

# The State of Youth in Singapore 2021

# 2021



NYC  
NATIONAL  
YOUTH  
COUNCIL  
SINGAPORE



© Copyright 2021, National Youth Council

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication), republished, uploaded, posted, transmitted or otherwise distributed in any way without the prior written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act (Cap. 63).

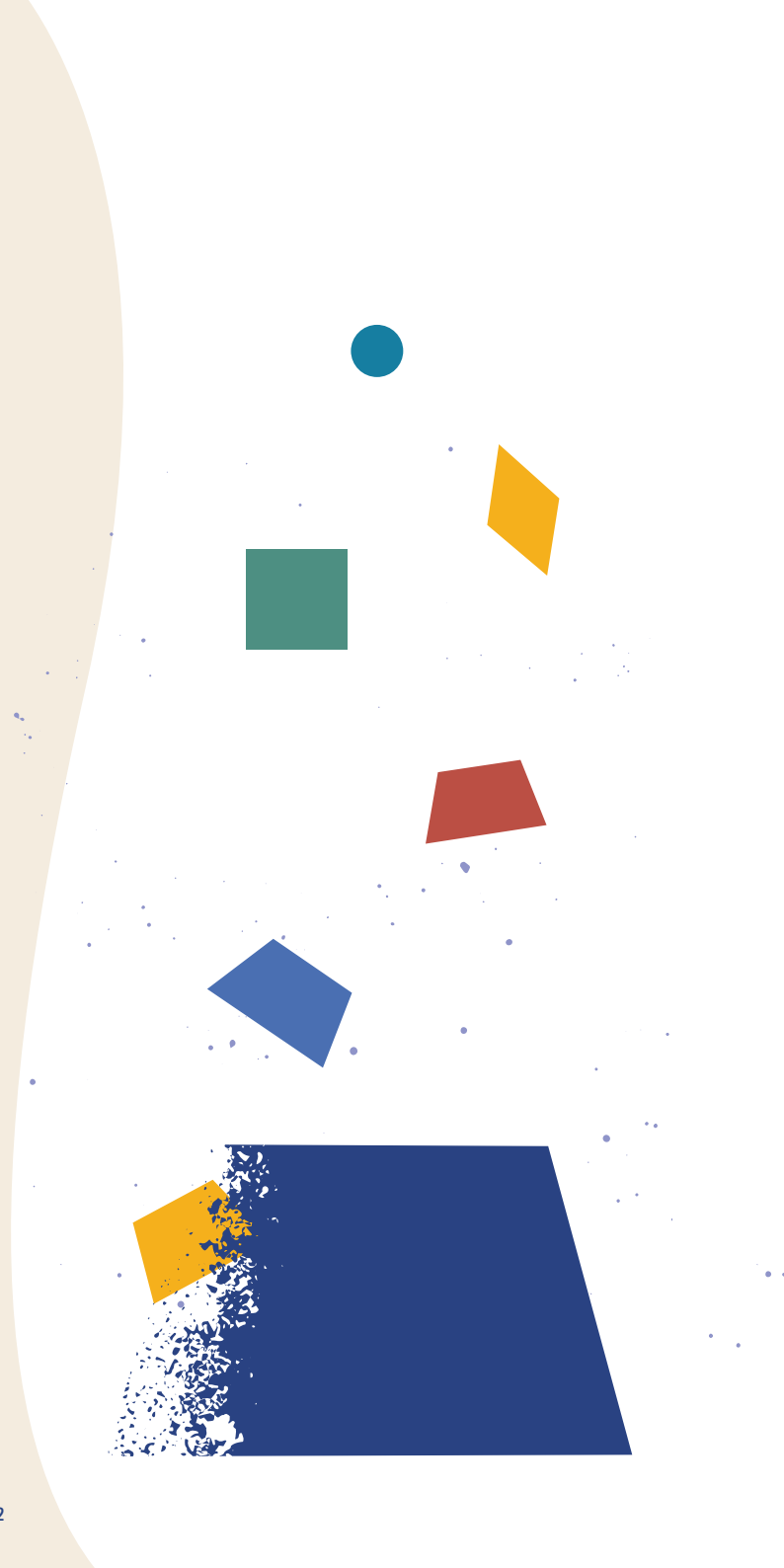
ISBN: 978-981-14-9548-9

### **Disclaimer**

The chapters compiled in this publication affirm the National Youth Council's (NYC) commitment to contribute towards building the nation's knowledge of youths in Singapore. NYC makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this publication, but makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of the information contained in or linked to the chapters.

The information and views set out in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the NYC, and their publication here does not constitute an endorsement by the NYC. Neither the NYC nor any persons or agency acting on their behalf may be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Individuals should respect the Intellectual Property Rights of the authors, and are advised to seek independent verification of such data should there be any concern with the accuracy of information published here.

**Published by the National Youth Council**





WE HEAR **YOUTH**  
HERE FOR **YOUTH**

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

## Our Vision

Thriving youth who are **Future-Ready** and **Committed to Singapore**

## Our Mission

Create **Opportunities for All Youths in Singapore**

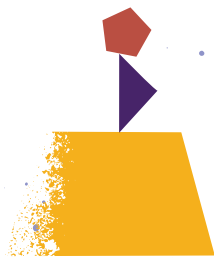
To be **heard**, to be **empowered** and to be **the change**

## Our Background

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

On 1 January 2015, NYC began its operations as an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and housed two key institutions: Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) and Youth Corps Singapore (YCS). Together, the agency drives youth development and broadens outreach to young Singaporeans and youth sector organisations.

Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law is the Chairperson of the 16th Council. The Council comprises members from diverse backgrounds such as the youth, media, arts, sports, corporate and government sectors.



## Preface

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

**This edition of YOUTH.sg consists of six separate issues covering the topics of**



**Values &  
Attitudes**



**Education &  
Employment**



**Social  
Support**



**Social  
Cohesion**



**Wellbeing**



**COVID-19  
(Special Edition)**

Each issue features youth statistics and insights from the NYS. Complementing the NYS insights are relevant studies and in-depth analyses by practitioners in youth research and development to provide readers with an overview of the state of youth in Singapore.

Contributors comprise NYS' academic collaborators (A/Ps Ho Kong Chong, Ho Kong Weng, and Irene Ng), NYC, Youth STEPS' academic collaborators (Dr Chew Han Ei, A/P Vincent Chua, and Dr Alex Tan) and other contributors (Ministry of Manpower, National Arts Council, National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, and Sport Singapore). Together, the YOUTH.sg intends to shed light on and explore specific emergent trends and issues of youths.

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

### Notation

NA Not Available

### Notes

Percentages may not total up to 100% due to rounding.

Survey figures may vary slightly due to sample weighting.

# Wellbeing

An individual's wellbeing can be said to be shaped by where they live, what they have and who they know. As a multifaceted concept, there are three broad contributors toward wellbeing; a person's quality of life, their economic circumstances, and their connections to the groups around them (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). These broad categories can be further sub-divided into 11 dimensions. Quality of life indicators include subjective wellbeing and health. Material conditions comprise income and wealth, work and job quality, and housing. Lastly, dimensions of connections include one's social ties and work-life balance.



# Wellbeing

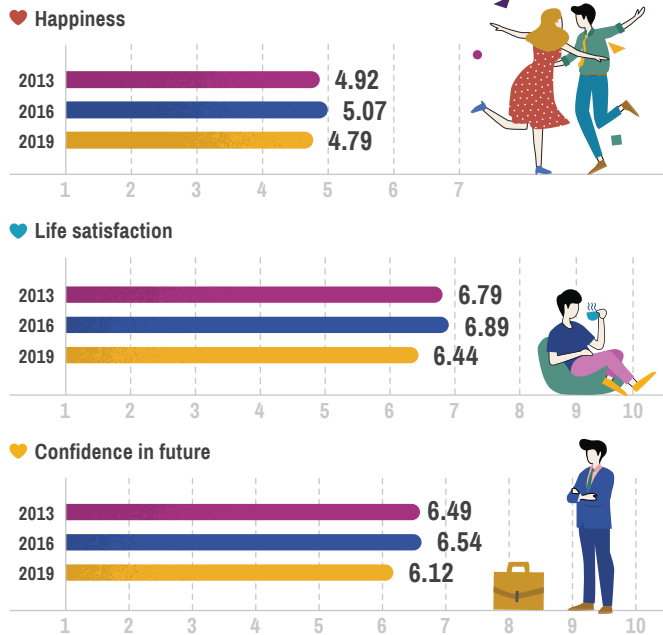
In a world of change, our youths are constantly navigating opportunities and upheavals in their journey. As they make strides towards a future where they flourish and thrive, their current wellbeing is shaped by the uncertain environment which they are living in (Wyn et al., 2015). Self-determination and resilience are critical in helping youths rise above disruptions beyond their control.

Global events such as economic downturns, pandemics, and political instability have a far-reaching impact on individuals who are at the cusp of making major life decisions and planning for their futures. Such events can create new possibilities or cause current opportunities to shrink and become volatile, thereby making pathways and achievements precarious (Schoon & Mortimer, 2017; Settersten et al., 2020).

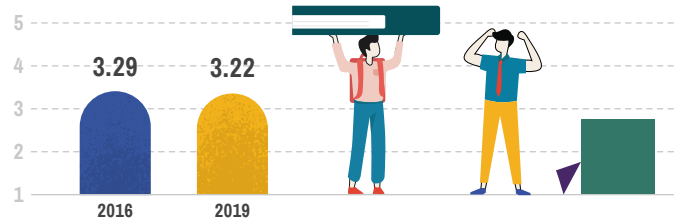
These disruptions and disappointments may threaten youths' immediate welfare in the short-term and make it difficult for them to visualise their futures in the long run. In 2019, young people continue to be most stressed by future uncertainty and hold only modest evaluations about the sufficiency of opportunities in Singapore to achieve their aspirations.

Yet our youths have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability. Subjective wellbeing remains relatively positive, with youths reporting positive evaluations of their lives alongside continued hope and confidence in their future. For parents, educators and mentors, this emphasises the importance of supportive environments and the continuous task of uplifting and developing youths for the future.

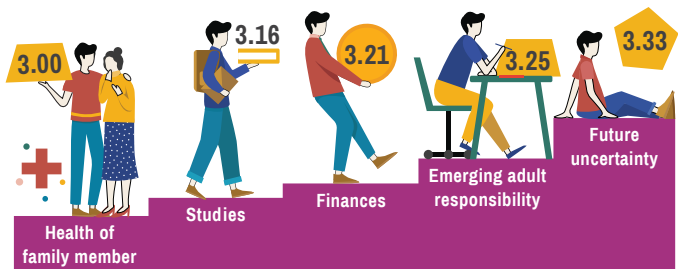
Overall, youths' wellbeing remains positive.



Youths' perceptions of their ability to bounce back from stress are moderate.



Youths remain most stressed about future uncertainty.



## Part A: Subjective Wellbeing

### Section A1: Happiness, Life Satisfaction & Confidence In Future

Youths' happiness, life satisfaction, and future confidence have remained positive despite a gradual decline over time (**Table A1**). Compared to younger youths, older youths appear to hold a more positive evaluation of their lives and the future (**Table A2**).



**Question: Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?**  
(Based on a 7-pt scale, where 7="very happy" & 1="very unhappy".)

**Question: Having considered all things in life, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?**  
(Based on a 10-pt scale, where 10="satisfied" & 1="dissatisfied".)

**Question: How confident do you feel about your future as a whole?**  
(Based on a 10-pt scale, where 10="very confident" & 1="not confident at all".)

■ **TABLE A1: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' HAPPINESS, LIFE SATISFACTION & CONFIDENCE OVER TIME**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
Happiness (7-pt scale)	5.45 (1.04)	4.92 (1.18)	5.07 (1.17)	4.79 (1.24)
Life satisfaction (10-pt scale)	7.64 (1.52)	6.79 (1.88)	6.89 (1.86)	6.44 (1.93)
Confidence in future (10-pt scale)	7.57 (1.56)	6.49 (1.99)	6.54 (2.00)	6.12 (1.97)

■ **TABLE A2: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' HAPPINESS, LIFE SATISFACTION & CONFIDENCE BY AGE**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
Happiness (7-pt scale)	4.71 (1.31)	4.66 (1.28)	4.82 (1.21)	4.93 (1.15)	4.79 (1.24)
Life satisfaction (10-pt scale)	6.21 (2.05)	6.23 (2.01)	6.55 (1.89)	6.70 (1.76)	6.44 (1.93)
Confidence in future (10-pt scale)	5.80 (2.07)	5.84 (2.01)	6.30 (1.96)	6.42 (1.82)	6.12 (1.97)

Section A2:  
Self-Esteem &  
Self-Efficacy

Self-esteem is understood as the evaluation of personal worth (Baumeister et al., 2003), while self-efficacy is defined as the beliefs about one's ability to exercise control over events in one's life (Bandura, 1990). Taken together, self-esteem and self-efficacy shape a person's agentic behaviour (e.g. goal setting and attainment, taking initiatives) and positive coping or recovery in response to setbacks.

Over time, youths report high levels of self-efficacy and comparatively lower self-esteem (Tables A3 and A5).

Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="strongly agree", 3="neither agree nor disagree", & 1="strongly disagree".)

■ TABLE A3: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' SELF-ESTEEM OVER TIME  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
Self-Esteem (Aggregate)	3.79 (0.54)	3.64 (0.67)	3.63 (0.66)	3.59 (0.70)
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	4.12 (0.61)	3.86 (0.86)	3.85 (0.85)	3.74 (0.90)
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	4.05 (0.59)	4.01 (0.75)	4.00 (0.71)	3.95 (0.75)
I feel I do not have much to be proud of <sup>a</sup>	2.80 (1.01)	2.95 (1.07)	2.96 (1.05)	2.93 (1.08)

Note  
a. This item was reverse coded in the aggregate score.





■ **TABLE A4: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' SELF-ESTEEM BY AGE**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
<b>Self-Esteem (Aggregate)</b>	<b>3.47 (0.76)</b>	<b>3.53 (0.74)</b>	<b>3.63 (0.65)</b>	<b>3.68 (0.64)</b>	<b>3.59 (0.70)</b>
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	3.61 (1.00)	3.67 (0.97)	3.80 (0.82)	3.83 (0.80)	3.74 (0.90)
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	3.89 (0.84)	3.92 (0.76)	3.97 (0.71)	4.00 (0.69)	3.95 (0.75)
I feel I do not have much to be proud of <sup>a</sup>	3.09 (1.12)	3.01 (1.10)	2.88 (1.05)	2.80 (1.04)	2.93 (1.08)

**Note**

a. This item was reverse coded in the aggregate score.

■ **TABLE A5: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' SELF-EFFICACY OVER TIME**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
<b>Self-Efficacy (Aggregate)</b>	<b>4.38 (0.51)</b>	<b>4.41 (0.53)</b>	<b>4.42 (0.52)</b>	<b>4.30 (0.54)</b>
It is important to think before you act	4.38 (0.60)	4.50 (0.61)	4.48 (0.59)	4.41 (0.63)
If I work harder, I will achieve better results	4.42 (0.63)	4.28 (0.78)	4.34 (0.74)	4.19 (0.78)
I am responsible for what happens to me	4.35 (0.64)	4.45 (0.62)	4.44 (0.61)	4.28 (0.64)

■ **TABLE A6: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' SELF-EFFICACY BY AGE**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
<b>Self-Efficacy (Aggregate)</b>	<b>4.37 (0.52)</b>	<b>4.36 (0.53)</b>	<b>4.26 (0.55)</b>	<b>4.22 (0.55)</b>	<b>4.30 (0.54)</b>
It is important to think before you act	4.46 (0.62)	4.47 (0.60)	4.40 (0.62)	4.34 (0.65)	4.41 (0.63)
If I work harder, I will achieve better results	4.36 (0.76)	4.27 (0.75)	4.10 (0.79)	4.08 (0.76)	4.19 (0.78)
I am responsible for what happens to me	4.28 (0.63)	4.35 (0.63)	4.27 (0.66)	4.23 (0.64)	4.28 (0.64)

### Section A3: Life Stressors

Over the years, future uncertainty has risen to be the top stressor for youths (**Table A7**). Concerns over the future are compounded by life stage-related worries, with greater worries about studies and emerging adult responsibilities observed among younger youths. Comparatively, older youths are more preoccupied by work and finances (**Table A8**).

**Question: To what extent do you find the following areas of your life to be stressful?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="extremely stressful", 3="moderately stressful", & 1="not at all stressful".)

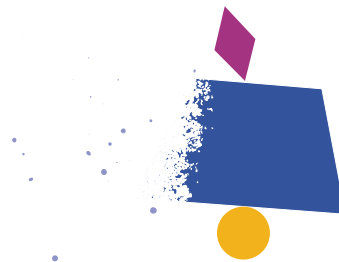
■ **TABLE A7: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' LIFE STRESSORS OVER TIME**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,259)	(n=2,791)	(n=3,493)	(n=3,354)
Future uncertainty	2.37 (1.13)	3.46 (1.15)	3.46 (1.17)	3.33 (1.15)
Emerging adult responsibility	2.25 (1.15)	3.22 (1.12)	3.30 (1.15)	3.25 (1.12)
Finances	2.28 (1.10)	3.23 (1.27)	3.07 (1.20)	3.21 (1.18)
Studies	2.81 (1.10)	3.49 (1.16)	3.36 (1.22)	3.16 (1.22)
Health of family member	2.14 (1.14)	3.04 (1.18)	3.13 (1.21)	3.00 (1.18)
Work	2.52 (1.04)	3.10 (1.09)	2.99 (1.06)	3.00 (1.05)
Personal health	1.88 (1.04)	2.68 (1.18)	2.74 (1.22)	2.62 (1.13)
Family relationships	1.82 (0.93)	2.45 (1.26)	2.26 (1.10)	2.40 (1.15)
Friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships)	1.80 (0.90)	2.40 (1.16)	2.20 (1.03)	2.38 (1.11)

**Note**

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



■ **TABLE A8: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' LIFE STRESSORS BY AGE**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=705)	(n=798)	(n=915)	(n=940)	(n=3,354)
Future uncertainty	3.41 (1.22)	3.61 (1.15)	3.27 (1.11)	3.09 (1.09)	3.33 (1.15)
Emerging adult responsibility	3.20 (1.13)	3.59 (1.11)	3.22 (1.10)	3.02 (1.07)	3.25 (1.12)
Finances	3.10 (1.21)	3.42 (1.18)	3.22 (1.16)	3.10 (1.16)	3.21 (1.18)
Studies	3.70 (1.17)	3.46 (1.10)	2.76 (1.13)	2.65 (1.14)	3.16 (1.22)
Health of family member	3.03 (1.22)	3.10 (1.19)	2.93 (1.16)	2.98 (1.16)	3.00 (1.18)
Work	2.77 (1.09)	2.95 (1.09)	3.09 (1.01)	3.08 (1.02)	3.00 (1.05)
Personal health	2.62 (1.22)	2.66 (1.13)	2.59 (1.07)	2.63 (1.11)	2.62 (1.13)
Family relationships	2.41 (1.22)	2.44 (1.19)	2.36 (1.13)	2.39 (1.10)	2.40 (1.15)
Friendships (including peer pressure, romantic relationships)	2.70 (1.17)	2.53 (1.09)	2.25 (1.07)	2.13 (1.04)	2.38 (1.11)

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



**Section A4: Resilience** The ability to bounce back or recover from stress or adversity (Smith et al., 2008) is critical for individuals to thrive in the face of challenges brought forth by an increasingly tumultuous environment. Overall, youths continue to report themselves to be moderately resilient (**Table A9**).

**Question: To what extent do you agree with these statements?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="strongly agree", 3="neither agree nor disagree", & 1="strongly disagree".)

■ **TABLE A9: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' RESILIENCE OVER TIME**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2016	2019
	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
<b>Resilience (Aggregate)</b>	<b>3.29 (0.60)</b>	<b>3.22 (0.63)</b>
I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times	3.73 (0.82)	3.46 (0.84)
I have a hard time making it through stressful events <sup>a</sup>	3.10 (0.96)	2.96 (0.94)
It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event	3.56 (0.86)	3.39 (0.88)
It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens <sup>a</sup>	2.92 (0.95)	2.93 (0.93)
I usually come through difficult times with little trouble	3.35 (0.85)	3.28 (0.86)
I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life <sup>a</sup>	2.89 (0.95)	2.92 (0.96)

**Note**  
a. These items were reverse coded in the aggregate score.

■ **TABLE A10: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' RESILIENCE BY AGE**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
<b>Resilience (Aggregate)</b>	<b>3.17 (0.64)</b>	<b>3.16 (0.66)</b>	<b>3.23 (0.61)</b>	<b>3.31 (0.60)</b>	<b>3.22 (0.63)</b>
I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times	3.46 (0.89)	3.39 (0.87)	3.46 (0.83)	3.51 (0.79)	3.46 (0.84)
I have a hard time making it through stressful events <sup>a</sup>	3.14 (0.96)	3.02 (0.95)	2.93 (0.91)	2.82 (0.92)	2.96 (0.94)
It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event	3.41 (0.94)	3.32 (0.90)	3.38 (0.88)	3.44 (0.82)	3.39 (0.88)
It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens <sup>a</sup>	2.98 (0.97)	2.99 (0.96)	2.95 (0.91)	2.83 (0.90)	2.93 (0.93)
I usually come through difficult times with little trouble	3.23 (0.90)	3.22 (0.87)	3.30 (0.84)	3.37 (0.81)	3.28 (0.86)
I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life <sup>a</sup>	2.99 (0.97)	2.97 (0.99)	2.89 (0.96)	2.85 (0.91)	2.92 (0.96)

**Note**

a. These items were reverse coded in the aggregated score.

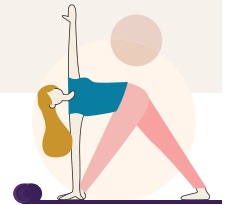


## Part B: Physical & Mental Wellbeing

### Section B1: Perceived Physical & Mental Health

Transitions during emerging adulthood can affect a person's physical and mental welfare (Arnett et al., 2014; Barlett et al., 2020). Therefore, attention needs to be paid to how youths are faring both physically and mentally. Perceptions of general health have stayed relatively modest between 2013 and 2016 (**Table B1**) with reported physical and mental health continuing to be moderate in 2019. Younger youths report higher levels of physical health yet lower levels of mental health (**Table B2**).

**Question: All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="very good", 3="fair", & 1="very poor".)



■ **TABLE B1: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' PERCEIVED GENERAL HEALTH OVER TIME**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)
Perceived general health	4.12 (0.69)	3.70 (0.79)	3.75 (0.81)

**Question: All in all, how would you describe your state of physical health these days?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="very good", 3="fair", & 1="very poor".)

**Question: All in all, how would you describe your state of mental health these days?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="very good", 3="fair", & 1="very poor".)

■ **TABLE B2: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' PERCEIVED PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH BY AGE**  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
Perceived physical health	3.60 (0.85)	3.48 (0.87)	3.52 (0.81)	3.48 (0.79)	3.52 (0.83)
Perceived mental health	3.43 (1.01)	3.38 (0.98)	3.50 (0.88)	3.59 (0.82)	3.48 (0.92)

#### Note

This is a new question introduced in NYS 2019, replacing the existing question on perceived general health.

## Part C: Economic Wellbeing



### Section C1: Perceived Opportunities

Neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic, youths hold realistic evaluations of their prospects. Since 2013, youths report modest expectations of the opportunities available to them in Singapore to achieve their aspirations (**Table C1**). Over time, they continue to be slightly more optimistic about their career opportunities.

**Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**  
(Based on a 5-pt scale, where 5="strongly agree", 3="neither agree nor disagree", & 1="strongly disagree".)

■ **TABLE C1: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES OVER TIME**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010 <sup>a</sup>	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to achieve my personal aspirations in life	3.73 (0.76)	3.29 (1.01)	3.28 (1.03)	3.28 (0.93)
There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to have a good career <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	3.37 (0.99)	3.39 (0.91)

#### Notes

a. "Perceived opportunities to achieve aspirations" was recoded as a 5-pt scale for NYS 2010, which adopted a 6-pt scale.

b. Item is new to NYS 2016.

■ **TABLE C2: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES BY AGE**

(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to achieve my personal aspirations in life	3.31 (0.92)	3.26 (0.96)	3.21 (0.93)	3.32 (0.90)	3.28 (0.93)
There are enough opportunities in Singapore for me to have a good career	3.45 (0.87)	3.40 (0.94)	3.33 (0.91)	3.38 (0.92)	3.39 (0.91)

Section C2:  
Income & Rewards

In recent years, youths have expressed more egalitarian attitudes. However, while youths have gradually shown greater inclinations towards income equality in the past decade, they remain accepting of income differences based on personal effort (Table C3). Younger youths tend to believe more strongly in equal incomes compared to older youths (Table C4).

Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statement regarding incomes and rewards?  
(Based on a 10-pt scale, where 10="we need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort" & 1="incomes should be made more equal".)

■ TABLE C3: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCOME & REWARDS OVER TIME  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=1,268)	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
Income & rewards	6.20 (2.06)	5.54 (2.50)	5.09 (2.44)	5.57 (2.31)

■ TABLE C4: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCOME & REWARDS BY AGE  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
Incomes & rewards	5.37 (2.31)	5.40 (2.26)	5.57 (2.38)	5.87 (2.24)	5.57 (2.31)





Section C3:  
Hard Work &  
Connections

Recognising the value of individual effort and perseverance, youths continue to see both hard work and connections as key to a better life. But with the pervasiveness of social networking, connections are perceived to be increasingly important for achieving success (Table C5). Older youths have a greater tendency to perceive luck and connections as crucial conditions for success (Table C6).

Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statement regarding work and connections?  
(Based on a 10-pt scale, where 10="hard work doesn't generally bring success - it's more a matter of luck and connections" & 1="in the long run, hard work usually brings a better life".)

■ TABLE C5: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HARD WORK & CONNECTIONS OVER TIME  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	2013	2016	2019
	(n=2,843)	(n=3,531)	(n=3,392)
Hard work & connections	5.12 (2.60)	4.99 (2.47)	5.72 (2.44)

■ TABLE C6: MEAN RATINGS OF YOUTHS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HARD WORK & CONNECTIONS BY AGE  
(with standard deviations in parentheses)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Overall
	(n=716)	(n=804)	(n=926)	(n=946)	(n=3,392)
Hard work & connections	5.06 (2.43)	5.59 (2.45)	5.96 (2.39)	6.08 (2.37)	5.72 (2.44)



Section C4:  
Allowance &  
Parental Income

Most schooling youths receive financial support from their parents, with 7 in 10 receiving at least \$100 or more in monthly allowances (Table C7).

Question: What is the average monthly spending money you receive from your family or guardian?  
(This does not include school or tuition fees or your own salary.)

TABLE C7: SCHOOLING YOUTHS' MONTHLY ALLOWANCES OVER TIME

	2010	2013	2016	2019
	(n=425)	(n=1,057)	(n=1,206)	(n=1,116)
Above S\$300	17%	17%	18%	20%
S\$201 - S\$300	21%	18%	19%	18%
S\$100 - S\$200	35%	32%	31%	32%
Below S\$100	23%	22%	22%	16%
I do not receive money	4%	11%	10%	13%

**Note**  
Respondents who declined giving a response were excluded from the reported figures. Response was mandatory for NYS 2013, 2016 and 2019, which may account for some fluctuation in the overall trend.



Question: What is your parents' combined monthly income (from all sources)?

TABLE C8: PARENTS' COMBINED INCOME OVER TIME

	2010 <sup>a</sup>	2013 <sup>a</sup>	2016	2019
	(n=813)	(n=2,025)	(n=3,341)	(n=3,140)
S\$5,000 and above	22%	25%	31%	38%
S\$3,000 - S\$4,999	20%	18%	19%	19%
S\$2,000 - S\$2,999	17%	15%	16%	16%
S\$1,500 - S\$1,999	13%	12%	10%	8%
S\$1,000 - S\$1,499	8%	11%	10%	6%
S\$500 - S\$999	4%	9%	5%	4%
Below \$500	16%	10%	9%	10%

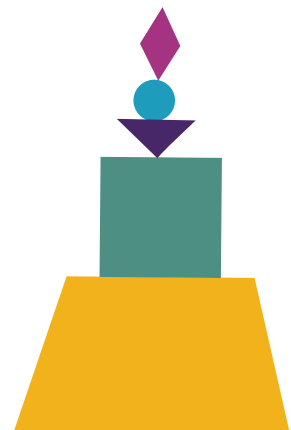
Notes

Respondents who declined giving a response were excluded from the reported figures.  
a. NYS 2010 and 2013 response brackets were captured differently and may not be strictly comparable.



## References

- Arnett, J. J., Žukauskienė, R., & Sugimura, K. (2014). The new life stage of emerging adulthood at ages 18–29 years: Implications for mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 1(7), 569–576. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(14\)00080-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)00080-7)
- Bandura, A. (1990). Perceived self-efficacy in the exercise of personal agency. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 2(2), 128–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413209008406426>
- Barlett, C. P., Barlett, N. D., & Chalk, H.M. (2020). Transitioning through emerging adulthood and physical health implications. *Emerging Adulthood*, 8(4), 297–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818814642>
- Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(1), 1–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1529-1006.01431>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). *How's life? 2020: Measuring well-being*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9870c393-en>
- Schoon, I., & Mortimer, J. (2017). Youth and the Great Recession: Are values, achievement orientation and outlook to the future affected? *International Journal of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12400>
- Settersten, R. A., Jr., Bernardi, L., Härkönen, J., Antonucci, T. C., Dykstra, P. A., Heckhausen, J., Kuh, D., Mayer, K. U., Moen, P., Mortimer, J. T., Mulder, C. H., Smeeding, T. M., van der Lippe, T., Hagestad, G. O., Kohli, M., Levy, R., Schoon, I., & Thomson, E. (2020). Understanding the effects of Covid-19 through a life course lens. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100360>
- Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E. Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 15(3), 194–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972>
- Wyn, J., Cuervo, H., & Landstedt, E. (2015). The limits of wellbeing. In K. Wright & J. McLeod (Eds.), *Rethinking youth wellbeing* (pp. 55–70). Springer.



# About the National Youth Survey

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

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

■ **TABLE I: NATIONAL YOUTH INDICATORS FRAMEWORK**

	Social Capital (Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002; Putnam, 2000)	Human Capital (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001; World Economic Forum, 2017)
Definition	Social capital refers to the relationships within and between groups, and the shared norms and trust that govern these interactions.	Human capital refers to the skills, competencies, and attitudes of individuals, which in turn create personal, social, and economic wellbeing.
Domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social support</li><li>• Social participation</li><li>• Values &amp; attitudes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education</li><li>• Employment</li><li>• Wellbeing</li></ul>
Focus	The power of relationships	The human potential of young people

NYS 2019 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 September to November 2019. A total of 3,392 youths were successfully surveyed, of which 227 were surveyed at their households. Demographic proportions of NYS respondents adhered closely to the youth population.

**Table II** presents the profile of respondents from NYS 2002, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2019. Figures referenced in all tables in the publication (with the exception of figures from NYS 2002<sup>a</sup>) were weighted according to interlocking matrices of age, gender, and race of the respective youth populations.

**Note**  
a. Figures from NYS 2002 were not weighted due to the non-standard age bands used.



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

		NYS 2002 (n=1,504)	NYS 2005 (n=1,504)	NYS 2010 (n=1,268)	NYS 2013 (n=2,843)	NYS 2016 (n=3,531)	NYS 2019 (n=3,392)	Latest Youth Population <sup>a</sup>
Age	15-19	NYS 2002 utilised non-standard age bands	33%	24%	24%	23%	21%	21%
	20-24		31%	23%	25%	25%	24%	24%
	25-29		36%	25%	24%	25%	27%	27%
	30-34 <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	28%	28%	27%	28%	28%
Gender	Male	50%	50%	49%	49%	49%	50%	50%
	Female	50%	50%	51%	51%	51%	50%	50%
Race	Chinese	77%	75%	72%	72%	72%	72%	72%
	Malay	15%	15%	15%	16%	16%	17%	17%
	Indian	7%	9%	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%
	Others	1%	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Nationality	Singaporean	93%	90%	86%	91%	94%	93%	86%
	Permanent Resident	7%	10%	14%	10%	6%	7%	14%
Marital Status	Single	83%	85%	74%	74%	74%	74%	74%
	Married	17%	14%	25%	25%	26%	25%	25%
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Religion	Buddhism	35%	32%	36%	25%	24%	22%	28%
	Islam	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%	21%	18%
	Christianity	16%	16%	15%	19%	19%	20%	18%
	Hinduism	5%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%
	Taoism/Traditional Chinese Beliefs	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	5%	7%
	Other Religions	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%
	No Religion	21%	21%	15%	23%	25%	27%	23%
Dwelling	HDB 1-2 rooms	5%	3%	5%	3%	5%	4%	3%
	HDB 3 rooms	26%	24%	24%	14%	14%	14%	12%
	HDB 4 rooms	33%	43%	34%	37%	38%	35%	35%
	HDB 5 rooms, executive, & above	24%	19%	26%	31%	29%	30%	29%
	Private flat & condominium	12%	11%	3%	10%	9%	12%	13%
	Private house & bungalow			9%	6%	4%	4%	6%
	Others	0%	NA	NA	0%	0%	1%	0%

**Notes**

a. Latest youth population refers to the most recent available data from the Department of Statistics (DOS) at the time of fieldwork – age, gender, race, and dwelling (DOS, 2019a) as well as nationality (DOS, 2019b), marital status, and religion (DOS, 2016).

b. The 30-34 age band was included from NYS 2010.

## References

- Department of Statistics. (2016). *General Household Survey 2015*. <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/ghs/ghs2015/ghs2015.pdf>
- Department of Statistics. (2019a). *Population Trends 2019*. <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/population/population2019.pdf>
- Department of Statistics. (2019b). *M810671 - Singapore citizens by age group, ethnic group and sex, end June, annual*. <https://www.tablebuilder.singstat.gov.sg/publicfacing/mainMenu.action>
- Grootaert, C., & van Bastelaer, T. (2002). Social capital: From definition to measurement. In C. Grootaert & T. van Bastelaer (Eds.), *Understanding and measuring social capital: A multidisciplinary tool for practitioners. Directions in Development* (pp. 1-16). World Bank.
- Ho, K. C., & Yip, J. (2003). *YOUTH.sg: The State of Youth in Singapore*. National Youth Council.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2001). *The well-being of nations: The role of human and social capital*. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/site/worldforum/33703702.pdf>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
- World Economic Forum. (2017). *The Global Human Capital Report 2017*. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Human\\_Capital\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Human_Capital_Report_2017.pdf)





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

**BLK 490 LORONG 6 TOA PAYOH  
HDB HUB BIZ THREE #04-10  
SINGAPORE 310490**

**E: [NYC\\_ENQUIRIES@NYC.GOV.SG](mailto:NYC_ENQUIRIES@NYC.GOV.SG)  
[WWW.NYC.GOV.SG](http://WWW.NYC.GOV.SG)**

**Also part of NYC**

