 2. When education types were controlled for, Malay students also similarly experienced more stress over their studies than the Chinese students. Being an immigrant also seems to matter when it comes to practical stressors. Youths with either one or both parents born overseas were less stressed over their studies, even when education types were controlled for. Youths with both parents born overseas were also less preoccupied with future uncertainty. In a finding that is consistent with the NYS 2013, girls were found to be more stressed over studies and the future than boys, indicating that gender remains a significant determinant of youth's practical stressors.

Unlike the NYS 2013 findings, SES and educational pathways had no significant associations with relationship stress (**Table 7**). The drivers of relational stressors for the NYS 2016 youths were ethnicity, family structure, immigrant status and gender. Indians and youths in single parent families were more likely to feel stressed over family relationships while those whose parents were both born overseas were less stressed over such relationships. These effects remain significant even when education types were controlled for in Model 2. For stress over friendships, the only significant effect is gender, which is predictive of higher stress for females.

• **TABLE 6: ORDERED PROBIT REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' PRACTICAL STRESSORS**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Finances	Finances	Studies	Studies	Future Uncertainty	Future Uncertainty
n	632	632	693	693	683	683
Parents' highest qualifications	-0.072*** (0.019)	-0.062*** (0.020)	-0.0068 (0.019)	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.0006 (0.019)	0.004 (0.020)
Single parent family	0.43*** (0.14)	0.40*** (0.14)	0.24* (0.14)	0.25* (0.15)	0.12 (0.14)	0.11 (0.14)
One parent is foreign-born	-0.10 (0.12)	-0.14 (0.12)	-0.21** (0.10)	-0.24** (0.10)	-0.10 (0.10)	-0.12 (0.10)
Both parents are foreign-born	-0.27** (0.12)	-0.28** (0.12)	-0.24** (0.12)	-0.24** (0.12)	-0.24** (0.12)	-0.25** (0.12)
Malay	0.48*** (0.13)	0.43*** (0.14)	0.18 (0.13)	0.31** (0.14)	0.081 (0.13)	0.087 (0.14)
Indian	0.24 (0.15)	0.21 (0.15)	0.30** (0.14)	0.35** (0.15)	0.10 (0.14)	0.097 (0.14)
Female	0.011 (0.087)	0.013 (0.088)	0.18** (0.084)	0.14* (0.085)	0.24*** (0.084)	0.22*** (0.084)
Age between 17-18	0.15* (0.085)	0.13 (0.094)	-0.12 (0.083)	-0.026 (0.092)	0.049 (0.083)	0.12 (0.091)
NA/NT/ITE		-0.044 (0.12)		-0.45*** (0.12)		-0.11 (0.12)
Polytechnic		0.060 (0.13)		-0.32** (0.13)		-0.25* (0.13)
IP/IB/Specialised Schools		-0.39*** (0.14)		-0.39*** (0.13)		-0.31** (0.13)
Private Programmes/Others		0.34** (0.16)		-0.47*** (0.16)		-0.21 (0.16)

Notes

Standard errors in parentheses

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

^ The base category is Express/JC.

• **TABLE 7: ORDERED PROBIT REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' RELATIONAL STRESSORS**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Family Relationships	Family Relationships	Friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships)	Friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships)
n	689	689	694	694
Parents' highest qualifications	-0.014 (0.019)	-0.014 (0.020)	-0.021 (0.018)	-0.031 (0.020)
Single parent family	0.27* (0.14)	0.27* (0.14)	-0.027 (0.14)	-0.009 (0.14)
One parent is foreign-born	-0.095 (0.10)	-0.093 (0.10)	-0.090 (0.10)	-0.093 (0.10)
Both parents are foreign-born	-0.21* (0.12)	-0.24* (0.12)	-0.17 (0.12)	-0.18 (0.12)
Malay	0.17 (0.13)	0.11 (0.13)	0.071 (0.12)	0.094 (0.13)
Indian	0.28** (0.14)	0.26* (0.14)	0.079 (0.14)	0.099 (0.14)
Other Race	-	-	-	-
Female	0.050 (0.084)	0.046 (0.085)	0.20** (0.083)	0.19** (0.084)
Age between 17-18	0.014 (0.083)	0.052 (0.091)	-0.020 (0.081)	0.012 (0.089)
NA/NT/ITE		0.061 (0.12)		-0.19 (0.12)
Polytechnic		-0.14 (0.13)		-0.13 (0.13)
IP/IB/Specialised Schools		0.030 (0.13)		-0.007 (0.13)
Private Programmes/Others		0.30* (0.16)		0.17 (0.16)

Notes
Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01
^ The base category is Express/JC.

Determinants of outlook outcomes

Next, turning to the determinants of outlook outcomes, the first question to ask is: how much do parents' SES and youths' educational pathways determine one's education aspiration? **Table 8** indicates that the answer is very much. Respondents who had more educated parents were more likely to aspire towards

higher levels of education. Even after adding education pathways in Model 2, the coefficient for parents' education decreases by 0.04 to 0.15, a figure that is still very significant. Thus, education pathways absorb 21% of the association between SES and educational aspirations. Unsurprisingly, education pathways

strongly relate to aspirations: compared to students in the Express/JC track, vocational and other track students had lower educational aspirations and the students in IP/IB/Specialised Schools aspired towards higher levels of education. The educational aspirations of polytechnic students did not significantly differ from that of Express/JC students.

The other variables that were significantly predictive of educational aspirations were ethnicity and age group. Malays had lower educational aspirations whereas Indians had higher aspirations. Respondents in the 17 to 18 age group were also more likely to have higher educational aspirations than their counterparts in the 15 to 16 age group. These effects remained significant even after education pathways were controlled for in Model 2.

• **TABLE 8: ORDERED PROBIT REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' EDUCATION ASPIRATION**

	Model 1	Model 2
	Educational Aspiration	Educational Aspiration
n	699	699
Parents' highest qualifications	0.19*** (0.020)	0.15*** (0.021)
Single parent family	-0.079 (0.15)	0.034 (0.15)
One parent is foreign-born	0.047 (0.11)	0.091 (0.11)
Both parents are foreign-born	0.15 (0.13)	0.17 (0.13)
Malay	-0.65*** (0.13)	-0.35** (0.14)
Indian	0.29* (0.15)	0.47*** (0.16)
Other Race	-	-
Female	-0.046 (0.088)	-0.10 (0.090)
Age between 17-18	0.20** (0.086)	0.24** (0.098)
NA/NT/ITE		-0.70*** (0.13)
Polytechnic		-0.11 (0.14)
IP/IB/Specialised Schools		0.86*** (0.15)
Private Programmes/Others		-0.44*** (0.17)

Notes Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01
^ The base category is Express/JC.

What are the determinants of positive outlook among youths in Singapore? **Table 9** shows that parents' education had a significant effect on youths' expectation for a happy life and having enough money, but not their expectation of having a nice family. Unsurprisingly, respondents whose parents have higher educational qualifications were more likely to be optimistic about their chances in being happy and having enough money in the future. The other determinants of youths' positive outlook include ethnicity, whereby Malays were more likely to be optimistic about their ability to have a nice family in 10 years time, and Indians had a more positive outlook with regards to their financial status in the future.

Females, conversely, were less optimistic about their chances in having a happy life, while youths in the 17 to 18 age group were more pessimistic that they will have enough money in the future. Educational pathways had no effect on outlook. When education pathways were added in Model 2, the only significant finding was that youths from the IP/IB track were more likely to be optimistic about having enough money in the future. The association between SES and having positive outlook over having enough money also remained significant in Model 2. The coefficient for parents' education decreased from 0.058 to 0.040, indicating that education pathways absorb 31% of the association.

• **TABLE 9: ORDERED PROBIT REGRESSIONS OF STUDENTS' POSITIVE OUTLOOK**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Nice Family	Nice Family	Happy Life	Happy Life	Enough Money	Enough Money
n	699	699	699	699	699	699
Parents' highest qualifications	-0.007 (0.019)	-0.005 (0.20)	0.034* (0.018)	0.036* (0.019)	0.058*** (0.018)	0.040** (0.019)
Single parent family	0.042 (0.14)	0.037 (0.14)	0.097 (0.14)	0.097 (0.14)	-0.021 (0.14)	0.016 (0.14)
One parent is foreign-born	-0.084 (0.10)	-0.088 (0.10)	0.092 (0.10)	0.10 (0.10)	-0.006 (0.010)	0.018 (0.100)
Both parents are foreign-born	0.099 (0.12)	0.091 (0.12)	0.17 (0.12)	0.18 (0.12)	0.16 (0.12)	0.15 (0.12)
Malay	0.29** (0.13)	0.26** (0.13)	-0.039 (0.12)	-0.043 (0.13)	0.086 (0.12)	0.15 (0.13)
Indian	0.15 (0.14)	0.15 (0.14)	0.19 (0.14)	0.19 (0.14)	0.26* (0.14)	0.29** (0.14)
Female	-0.011 (0.083)	-0.020 (0.084)	-0.17** (0.082)	-0.16* (0.083)	-0.009 (0.082)	-0.021 (0.083)
Age between 17-18	0.10 (0.082)	0.13 (0.091)	-0.13 (0.081)	-0.17* (0.089)	-0.27*** (0.081)	-0.23*** (0.089)
NA/NT/ITE		0.002 (0.12)		0.077 (0.12)		-0.097 (0.12)
Polytechnic		-0.10 (0.13)		0.13 (0.13)		-0.16 (0.13)
IP/IB/Specialised Schools		-0.079 (0.13)		0.10 (0.13)		0.36*** (0.13)
Private Programmes/Others		0.054 (0.16)		0.023 (0.16)		-0.067 (0.16)

Notes Standard errors in parentheses
 *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01
 ^ The base category is Express/JC.

Discussion

The first insight from the findings in this analysis is the strong relationship between parents' socioeconomic background and a range of youth developmental outcomes. In this study, having parents who are more highly educated (i.e. from a higher SES) puts one on a higher educational pathway. It is also associated with higher self-esteem, greater resilience, lower financial stress, higher educational aspiration, higher expectations of a happy life in future and higher expectations of earning enough money. Some may find these associations expected, that is, it is expected that one will have higher educational aspiration if one's parents are more educated. However, that SES is associated to other less seemingly-related outcomes such as resilience and expectations of a happy life points to some undercurrent of anxiety over future outlook when one is of a lower SES.

The second insight from the findings is that part of the relationship between SES and the youth outcomes is through parents placing their children in more desired educational paths, especially in the IP/IB Programme. The effects through educational pathways are especially strong for educational aspiration, resilience and future outlook on having enough money. Educational pathways absorb 40% of the association between SES and resilience, 31% of the association between SES and money-related future outlook, and 21% of the association between SES and educational aspiration.

The third insight is that being in the IP/IB Programme strongly relates to several youth outcomes, independent of parents' education.

Respondents who are in the IP/IB track are more resilient, have higher educational aspiration, are less stressed about studies, finances and future uncertainty, and are more optimistic about earning enough money in the future.

Comparison with the previous analysis on educational pathways and youth development also throws up some interesting insights. To start, the relationship between educational pathways and educational aspiration was found to be the same in both NYS 2013 and 2016. Compared to Express/JC stream students, Normal/ITE and private students have lower educational aspirations and IP/IB students have higher aspirations. However, the effects on the other youth development outcomes has shifted away from the Normal/ITE path.

In NYS 2013, Normal/ITE students were found to have lower self-esteem and were more stressed about family relationships. Also, Normal/ITE, polytechnic and private/other students (that is, all except IP/IB students) were more stressed over finances compared to Express/JC stream students. In NYS 2016, the Normal/ITE students did not rate differently from Express/JC students in self-esteem and stress over finances. Instead, IP/IB students came out as clearly more advantaged. They had higher self-esteem and were less stressed over finance and future uncertainty. Also, instead of Normal/ITE students showing greater disadvantage, private/other students were more stressed over finances, whereas Express/JC students (the group used as basis for comparison) were more stressed over studies.

Limitations & Implications

The fluctuating trends above beg a few questions. From NYS 2013 to NYS 2016, why did the disadvantages faced by Normal/ITE students decrease and the advantages of IP/IB students increase? Are new risks emerging among the "sandwiched" group of students, where Express/JC students feel the competitive pressure of being between the elite IP/IB Programme above and the polytechnic programme below? Are private/other students feeling the pinch of private school fees? A macro analysis through the regressions in this chapter cannot answer these "why" questions, which will require longitudinal analyses with more specific measures of the youth psychosocial variables mixed with a qualitative inquiry of these research questions.

As a cross sectional repeated survey, the findings from the NYS cannot tease out causal effects. For instance, it cannot be concluded that being in the IP/IB Programme improves self-esteem. It might be students with higher self-esteem are selected into IP/IB. Some causal claim can be made of parents' education, however. Since parents' education is acquired before the students' current state and aspiration, it can be said that the level of parents' education has influence on the student's aspiration and outlook.

Another caveat is that females were over-represented and Malays under-represented in NYS 2016. It is unclear whether the different composition might have led to the slightly different results.

With the above limitations in mind, there are a few clear insights to note from the findings in this analysis. One is the clear advantage to youth development of having better educated or higher SES parents. The second insight is the early settlement of aspirations by education paths. Early selection into programmes might lead youths to settle on their educational goals early. Third, the IP/IB Programme appears to have become a premier pathway that yields not only superior academic outcomes, but also privileged developmental effects. Fourth, the Normal/ITE path might be shedding some of its stigma, and students in this path seem to be gaining confidence in themselves and their future.

The latter finding is heartening news to the many years of aggressive promotion of ITE and its image. The recent SkillsFuture movement, which emphasises mastery of skills over academic pursuit, might have given vocational careers a boost. However, the other findings suggest the need to continue addressing equity in youth education and development. With Singapore's fast pace economic development, social stratification has become an inevitable modern reality. Today, Singapore families are stratified by basic social goods such as housing type, education level and school types. That parental advantage and education paths define youth wellbeing and outlook suggests the role that educational and youth policies can play to undo class and educational privileges, and mitigate path-dependent development. Some rebalancing from competitive economic outcomes to social equity might yield social and societal gains without much economic sacrifice.

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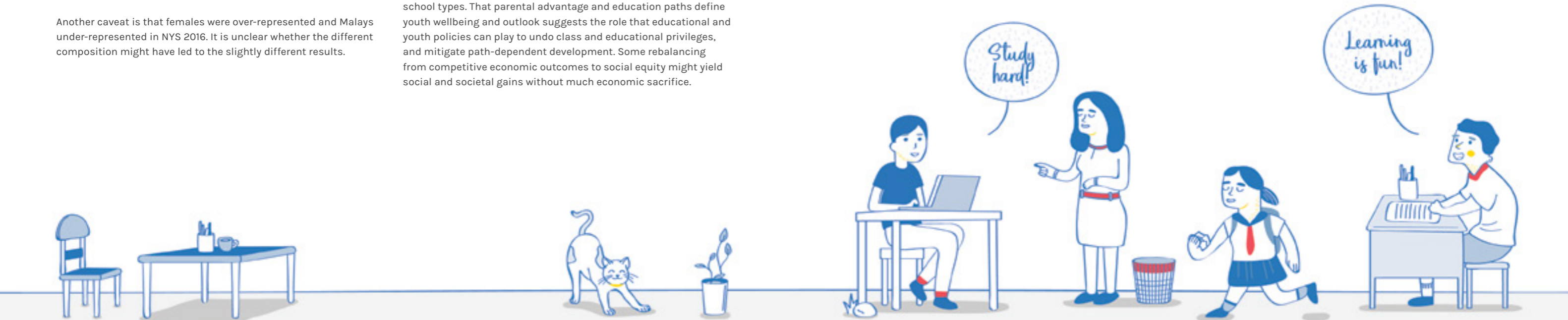
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Youths in the Labour Market

Ministry of Manpower



Abstract

Youths in Singapore have one of the lowest unemployment and long-term unemployment rates in the world. Economic 'idleness' is also less of a problem in Singapore, as the share of our youths not in employment, education or training is small and lower than in many of the economies compared. This reflects a quality education and training system that equips our youths to take on the jobs created.

Although more youths deferred entry into the labour market for studies, the proportion of youths in the labour force has remained stable in the past decade, as more took up work or internships while studying. The rising trend of youths working while studying has enabled them to acquire skills and experiences to help smoothen their eventual school-to-employment transition.

The median income of full-time employed youths¹ rose over the decade by 4.1% per annum, or 1.7% per annum after adjusting for inflation.

¹ Refers to those who were fully engaged in work.



Introduction

For the purposes of this chapter, youths are defined as persons aged 15 to 24, in line with practices of the International Labour Organisation and many countries. Data pertaining to the resident² population were mainly sourced from the Labour Force Surveys conducted by the Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM.

Abbreviations

CPF	: Central Provident Fund	NITEC	: National ITE Certificate
DOS	: Department of Statistics	OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ITE	: Institute of Technical Education	PMETs	: Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians
LFPR	: Labour Force Participation Rate	SSOC	: Singapore Standard Occupational Classification
MOM	: Ministry of Manpower		
NEET	: Not in Employment, Education or Training		

² Residents refer to Singapore citizens and permanent residents.

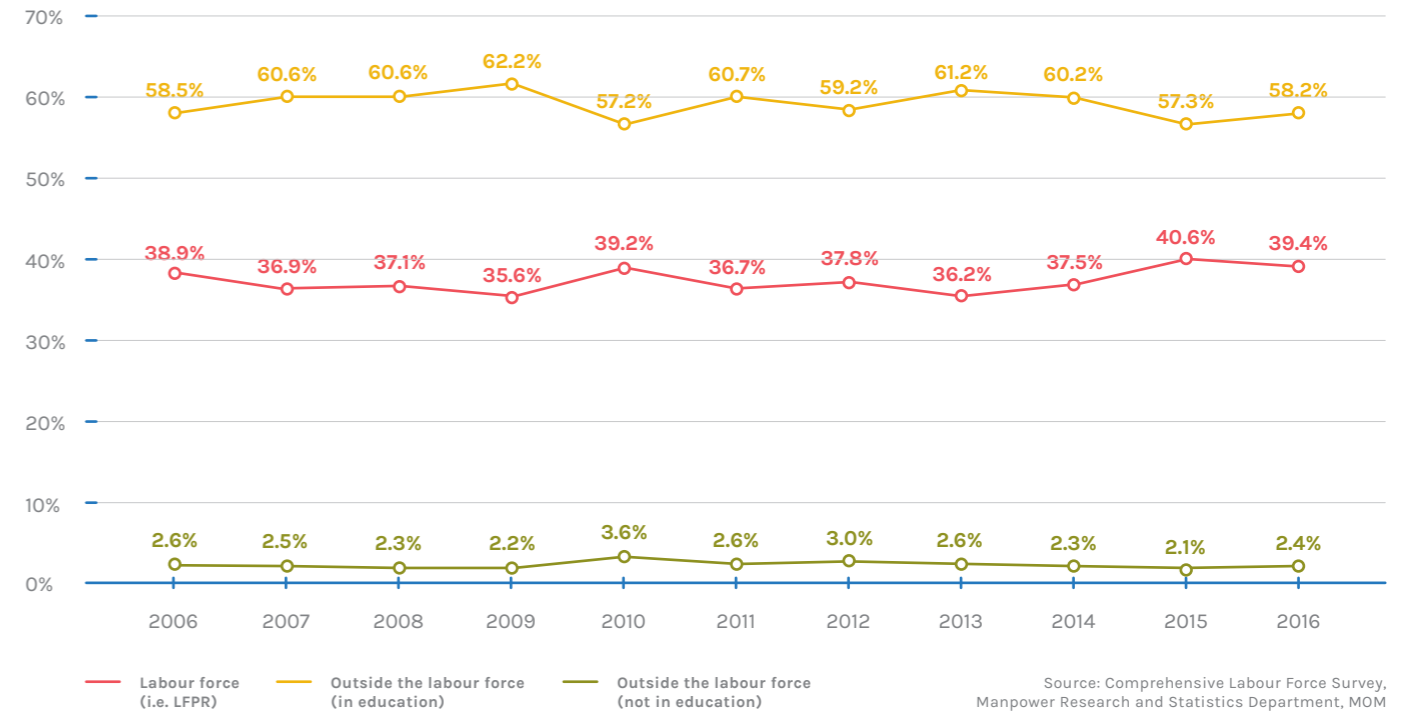


Labour Force Participation

The youth labour force participation rate was stable in past decade

The labour force participation rate (LFPR) among youths is typically lower than other age groups, as most youths defer entry into the labour market for studies. Even as more youths pursue further studies, LFPR among youths has remained stable in the past decade as more took up work or internship while studying³.

• CHART 1: DISTRIBUTION OF YOUTH POPULATION BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS (JUNE PERIODS)



Notes

June 2007 data have been adjusted based on latest revised population estimates from DOS to facilitate comparisons with June 2008 onwards. Adjusted figures for 2007 are the same as the original figures.

³ The proportion of youths who were working while studying has increased from 5.1% in 2006 to 6.5% in 2016.

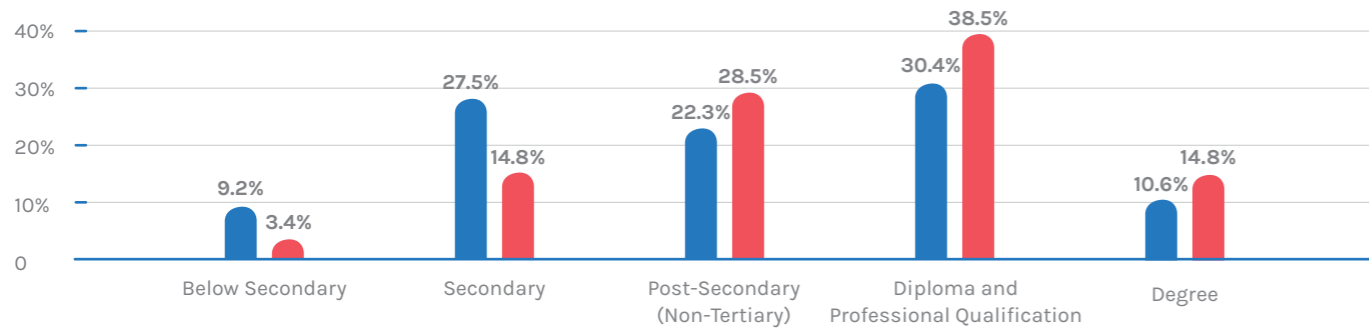
Educational profile of youth labour force has improved

The proportion of youths in the labour force with post-secondary (non-tertiary)⁴ and diploma and professional qualifications rose from 53% in 2006 to 67% in 2016. As they spend more years in education, degree holders typically enter the labour market later

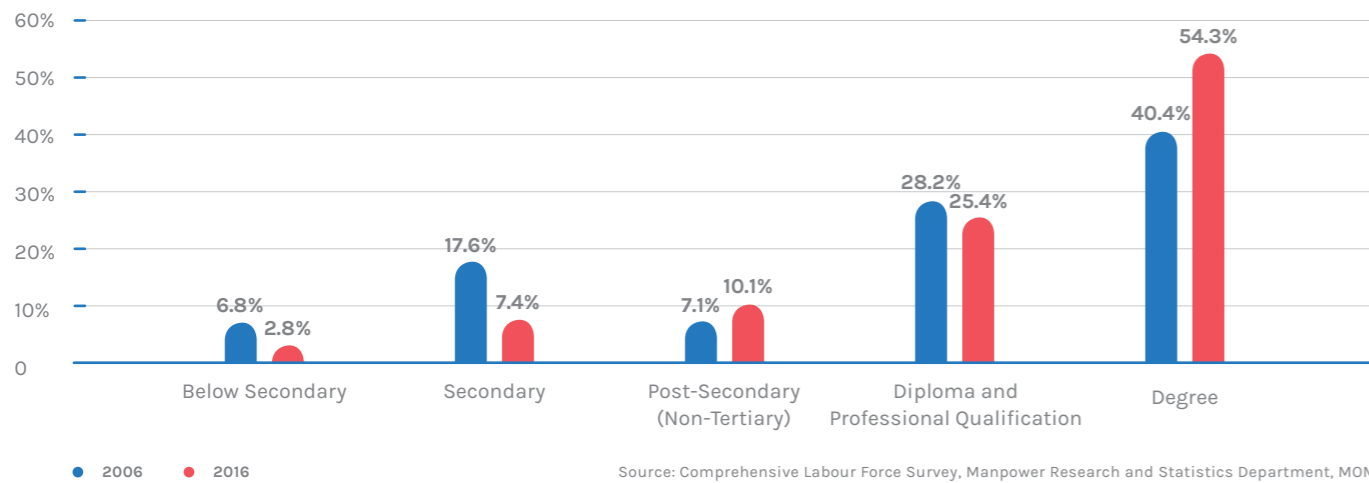
than those from other education groups. Hence, degree holders constituted a smaller proportion (15%) of the youth labour force than in the next age band of 25 to 29 (54%), when the large majority of the population would have entered the labour market⁵.

• **CHART 2: DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR FORCE BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED FOR YOUTHS & RESIDENTS AGED 25 TO 29 (JUNE PERIODS)**

Youths aged 15 to 24



Aged 25 to 29

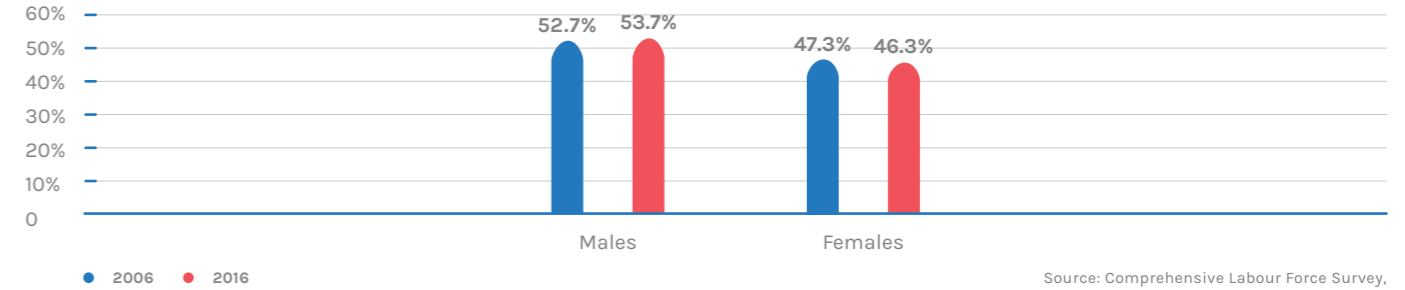


⁴ This includes A-level, National ITE Certificate (NITEC), Higher NITEC and Master NITEC qualification holders.

⁵ 90.3% of the resident population aged 25 to 29 were in the labour force, compared with 62.3% for those aged 20 to 24 and 15.3% for those aged 15 to 19 in 2016.

Males (54%) continued to form a slightly larger share of the resident youth labour force than females (46%) in June 2016, broadly unchanged from a decade ago.

• **CHART 3: SEX COMPOSITION OF YOUTH LABOUR FORCE (JUNE PERIODS)**

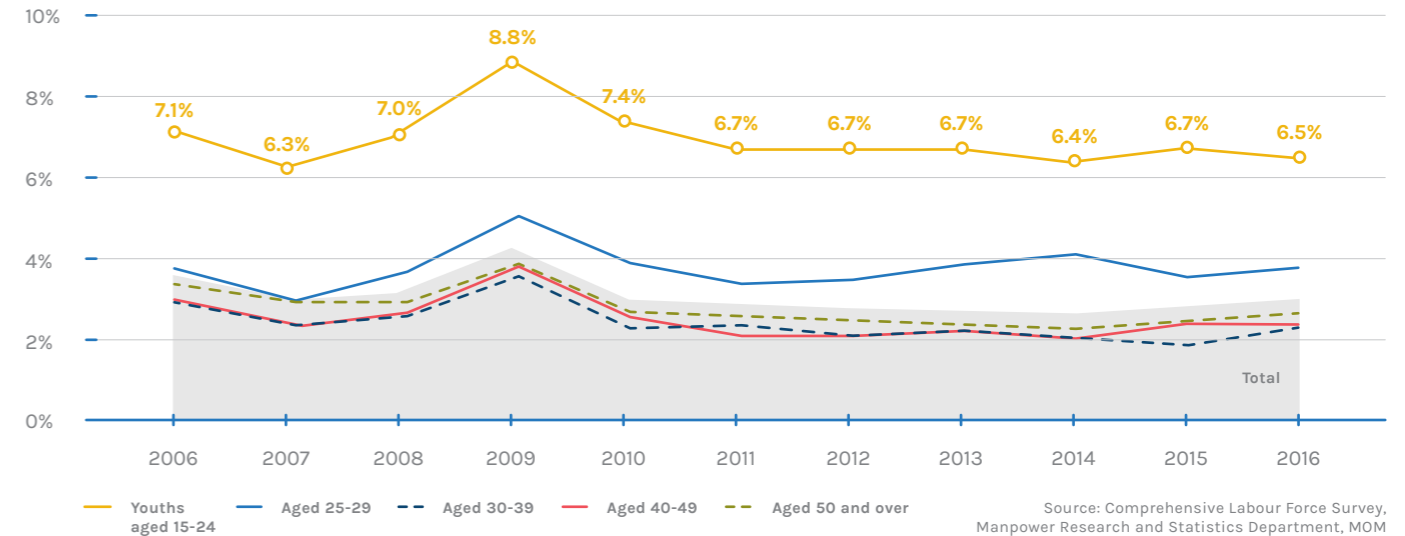


Youth unemployment rate has held steady

Singapore's youth unemployment rate (6.5%) has remained broadly unchanged since 2011. The unemployment rate is higher for youths than other age groups as it reflects the job search activities of

fresh graduates entering the labour market, as well as the higher likelihood to change jobs in the process of exploring different options to find a more suitable job.

• **CHART 4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE (ANNUAL AVERAGE)**

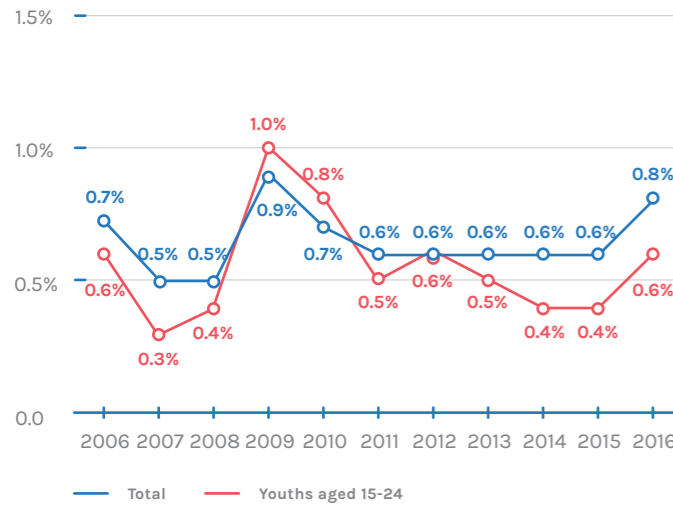


Note

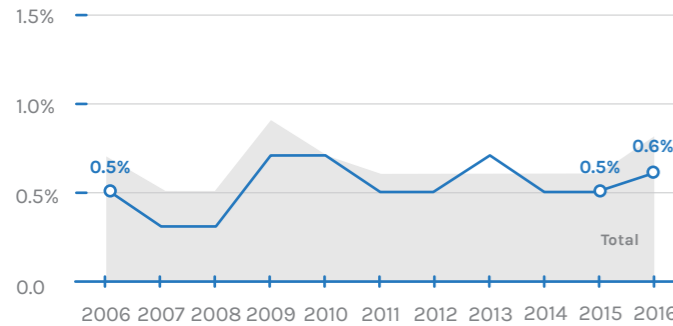
(1) Annual figures are the simple averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment figures obtained at quarterly intervals.

However, the unemployment among youths is mostly transitional as unemployment for long periods is uncommon. The long-term unemployment rate⁶ for resident youths, at 0.6% in 2016, was lower than 0.8% for all residents, and one of the lowest across the age groups.

• **CHART 5: LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE (ANNUAL AVERAGE)**



Aged 25 to 29

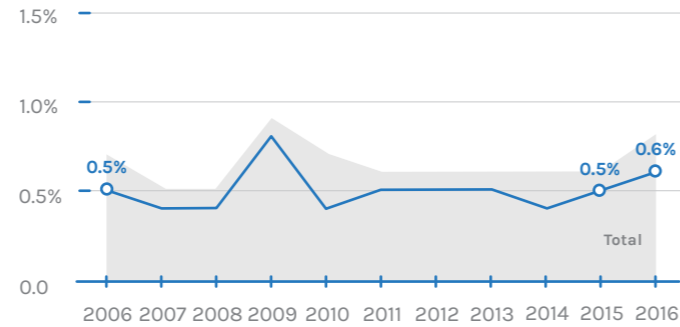


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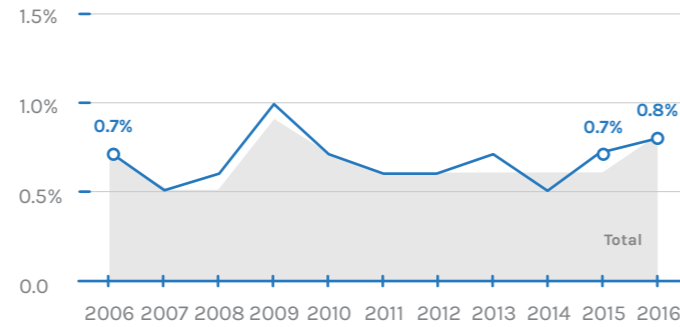
- (1) The long-term unemployment rate is the percentage of long-term unemployed persons (i.e. those unemployed for at least 25 weeks) to the labour force.
- (2) Annual figures are the simple averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment figures obtained at quarterly intervals.

⁶ The long-term unemployment rate is the percentage of long-term unemployed persons (i.e. those unemployed for at least 25 weeks) to the labour force.

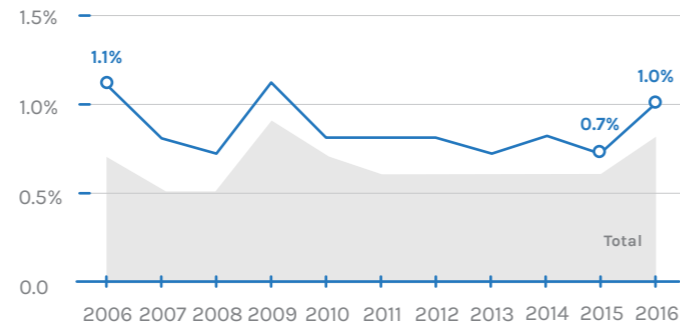
Aged 30 to 39



Aged 40 to 49



Aged 50 and over



Source: Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM

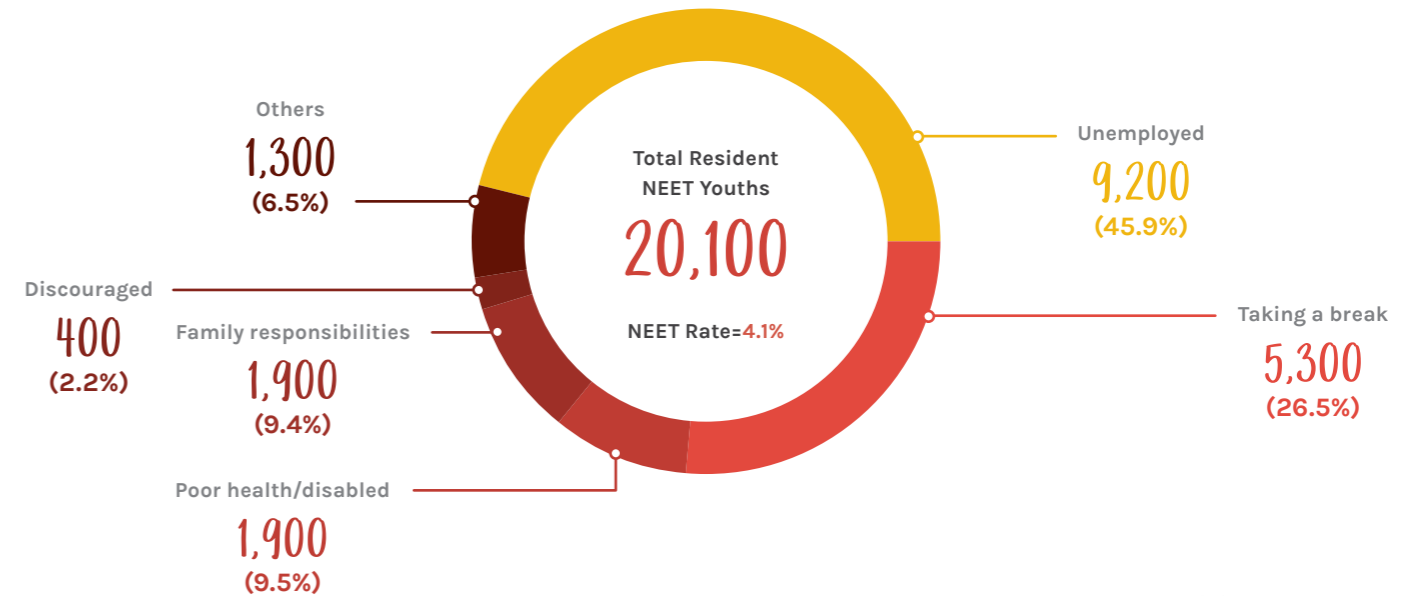
Share of youths not in employment, education or training in Singapore is small

While the unemployment rate of youths provides an indication of their performance in the labour market, it may not fully capture the employment situation of youths. Specifically, it does not include youths who may have dropped out of the labour force due to difficult job search experiences. To better understand youths' difficulty in finding a job as well as their likelihood of being economically 'idle', many countries also monitor the proportion of youth population who are not in employment, education or training (i.e. the NEET measure).

In Singapore, only 4.1% or 20,100 of the resident youth population were not in employment, education or training in 2016. This is low by international standards. Around half (46% or 9,200) of the NEET youths were unemployed, out of which only 900 were long-term unemployed in 2016⁷.

The other half were outside the labour force, mostly due to taking a break (26% or 5,300), personal/family reasons such as poor health/disability (9.5% or 1,900) or family responsibilities (9.4% or 1,900), rather than being discouraged from their job search (2.2% or 400).

• **CHART 6: NEET YOUTHS, 2016 (ANNUAL AVERAGE)**



Source: Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM

Notes

- (1) NEET refers to those who are unemployed or outside the labour force, due to reasons other than education or training.
- (2) NEET rate represents the NEET youths as a proportion of the resident youth population.
- (3) Figures in brackets refer to the number of resident NEET youths in each category as a percentage of the resident youth population.
- (4) 'Family responsibilities' includes housework, childcare and care-giving to families/relatives.
- (5) 'Discouraged' refers to those who believed that there is no suitable work available, perceives that there is discrimination from employers or that he or she lacks the necessary qualification, training, skills or experience.
- (6) 'Others' includes having sufficient financial support/means and doing voluntary/community work.
- (7) Data may not add up due to rounding.

⁷ These 900 long-term unemployed NEET youths made up 4.6% of all NEET youths in 2016.

Singapore's youth unemployment rate among the lowest internationally

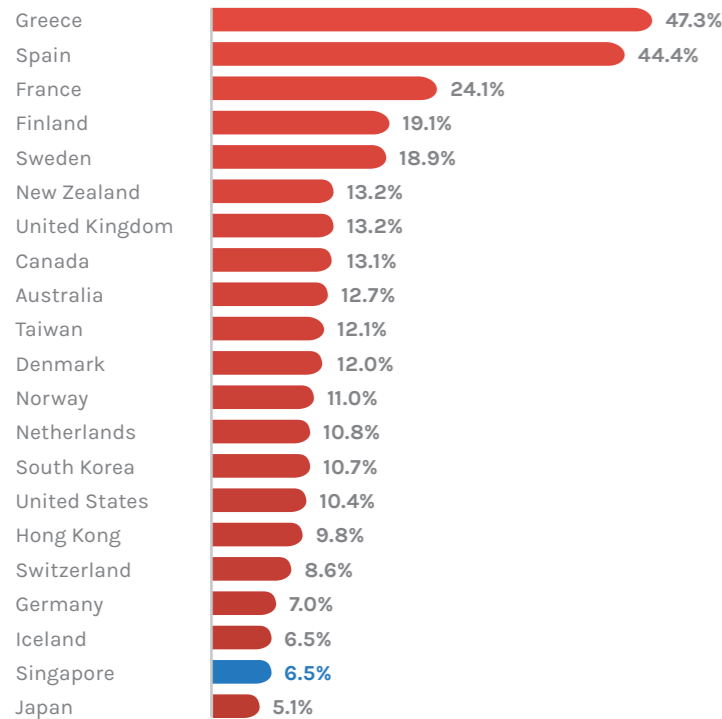
Singapore's youth unemployment rate, at 6.5% in 2016, was one of the lowest among the economies compared. Many experienced double-digit youth unemployment rates, including Greece (47%), Spain (44%), Finland (19%), Sweden (19%), the United Kingdom (13%) and the United States (10%). Singapore's rate was also lower than Switzerland (8.6%) and Germany (7.0%), countries which are known for their model of

vocational education that aid school to work transition. Singapore's youths also fared better than those in the Asian economies of Taiwan (12%), South Korea (11%) and Hong Kong (9.8%).

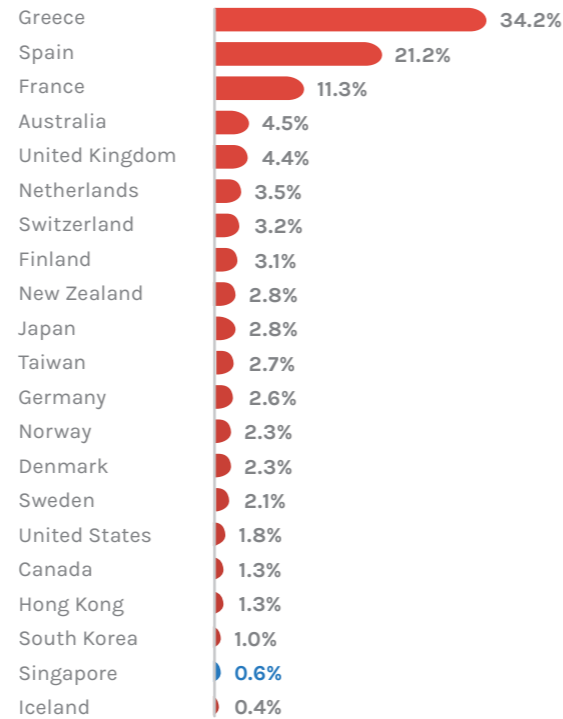
Singapore's youths were also less likely to be long-term unemployed compared with peers in other economies.

• CHART 7: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT & LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2016

(a) Youth unemployment rate



(b) Long-term unemployment rate



Source: Singapore: Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM
Other economies: OECD Database, EuroStat Database and national statistical agencies

Notes

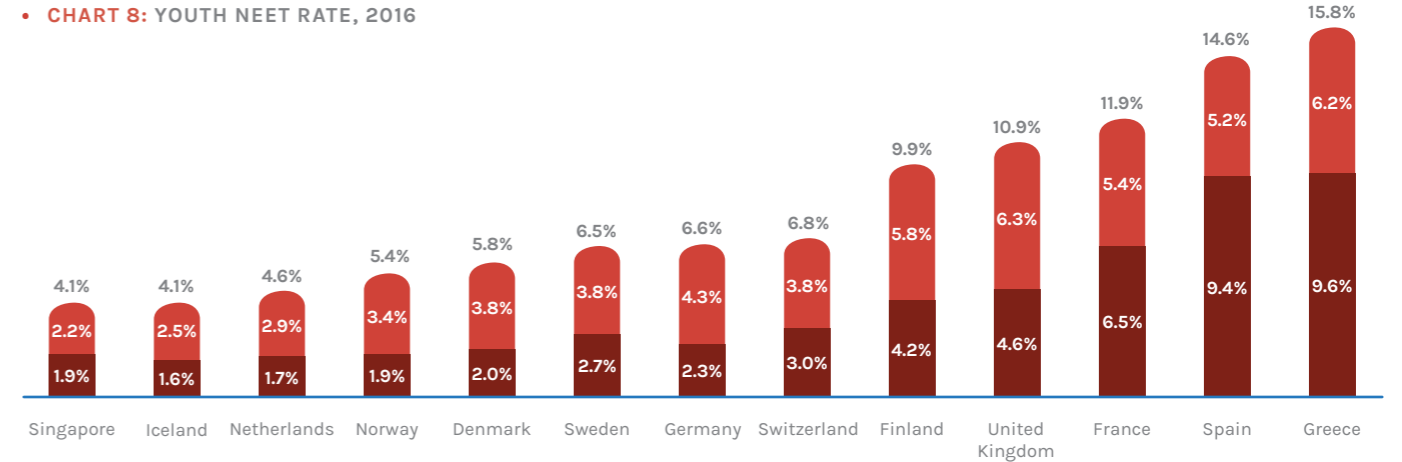
- (1) Data are for 2016 except for Taiwan's long-term unemployment rate (2015).
- (2) Annual average data used for Singapore and pertain to residents.
- (3) Youths refer to those aged 15 to 24, except for the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain which refer to those aged 16 to 24.
- (4) For Singapore, long-term unemployed refers to residents who have been unemployed for at least 25 weeks. In the other economies, long-term unemployed refers to those who have been unemployed for at least 6 months, except for Taiwan and the United States which refer to those unemployed for at least 27 weeks.

Singapore's NEET rate also one of the lowest internationally

Similar to unemployment, Singapore's share of youths who were not in employment, education or training was also one of the lowest internationally. In 2016, Singapore's youth NEET rate of 4.1%

was lower than many developed economies such as the United Kingdom (11%), Germany (6.6%) and the Nordic countries of Finland (9.9%), Sweden (6.5%), Denmark (5.8%) and Norway (5.4%).

• CHART 8: YOUTH NEET RATE, 2016



● Unemployed Component ● Outside the Labour Force Component Source: Singapore: Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM
Other economies: EuroStat Database

Notes

- (1) Annual average data used for Singapore and pertain to residents.
- (2) Youths refer to those aged 15 to 24, except for the United Kingdom and Spain which refer to those aged 16 to 24.
- (3) Unemployed and outside the labour force components may not add up to the NEET rate due to rounding.

Employment Characteristics

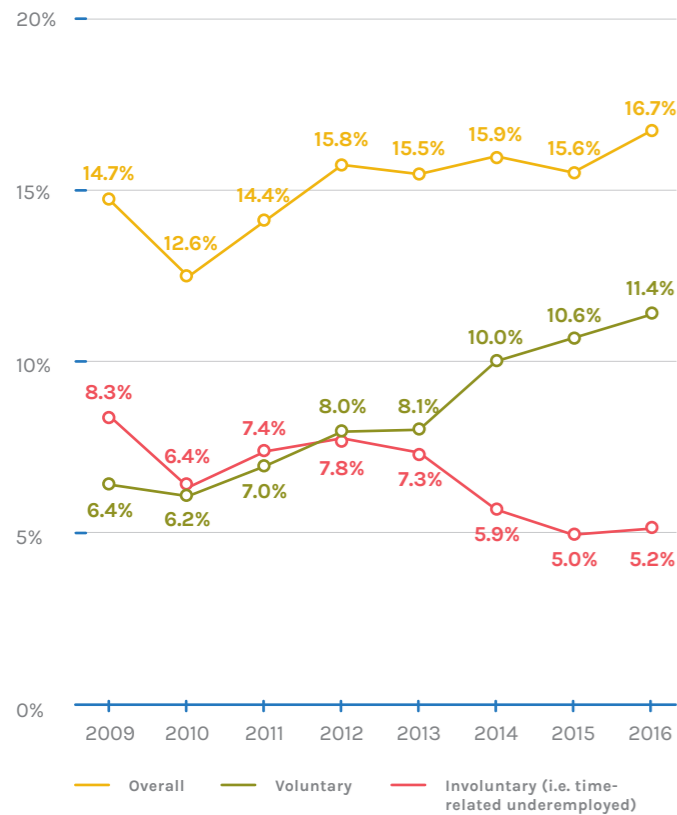
While youths were over-represented among part-time employment, most did so voluntarily

17% (or 30,300) of employed resident youths were in part-time employment in 2016. This was higher than the part-time share among all employed (11%), reflecting the higher prevalence of working students whose time spent in a job would be limited by their study commitments. Majority (73%) of the youths working part-time cited education/training-related reasons for doing so⁸. While part-time employment among youths has increased in

recent years, it was largely voluntary. Involuntary part-time employment or time-related underemployment, which refers to part-timers who are willing and available to work additional hours, remained low. Singapore's resident youths time-related underemployment rate (5.2% in 2016) was also lower than in most countries except Iceland (3.6%), the United States (3.3%), Norway (2.5%) and Germany (2.2%).

⁸ Refer to those pursuing full-time/part-time studies, awaiting the start of the academic year and attending courses/training.

• **CHART 9: INCIDENCE OF PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AMONG EMPLOYED YOUTHS (JUNE PERIODS)**

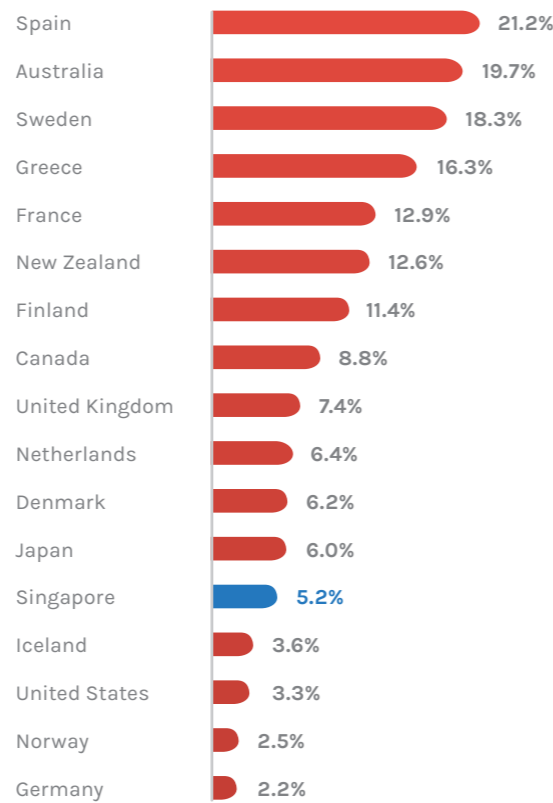


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM

Notes

- (1) 'Voluntary' part-time employed refers to those who are (a) unwilling to work additional hours or (b) willing to work additional hours but unavailable for additional work.
- (2) 'Involuntary' part-time employed refers to time-related underemployed persons, i.e. part-timers who are willing and available to work additional hours.
- (3) Incidence refers to the number of part-time employed resident youths in the respective groups as a percentage of employed resident youths.
- (4) Data for 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' may not add up to the overall figure due to rounding.

• **CHART 10: YOUTH TIME-RELATED UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE, 2016**



Source: Singapore: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM
Other economies: OECD Database

Notes

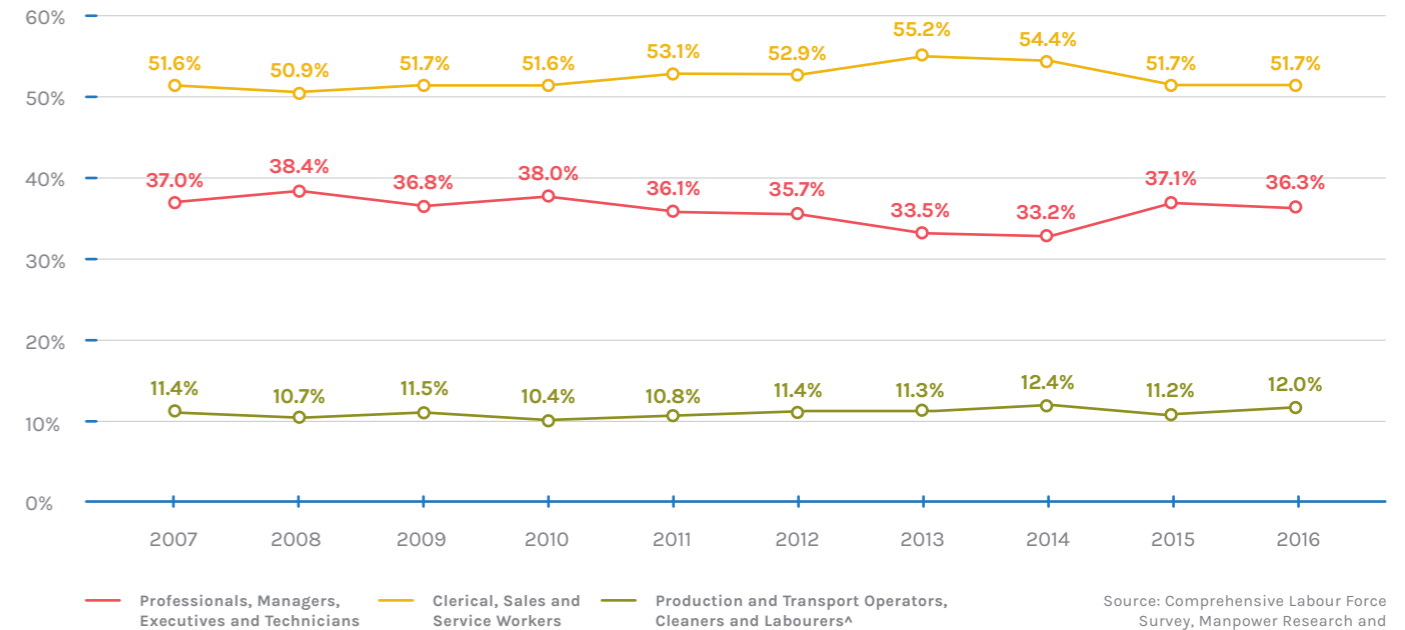
- (1) Data for Singapore pertain to residents and are for the period of June.
- (2) In Singapore, time-related underemployed (i.e. involuntary part-timers) are defined as part-timers who are willing and available to work additional hours. In Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom, involuntary part-time workers are defined as persons who declared to work part-time because they could not find a full-time job, in Norway as persons who declared to work part-time because they could not find a full-time job and would prefer to work more hours, in Sweden as persons who could not find a full-time job, wish and are available to work more hours and in the United States as persons who are unable to find a full-time job and would prefer to work more hours.
- (3) Youths refer to those aged 15 to 24, except for the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain which refer to those aged 16 to 24.

Varied occupations among youths reflect their education profile and presence of part-timers

The occupational mix of youths in employment has stayed largely similar across the past decade⁹. In part pulled up by the presence of part-timers, 52% of youths in employment were *clerical, sales and service workers* such as office clerks, shop sales assistants and waiters. This was followed by *professionals, managers, executives*

and *technicians (PMETs)* (36%), and *production and related workers* (12%). While PMETs formed a smaller proportion among employed youths, their share was substantially higher among employed residents in the next age band of 25 to 29 (71%) as more of them have obtained degree qualifications.

• **CHART 11: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED YOUTHS (JUNE PERIODS)**



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM

Notes

- (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
- (2) Data are classified based on Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2015. Data before year 2015 which were coded based on earlier versions of the SSOC were mapped to SSOC 2015 as far as possible to facilitate data comparability. The series starts from June 2007 instead of June 2006 as the level of occupational detail collected in 2006 did not support mapping to the latest version of SSOC.
- (3) Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- (4) [^] Includes Agricultural and Fishery Workers and Workers Not Elsewhere Classified.
- (5) June 2007 data have been adjusted based on latest revised population estimates from DOS to facilitate comparisons with June 2008 onwards.

⁹ Data exclude male youths who were serving their mandatory full-time National Service to better understand the choice of employment among youths.

Most youths were working in the services industries, mainly in public administration and education, food and beverage services, retail trade and professional services.

• **CHART 12: INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED YOUTHS, JUNE 2016**



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM

Notes

(1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

(2) 'Others' refer to Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage and Waste Management.

Youths typically earned less than the average worker, reflecting their shorter work experience

In 2016, the median income (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed resident youths was \$2,369, lower than the \$4,056 for all full-time resident workers. Expectedly, youths earn less than the average worker, as many have just started in their careers and tend to be in entry-level positions. The income was also weighed down by youths who work while studying. Excluding students in employment, youths who were fully engaged in work earned a higher median income of \$2,535. As with the general population, the median income of full-time employed youths¹⁰ rose over the decade by 4.1% per annum, or 1.7% per annum after adjusting for inflation.

Conclusion

Youth participation in the Singapore labour force remains stable. Although more youths deferred entry into the labour market for studies, more youths took up work or internship while studying. The rising trend of youths working while studying has enabled them to acquire skills and experience and would help smoothen their eventual school-to-employment transition.

Given their life stage, youths do earn less than the average worker. This can be attributed to their shorter work experience as many have just started in their careers and tend to be in entry-level positions.

Positively, Singapore's youth continue to have one of the lowest unemployment and long-term unemployment rates in the world, and economic 'idleness' is less of an issue for Singapore. This reflects the quality education and training system which equips our youths to take on the jobs created.

¹⁰ Refers to those who were fully engaged in work.

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Youth Wellbeing & Aspirations



Overcome limits!



Healthy body!



Nice throw!



Let's work harder!



Have goals!



Study hard!

Contributors of Singaporean Youths' Wellbeing:

Life Goals, Family-Community-Nation Capitals, Opportunity & Social Mobility

Ho Kong Weng

School of Economics
Singapore Management University

Abstract

Life goals induce one's current investment and set one's expectations of future outcomes, affecting one's current state of subjective wellbeing. Using National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016, which has a representative sample of Singaporean youths, we find that non-zero-sum life goals such as family-oriented life goals and altruism-oriented life goals enhance happiness and life satisfaction of Singaporean youths while career-oriented life goals, zero-sum in nature, reduce subjective wellbeing. Apart from personal motivations or life aspirations, perceived social mobility (in terms of career opportunity and meritocracy) matters positively in the subjective wellbeing of both youths in school and in the workforce. Family support and national capital (constructed using items on national pride, support for nation during crisis, sense of belonging, role in developing nation) are also important contributors to youths' subjective wellbeing. Given family support is an important contributor to wellbeing, shrinking family size and rising divorce rate pose challenges to the wellbeing of youths. Our exploratory empirics showed an improvement of intergenerational education mobility over the various waves of NYS, and that upward mobility is an important channel of up-lifting the subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore. Maintaining mobility and meritocracy are critical to youths' wellbeing as the Singapore economy matures to a lower steady-state growth rate.



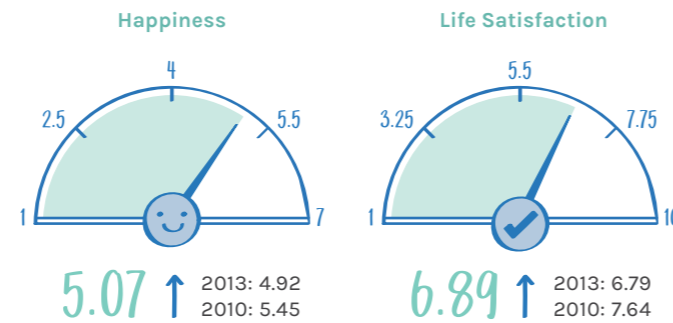
Introduction

Singapore's economy has been growing since her independence, with impressive economic output and low average unemployment rates, together with high educational attainment and life expectancy.

Real per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown from S\$5,603 in 1961 to S\$73,957 in 2016¹ with average end-of-quarter seasonally adjusted total unemployment rate of 2.3 percent², from 1992 first quarter to 2017 second quarter. The mean number of years of schooling for residents aged 25 and over has increased from 3.1³ in 1960 to 10.7⁴ in 2016 while the life expectancy at birth for residents has also increased from 62.9 years in 1960 to 82.9 years in 2016. Although these figures are not specific to the youths in Singapore, we can infer that both government and parental investment in human capital over the years have brought about higher educational attainment and better health of the youths in Singapore, preparing them for the economic and job opportunities available.

In the quest for economic wellbeing, are our youths pursuing and faring well too in terms of their subjective wellbeing? This chapter will provide an account, and examine the relationships of these and related measures of non-economic wellbeing with the various domains from the National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016. In particular, we are interested in how different subgroups perform in the various wellbeing indicators, and how perceived opportunities in Singapore, used as proxies for social mobility, might affect the subjective wellbeing of youths.

• **FIGURE 1: HAPPINESS & LIFE SATISFACTION**



In our study here, we focus on two indicators of youth's subjective wellbeing: happiness, and life satisfaction; the former is emotive in nature, a form of experienced wellbeing, while the latter is cognitive in nature, a form of evaluative wellbeing. Using data from the NYS 2010, 2013 and 2016, **Figure 1** shows that on a happiness scale from 1 to 7, taking all things together, youths' self-reported level of happiness has increased slightly from 4.92 in 2013 to 5.07 in 2016, and on a life satisfaction scale from 1 to 10, having considered all things in life, youths' self-reported level of life satisfaction, similar to that of happiness, has registered a slight increase from 6.79 in 2013 to 6.89 in 2016. However, these levels of subjective wellbeing are lower than those reported in 2010, which could be a year with an unusual spike, as reported in Ho (2015). Disregarding the spike in 2010, the levels of youth wellbeing are rather stable. Instead of trying to explain fluctuations of wellbeing over the years, we attempt to explain variations of wellbeing across characteristics of youth using NYS 2016.

We will consider, in subsequent sections, the relationships of happiness and life satisfaction with life goals of youth, the various forms of capital (family, community, and national), with controls on demographic and socioeconomic background variables in a series of regression analyses. Finally, we will explore the relationships of wellbeing and opportunity, inequality, and social mobility.

Demographic & Socioeconomic Background

Blanchflower (2009) surveyed international studies on subjective wellbeing and found that wellbeing was higher among married people, the highly educated, the healthy, and those with high income. In contrast, wellbeing was low among newly divorced and separated people, the unemployed, immigrants and minorities, those in poor health, the less educated, and the poor. However, these are covariates of wellbeing of the general population, and we want to ask if they are also relevant for youths. Suppose there is an intergenerational transmission of wellbeing and its determinants from adult parents to their youths⁵, then we could still find them as significant influencers of youth's subjective wellbeing. Are the determinants similar in Singapore?

Using data from NYS 2013, Ho (2015) documented that the wellbeing of Singapore's youths was related to demographic and socioeconomic background: non-Chinese registered slightly higher levels of wellbeing, better health was associated with higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, divorced or separated youths registered lowest scores, both educational attainment and educational aspiration were positively correlated with subjective wellbeing, and parental income or personal income had a positive influence on the wellbeing of youths. Are the results similar for NYS 2016?

Life Goals

Forward-looking behaviours in economic models imply that life goals set by youths will induce investment in terms of time, effort, and resources to fulfil their dreams, and an expectation of the future outcomes will likely affect their current state of subjective wellbeing. We will use this conceptual framework to understand why life goals do or do not matter in the wellbeing of youth, either positively or negatively.

Based on comprehensive reviews, Casas et al. (2004) and Kasser (2004) documented positive correlations of intrinsic goals and personal wellbeing but negative relationships between extrinsic goals and subjective wellbeing. Using data obtained from Germany, Headey (2006) found that non-zero-sum goals (likened to intrinsic goals), which include commitment to family, friends and social, and political involvement, promote life satisfaction. Zero-sum goals (likened to extrinsic goals), on the other hand, including commitment to career success and material gains, appear detrimental to life satisfaction. Following the lead of Headey (2006), we will group the various items of life goals into zero-sum and non-zero-sum life goals, and examine their impact on wellbeing of the youth. Ho (2015) documented that family-oriented life goals, which are non-zero-sum in nature, were positively correlated with wellbeing while life goals such as "to earn lots of money", and "to migrate to another country" were negatively correlated with happiness and life satisfaction.

Using NYS 2016, we conduct factor analysis and construct life goal indices seen in **Table 1**. Family Life Goals and Altruism Life Goals are considered non-zero sum life goals while the third index constructed, Career Life Goals, is zero-sum.

Notes

¹ Computed by the author based on online data from the Singapore Department of Statistics, www.singstat.gov.sg. The deflator is Consumer Price Index (CPI), base year 2014.

² Computed by the author based on online data from the Singapore Department of Statistics, www.singstat.gov.sg.

³ Extracted from Barro and Lee (2001).

⁴ Extracted from online data, Singapore Department of Statistics, www.singstat.gov.sg.

Note

⁵ Family members and conditions have an influence on the wellbeing of the youth; for example, Schnettler et al. (2015) showed that family resources influenced the subjective wellbeing of university students in Southern Chile. With regard to intergenerational transmission of subjective wellbeing, Ong et al. (2013) found mutual altruism between mothers and their youths aged 15 to 19 years based on data from a social survey on Singaporeans.

• TABLE 1: LIFE GOAL INDICES

Index	Cronbach's alpha
Family Life Goals	
To maintain strong family relationships	0.726
To get married	
To have children	
Altruism Life Goals	
To be actively involved in local volunteer work	0.829
To be actively involved in overseas volunteer work	
To help the less fortunate	
To contribute to society	
Career Life Goals	
To acquire new skills and knowledge	0.72
To start my own business	
To earn lots of money	
To be famous	
To discover, design or invent something new	
To have a successful career	

• TABLE 2: SIMPLE WELLBEING REGRESSION ON LIFE GOALS

	Happiness	Satisfaction
Family Life Goals	.2460143***	.2113418***
Career Life Goals	-.0599607***	-.0722501***
Altruism Life Goals	.1154323***	.1237207***
Sample Size	3,531	3,531
Adj. R-squared	0.0787	0.0636
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000

Note
***p<0,01

Table 2 shows the simple wellbeing regressions on life goals. The results clearly document the positive correlations between non-zero-sum life goals (Family Life Goals and Altruism Life Goals) and subjective wellbeing, be it happiness or life satisfaction; in contrast, zero-sum life goals (Career Life Goals) are negatively correlated with the wellbeing of youths, consistent with the results of Headey (2006). As the constructed indices are normalised, the magnitudes of the coefficients suggest that family-oriented life goals are relatively more important than the other life goals in the wellbeing of youths.

Family Capital & Community Capital

Family members and conditions have an influence on the wellbeing of the youths. For example, using the first four waves of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Ulker (2008) found that parental divorce significantly and negatively affected the wellbeing of female youths; current living arrangements were important determinants of the mental health and life satisfaction of the males. Offer (2013) showed that adolescents' emotional wellbeing was enhanced by eating meals together with family members, especially with the presence of the fathers, and that leisure activities with family members were beneficial to teens' wellbeing. A review by Proctor et al. (2009) showed that parental marital status, and social support from family and friends were important determinants of the wellbeing of youths. These findings suggest family as a capital stock benefiting the wellbeing of the children and youths. Waithaka (2014) introduced a conceptual model of family capital to explain an intergenerational transfer of statuses, where family stock is a stock of resources of multiple dimensions: economic wealth of the family, social networks and support of the family, and cultural knowledge, habits, beliefs, and values of the family. Distinguishing tangible resources, in the form of economic support, from intangible resources, in the form of social support, Schnettler et al. (2015) found that the former correlated positively with the life satisfaction of university students in Southern Chile while the latter was related to happiness.

In NYS 2016, respondents were asked to indicate the position of their household in a 10-point income scale, and we call this variable Household Income Step, which represents a type of family tangible resources.

Available in NYS 2016 are 6 items on family support with regard to one's family upbringing, developed by Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider (2000), and we will use them to construct a Family Support Index to represent the family stock (**Table 3**).

• TABLE 3: FAMILY SUPPORT INDEX

Index	Cronbach's alpha
Family Support	
I feel appreciated for who I am	0.767
If I have a problem, I get special attention and help from family	
No matter what happens, I know I'll be loved and accepted	
We enjoy having dinner together and talking	
We compromise when our schedules conflict	
We are willing to help each other out when something needs to be done	

Next, we will represent community capital by participation in social groups and assumption of leadership positions in these groups. Social participation has been found to be positively correlated with wellbeing of students. For example, Gilman (2001) reported positive and significant correlations of students' global life satisfaction and their social interests and participation in structured extracurricular activities. Also, in Gilman et al. (2004), students who reported low social interests and low participation in structured extracurricular activities scored low in all satisfaction domains.

We construct the Leader-Social Participation variable by estimating and normalising the times per year the youth participated and held a leadership position, measured as holding an official title, in at least one social group.

National Capital

Ho (2015) reported a positive correlation of national pride with wellbeing of youths in Singapore, consistent with the findings of Tambyah et al. (2009) and Ha and Jang (2015). As NYS 2016 has three more items related to national pride, and are closer to the notion of contributing or investing in the national capital, we will use them to construct a National Capital Index (**Table 4**).

• TABLE 4: NATIONAL CAPITAL INDEX

Index	Cronbach's alpha
National Capital	
How proud are you to be a Singaporean	0.88
I will do whatever I can to support Singapore in times of national crisis	
I feel a sense of belonging to Singapore	
I have a part to play in developing Singapore for the benefit of current and future generations	
We compromise when our schedules conflict	
We are willing to help each other out when something needs to be done	

All Together!

Now, we are ready to consider together all the contributions of family capital (Family Support Index), community capital (Leader-Social Participation) and national capital (National Capital Index) with control on individual demographic and socioeconomic background, to the subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore. We will examine also the impact of the three types of life goals in the regressions: Family Life Goals, Career Life Goals, and Altruism Life Goals. **Table 5** shows the happiness regressions while **Table 6** shows the life satisfaction regressions. We report the findings for the entire sample of NYS 2016 in column (1), full-time students in column (2), and full-time working youths in column (3). The sub-samples allow us to examine if the covariates of subjective wellbeing vary over the life stages of youths or in the transition from school to work.

Based on **Table 5**, Family Support Index has a positive and significant influence on happiness for both full-time students and youths working full-time. Leader-Social Participation has a positive impact on happiness of the working youth. National Capital Index contributes positively to happiness for both sub-samples. These relational stocks are important determinants of the happiness of the youths.

Family Life Goals and Altruism Life Goals, both being non-zero-sum, contribute positively to happiness while Career Life Goals, which is zero-sum, has a negative impact on happiness of full-time working youths and the entire sample, based on columns (1) and (3). Note that, in particular, the absolute value of the Career Life Goals is comparable or even larger than that of the Family Life Goals for

working youths; there is a tension between family life and work life, and the negative influence of the zero-sum career-oriented life goals overwhelms the positive influence of the non-zero-sum family-oriented life goals.

Household Income Step, an item representing a form of tangible family resources, is positively correlated with happiness. Personal Income has a positive and significant ($p < .10$) coefficient for youths working full-time. Parents' income does not matter in the happiness of full-time students as its influence may be captured in Household Income Step. Economic variables such as income would translate to higher purchasing power for goods and services required in the production of happiness.

• **TABLE 5: HAPPINESS REGRESSIONS**

	Entire Sample	Student (Full-time)	Working (Full-time)
Age	0.0065190	0.0089422	-0.0008524
Male	-0.0099065	0.0268949	0.0114422
Non-Chinese	0.1010657***	-0.0269390	0.2049529***
Has Religion	-0.0247969	-0.0530791	-0.0136559
Lives in HDB	-0.0054636	-0.1201255*	0.0415363
Married	0.0654093	0.4992298	0.0405680
Working (Full-time)	0.0575684	-	-
Student (Full-time)	0.0233104	-	-
Family Support Index	0.2895059***	0.3545105***	0.2121161***
Leader-Social Participation	0.0612090***	0.0287608	0.0559987**
Family Life Goals	0.0858998***	0.0880409***	0.0722240***
Career Life Goals	-0.0459849***	-0.0028605	-0.0802326***
Altruism Life Goals	0.0409162**	0.0520638*	0.0561828**
National Capital Index	0.1963654***	0.1322280***	0.2212535***
Household Income Step	0.0991781***	0.0827601**	0.1122121***
Parents' Income	-	-0.0397135	-
Personal Income	-	-	0.0494864*
Sample Size	3,445	1,205	1,660
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.2385	0.2237	0.2313

Note * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 6 reports the findings on life satisfaction regressions.

The results and interpretations for life satisfaction in **Table 6** are similar to those for happiness in **Table 5**. For full-time students, only Altruism Life Goals matters in their life satisfaction while all three life aspiration indices matter in the life satisfaction of working youths.

As the three life goal indices are statistically significant covariates in the regression results reported in **Tables 5 and 6**, we are interested to investigate if our youths exhibit patterns of life aspirations in clusters, and if affirmative, whether further analyses would suggest what matters more in the wellbeing of the respective clusters separately and what is common across the clusters.

• **TABLE 6: SATISFACTION WITH LIFE REGRESSIONS**

	Entire Sample	Student (Full-time)	Working (Full-time)
Age	0.0021977	0.0053167	-0.0014623
Male	0.0017623	0.0192602	0.0109851
Non-Chinese	0.0215741	-0.0204149	0.1236675**
Has Religion	-0.0052569	0.0032368	-0.0198897
Lives in HDB	-0.0020362	-0.0618129	0.1033282*
Married	0.1187022**	0.3665415	0.0694459
Working (Full-time)	0.1311448***	-	-
Student (Full-time)	0.1140127**	-	-
Family Support Index	0.2775646***	0.3386545***	0.2042832***
Leader-Social Participation	0.0512828***	0.0340937	0.0437098*
Family Life Goals	0.0581675***	0.0432124	0.0459163**
Career Life Goals	-0.0558288***	-0.0137793	-0.1031126***
Altruism Life Goals	0.0540861***	0.0675242**	0.0581421**
National Capital Index	0.1828467***	0.1468292***	0.2201106***
Household Income Step	0.1222272***	0.0881217**	0.1234022***
Parents' Income	-	0.0012976	-
Personal Income	-	-	0.0921596***
Sample Size	3,445	1,205	1,660
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.2171	0.2083	0.2212

Note

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Perceived Mobility & Inequality

Life aspirations form the current stock of goals our youths have for the future, spurring them toward the future and at the same time influencing their subjective wellbeing. Apart from the motivations they have now, how the future might turn out to be, especially in terms of the expected realisation of personal aspirations and career opportunities, would have an impact on their subjective wellbeing as well. Therefore, we will next use items on perceived opportunity in achieving personal aspirations and having a good career to examine their influence on the subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore.

Furthermore, perceived opportunity in realising one's personal aspirations and career may be viewed as perceived social or intergenerational mobility, which has an influence on one's subjective wellbeing. For example, using data from the General Social Survey in the U.S., Nikolaev and Burns (2014) showed that downward intergenerational mobility had a negative impact on self-reported level of happiness while upward intergenerational mobility had a positive effect, with the downward mobility negative effect stronger than the upward mobility positive effect. Zhao et al. (2017) used data from mainland China and found that both inter- and intra-generational social mobility had a positive effect on subjective wellbeing; downward intra-generational social mobility had a negative effect but it was not the case for downward inter-generational social mobility as family advantages might help maintain the levels of wellbeing previously enjoyed.

Social mobility and inequality are related concepts, and can be jointly determined in the conceptual model of Ho (2010). Does inequality increase or decrease happiness? Katic and Ingram (2017) hypothesised that the relationship between income inequality and subjective wellbeing was influenced by mechanisms such as egalitarian preferences, perceived fairness, social comparison concerns, as well as perceived social mobility. Alesina et al. (2004) showed that inequality could have different effects on happiness, depending on the perception of social mobility and the economic status of the respondents; Americans perceived high social mobility and those who were rich perceived a high chance of their offspring moving down the social ladder,

and therefore a higher income inequality was associated with a much lower expected economic status for their children, implying lower level of happiness; on the other hand, Europeans who were poor were adversely affected by income inequality because Europeans perceived low social mobility. Those who were poor perceived a low chance of their offspring moving up the social ladder, and therefore a high income inequality meant their children being trapped with much lower expected economic status, resulting in lower level of happiness. In other words, wellbeing, inequality, and perceived social mobility are inter-related.

How about the case of Singapore? Using the World Values Survey Singapore 2012, Ho (2016) provided evidence that the middle income class was squeezed in terms of national pride because of income inequality, and suggested the perception of low social mobility being a possible reason. Extending Ho's (2016) study on the general population, we are interested to find out the relationship between subjective wellbeing and perceived social mobility as proxied by perceived opportunity in career and personal aspiration, attitudes related to inequality, as well as the interaction between perceived opportunity and attitudes related to inequality among youths in Singapore.

Career Opportunity is a standardised variable based on the 5-point Likert scale item "There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to have a good career" while Aspiration Opportunity is derived from "There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to achieve my personal aspirations in life". These variables are used as proxies for expected or perceived upward mobility, especially for the case of Career Opportunity.

NYS 2016 has two items on attitudes related to inequality (and social mobility): Inequality-Incentive and Work-Connection. Inequality-Incentive is based on a 10-point scale where 1 represents "income should be made more equal" at one end, and 10 represents "we need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort" at the other end. This item suggests a certain perceived optimal level of inequality; a higher score suggests a preference for higher inequality while a lower score the opposite.

Work-Connection, also a 10-point scale, has 1 representing "in the long-run, hard work usually brings a better life" at one end, and 10 representing "hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections" at the other end. Katic and Ingram (2017) used a reverse-coded version of this question to represent perceived social mobility. Here we interpret the reverse-coded version as an indicator for perceived meritocracy.

Table 7 shows the happiness regressions for the entire sample, full-time students and youths working full-time, with Career Opportunity, Aspiration Opportunity, Inequality-Incentive, and Work-Connection added as covariates. **Table 8** shows the life satisfaction regressions.

Career Opportunity is significant for all the three samples, especially the sample for full-time working youths, based on both **Tables 7 and 8**. Aspiration Opportunity is only significant for the entire sample, for both happiness and life satisfaction regressions.

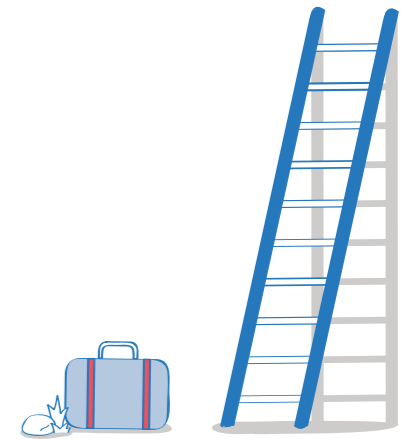
A higher Inequality-Incentive brings about a lower level of happiness in the entire sample in **Table 7**, though not in the separate samples, would be consistent with the zero-sum life goals bringing lower wellbeing⁶. As for the life satisfaction regressions

reported in **Table 8**, a higher Inequality-Incentive brings a lower level of life satisfaction in the combined sample as well as the sample of youths working full-time.

A higher Work-Connection lowers happiness as a perception of a lack of meritocracy brings about a lower level of emotive and experiential wellbeing as well as a lower level of cognitive and evaluative wellbeing, with significant coefficients for all six happiness and life satisfaction regressions in **Tables 7 and 8**.

Family Support Index, National Capital Index, and Household Income Step continue to be statistically significant throughout all happiness and life satisfaction regressions.

Family Life Goals remain significant in all happiness regressions in **Table 7** but not in the separate samples in life satisfaction regressions in **Table 8**.



Note

⁶ Schneider (2012) showed that when the gap between perceived inequality and preferred inequality increased, wellbeing would decrease. A higher Inequality-Incentive might represent a higher preferred inequality, narrowing the gap, and hence might enhance wellbeing. This mechanism seemed absent in our sample. Hence, we offer an alternative reason via the life goals mechanism.

• TABLE 7: HAPPINESS, OPPORTUNITY & INEQUALITY REGRESSIONS

	Entire Sample	Student (Full-time)	Working (Full-time)
Career Opportunity	0.1086995***	0.0813802*	0.1796543***
Aspiration Opportunity	0.0752141***	0.0465906	0.0208951
Inequality-Incentive	-0.0364552**	-0.0359554	-0.0176422
Work-Connection	-0.1251633***	-0.1319381***	-0.1194846***
Age	0.0121575***	0.0180427*	0.0040088
Male	-0.0362013	0.0094620	-0.0198164
Non-Chinese	0.0566399	-0.0684964	0.1677022***
Has Religion	-0.0290790	-0.0630933	-0.0173293
Lives in HDB	-0.0208971	-0.1413905**	0.0251838
Married	0.0367718	0.3658876	0.0235688
Working (Full-time)	0.0316601	-	-
Student (Full-time)	-0.0019386	-	-
Family Support Index	0.2602965***	0.3302827***	0.1823950***
Leader-Social Participation	0.0534254***	0.0272963	0.0459201*
Family Life Goals	0.0718292***	0.079071***	0.0598319***
Career Life Goals	-0.0239124	0.0129532	-0.0527357**
Altruism Life Goals	0.0197281	0.0274996	0.0347596
National Capital Index	0.1215907***	0.0846934***	0.1389403***
Household Income Step	0.081779***	0.0599492*	0.0906036***
Parents' Income	-	-0.031248	-
Personal Income	-	-	0.0308244
Sample Size	3,445	1,205	1,660
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.2866	0.2517	0.2921

Note

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

• TABLE 8: SATISFACTION, OPPORTUNITY & INEQUALITY REGRESSIONS

	Entire Sample	Student (Full-time)	Working (Full-time)
Career Opportunity	0.1331545***	0.1032782**	0.1697227***
Aspiration Opportunity	0.0525458**	0.0460683	-0.0014933
Inequality-Incentive	-0.0531012***	-0.0289509	-0.0600300***
Work-Connection	-0.1052884***	-0.1269128***	-0.1123591***
Age	0.0074580	0.0144396	0.0031038
Male	-0.0229944	-0.0015916	-0.0145883
Non-Chinese	-0.0178650	-0.0616943	0.0852980*
Has Religion	-0.0101385	-0.0062200	-0.0262044
Lives in HDB	-0.0172076	-0.0841501	0.0910207*
Married	0.0945596**	0.2274385	0.0574243
Working (Full-time)	0.1053982**	-	-
Student (Full-time)	0.0895325*	-	-
Family Support Index	0.2497471***	0.3122919***	0.1778354***
Leader-Social Participation	0.0437582***	0.0321701	0.0364586
Family Life Goals	0.0449268***	0.0329121	0.0344128
Career Life Goals	-0.0336885**	0.0023837	-0.0739909***
Altruism Life Goals	0.0332294*	0.0441410	0.0340840
National Capital Index	0.1099569***	0.0949258***	0.1506407***
Household Income Step	0.1072564***	0.0618606*	0.1144526***
Parents' Income	-	0.0099560	-
Personal Income	-	-	0.0772392***
Sample Size	3,445	1,205	1,660
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.2616	0.2389	0.2726

Note

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

In summary, based on **Tables 7 and 8**, Career Opportunity and Work-Connection are important covariates of the youths' wellbeing in Singapore, based on NYS 2016. It is then natural to ask if actual

social mobility has increased over the various waves of NYS. We attempt to explore further in the next section.

Actual Social Mobility

While the earlier section provides evidence that perceived mobility has an important influence on subjective wellbeing of youths based on NYS 2016, we want to ask whether actual social mobility has increased or decreased over the various waves of NYS and the implications for subjective wellbeing. We now make use of an available variable on educational attainment and educational aspirations for all past waves of the NYS to derive a coefficient of intergenerational mobility in education. Education Step is a 5-point item, representing educational attainment at different levels: Below Secondary, Secondary, Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary), Diploma and Professional, and University. Education Step is available for fathers, mothers, and non-student youths. Similarly, we construct the corresponding Education Aspiration Step for youths who are students.

Among the three possible variables for measuring intergenerational mobility, namely education, income, and occupation, educational attainment is more reliable as it is less subject to yearly variations and variations in career stages or ages of parents and children, which affects both income and occupation class.

Table 9 shows intergenerational education mobility based on samples of working youths for the various waves. Father's Education matters more than Mother's Education, and the latter is not significant statistically; hence we remove the latter. The coefficient of Father's Education is a simple measure of the intergenerational persistence, or the inverse, of mobility. The coefficient is seen to decrease across the various waves, suggesting improvements in social mobility between the working youths and their fathers.

• **TABLE 9: INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION STEP MOBILITY FOR WORKING YOUTHS**

	2002	2005	2010	2013	2016
Male	-0.0633217	-0.2572667**	-0.0791893	-0.0405874	-0.2037000***
Non-Chinese	-0.4347621***	-0.6453446***	-0.4039193***	-0.7551898***	-1.0257020***
Parents Unmarried	-0.3233825**	-0.0086164	-0.1590174	-0.3578772***	-0.1465406**
Father's Education	0.3122229***	0.3267048***	0.2757750***	0.1769100***	0.1571114***
Sample Size	767	404	688	1,234	1,675
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.1363	0.1501	0.0996	0.1812	0.2684

Note
p<0.05, *p<0.01

Table 10 shows the intergenerational education aspiration mobility based on samples of students from the various waves. The dependent variable is educational aspiration of the youths in school while the independent variable Father's Education is

based on the education attainment of the father. The coefficient of Father's Education in the fifth wave is much lower than that of the first wave.

• **TABLE 10: INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION ASPIRATION STEP MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS**

	2002	2005	2010	2013	2016
Male	-0.0886964	-0.0958674	-0.2146076**	-0.0203610	-0.0201473
Non-Chinese	-0.3435199***	-0.3642993***	-0.2544201**	0.0625645	-0.0552246
Parents Unmarried	-0.5009355**	-0.0852227	-0.2256310	-0.0336963	-0.0959776*
Father's Education	0.2010856***	0.1248982***	0.1343752***	0.1209678***	0.0653562***
Sample Size	406	577	426	1,123	1,250
Prob > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Adj R-squared	0.0901	0.0612	0.0488	0.0481	0.0319

Note
*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Note that the coefficients of Father's Education in **Table 10** are lower than those in **Table 9**, as students' educational aspirations might be influenced to a larger extent by educational policies and the generally homogenous school environment in Singapore, rather than by parental background in terms of Father's Education. In the last two waves, Non-Chinese did not have lower educational aspirations in **Table 10**, but educational attainment did have a negative correlation with Non-Chinese for the last two waves in **Table 9**.

Based on the findings from **Tables 8 and 9**, we may say that intergenerational education mobility could have increased between 2002 and 2016, contributing positively to the subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore, for both working youths and youths in school. Further investigations are needed as the regressions done here are preliminary and serve as exploratory studies.



Conclusion

Using NYS 2016, we showed that proxies for family capital, community capital, and national capital are important determinants of subjective wellbeing of our youths in Singapore. In particular, non-zero-sum life goals such as family-oriented life goals and altruism-oriented life goals contributed positively to wellbeing, while zero-sum life goals such as career-oriented life goals have a negative impact.

While community engagement and social participation are important youth development strategies, the role of the family seems to be critical in the subjective wellbeing of the youth and its relationship with other variables may be researched further, as well as the changing nature of families in Singapore which may have an impact on family support and life goals related to the family. Further investigations on the different types of resources in family support, as in Waitthaka (2014) and Schnettler et al. (2015), would help us understand better on the transmission of both economic and non-economic wellbeing from parents to their youths.

Apart from life goals, expectations about the future, proxied by perceived opportunities in career and perceived meritocracy are also key contributors to wellbeing. Mechanisms of upward mobility, differences in upward mobility, and differential returns in human capital investment, if any, across sub-groups of youths in Singapore should be investigated further, as they matter in the subjective wellbeing of our youths significantly.

Our exploratory empirics showed an improvement of intergenerational education mobility over the various waves of NYS, and hence a channel of lifting up the subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore. Our future research will examine the interaction of inequality, mobility and subjective wellbeing of youths in Singapore, and an intergenerational transmission of both economic and non-economic wellbeing in Singapore.

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Gender Differences of Working Youths' Attitudes towards Marriage & Work

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Abstract

Using Wave 2 (2016) data from the Singapore Panel Study on Social Dynamics (SPSSD), a longitudinal panel study investigating Singaporean households, youths aged 21 to 35 (n=602) who are working full time were examined. Gender differences of working youths in their attitudes towards work-family conflicts, marriage and dual-career families were found. Both genders are satisfied with their work-life balance, as their families are generally supportive and able to understand and willing to adapt to their work demands. Although youths are becoming more liberal in their attitudes as indicated by the National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016, the panel data suggests that working youths, especially females, still hold conservative attitudes in a number of areas including having children in a marriage, cohabitation and becoming an unwed mother. In addition, female working youths still see themselves as the main homemaker and childcare provider. Male working youths are also more career-oriented and less willing to accept a low-paying job to spend more time with their families, as they see themselves as the breadwinners of their families. There is more gender equality when it comes to work, as working youths, regardless of gender, see women as important and equal income contributors to the family, and that careers are equally important for both genders. However, this presents a challenge for female working youths as they would need to juggle both work and family obligations, more so than males, especially when they feel that it is their responsibility for homemaking. They are therefore more willing to accept lower paying jobs and less willing to work long hours.



Introduction

Singapore enjoys one of the lowest unemployment rate for young people in the world (Toh, 2017). At 5.0% in 2016 for youths aged 15 to 29 (Ministry of Manpower [MOM], 2017a), the low proportion of unemployed youths reflects the strong economic fundamentals and quality of education received by young Singaporeans. According to data from the Labour Force in Singapore 2016 (MOM, 2017b), two in three Singaporeans (62.3%) between the ages of 20 and 24 are in the work force, while nine in ten of those aged between 25 and 29 are gainfully employed (90.3%). In spite of their active participation in the job market, there is a lack of research examining the attitudes of employed youths, whose opinions may be radically different from those who are still in school. Working youths' attitudes towards work are highly salient as they have just stepped into the workforce, or are still developing in their early careers.

For Singapore youths born after the 1980s, they are often accused of being a strawberry generation, who are unable to withstand pressure or work as hard as previous generations. Youths belonging to this generation are often seen as valuing personal time over work and responsibilities, and are less resilient and adaptive to changes.

In conjunction with differing work attitudes, youth in general are often popularly portrayed as being more liberal than the older generation. We would thus expect that youth are more accepting of cohabitation, unwed motherhood and choosing to remain childless after marriage. Working youths typically are also of the marrying age and are becoming financially independent from their parents. This allows them to have the resources to consider marriage and settle down with a partner. With dual-career families becoming more common in Singapore, it would be interesting to see how youths negotiate both work and family obligations in the competitive employment climate.

According to the latest Marriage and Parenthood Survey, 83% of single Millennial youths aged 21 to 35 indicated that they want to marry (National Population and Talent Division, 2017). This is consistent with the National Youth Survey (NYS) (National Youth Council, 2017), where around two fifths of youths aged 15 to 34 still view getting married and having children as very important life goals; these aspirations have remained constant from 2013 to 2016. However, young people's marriage beliefs may be increasingly influenced by the pragmatic realities of family and work responsibilities that accompany marriage. The NYS 2016 saw a decrease in the percentage of youths who believe that one should marry (39% in 2013 to 30% in 2016) and an increase in the percentage of youths who believe that it is not necessary to marry (25% in 2013 to 31% in 2016).

A study by the Institute of Policy Studies (2013) where they asked singles aged 21 to 39 for their views on marriage and parenthood echo similar findings. Results from that study show that most singles still want to get married and have children, with male respondents more likely to desire marriage than female respondents. However, where male respondents expect to be egalitarian in terms of sharing home responsibilities after marriage, female respondents are not convinced that their future spouse will actually do so. The same study also found that most respondents accept the concept of cohabitation, although only half of them will personally do that with their partners. About a third of the respondents said that having children out-of-wedlock was unacceptable.

Under the current Employment Act, working mothers are entitled to sixteen weeks of paid maternity leave. Since the year 2016, working fathers are also entitled to two weeks of paid paternity leave funded by the government (Yong, 2016). Starting from July 2017, working mothers are also able to share four out of the sixteen weeks of maternity leave with their husbands, up from the original one week. With the one week of childcare and one week of unpaid infant care leave, this gives working fathers the potential to take up to eight weeks of leave from work during his child's first year. The government hopes to encourage fathers to be more involved in the raising of their children with these policy changes.

In addition to promoting an active fathering role, young couples are also encouraged to stay close to their parents through additional housing grants so that the grandparents may help look after their children while both parents work (Housing & Development Board, 2015).

In summary, the current study examines gender differences in work attitudes, family obligations, and opinions on marriage. The topline findings will help inform policymakers on the emerging social attitudes among dual income families and the challenges faced in the workplace and at home.

Methodology

Respondents

Using data from the Singapore Panel Study on Social Dynamics (SPSSD) Wave 2 (2016) survey, youths aged 21 to 35 who work full time (n=602) were examined for gender differences in their attitudes towards work, marriage and parenthood. About half of the sample is married, and a handful (1 to 2%) are divorced or widowed. All respondents are Singapore residents (both Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents). The sample has nearly equal representation of gender (Males: 47.8%, Females: 52.2%). The demographic breakdown for each gender is presented in **Table 1**. Working youths are generally well-educated, where 75% report having received tertiary education (diploma and above qualifications), more than half hold professional, associate professional and technician jobs, 21% earned a monthly gross income of \$5,000 or higher, and 60% earned between \$2,000 and \$4,999.

Procedures

Respondents were members of the SPSSD households, and were randomly chosen for interviews in the household through the Kish Selection Method. The interviews were administered face-to-face by trained interviewers at respondents' homes, and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. They were conducted in the language that respondents were most comfortable with, and were available in all four official Singaporean languages: English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil.

Survey questionnaire

The SPSSD is a longitudinal study tracking a panel of around 5,000 households representative of the Singapore population since 2015. The study measures family dynamics, societal values and attitudes relevant to national identity and social mobility, and has recently completed its Wave 3 data collection in July 2017. The SPSSD Wave 2 survey contains many research sections and three of them which are related to work, dual-career orientation and marriage attitudes were used in this paper. The seventeen work-family conflict related statements were mostly adapted from Ahmad and Skitmore (2003), while the rest were original statements related to work-life balance. The other statements were adapted from a variety of sources, including nine statements on dual-career orientation from Quah (1999) and seven statements on marriage attitudes from the Taiwan Panel Study of Family Dynamics (Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, 2011). Respondents rated all statements using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 7 is "Strongly agree". They were also allowed to answer "Don't know", "Refused" and "Not applicable" for any of the statements.

Results

As a 7-point Likert scale is used, the scalar mid-point of 4.00 is used as the benchmark to determine if there is higher (above 4.00) or lower (below 4.00) endorsement for the statement. To examine gender differences, a series of t-tests comparing the mean responses between full-time working male and female youths were conducted on all the statements (**Tables 2 to 4**).

Attitudes towards work

For work-related statements, the responses for both genders are largely similar with no statistically significant differences except for three statements (**Table 2**: Statements e, m and p). Female respondents are more likely to agree to accepting a lower income if they get to spend more time with their family, while male respondents are more likely to disagree with this statement (t(589)=-2.31, p<.05). While both genders tend towards agreeing that working long hours give them financial rewards that would benefit their family, male respondents agree significantly

more than females ($t(590)=3.12, p<.01$). Male respondents also are more likely to agree that they do not find it a disturbance when they are required to work outside their stipulated working hours, while female respondents are more likely to disagree with this statement ($t(594)=2.33, p<.05$).

Attitudes towards dual-careers

In terms of dual-career statements, significant gender differences are found for six of the nine statements (Table 3: Statements a, b, c, d, e and g). Interestingly, male respondents are more likely to disagree that it is the wife's responsibility for homemaking even though the husband may help out, while female respondents are more likely to agree that it is largely the wife's responsibility for homemaking ($t(593)=-2.30, p<.05$). Although both genders tend to agree that a working woman's primary responsibilities are to her husband and children in case of conflicting demands, female respondents agree significantly more than male respondents ($t(594)=-2.99, p<.01$). Both genders are likely to disagree that the mother, and not the father, should stay at home if a child is ill. However, female respondents disagree significantly less than male respondents ($t(597)=-2.57, p<.05$). Similarly both genders disagree that the wife should not work if the husband does not approve, but male respondents disagree significantly less than female respondents ($t(596)=2.49, p<.05$). Females agree significantly more than males that having a career or job is equally important for both women and men ($t(598)=-3.54, p<.001$), while males are more likely to see themselves as a very career-oriented person compared to females ($t(599)=2.33, p<.05$). In essence, male respondents embrace more gender egalitarian dual-career attitudes than their female counterparts, particularly in relation to homemaking and

caregiving matters. Despite viewing work outside of the household as equally important for both genders, female youths are still more inclined towards greater female responsibility in homemaking and caregiving matters.

Attitudes towards marriage

Four of the seven marriage statements have statistically significant gender differences (Table 4: Statements a, c, f and g). Although both genders disagree with the statement that it is not necessary to have children in marriage, female respondents disagree significantly less than males ($t(599)=-2.22, p<.05$). When it comes to the statement that it would be better to be in a bad marriage than to be single, both genders strongly disagree, with females disagreeing more than males ($t(599)=3.49, p<.01$). On whether married people are generally happier than divorced and unmarried people, male respondents agree that this is so. However female respondents do not agree as much as males that married people are happier than those who are divorced ($t(592)=3.80, p<.001$), and are on the fence when it comes to married people being happier than those who are unmarried ($t(596)=4.88, p<.001$).



• TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS OF WORKING YOUTHS (N=602)

Demographics	Male (n=288, 47.8%)		Female (n=314, 52.2%)	
	n	%	n	%
Age				
21-25	39	13.5	63	20.1
26-30	106	36.8	99	31.5
31-35	143	49.7	152	48.4
Ethnicity				
Chinese	195	67.7	221	70.4
Malay	56	19.4	48	15.3
Indian	30	10.4	33	10.5
Others	7	2.4	12	3.8
Marital Status				
Single, never married	142	49.3	161	51.3
Married	143	49.7	146	46.5
Divorced/Widowed	3	1.0	7	2.2
Education				
Non-tertiary	72	25.0	68	21.7
Tertiary	216	75.0	246	78.3
Occupation				
Legislators, senior officials and managers	45	15.6	45	14.3
Professionals	84	29.2	79	25.2
Associate professionals and technicians	82	28.5	123	39.2
Clerical support workers	12	4.2	37	11.8
Service and sales workers	19	6.6	24	7.6
Craftsmen and related trades workers	4	1.4	-	-
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	8	2.8	1	0.3
Cleaners, labourers and related workers	3	1.0	4	1.3
Others	31	10.8	1	0.3
Personal Income				
Low income (Below \$2,000)	59	20.5	54	17.2
Middle income (\$2,000-\$4,999)	155	53.8	204	65.0
High income (\$5,000 and above)	74	25.7	54	17.2
Refused	-	-	2	0.6

Note n=sample size

• TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MALE & FEMALE WORKING YOUTH RESPONSES FOR WORK-RELATED STATEMENTS

Statement	Male Working Youths (%)										Female Working Youths (%)								
			Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
a. My working hours prevent me from having more quality time with my family.	4.49 (1.82)	282	8.9	9.6	8.5	18.8	18.4	22.3	13.5	4.38 (1.82)	313	7.7	11.8	12.5	16.0	22.0	15.3	14.7	
b. My work responsibilities demand more of me than my family responsibilities.	4.55 (1.57)	281	5.0	7.8	9.6	21.0	26.7	21.4	8.5	4.34 (1.61)	313	6.1	7.6	11.1	22.7	25.1	19.2	8.2	
c. I would like to share the family responsibilities with my partner.	5.62 (1.34)	250	2.4	1.6	1.6	10.4	22.8	32.8	28.4	5.71 (1.24)	268	1.5	0.7	1.9	10.4	23.1	31.3	31.0	
d. My family is able to adapt to my working hours and work demands.	5.78 (1.12)	281	0.4	1.4	1.4	7.5	25.6	33.8	29.9	5.79 (1.11)	314	0.6	1.0	1.9	6.4	24.5	36.3	29.3	
e. I am willing to accept a lower income if that means I get to spend more time with my family.*	3.88 (1.77)	281	12.1	12.8	16.7	18.9	20.3	11.0	8.2	4.22 (1.73)	310	9.4	9.7	12.9	20.0	22.9	16.5	8.7	
f. If I have to work overtime or over the weekend, I will still spend quality time with my family.	5.41 (1.46)	282	2.1	3.5	5.0	10.3	25.5	26.6	27.0	5.42 (1.48)	313	3.5	2.6	4.2	8.6	25.9	29.4	25.9	
g. Taking care of my dependents affect my working time.	3.59 (1.71)	259	16.2	14.3	12.4	25.5	19.3	7.7	4.6	3.53 (1.76)	285	16.5	15.8	16.8	19.6	17.9	7.4	6.0	
h. My family is stressed because of my working hours and work commitments.	2.81 (1.66)	281	29.5	21.0	15.3	16.4	10.7	5.0	2.1	2.59 (1.48)	313	31.3	22.0	19.2	15.7	8.0	2.9	1.0	
i. I am confident that my family understands my working situations/demands.	5.89 (1.07)	282	0.7	0.0	2.5	4.6	23.4	35.8	33.0	5.88 (1.16)	314	1.0	0.6	2.5	6.4	18.8	36.0	34.7	
j. I can adjust my role easily when I am at work or with my family.	5.53 (1.25)	282	1.1	0.7	5.0	11.3	24.8	33.3	23.8	5.59 (1.21)	314	0.6	2.5	1.0	10.5	29.6	29.9	25.8	
k. I will agree to travel overseas for an extended period if my work requires me to do so.	4.89 (1.67)	285	7.0	5.3	5.6	12.6	26.0	30.2	13.3	4.69 (1.91)	313	8.9	9.6	7.3	11.8	23.6	17.6	21.1	
l. If my work requires me to take up an overseas assignment, my family will accept and adjust accordingly to it.	4.99 (1.45)	280	3.6	2.9	6.4	18.6	30.7	22.9	15.0	4.83 (1.68)	311	7.4	3.9	5.1	20.6	26.0	19.3	17.7	
m. I work long hours because it gives me financial rewards that would benefit my family.**	4.93 (1.69)	281	6.4	3.9	6.4	18.9	22.1	22.4	19.9	4.49 (1.74)	311	7.7	6.4	12.5	20.9	21.5	16.4	14.5	
n. I bring my work home on the weekends.	3.18 (2.04)	283	33.2	14.5	8.1	13.1	15.2	8.5	7.4	3.20 (2.06)	311	32.5	13.8	11.3	11.6	14.1	7.7	9.0	
o. I am not often required to work outside my stipulated working hours.	3.78 (1.81)	283	13.1	14.8	17.0	19.8	14.5	13.1	7.8	4.00 (1.93)	312	13.1	14.1	12.8	18.3	16.0	12.8	12.8	
p. I don't find it a disturbance when I am required to work outside my stipulated working hours.*	4.21 (1.71)	283	10.2	8.5	10.2	23.7	23.3	16.3	7.8	3.89 (1.69)	313	12.8	10.2	14.7	21.7	23.6	12.1	4.8	
q. I am satisfied with my work-life balance.	4.74 (1.50)	285	2.8	4.2	13.3	22.5	22.5	22.5	12.3	4.74 (1.49)	314	2.2	7.3	9.9	20.1	27.1	22.6	10.8	

Notes

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, n=sample size. All statements range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

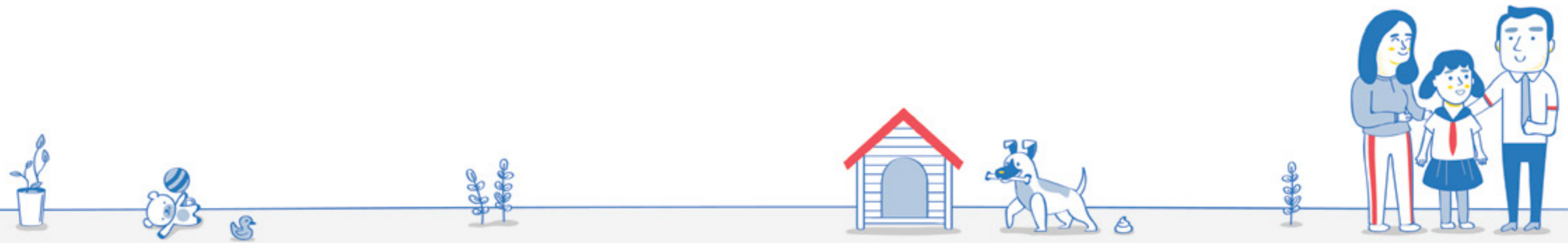
• TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MALE & FEMALE WORKING YOUTH RESPONSES FOR DUAL-CAREER STATEMENTS

Statement	Male Working Youths (%)										Female Working Youths (%)								
			Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
a. Although husband may help out, the responsibility for homemaking is the wife's.*	3.86 (1.85)	284	15.1	13.0	10.9	22.2	18.3	11.6	8.8	4.21 (1.86)	311	12.5	9.0	11.3	17.7	23.8	13.5	12.2	
b. In case of conflicting demands, a working woman's primary responsibilities are to her husband and children.**	4.39 (1.71)	284	8.5	9.2	8.5	20.8	24.3	19.7	9.2	4.79 (1.52)	312	4.8	4.2	7.7	19.2	31.4	20.2	12.5	
c. The mother, not the father, should stay at home if a child is ill.*	3.10 (1.78)	286	27.6	15.0	13.3	22.0	11.2	7.0	3.8	3.49 (1.83)	313	19.2	15.3	15.7	20.4	13.4	8.9	7.0	
d. The wife should not work if the husband does not approve.*	3.00 (1.93)	285	33.0	15.4	12.3	19.3	5.6	7.0	7.4	2.62 (1.72)	313	38.3	16.3	16.6	14.1	6.4	4.8	3.5	
e. Having a career or job is equally important for both women and men.***	5.95 (1.13)	286	0.0	0.7	1.7	10.5	17.5	28.3	41.3	6.25 (0.93)	314	0.0	0.3	1.0	3.2	15.3	29.6	50.6	
f. Both wife and husband's income are equally important for the wellbeing of the family.	5.93 (1.25)	286	0.0	1.7	2.8	10.5	15.7	24.1	45.1	6.05 (1.17)	313	0.6	1.6	1.0	6.4	15.7	28.4	46.3	
g. I am a very career-oriented person.*	5.34 (1.20)	287	0.7	1.4	2.1	20.9	26.1	31.4	17.4	5.11 (1.19)	314	0.3	2.5	3.8	20.7	39.2	18.2	15.3	
h. My career/job is equally important to my spouse and I.	5.35 (1.56)	255	3.9	3.5	4.7	10.6	20.8	32.2	24.3	5.29 (1.47)	269	2.6	2.2	8.2	10.8	26.4	26.8	23.0	
i. Married working women have the best of both worlds: a job combined with a full family life.	5.12 (1.39)	284	2.1	2.5	5.6	21.1	25.4	26.1	17.3	5.22 (1.41)	311	1.9	3.9	5.8	13.2	27.3	29.9	18.0	

Notes

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, n=sample size. All statements range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).



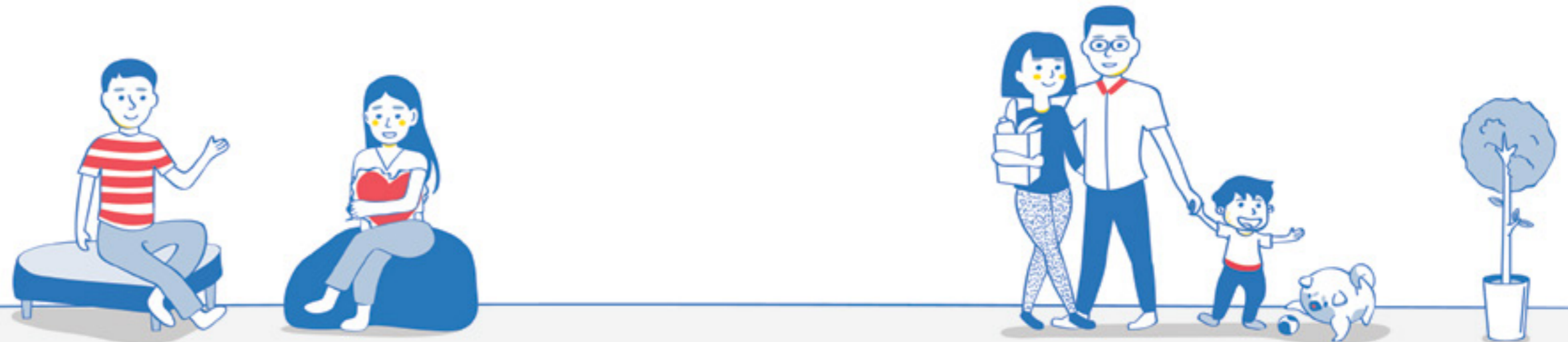
• **TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MALE & FEMALE WORKING YOUTH RESPONSES FOR MARRIAGE ATTITUDE STATEMENTS**

Statement	Male Working Youths (%)										Female Working Youths (%)									
			Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree				
	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M (SD)	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
a. It is not necessary to have children in a marriage.*	3.25 (1.94)	288	27.4	15.3	11.8	19.4	10.8	7.3	8.0	3.60 (2.00)	313	22.4	12.8	12.5	19.2	10.9	12.5	9.9		
b. It is alright for a couple to live together without intending to get married.	3.56 (2.01)	288	22.9	14.6	11.8	15.6	14.6	10.8	9.7	3.25 (1.95)	313	28.8	13.1	13.4	16.3	11.8	10.5	6.1		
c. It is better to be in a bad marriage than to be single.**	2.05 (1.43)	288	51.0	23.3	7.6	10.1	4.9	1.7	1.4	1.67 (1.24)	313	68.4	14.1	8.0	4.5	2.6	1.9	0.6		
d. Women could still have their own children even when unmarried.	3.77 (1.86)	287	19.5	8.7	10.1	23.7	19.9	10.8	7.3	3.52 (1.95)	314	24.2	13.7	6.4	21.7	16.9	9.9	7.3		
e. There are few happy marriages in our society.	4.00 (1.76)	286	9.1	14.7	12.6	26.9	15.4	10.1	11.2	3.94 (1.67)	313	8.9	15.3	11.5	25.6	21.4	10.2	7.0		
f. Married people are generally happier than divorced people.***	4.77 (1.46)	286	4.2	2.4	6.3	32.2	22.4	19.2	13.3	4.28 (1.64)	308	7.5	8.1	10.4	31.8	16.9	15.6	9.7		
g. Married people are generally happier than unmarried people.***	4.53 (1.38)	286	4.2	2.8	7.0	39.9	22.7	14.3	9.1	3.95 (1.54)	312	10.6	7.1	11.2	38.5	18.9	8.0	5.8		

Notes

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, n=sample size. All statements range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).



Discussion

On the whole, there are more similarities than differences between male and female respondents on work attitudes (**Table 2**), more gender differences than similarities for dual-career attitudes (**Table 3**), and some similarities and differences for marriage attitudes (**Table 4**). It appears that both genders find that their working hours prevent them from spending quality time with their family, and that work responsibilities are more demanding than family responsibilities (**Table 2**: Statements a and b). In spite of these work demands, both genders find ways to overcome these challenges as they are satisfied with their work-life balance (**Table 2**: Statement q). Families of respondents may have played a crucial role in mitigating the above-mentioned challenges as they are ostensibly supportive of their careers. This view is supported by the finding that the respondents are confident that their family understands their working situation and demands. In addition, both genders agree that their family is able to adapt to their working hours and work demands such as them taking up an overseas assignment, and that they are not stressed because of their working hours and work commitments. (**Table 2**: Statements d, h, i and l).

Besides familial support, the respondents' ability to adjust their roles easily at work or with their family may have played a role in achieving work-life balance as well (**Table 2**: Statement j). This is supported by findings that the respondents are unlikely to bring work home on the weekends, and generally do not find that taking care of their dependents affects their working time (**Table 2**: Statements g and n). The respondents also agree that they are able to spend quality time with their family even if they work overtime or over the weekend (**Table 2**: Statement f). Besides this, the respondents express their desire that their partner (if any) share their family responsibilities, which may help in balancing and managing the time spent on both family and work responsibilities (**Table 2**: Statement c). Both genders are also open to working overseas if their job requires them to do so (**Table 2**: Statement k).

On gender differences in work attitudes, male respondents are less likely than their female counterparts to accept a lower income in order to spend time with family, and are more likely to agree that working long hours provides them with the income to support

their family (**Table 2**: Statements e and m). This suggests that conservative attitudes regarding division of household labour - where men are breadwinners and women are homemakers - are still predominant sentiments among respondents. Both genders retain the implicit expectations that men should focus on their careers and bring back the bacon, while women should sacrifice their careers or become less work-driven, so that they can afford to spend more time on their families. This may explain why female respondents on average find working outside normal working hours a disturbance while male respondents do not (**Table 2**: Statement p).

When it comes to dual-career attitudes, respondents regardless of gender are likely to agree that income from both the husband and wife are important for the family's wellbeing, that a career is equally important to both spouses, and that married working women have the best of both worlds by having a job with a full family life. (**Table 3**: Statements f, h and i). This demonstrates that it is socially acceptable and even necessary for women to work in order to supplement the family income. In fact, female youths agree significantly more than male youths that having a career is equally important for both genders (**Table 3**: Statement e).

Interestingly, and consistent with the findings on work attitudes, it appears female as compared to male respondents hold more conservative gender attitudes towards division of household labour. The former believes that homemaking is the wife's responsibility, and that the main responsibility of a working woman is to her family, and disagree less that the mother should stay home to look after a sick child instead of the father (**Table 3**: Statements a, b and c). Ironic as this may seem, perhaps this is the modern schema of a successful woman; that she is able to and expected to handle both her career and family, and fulfil her obligations and responsibilities in both domains. Male youths appear to hold some conservative attitudes as well, as they disagree significantly less than females that a wife should not work without her husband's approval. They are also more career-oriented than females, which is consistent with the earlier finding that men are expected to work long hours to bring back a decent pay (**Table 3**: Statements d and g).

The NYS 2016 findings show that despite growing openness towards the justifiability of certain marriage-related actions such as premarital sex and divorce, youths' attitudes are still generally conservative. This is also evident here, where respondents of both genders generally do not accept cohabitation and unwed motherhood (**Table 4**: Statements b and d). Consistent with previous studies, both genders think that having children is necessary in a marriage, but females believe this significantly less than males (**Table 4**: Statement a). This is unsurprising as females are expected to balance both work and family, with the responsibility of homemaking and caregiving resting more on their shoulders. Even so, this may be an area of concern as there appears to be a mismatch in the expectations of having children in a marriage, with less females thinking this is necessary compared to males. This suggests that the low birth rates in Singapore among married couples may have something to do with this difference in expectations in parenthood. In general, respondents believe that to be married is to be happier than being divorced and single, but with female respondents believing this less strongly than males (**Table 4**: Statements f and g). Both genders however believe that being single is better than being in a bad marriage, with female respondents believing this more strongly than males (**Table 4**: Statement c). This implies that females are on average unlikely to marry for the sake of marrying, as they are less likely to believe that marriage leads to happiness. In what perhaps highlights their uncertainty towards marriage, respondents are on average ambivalent about the happiness of marriages as a whole in our society (**Table 4**: Statement e).

Conclusion & Policy Implications

Taking working youths' attitudes towards work, dual-careers and marriage as a whole, it appears that working youths are liberal in some attitudes such as gender work equality, but still hold conservative attitudes towards cohabitation and unwed motherhood. However, the latest National Youth Survey does indicate that youths are becoming more liberal in their attitudes, although still more conservative than their Western counterparts. Interestingly, this study found that female youths hold more

conservative views, as they see homemaking and childcare as their sole responsibility more than males. For the male respondents, there seem to be a stronger orientation towards career and earning money as breadwinners. This demonstrates that the division of household labour according to traditional gender roles is still strongly ingrained and inculcated in our youths, perhaps through gender socialisation during their formative and schooling years. Although it is now socially acceptable that women work, and they are even encouraged to do so and have their own careers, female youths would need to and are still expected to juggle both work and family commitments. In addition, although female youths agree that marriage brings happiness and that child-bearing is important in marriage, they believe this significantly less so than men. This is a notable finding, as it demonstrates that female working youths may be more willing to remain single than their male counterparts, and even if they do get married, are fine to remain childless. There needs to be some policies to target and address the concerns of female youths with regards to marriage and child-bearing, and identify the reasons why they are less likely than male youths to get married or want children. More support or counselling can be offered to working mothers to encourage them to let their spouses take over childcare responsibilities; the current research suggests that the male working youths are ready to take on greater responsibilities in homemaking but their female counterparts are not ready to relinquish this role.

Last but not least, it is heartening to learn that respondents generally have supportive families who adjust and adapt to their careers, and are also satisfied with their work-life balance. However, they do find that work is more demanding than family, and takes time away from their families. There needs to be more family-friendly work policies in place to support working youths. Current policies such as paternity leave for fathers and shared parental leave are in the right direction, as they encourage men to do more for their family. This is especially so when more Singaporean families are expected to be dual-career, where both spouses work to contribute to the household income. Encouraging fathers to participate more in homemaking and childcare would not only relieve the responsibility burden that women carry, it may help to nullify the perception that men should focus more on their careers than their families. Although maternity and childcare leave are part and parcel of all work policies, there could be other family-related leave options such as parent-

care leave, which is currently implemented for the Civil Service, but not necessarily so for other private companies. Given that Singapore's population is ageing rapidly, parent-care leave could be made a compulsory requirement for companies by the Ministry of Manpower. This would give all Singaporeans and not just working youths more flexibility in meeting their familial obligations.

Limitations and future directions

Although the findings inform the opinions of working youths towards work, parenthood and marriage, it may not be representative of the overall population due to the sampling. For example, the Chinese population is slightly underrepresented in both genders. Education and personal income are also two important factors that need to be explored further in future studies as they may colour youths' attitudes towards work and marriage.

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The Singapore that Our Youths will Live In - & How They Can Shape It

Strategy Group

Prime Minister's Office



Abstract

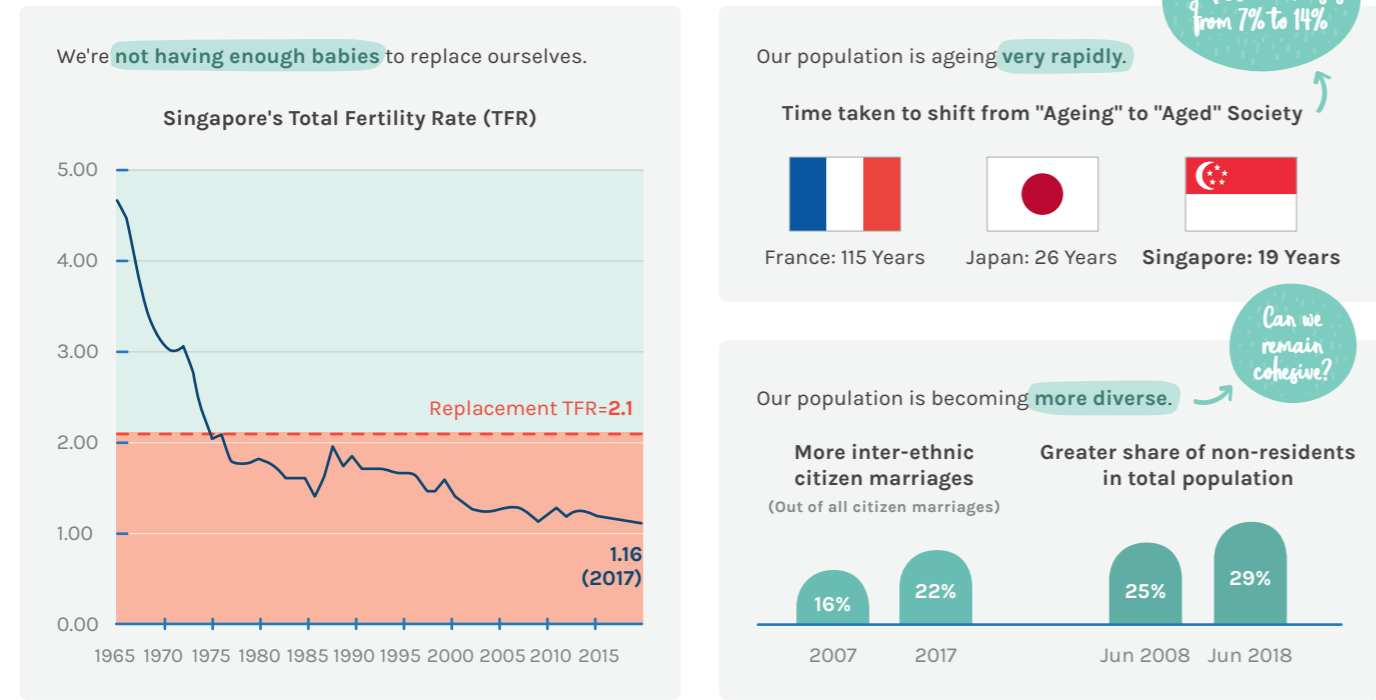
Singapore today faces three key demographic trends - (i) we are not having enough babies to replace ourselves, (ii) our population is growing older, and (iii) our population is becoming more diverse. These trends are not unique to Singapore, but they will likely have a profound impact on the lives and experiences of our youths.

It is a crucial time for our youths to decide how they will respond to these trends. Our demographic context presents opportunities for our youths to navigate a course and shape our future for a more vibrant and cohesive Singapore that they are happy to call home.

First, our youths have strong aspirations to marry and raise a family. Measures in various areas including housing, pre-school, workplace and community support have been put in place to support their aspirations. Second, our youths' compassion and drive can be a positive force in fostering a more caring society that values each individual living in our midst, from young to old and those from different backgrounds. This will help our society age gracefully and remain a vibrant, cosmopolitan city-state. Third, our youths' openness and creativity can help our diverse society become one that is more cohesive, vibrant and dynamic, providing opportunities for all.

What are Singapore's Key Demographic Challenges?

• FIGURE 1: SINGAPORE'S KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES



Sources: Department of Statistics (Singapore data); United States National Institute on Aging, 2007 (International data)

Introduction

Singapore has transformed remarkably over the past 50 years. Today it is a much-admired global city, a gateway to Asia, and – for many of us – a beloved home.

However, like many other developed societies, Singapore faces serious demographic challenges. We are having far fewer children than is needed to replace ourselves and prevent our population

from shrinking – our Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has been below the replacement rate of 2.1 for the past 40 years¹.

At the same time, Singaporeans are living longer due to better healthcare. Our population is growing old faster than almost any other country in the world, even faster than industrialised societies like France, Japan, Germany or the United States. Going by terminology used by demographic researchers (Brigitte

Note
¹ The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) estimates the average number of children that a woman would have over her childbearing years, based on current birth trends. The replacement rate of 2.1 is the approximate fertility rate at which the population replaces itself.

Miksa, 2015 as published in World Economic Forum), we are already an "Aged" society, with 14% or more of our citizens aged 65 and above. By around 2025, Singapore will be a "Super-Aged" country, where one in five citizens are aged 65 or above. Today, only a handful of countries including Japan, Italy and Germany are "Super-Aged".

A shrinking and ageing citizen population driven by a low TFR could spell dire consequences for our future society and economy. A city-state like Singapore enjoys vibrancy, a high quality of life, and a strong economy because we have a critical mass of population. A future Singapore with low TFR and an ageing society could mean an increasingly shrinking workforce to support our economy. This may limit our opportunities, especially in the face of a thriving Asia where countries that surround us have not just far larger, but also younger, populations. This could put a strain on today's youth, who will be in the workforce by then.

We are also seeing greater diversity in our society. Our families are becoming more culturally diverse, with more Singaporeans marrying across ethnic groups and nationalities today. In addition, immigrants make tangible and valuable contributions to Singapore, and help slow down the pace of ageing of our population. At the same time, immigrants bring new cultural practices and perspectives, as more people from more diverse cultural backgrounds share in our society.

These trends make the Singapore that youths live in and will take forward in the future quite differently from the milieu that their parents grew up in.

However, there are encouraging signs that Singapore's youth are in a good position to turn these demographic challenges into opportunities.

This chapter takes a look at the implications of Singapore's changing demographics for today's youth, and what youths can do amid these trends.

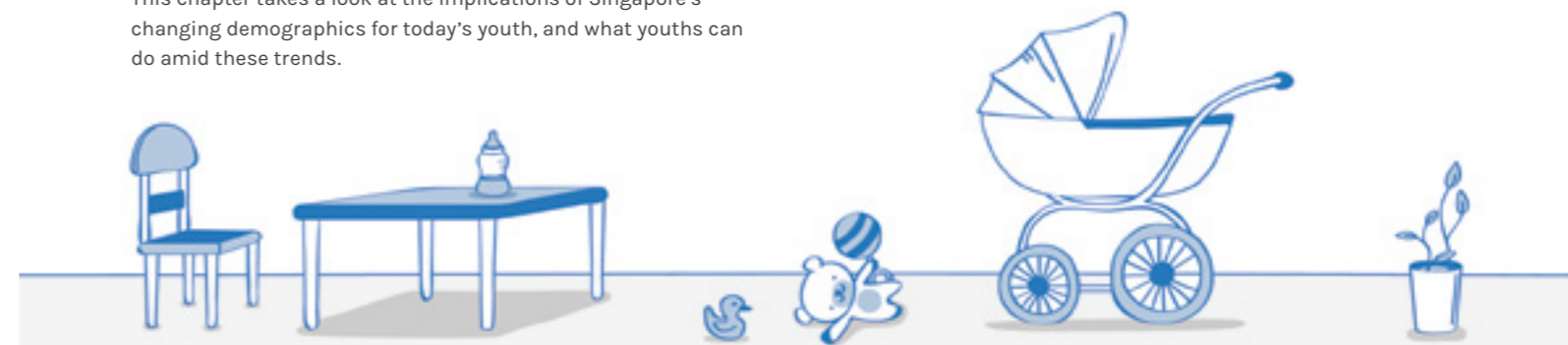
Section 1: Marriage & Parenthood

a. Low fertility rates

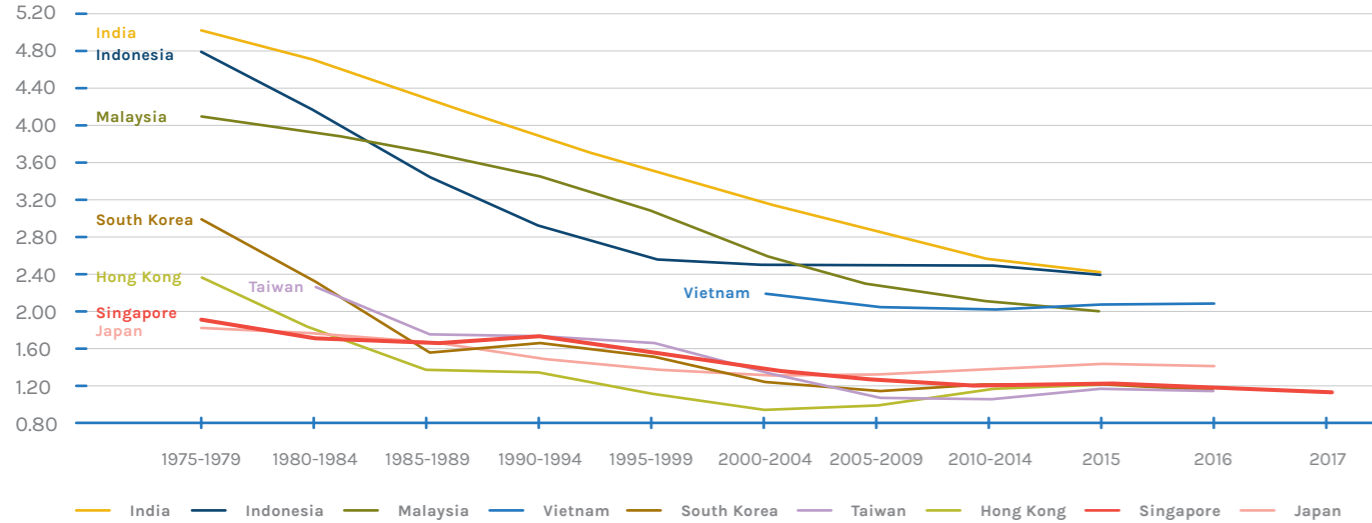
With progressive enhancements to the Marriage and Parenthood package, our TFR has hovered around 1.2 in recent years. Nonetheless, our TFR remains among the lowest in the world and in Asia. In 2017, Singapore's resident TFR was 1.16, still far below the replacement rate.

We are not alone in facing this challenge of low fertility. Many developed societies including East Asian economies such as South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong, as well as European countries such as Portugal and Spain, have registered TFRs between 1.2 and 1.4 for the past two decades or longer. Closer to home, however, many ASEAN countries have TFRs above Singapore's (Chart 1A) and will have not just larger, but younger, populations to drive their economy and society over the next few decades.

Although developed societies are associated with low TFR trends, we have seen some countries turn around their fortunes. France, Denmark and Germany have seen an improvement in their fertility rates in recent years (Chart 1B).

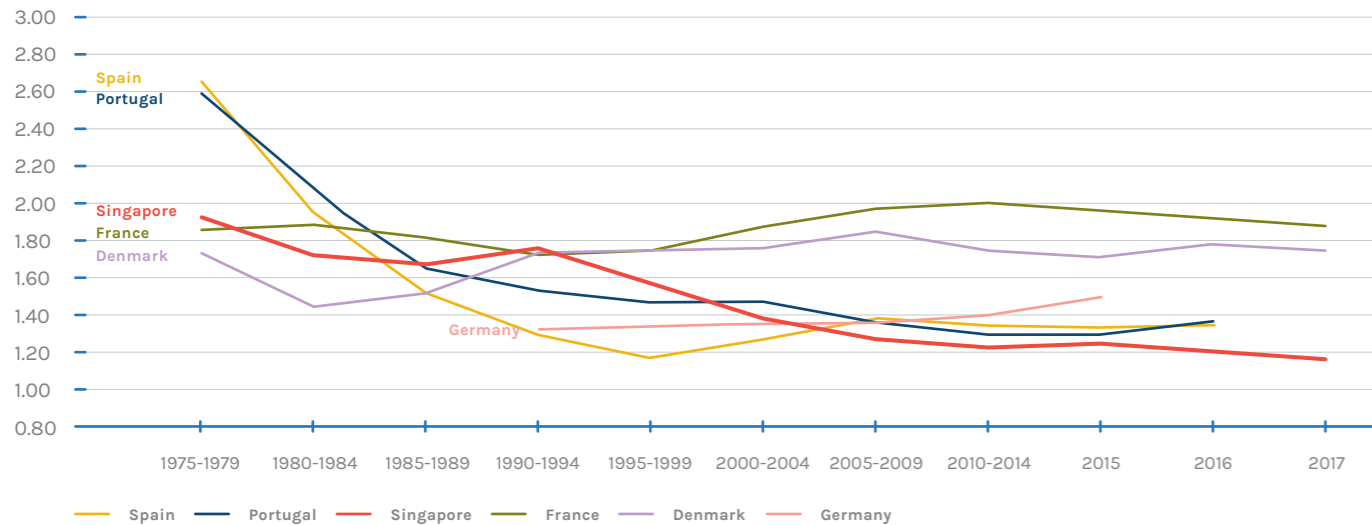


• CHART 1A: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF TFR (ASIAN ECONOMIES)



Source: Department of Statistics (Singapore); OECD Database (India, Indonesia); National statistics website (all other countries)

• CHART 1B: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF TFR (EUROPEAN ECONOMIES, SINGAPORE)



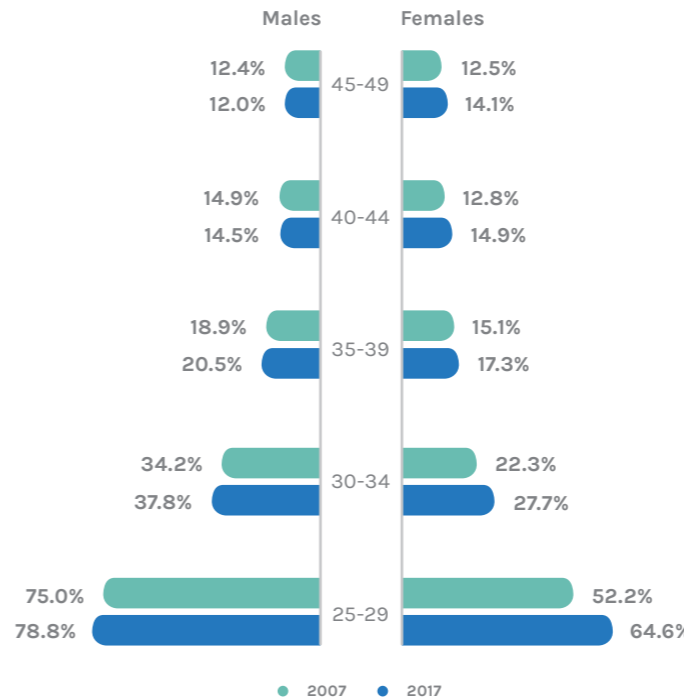
Source: Department of Statistics (Singapore); National statistics website (all other countries)

Note
Each data point is a five-year average of the countries' TFRs, except for 2015 to 2017.

Our persistently low TFR is a serious and complex issue, and can be attributed to two key factors:

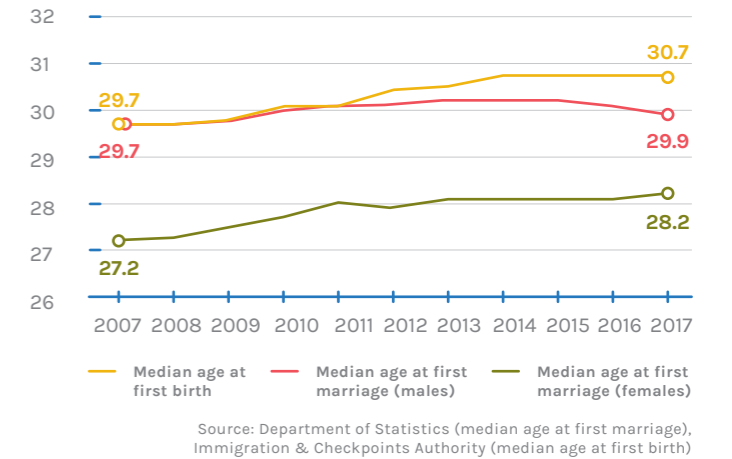
- **More people are staying single while those who marry are getting married later.** Compared to a decade ago, singlehood rates have increased significantly among both males and females in their twenties and thirties (Chart 2A). The median age of residents at first marriage has also risen by 0.2 years for males, and 1.0 years for females from 2007, to around 30 and 28 years old in 2017 respectively (Chart 2B).
- **Married couples are having their first child later and having fewer children.** The median age of resident mothers at first birth, increased by one year from 29.7 years in 2007 to 30.7 years in 2017 (Chart 2B).

• CHART 2A: PROPORTION OF SINGLES AMONG RESIDENTS BY AGE GROUP & SEX



Source: Department of Statistics

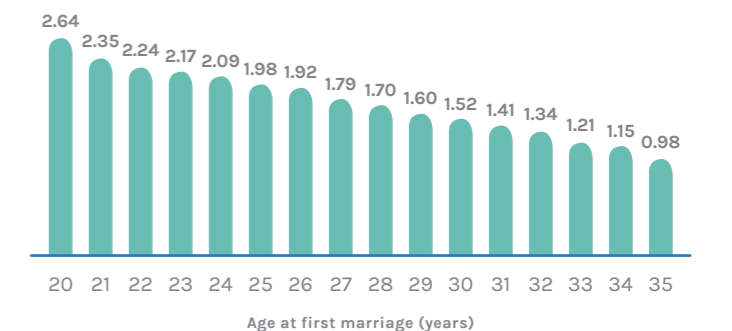
• CHART 2B: MEDIAN AGE OF RESIDENTS AT FIRST MARRIAGE & FIRST BIRTH



Source: Department of Statistics (median age at first marriage), Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (median age at first birth)

The two trends above are interrelated. Later marriages lead to a delay in family formation and tend to result in families with fewer children. For example, among ever-married women born between 1965 and 1970, those who married at age 25 had nearly 2 children on average by age 45, while those who married at age 35 had about 1 child on average (Chart 3).

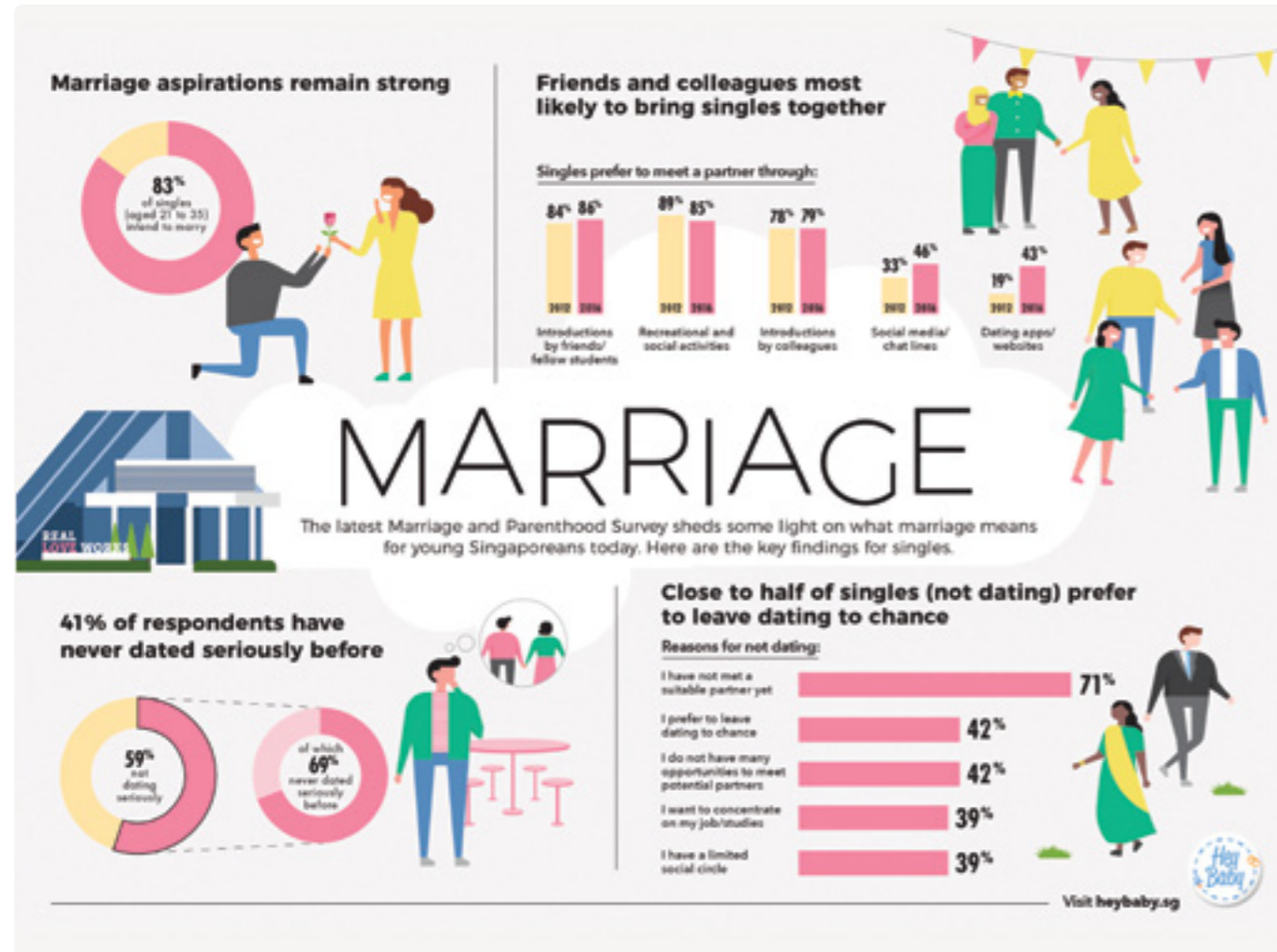
• CHART 3: AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN TO EVER-MARRIED FEMALE CITIZENS AMONG THE 1965-1970 BIRTH COHORTS AT AGE 45 YEARS, BY AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE



Source: Department of Statistics

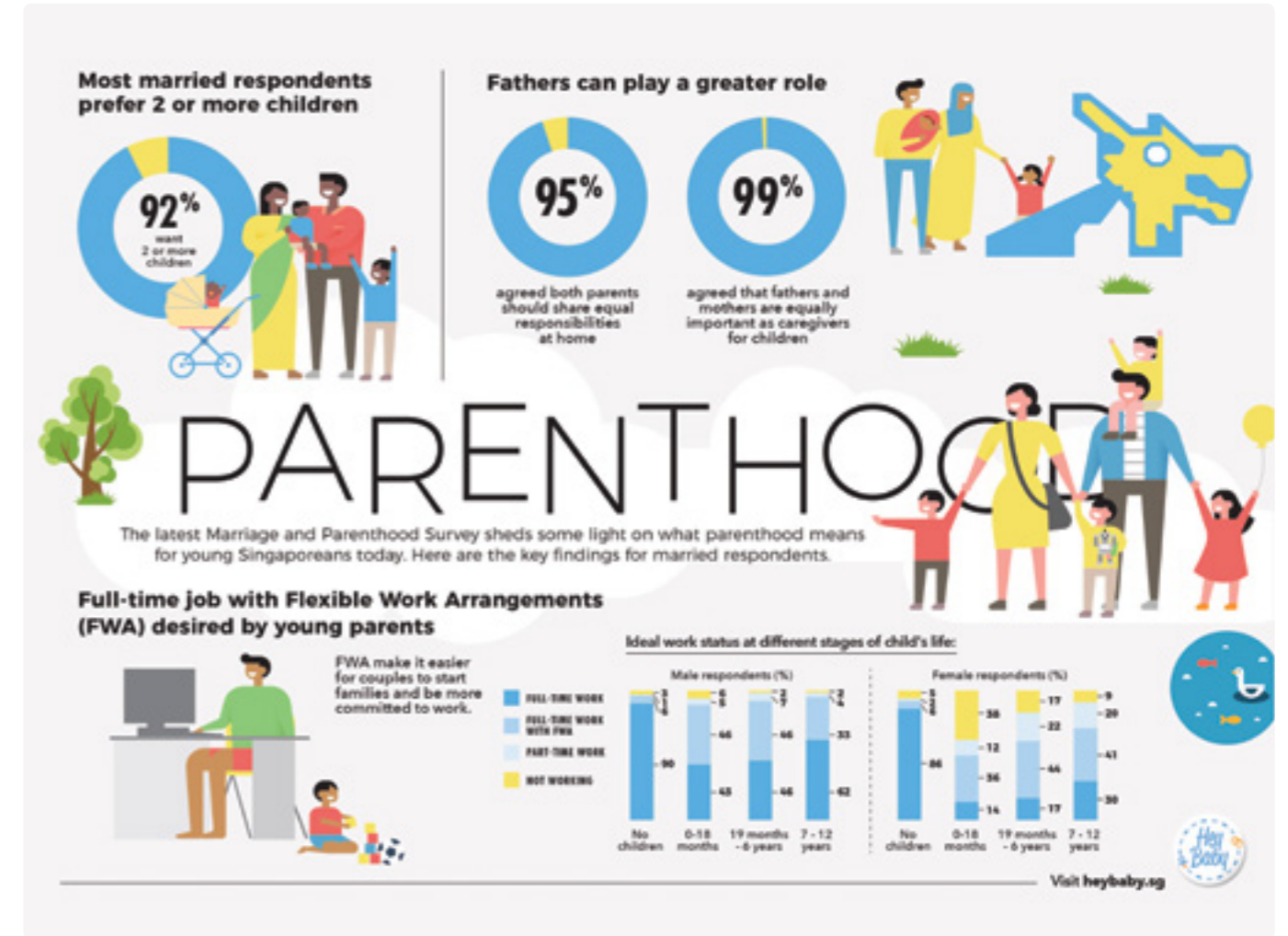
b. Marriage and parenthood aspirations of young Singaporeans

• FIGURE 2: KEY FINDINGS FROM MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD SURVEY 2016²



Note
² The 2016 Marriage and Parenthood (M&P) Survey was conducted by PMO Strategy Group to understand public attitudes and perceptions toward marriage and parenthood. A total of 2,940 single (never-married) and 2,861 married Singapore residents aged 21 to 45 were surveyed from August to December 2016.

• FIGURE 2: KEY FINDINGS FROM MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD SURVEY 2016² (CONTINUED)



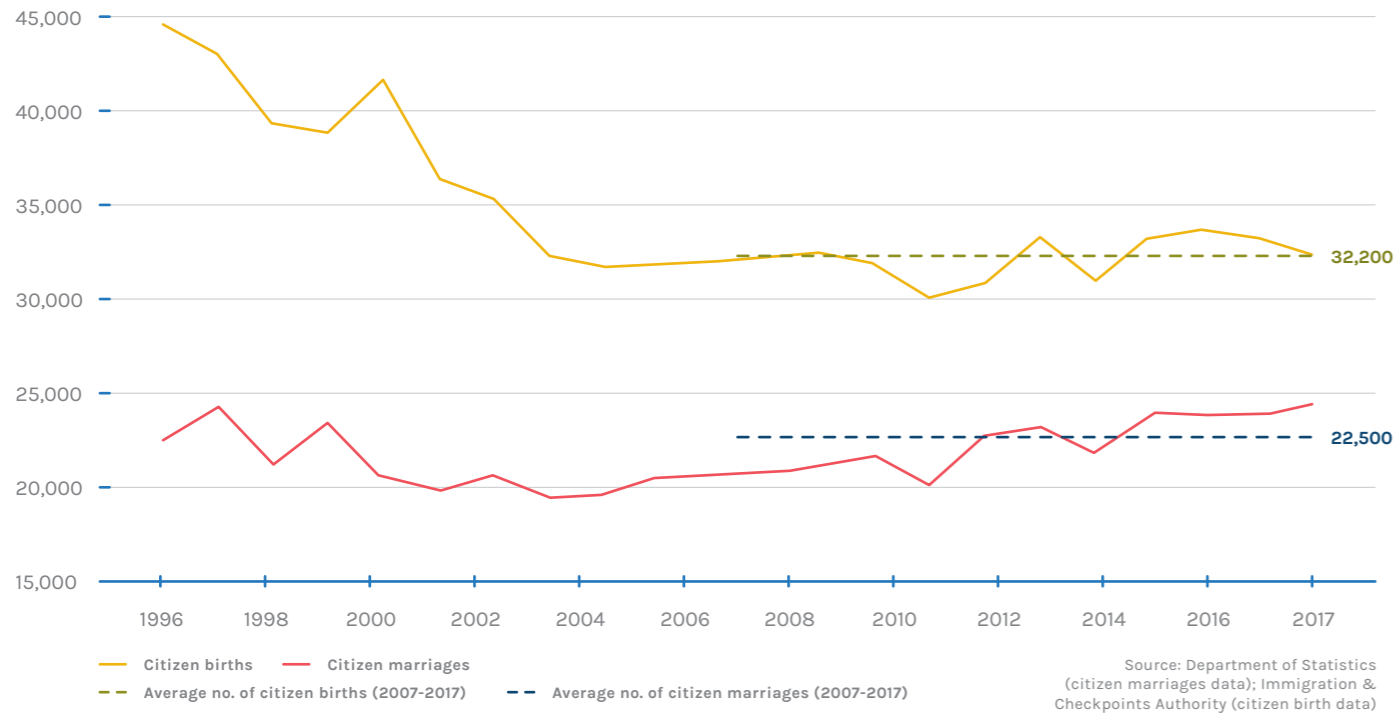
Note
² The 2016 Marriage and Parenthood (M&P) Survey was conducted by PMO Strategy Group to understand public attitudes and perceptions toward marriage and parenthood. A total of 2,940 single (never-married) and 2,861 married Singapore residents aged 21 to 45 were surveyed from August to December 2016.

In the next few years, a bigger cohort of Singaporeans will be approaching the peak ages for marriage and parenthood. Many of these young Singaporeans are children of the baby boomer generation, and are about 20 to 30 years old today. According to Singapore's Marriage and Parenthood (M&P) Survey 2016, these young Singaporeans have strong aspirations to marry and raise a family – 83% of single youths aged 21 to 35 years indicated

that they intend to get married and 92% of married youths would like to ideally have at least two children.

We have seen some encouraging trends in recent years. Over the last few years, the number of citizen marriages and births has been above the past decade's average of about 22,500 marriages and 32,200 births (Chart 4).

• CHART 4: NUMBER OF CITIZEN MARRIAGES & BIRTHS³



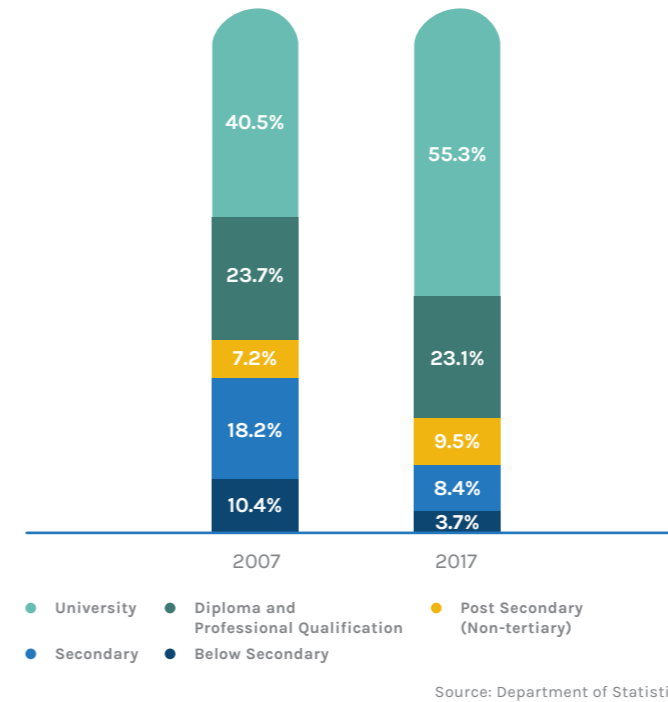
³ Citizen marriages refer to marriages involving at least one citizen. Citizen births refer to babies born to at least one citizen parent.

There are several factors which may influence youths in their decisions to get married and have a family:

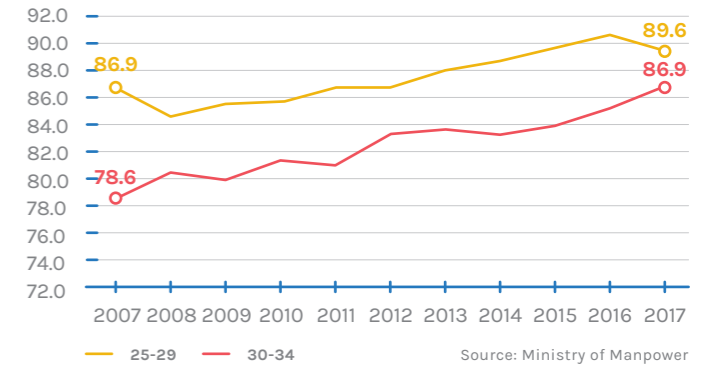
• **Improved opportunities in education and work.** In 2007, about 6 in 10 residents aged 25-34 years had diploma and above qualification. In 2017, this rose to 8 in 10 residents (Chart 5A). Over the past decade, the proportion of young women (in their late twenties and early thirties) in the workforce has also risen (Chart 5B).

These increased opportunities mean that youths have a wider range of options and priorities in life that they can pursue. In the 2016 M&P Survey, more than 90% of single youth respondents viewed financial security, having a successful career and owning a home as important life goals. These were viewed as more important than getting married (72%) and having children (71%).

• CHART 5A: EDUCATION PROFILE OF SINGAPORE RESIDENTS AGED 25-34 YEARS



• CHART 5B: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF FEMALE RESIDENTS AGED 25-34



• **Mindsets towards dating.** For young singles, meeting new people and expanding their social networks could be the first steps to finding the right partner. However, according to the 2016 M&P Survey, many prefer to leave dating and marriage to chance. Among single respondents, 4 in 10 had not dated seriously (i.e. with a view toward marriage) before. Close to half (42%) of those who were not dating seriously said that they prefer to leave dating to chance.

• **Managing work and family.** Many young Singaporeans desire to have meaningful careers as well as fulfilling family lives. For working couples, the ability to manage their work and family commitments at the same time may also be a key consideration in deciding whether to have children. In the 2016 M&P Survey, a large majority of married respondents agreed that the availability of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) would make/have made it easier for them to start a family (87%) and have more children (79%). The most favoured option for both men and women while their child is in the infancy and early childhood years (0 to 6 years) was "full-time work with FWAs", more so than "full-time work" (without FWAs) and "part-time work".

With more women working, sharing of parental responsibilities with fathers is becoming more important. In the same survey, 95% of married respondents across both genders agreed that both parents should share the responsibilities of the home equally. However, mothers still reported spending almost twice the amount of time on domestic chores (2.6 hours) compared to fathers (1.5 hours) on a normal weekday.

Implications for youth

Young Singaporeans have a wider range of opportunities today, possibly resulting in more diverse aspirations – pursuing a dream career, travelling to see the world, achieving financial stability and contributing to a cause they feel strongly for. The good news, is that they also continue to have high aspirations to get married and have children. How can we ensure that these aspirations do not get "crowded out"?

If our youths strive for their life goals sequentially – studying for longer, and achieving their career goals before dating, getting married and having children – then marriage and parenthood are inevitably postponed and it may become even harder to achieve these goals by the time one is ready. For example, young adults who aspire to have a family should plan early as there is a limited biological window for having children. Generally, a healthy couple in their twenties have a 20% chance of conceiving in any particular month. However, chances of conceiving a child falls by about half for couples in their thirties (KK Women's and Children's Hospital, 2016). There is also a higher risk of complications with pregnancies at an older maternal and paternal age. Despite medical advancements, Assisted Reproduction Technology (ART) is not a guaranteed solution. Chances of conception with ART also decline rapidly with age. Unfortunately for some couples, delays may result in missing out on starting a family altogether.

This "sequential approach" to achieving life goals seems to be supported by the data from the 2016 M&P Survey, which shows that not having enough money and wanting to concentrate fully on their job/studies were among the top three reasons which singles cited for not marrying yet. One way to break this cycle is for our society to **encourage and support our youths to consider approaching life goals concurrently (e.g. to get married and start their families even while they are establishing their careers).**

While marriage and parenthood are ultimately personal decisions, the government is committed to supporting youths in achieving their aspirations to marry and start their families. At every stage of Singaporeans' marriage and parenthood journey, the government provides a comprehensive suite of support measures – from getting married and setting up a home, to managing work and family commitments, and caring for and raising children (see

Figure 3). Beyond government measures, involvement by the whole-of-society, including friends, colleagues and employers, is needed in making Singapore a great place for families and one in which marriage and parenthood is achievable, enjoyable and celebrated.

• FIGURE 3: GOVERNMENT'S MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD SUPPORT MEASURES

Housing

Faster access to housing

- 16,000 Build-To-Order (BTO) flats in 2018
- Shorter waiting time of about 2.5 years for some BTO flats, starting with 1,100 units by end-2018, and another 2,000 flats in 2019
- First-timer married couples with or expecting a child enjoy priority under the Parenthood Priority Scheme (PPS)
- Interim housing for families awaiting completion of new flats, under the Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme (PPHS)

More affordable home ownership

- CPF Housing Grants of up to \$80,000 for couples buying a new HDB flat, and up to \$120,000 for couples buying a resale flat

Helping families live closer together

- Proximity Housing Grant (PHG) of \$30,000/\$20,000 for families who buy resale flats to live with/near their parents/married child
- 3Gen flats, Married Child Priority Scheme and Multi-Generation Priority Scheme for those who are buying new flats and wish to live close to family

Community and workplace support

Parental leave

- 16 weeks of paid Maternity Leave
 - Includes 4 weeks of paid Shared Parental Leave
- 2 weeks of paid Paternity Leave
- Paid Childcare Leave:
 - 6 days per year for parents with at least one child under 7 years
 - 2 days per year for parents with at least one child aged 7-12 years
- Unpaid Infant Care Leave:
 - 6 days for parents with at least one child under 2 years
 - Additional 4 weeks for public servants to be taken in child's first year (3-year pilot from 2017)

• FIGURE 3: GOVERNMENT'S MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD SUPPORT MEASURES (CONTINUED)

- Tripartite Standard on Unpaid Leave for Unexpected Care Needs
 - Up to 2 or 4 weeks unpaid leave for employees with immediate family members or infants with unexpected care needs respectively

Support for Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)

- Employers can tap on various resources to implement FWAs to help employees better manage their work and family responsibilities:
- Work-Life Grant from the Ministry of Manpower
 - Tripartite Advisory on FWAs, which guides companies in introducing and sustaining FWAs
 - Tripartite Standard on FWAs to help job seekers and employees identify companies with progressive practices regarding the provision of FWAs

Community support

- Embracing Parenthood Movement
 - Initiative by People's Association to celebrate the birth of new Singaporean babies and forge community support for young parents
- Family-friendly bus and rail network
- Family-friendly activities at our museums, parks and community spaces
- ActiveSG's sports programmes

Pre-school

Expanding pre-school capacity

- Over 40,000 new full-day pre-school places, total of about 200,000 places, by 2023
- Expand to 50 MOE Kindergartens by 2023

Quality early childhood education

- Early Childhood Development Centres Act to ensure higher and more consistent quality pre-schools
- Set up National Institute of Early Childhood Development to develop early childhood professionals

Making pre-school more affordable

- Basic Subsidy of up to \$600 for infant care and up to \$300 for childcare for working mothers (up to \$150 for non-working mothers)
- Additional support for lower and middle-income families

Caring for our children

Baby bonus cash gift

- \$8,000 per child for 1st and 2nd child, and \$10,000 per child for the 3rd child onwards

Child Development Account (CDA)

- CDA First Step: a \$3,000 contribution to the CDA given without having to save in the CDA first
- Savings deposited into the CDA are matched dollar-for-dollar by the Government, up to a cap for matching contributions

Healthcare support

- \$4,000 Medisave Grant for Newborns
- MediShield Life coverage from birth

Tax reliefs and rebates for parents

- Parents can claim the following reliefs and rebate to offset their income taxes:
 - Parenthood Tax Rebate
 - Working Mother's Child Relief
 - Qualifying Child Relief
 - Handicapped Child Relief
 - Grandparent Caregiver Relief

Support for caregiving

- Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Levy Concession: Concessionary levy of \$60 for families who engage an FDW if they have a child below 16 years old

Having children

Support for Assisted Conception Procedures

- Government co-funding for eligible couples undergoing Assisted Reproduction Technology (ART) treatments at public hospitals
- Medisave for Assisted Conception Procedures (ACP)

Support for pregnancy and delivery

- Medisave Maternity Package - use Medisave to help pay for delivery and pre-delivery fees
- MediShield Life to cover serious pregnancy and delivery-related complications

Section 2: Ageing Population

Medical advances, better nutrition and an active lifestyle have raised the life expectancy of Singaporeans, many of whom are living into their eighties. With low fertility rates and improving life expectancies, Singapore's population is ageing rapidly.

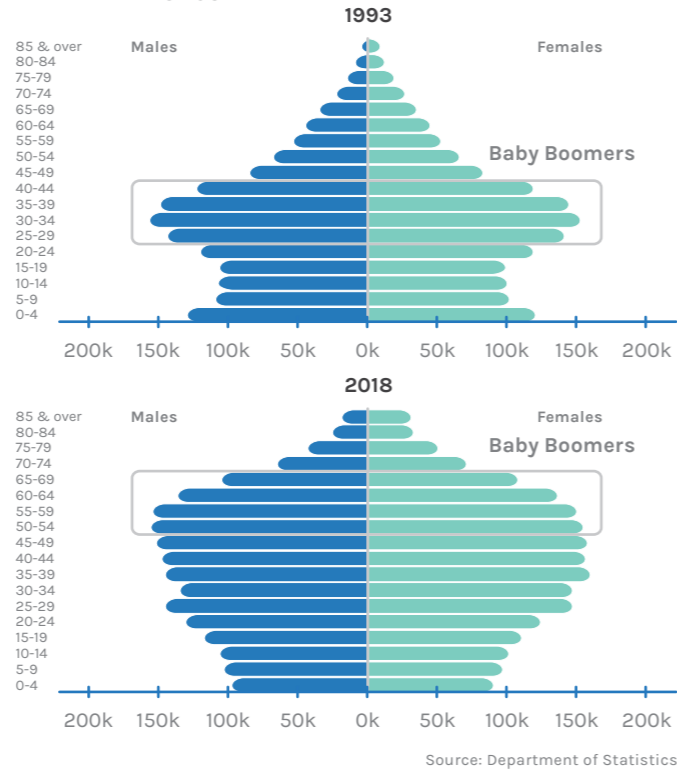
- Over 25 years, life expectancy at birth for Singapore's residents increased from 75.9 years to 83.1 years (from 1992 to 2017 (prelim), while the median age of our resident population increased from 31.0 years in 1993 to 40.8 years in 2018 (Chart 6A).
- The proportion of senior citizens in the resident population has also doubled over the same period (Chart 6A). A reason for this is the large cohort of baby boomers - people who were born in 1950 to 1964, the two decades just after the Second World War. Many of them are turning 65 over the next few years (Chart 6B).

A more aged resident population

• CHART 6A: MEDIAN AGE & PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS AGED 65 YEARS & ABOVE, AS OF JUNE



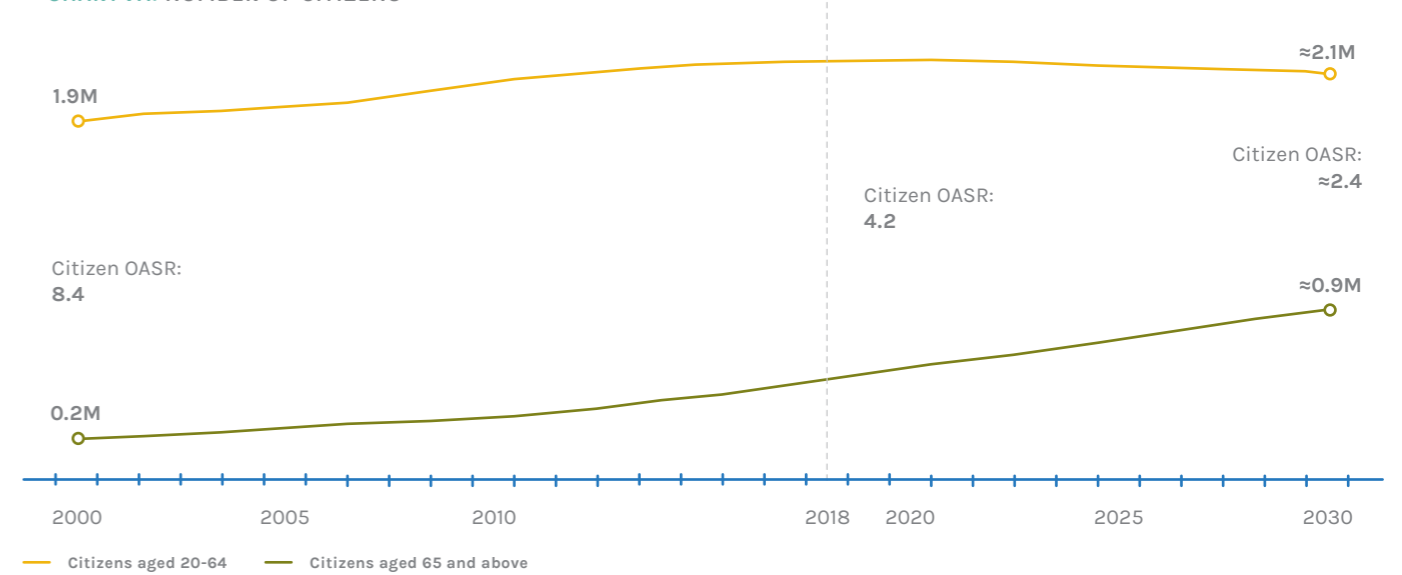
• CHART 6B: AGE PROFILE OF RESIDENT POPULATION, AS OF JUNE



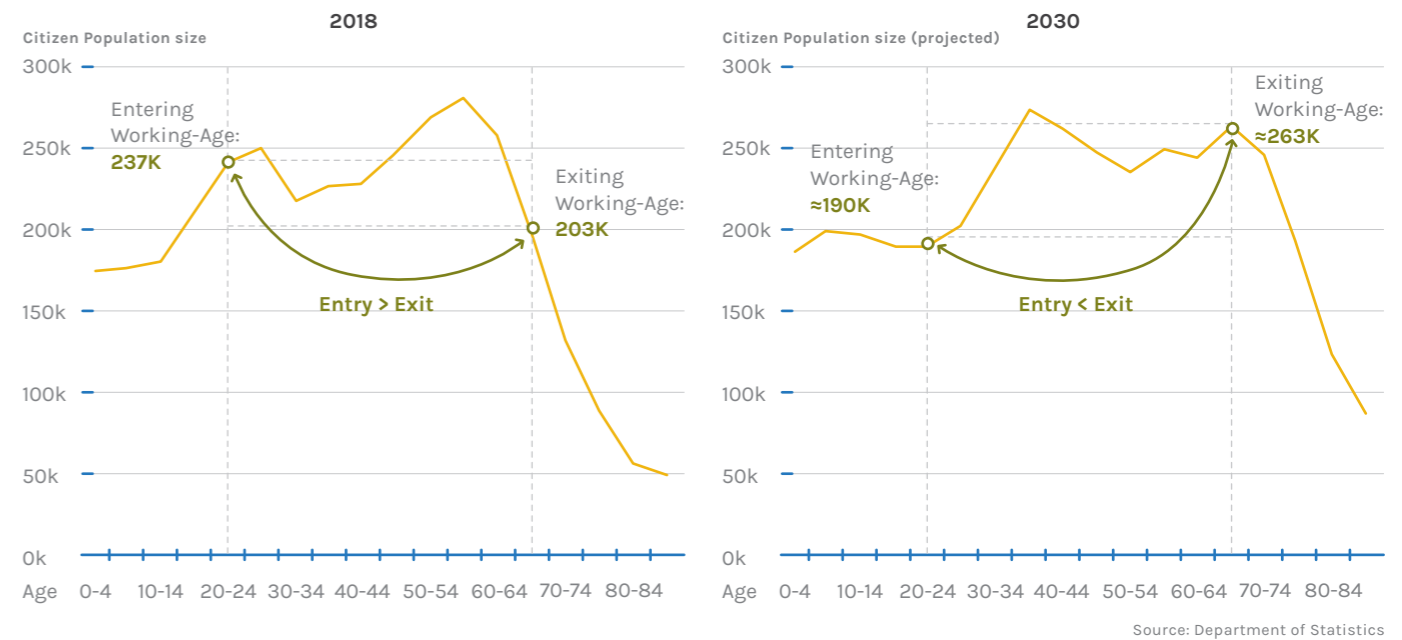
The old-age support ratio (OASR) - defined as the ratio of the number of working-age adults, aged 20 to 64, to the number of people aged 65 and over - will continue to fall over the next few years.

Among citizens, there were about 4.2 working-age adults supporting every older person in 2018. This will halve to about 2.4 working-age adults to every older person by 2030 (Chart 7A). Our citizen workforce could shrink; by 2030, we will have more citizens exiting the working-age group (20 to 64 years old) than those entering it (Chart 7B). While it is likely that more individuals will be financially independent well beyond 65 years of age in future, these statistics remain useful in illustrating the rapid pace of ageing, and what it could mean for our working youths.

• CHART 7A: NUMBER OF CITIZENS



• CHART 7B: ENTRY & EXIT OF CITIZENS FROM WORKING-AGES



Many other developed economies, including Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea are also facing a rapidly ageing population. The additional challenge for Singapore is that we are ageing at a faster pace than other developed countries. This means that our window to effect change and prepare for the transition is shorter compared to other countries. Our society needs to make decisive moves now, to prepare for the future.

- France took about 115 years to move from an "Ageing" to an "Aged" society⁴. Closer to home, Japan which also has a rapidly ageing society took 26 years to make this transition (United States National Institute on Aging, 2007). Singapore has made that same shift in a short 19 years.
- By around 2025, Singapore is projected to join the ranks of "Super-Aged" countries such as Japan, Germany and Italy, i.e. where one in five citizens are aged 65 or older.

Implications for youth

The ageing population presents some challenges for our society and economy. The working youth may bear some strain – both at a whole-of-society level with the smaller base of taxpayers to support higher social expenditures; and on an individual level as there are fewer of them to support the healthcare needs of a larger number of their elderly relatives. In recent memory, we have also seen the young-old divide play out in other countries, bringing unintended consequences that are no-win outcomes for the country and its citizens⁵.

But our youths embody strong values which gives confidence that they will do their part to care for seniors. According to the National Youth Survey (NYS) 2016, filial piety among the young remains strong. 85% of respondents said they will take care of their parents in their old age regardless of circumstances, similar to the 86% in NYS 2013 and 81% in NYS 2010.

Notes

⁴ A country is considered 'ageing' when 7% of the population is aged 65 and above, and 'aged' when 14% of the population is aged 65 and above.
⁵ See "The U.K.'s Old Decided for the Young in the Brexit Vote" (Schuster, 2016); and "After Brexit, we must strengthen the ties between young and old" (Willetts & Bell, 2016).
⁶ Lions Befrienders Singapore is a voluntary welfare organisation formed in 1995. Its mission is to provide friendship and care for seniors to age in place with community participation. Its islandwide befriending service matches seniors at risk of social isolation to befrienders (volunteers) who provide friendship through weekly home visits (Lions Befrienders Singapore, n.d.).

Youths can be a positive force of change for how we can create an inclusive and cohesive society for both youths and seniors. For instance, in our workplaces. With an ageing population, there would be more Singaporeans remaining in the workforce well into their silver years, working alongside much younger colleagues. Youths would stand to benefit from our seniors' wealth of experiences and deep skills, and can in turn play their part by helping seniors live healthy and meaningful lives, for longer. Youths can ensure that workplace practices do not discriminate by age, and that they promote healthy and productive working relationships between colleagues of different generations.

In the same vein, our youths can promote overall inter-generational understanding and communication across the community, and help the wider community break their unhelpful stereotypes of ageing. Youths can initiate or join in existing programmes (such as the Lions Befrienders Singapore⁶) to interact with and learn from seniors in the community. As the future leaders of Singapore society, youths can also think about how to design institutions and services that bridge across the younger and older generations. One good example from abroad is Providence Mount St. Vincent in Seattle, USA, which combines a nursing home with a childcare center, where children and elderly residents can interact, fostering valuable inter-generational connections. A similar model could be a reality in Singapore by 2020, with a planned integrated facility by the St John's-St Margaret's Church, which would house a nursing home, a senior day care centre and a childcare centre (Ng, 2017).

Singapore's ageing population can serve as a powerful springboard for young and innovative companies to launch new products and services aimed at seniors in the region. There are growing business opportunities to meet the needs of the silver industry, not just in Singapore but the rest of Asia as well.

The "Silver" customer segment will be increasingly wealthy and sophisticated consumers of products and services. Business consultancy Ageing Asia has estimated that the silver industry in the Asia Pacific could be worth as much as US\$3.3 trillion by 2020 (Ageing Asia Pte Ltd, 2015). This is a tremendous opportunity for entrepreneurial youths.

How young Singaporeans respond to the ageing society phenomenon we face, will determine whether Singapore can be a beacon and an exemplary model of how an ageing society can still be a cohesive and vibrant country and economy – a great place to live, work, and play.

Section 3: Increasingly Multi-cultural Singapore

Singaporeans have always embraced diversity. It is the bedrock of our multi-racial and multi-religious society, and a societal value that defines us as Singaporeans.

As the world becomes more globalised and connected, people, ideas and cultures move more fluidly across borders. This means that populations everywhere, Singapore too, will become more diverse.

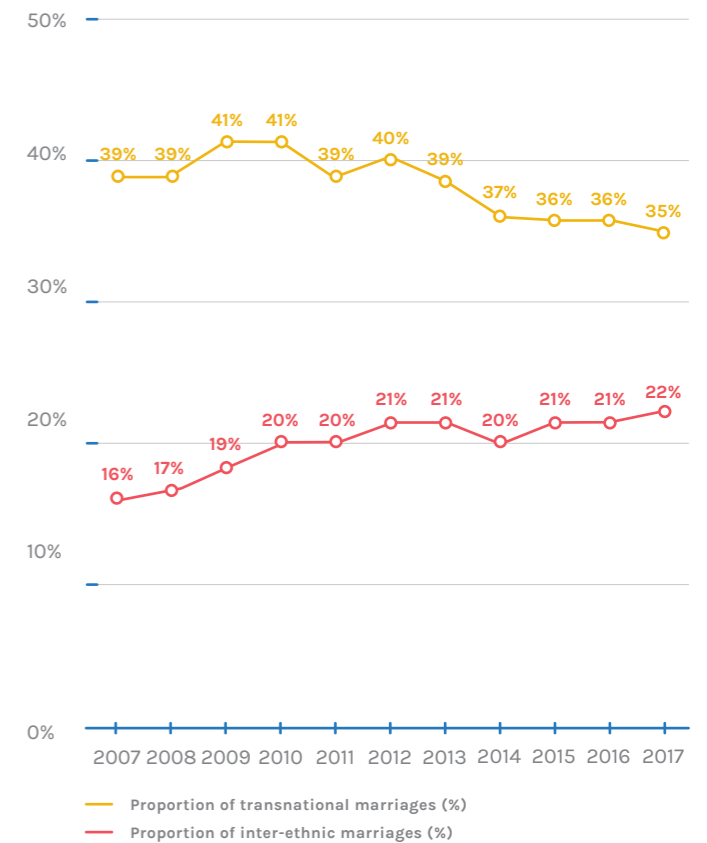
a. More culturally diverse families

Our families are getting more culturally diverse. More Singaporeans are marrying partners from a different race and nationality. The percentage of inter-ethnic marriages stood at 22% in 2017, up from 16% in 2007. A significant proportion of Singaporeans are also marrying foreigners, a trend that has held steady over the past decade (**Chart 8A**). Most foreign spouses hail from the region (**Chart 8B**).

Note

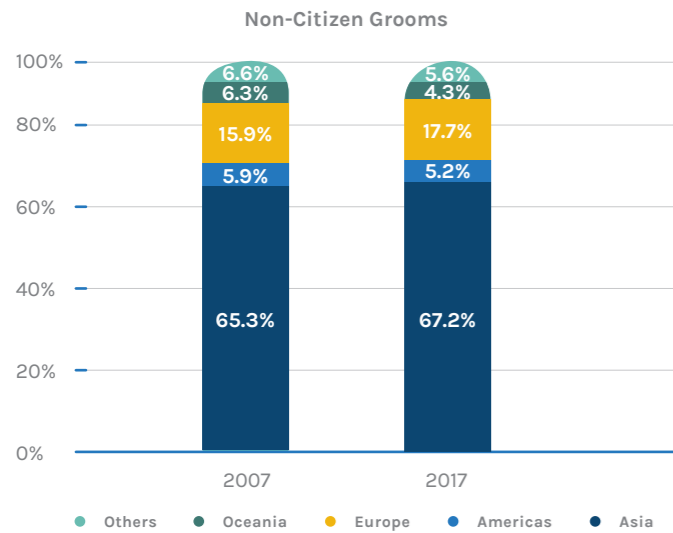
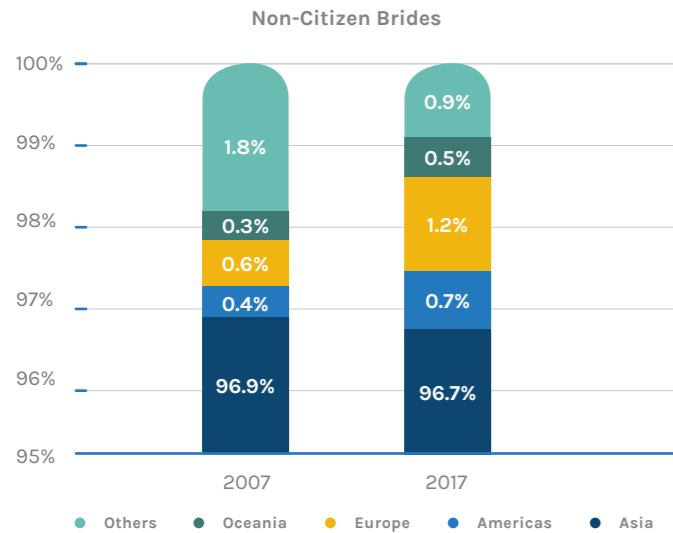
⁷ Transnational marriages refer to marriages involving one citizen and one non-citizen (i.e. permanent resident or non-resident).

• **CHART 8A: TRANSNATIONAL⁷ & INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGES INVOLVING AT LEAST ONE CITIZEN**



Source: Department of Statistics

• **CHART 8B: ORIGINS OF NON-CITIZEN SPOUSES MARRIED TO CITIZENS (AMONG TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGES THAT TOOK PLACE IN 2007 & 2017)**



Source: Department of Statistics

Note
"Americas" consists of USA and Canada. "Oceania" consists of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

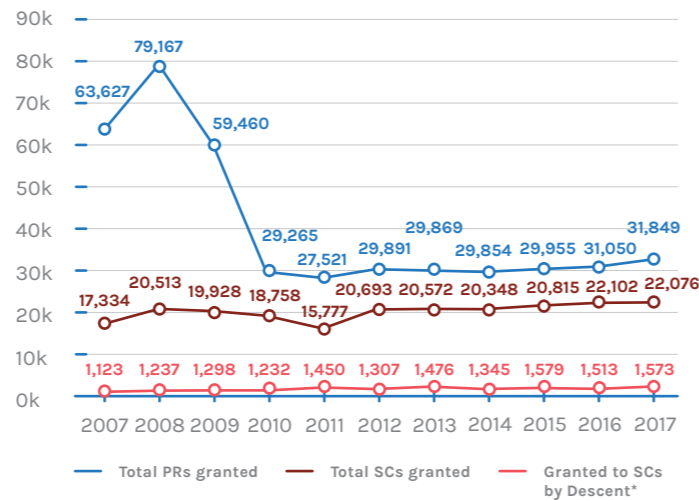
b. Diversity from immigration

Immigration has been a part of the Singapore DNA for a very long time. Many born-and-bred Singaporeans have parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who arrived at our shores and settled here, decades ago.

Immigration helps slow down the pace of ageing in our citizen population given our low fertility rates. Each year, around 20,000 individuals are granted Singapore Citizenships (SC) and 30,000 are granted Permanent Residency (PR) (Chart 9A). Many of these immigrants would have already lived in Singapore for an extended period of time, and some have studied in our local schools and adopted the Singaporean "way of life". Others married Singaporeans and have committed to sink roots in Singapore.

Immigrants make tangible and valuable contributions to our society as spouses of Singaporeans, fellow workers, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and countrymen. Many also bring and share their cultural practices which enrich our Singapore tapestry, such as cuisines and festivals which can be enjoyed by all.

• **CHART 9A: NUMBER OF SCs & PRs GRANTED**

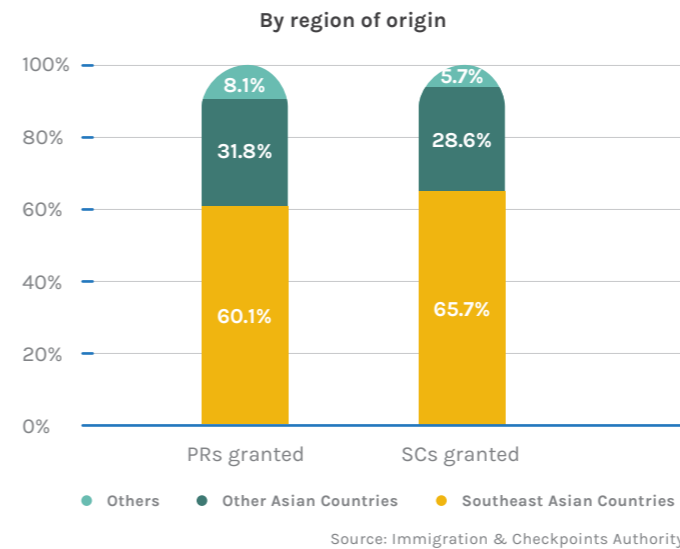
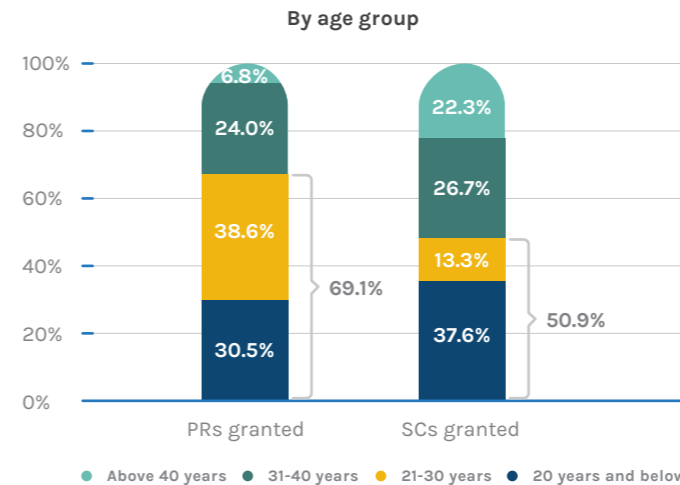


Source: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

Note
*This is a subset of the total SCs granted each year. It refers to SCs granted to children born overseas to Singaporean parents.

The majority of our new immigrants are youths. Some 69% of individuals granted PR status in 2017 were aged 30 and below. Among those who became citizens, about half were aged 30 and below (Chart 9B). They are part of the growing, exciting diversity that make up our Singaporean youth segment.

• **CHART 9B: PROFILE OF SCs & PRs GRANTED IN 2017**

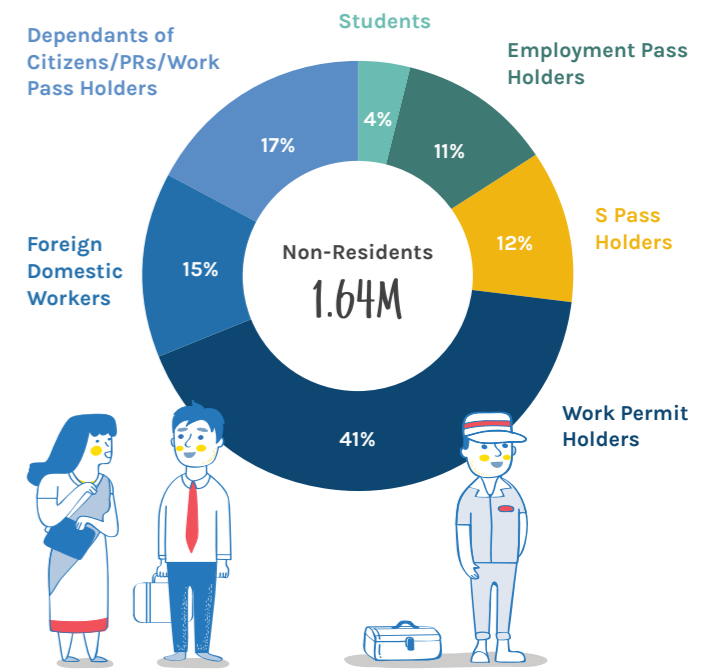


Source: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

c. Diversity from non-residents

Non-residents (i.e. foreigners who are not PRs) in Singapore add to our demographic diversity. The majority of non-residents are lower skilled workers in more manpower-intensive industries as well as foreign domestic workers; about 1 in 5 are mid-to-higher skilled workers. Another 1 in 5 are students, or young dependants of residents and work pass holders. Many of them attend our local schools and mix with our youths, forming international friendships and building cross-cultural skills in the classroom (Chart 10).

• **CHART 10: NON-RESIDENT POPULATION, AS OF JUNE 2018⁸**



Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Manpower

Note
⁸ The figures are based on stock numbers as of end-June 2018. **Work Permit Holders** are mostly in occupations which face difficulties hiring Singaporeans (e.g. construction workers). **S Pass Holders** are workers providing mid-level and technical skills to fill jobs with local shortfall. **Employment Pass Holders** work in managerial, executive, or specialised jobs.

Implications for youth

There are several benefits from having a culturally diverse community.

For individuals, meeting people from different backgrounds and cultures opens up opportunities to learn from each other and to benefit from the exchange of different perspectives. Actively seeking opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, especially while in school, can help build cross-cultural competencies and prepare young people for more diverse environments at work, giving them a competitive edge, and opening up more opportunities for them in their careers.

Diversity is also a boon to the economy. Studies have consistently shown that companies and economies that have a greater level of diversity, consistently outperform those which do not. For example, a 2015 analysis of 366 public companies by global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company found that companies with greater cultural diversity had better financial returns⁹ (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).

However, if not managed well, diversity can result in challenges. Without active efforts to bridge and celebrate differences, it could lead us instead to discrimination and polarisation – an unhealthy “them versus us” mindset.

As a segment of our population that comprises an increasingly diverse set of attributes, our Singaporean youth can lead the way to model how diversity can be a deep source of strength. Collectively, our Singaporean youth can distinguish themselves from others in that they have a global-orientation, embrace diversity, have cross-cultural fluency – and are committed to Singapore.

This bears out in the National Youth Survey. The proportion of youths agreeing that they are comfortable working or being neighbours with someone of a different race or nationality is higher in 2016 than 2013. Over the same period, there is also a higher proportion of youths who report that they have a close friend of a different race or nationality.

Youths can continue to uphold and propagate the importance of valuing diversity, not just as part and parcel of Singapore’s way of life, but as something that enriches our society and strengthens our identity as an open and inclusive nation. There are tools and resources that youths can tap on, such as the Community Integration Fund (see **Box Story**).

Box Story

The Community Integration Fund (CIF)

The **Community Integration Fund (CIF)**, an initiative of the National Integration Council, co-funds ground-up projects that create opportunities for locals and foreigners to meet and better understand each other, and help newcomers better adapt to Singapore society, norms, and values. These efforts include interest-based activities (such as sports, arts and volunteerism), dialogues and seminars, community celebrations, and media projects which encourage cross-cultural understanding.

Various groups of youths have tapped on the CIF to organise projects encouraging integration among foreigners,

immigrants and Singaporeans. One such group is United Singapore, a community organisation that aims to bring youths together to celebrate their Singaporean identity through platforms such as sports and the arts. Led by founder Gabriella Zhao, United Singapore has organised various activities supported by the CIF. This includes a cycling event in 2016 which paired 100 locals and foreigners to interact and bond while exploring the Marina Bay area, and a concert in 2017 where local and international students presented original compositions about unity, integration, and a sense of belonging in multicultural Singapore.



Conclusion

From a newly independent state that had no natural resources to a global city, Singapore has come a long way. Going forward, the trends we are seeing in our demography will drive our future, and it is a long-term, deeply and widely impactful issue that we must grapple with collectively as a nation, and now. In many ways, Singapore is at a crossroads.

There are encouraging signs that our youth of today will be a positive force in shaping the future trajectory of Singapore, if they

so choose. Their attitudes and responses towards marriage and parenthood, and an ageing and diverse population, will shape our values and determine what it means to be truly Singaporean.

Youths are agents of action and change, and have the unique opportunity to put us and future generations of Singapore on a path that assures opportunity and progress for all, a caring, cohesive society, and an exceptional nation.

Note

⁹ In 2015, McKinsey & Company examined proprietary data sets for 366 public companies across a range of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity were 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015).

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