

CREATING OUR SHARED FUTURE TOGETHER - SUMMARY NOTES

5 FEBRUARY 2025, 6.00PM - 9.00PM

***SCAPE GROUND THEATRE**

On 5 February 2025, 191 youths participated in the “Creating Our Shared Future Together” engagement, part of a year-long series of SG60 engagements. SG60 is an important milestone that allows youths to reflect on Singapore’s journey as a nation, aspire towards their shared future in SG100, and encourage them to take action together with the Government and whole-of-society to realise their vision. Youths’ insights from the year-long engagements will develop the SG Youth Plan, a five-year action plan created by youths, for youths, and supported by the whole-of-society that builds on previous national-level engagements such as the Forward Singapore Exercise, PA’s FutureYOUTH movement, and other NYC dialogues.

The session comprised a visualisation exercise using Gen AI, breakout discussions, and a panel dialogue. Youths shared their aspirations for Singapore's future and explored how to work alongside Government, private sector, and the community to shape the SG Youth Plan's themes and action areas.

The session involved the following panellists:

- Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Minister of State, Ministry of Digital Development and Information and Ministry of Health
- Mr Keith Yap, Vice Chairman, Impart and Host, The Front Row podcast
- Ms Yuli Ardini Affandi, Executive Committee Member and Director, Volunteer Management, MENDAKI Club
- (Moderator) Ms Kong Man Jing ("Biogirl MJ"), Co-founder, Just Keep Thinking and NYC Council Member

Context Setting on the SG Youth Plan

The moderator began the session by sharing participants’ responses to a two-part poll: “What do you imagine your ideal Singapore to be like?” and “My ideal Singapore would also be...”

The top three results for “What do you imagine your ideal Singapore to be like” were

- (i) “A society that values different definitions and pathways to success” (23.6%);
 - (ii) “A society where people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds can live harmoniously” (15%);
- and
- (iii) “A community where people have strong, caring relationships” (12.9%).

The top responses for “My ideal Singapore would also be...” were “harmonious” and “kind”.

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Key Insights from the Breakout Discussions and Panel Dialogue

Theme: Embracing Learning Beyond Grades

Issue: To foster a society where every individual is valued, supported in their diverse aspirations and pathways, and celebrated for their successes.

Discussion Points from Breakout Groups:

- Participants called for more flexible educational and career pathways, including support for youths to explore non-traditional careers, entrepreneurship, and alternative learning routes.
- Participants said lifelong learning and skills beyond formal education was important, and youths should have more exposure to different industries and job sectors from a young age.
- Participants said that it was important to encourage a culture that embraces trying and failing, critical thinking and a broadening of perspectives through diverse learning opportunities e.g. overseas exposure.
- Participants said that there was a lack of accessible mentorship for youths and young working adults. They suggested mentorship to cover issues such as “life mentoring” and career advice.

Key Insights from Panel Dialogue:

Participants asked (via Pigeonhole) how to balance traditional metrics of success and reducing pressure on youth.

- Mr Yap said that success should be defined by youth themselves rather than imposed by others.
- Ms Yuli said that success could be defined in various ways, including academic achievements, societal contributions, and family relationships.
- Panellists said that one’s progress could only be measured individually rather than through standardised metrics.

Theme: Supporting Families Through Every Stage

Issue: As youths transition to adulthood, interpersonal skills learned from their support networks become invaluable in forming healthy relationships, building professional networks, and contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Discussion Points from Breakout Groups:

- Participants said that youths faced challenges in maintaining work-life balance and family relationships.

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- Participants said they had observed mental health issues among youths and called for more accessible, affordable, and destigmatised mental health resources, with a focus on work-life balance and preventing burnout. They said that resources and support systems should be holistic to include both physical and emotional health.
- Participants said that they anticipated more support needed for caretaking or healthcare related responsibilities in the future in view of Singapore's ageing population. They called for greater community involvement to look out for each other's families and said it was important to cultivate intergenerational understanding and support.

Key Insights from Panel Dialogue:

A participant asked how youths can work together to take action against divisive views on social media in light of its algorithms and echo chambers.

- MOS Rahayu encouraged youths to engage in face-to-face interactions with others. She said that cyberbullying cases have increased, and called for youths to strengthen their interpersonal relationships, look out for one another and seek peer support when navigating the digital space.

Theme: Empowering Those in Need

Issue: While Singapore has numerous support schemes and resources available, there remain significant barriers to access and equity that need to be addressed. These challenges span across education, mental health, and social mobility, particularly affecting youth from lower-income backgrounds, those with different learning paths, and marginalised communities.

Discussion Points from Breakout Groups:

- Participants said there should be equal access to opportunities regardless of social status and spoke about challenges faced by youth from low-income backgrounds in accessing development opportunities.

Key Insights from Panel Dialogue:

Participants asked (via Pigeonhole) about creating barrier-free approaches for persons with disabilities.

- MOS Rahayu shared insights about the Enabling Masterplan 2030, which was developed by, for, and with persons with disabilities and their caregivers. She said that whole-of-society participation was needed to achieve a more caring and inclusive Singapore.
- Panellists said it was important to have both infrastructural improvements and cultural shifts for society to move towards greater inclusivity.
- Ms Yuli suggested two approaches: individual action through empathy and collaborative efforts among passionate individuals.

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Theme: Investing in Our Shared Tomorrow

Issue: As Singapore looks towards its future, there is a pressing need to create more inclusive and accessible pathways for youth development, participation, and leadership.

Discussion Points from Breakout Groups:

- Participants said that emerging technologies like AI would impact future careers, and called for more research opportunities that would provide hands-on experience in R&D, particularly in technological innovation projects.
- Participants said that it was important to encourage students to build “environmental consciousness”, as they may not feel that they can make a difference in their individual capacities.

Key Insights from Panel Dialogue:

Participants asked (via Pigeonhole) about youth co-creation of solutions rather than being mere policy beneficiaries.

- Mr Yap said that from his experience at Impart, he observed that it was important to empower individuals to take ownership in shaping the future and become solution providers.
- MOS Rahayu said that Singapore's social compact had evolved towards having greater youth participation and their participation was essential in shaping the future.

Theme: Doing Our Part As One United People

Issue: As Singapore's society becomes increasingly complex and diverse, there is a critical need to strengthen social cohesion and foster a more inclusive national identity. While Singapore has built its foundation on multiculturalism and shared values, new challenges are emerging that require renewed commitment to unity and collective responsibility.

Discussion Points from Breakout Groups:

- Participants said that it was important to preserve cultural heritage and dialects while embracing progress.
- Participants said stronger community bonds were needed to ensure social cohesion across different demographic groups and suggested developing new community spaces to foster unity between people from different backgrounds and ages. They said that strong community support networks would ensure active citizenship and civic consciousness.

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Key Insights from Panel Dialogue:

Participants asked (via Pigeonhole) about encouraging greater civic consciousness among those who appear apathetic.

- Ms Yuli said that youths should not underestimate their passion for issues they were concerned about, and the impact they could make.
- Panellists said that civic consciousness and action could be encouraged by creating accessible entry points for youths to be engaged.

Closing Remarks by MOS Rahayu

The session concluded with the unveiling of five AI-generated visuals representing Singapore's future, showcasing how participants' insights were utilised as prompts to generate images across the five themes.



- MOS Rahayu encouraged participants to undertake three key actions:
 - 1) to make and nurture new connections from the session;
 - 2) to identify causes they can take small steps to contribute towards; and
 - 3) to share information about available resources and platforms with their peers.

Notes recorded by the NYC Youth Leadership and Engagement Team.