

Issued on 15 Aug 2020

FACT SHEET

SINGAPORE TOGETHER EMERGING STRONGER CONVERSATIONS – BUILDING A CARING, COHESIVE AND RESILIENT SINGAPORE SOCIETY

Singapore is facing the crisis of a generation. Covid-19 has impacted every Singaporean. While we have resumed activities cautiously after the Circuit Breaker, Singaporeans continue to brace ourselves for the scale of the economic and social impact. In the spirit of Singapore Together, Singaporeans have also kept the momentum of conversations and partnerships to build a better future going during this period. As we work towards recovering from this pandemic, this spirit will help Singaporeans to chart a new path and emerge stronger from the crisis.

2 In the coming months and years, we will need Singaporeans – individuals, friends and families, community groups and businesses alike – to step forward, offer help, and work together with each other, and with the Government. In support of this, Singapore Together will focus on engendering new partnerships to help us emerge stronger as an economy and as a society.

(i) Emerging Stronger Conversations

3 We have undergone a shared experience which will shape the attitudes and worldview of an entire generation. We want to draw this out and use these reflections as core elements on which to build an even stronger society. A series of Singapore (SG) Together Emerging Stronger Conversations (“Conversations”) are being organised as a platform for Singaporeans to share their reflections, and explore aspirations and actions that will help us become a more caring, cohesive and resilient society.

4 These efforts complement the engagements and partnerships that other Government agencies continue to organise and support. Together, they will contribute to our overall effort to build our shared future.

5 12 Emerging Stronger Conversations will be organised between June and October 2020. These Conversations will be conducted digitally by default, until the situation allows for face-to-face gatherings to take place safely. Each Conversation will involve some 40 to 50 participants from diverse backgrounds, and hosted by a political officer holder. Over 2 hours of discussion, participants will, in their facilitated breakout groups, share their reflections about the Covid-19 crisis, their hopes for Singapore, and what actions we can take to reach the desired outcome together.

6 These Conversations are open for public sign-up. Those who are interested can still register their interest for one of the forthcoming Conversations taking place, at <https://go.gov.sg/ESconversations>. (Please see Annex A for the list of public Conversations.)



QR code to the Emerging Stronger Conversations Registration

<https://go.gov.sg/esconversations>

(ii) Other Platforms

7 The government is committed to engaging widely across different stakeholders and will also invite partners to convene their own Conversations, to enable more to participate, and multiply the potential for action. Outside of these Conversations, Singaporeans can also share their reflections and aspirations at www.singaporetogether.gov.sg/reflect.

8 Stories and ideas shared by participants of across these channels will be shared on Our SG social platforms and on the Singapore Together website for interested members of the public to catch up on the perspectives of other Singaporeans.

(iii) Emerging Aspirations from the ESC

9 In the first few Conversations, participants shared their experiences and candid thoughts on a wide range of issues including supporting the vulnerable, equipping both younger and mid-career workers with necessary skills and digital tools, and having greater civic participation across all segments of society. Through these Conversations, there was a common thread of aspiring towards a more caring, resilient and cohesive Singapore, and the belief that by working together, and pooling together our experiences, expertise and efforts, we can emerge stronger as a society and country. (Please see Annex B for a snapshot of the participants and topics discussed at the SG Together Emerging Stronger Conversations)

(iv) SG Together Action Networks

10 These Conversations are in their early days. More will take place in the coming months. As key issues emerge from the SG Together Emerging Stronger Conversations, we will form the Singapore Together Action Networks (“Action Networks”) to work on them and give effect to the aspirations shared by participants.



11 The Action Networks will bring together a diverse group of people from different sectors – Government, community, businesses – to co-create, and co-deliver ideas and solutions. They will be important drivers to mobilise our collective energies and expertise and exemplify the Singapore Together governance approach of working in partnership, towards Singapore’s recovery and future. The number and composition of Networks will be determined by the issues surfaced through the Emerging Stronger Conversations, and the actions needed.

12 We encourage all Singaporeans to play a part in the Singapore Together efforts. We can stay united amidst the challenges ahead and emerge stronger together.

Annexes

- A.** Emerging Stronger Conversations Public Sessions
- B.** Snapshot of the participants and topics discussed at the SG Together Emerging Stronger Conversations

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About Singapore Together

Singapore Together is about the Government working with Singaporeans, and Singaporeans working with one another, to build our future Singapore. The Government will open up more partnership opportunities for Singaporeans to participate. The Government also hopes to support more citizen-led efforts. Whatever our background or interests, we can each step forward to contribute in areas that we care about. By working together, we can turn diversity into strength and transform challenges into opportunities, to build a Singapore that present and future generations of Singaporeans will be proud of. For more information, visit www.singaporetogether.gov.sg.

**SINGAPORE TOGETHER EMERGING STRONGER CONVERSATIONS –
12 PUBLIC SESSIONS**

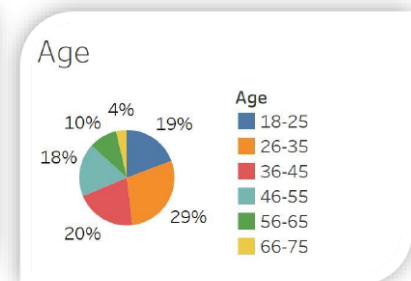
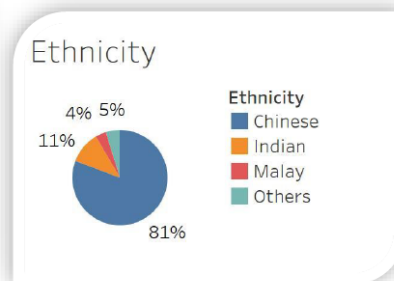
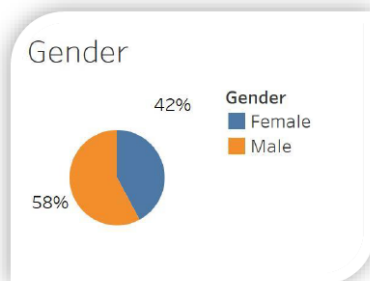
Emerging Stronger Conversation Sessions	Date	Time	Remarks
Session 1	16 Jun 2020 (Tue)	3.30pm – 5.30 pm	Completed
Session 2	1 Aug 2020 (Sat)	9.30 am – 12.00 pm	Completed
Session 3	5 Aug 2020 (Wed)	7.00 pm – 9.30 pm	Completed
Session 4	12 Aug 2020 (Wed)	7.00pm – 9.30pm	Completed
Session 5	15 Aug 2020 (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	<i>*to be held today</i>
Session 6	22 Aug 2020 (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	Upcoming
Session 7	5 Sep 2020 (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	Upcoming
Session 8	9 Sep 2020 (Wed)	7.00pm – 9.30pm	Upcoming
Session 9	12 Sep 2020 (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	Upcoming
Session 10	23 Sep 2020 (Wed)	7.00pm – 9.30pm	Upcoming
Session 11	26 Sep 2020 (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	Upcoming
Session 12	Oct (exact date tbc)	Tbc	Upcoming

A SNAPSHOT OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE SG TOGETHER ESCS

Participants Profile

Day/ Date	Time	Office Holder	Participants
16 Jun (Tue)	3.30pm – 5.30pm	Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat; Minister Indranee Rajah	51
1 Aug (Sat)	9.30am – 12.00pm	Minister Indranee Rajah	44
5 Aug (Wed)	7.00pm – 9.30 pm	Minister Desmond Lee	39
12 Aug (Wed)*	7.00 pm – 9.30pm	Senior Parliamentary Secretary Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim	43

- 134 participants over the 4 Conversations
- Mix of genders, ethnicities and age groups
 - Slightly higher representation by males, Chinese and younger people (≤ 35).
 - In terms of occupation, mostly PMETs. Others include students, self-employed and retirees.



Key Issues – A Summary

Participants...

Issue 1: Social support

- Want greater inclusiveness for people of all walks of life, and more recognition or tangible benefits (e.g. higher pay) for essential workers (e.g. cleaners, gardeners), foreign workers, and the “invisibles”.
- Want the Government and community to provide more support to those who need assistance, such as low-income families, people with disabilities, mental stresses and those suffering from family violence.

- Want an equitable society with equal opportunity for all; concerned that GST hike to 9% would hit the poor the worst.

Issue 2: Jobs and Economy

- Want better work-life balance and employer flexibility, though important to increase work productivity and be willing to transform and upskill.
- Want better policy support for those going through mid-career changes, entrepreneurs and start-ups, and home-based businesses in particular.
- Concerned about overdependence on cheap foreign labour, foreign companies, and international trade; Government policies should push companies to have a Singaporean core, and we should teach children to do “manual labour” skills from young (e.g. do household chores).

Issue 3: Education and Training

- Feel that we are too driven by results, instead of growing through the process. We are losing our soul – we need a paradigm shift in mindset and to redefine success, as results should not determine one’s value.
- Recognise the importance of teaching good habits (e.g. household chores, time management, healthy lifestyle) and empathy from young, want campaigns to encourage Singaporeans to be more gracious and inclusive (e.g. Sharity/Singa of the past).
- Think it is important for next generation to be trained in critical thinking and be able to analyse information. Also, all schools need to have good resources and learn to adapt to digital platforms.
- Want to take up small courses and qualifications under skills development programme but need to have better course offerings – should change SkillsFuture offerings as we seem to be wasting money on low-grade skills.

Issue 4: Digitalisation and Technology

- Felt that technology could bring about positive changes and progress.
- Want Government / employers / community to better reach out and provide support to ensure greater inclusivity especially for seniors and lower-income families, so that technology would not perpetuate the gap between the “haves” and “have nots”.
- Raised privacy, cybersecurity concerns and the need to address fake news / misinformation



Issue 5: Engagement and Partnerships

- Want the Government to connect and engage with people of diverse backgrounds, including youth voices for innovations.
- Recognise that apart from the Government, people need to be proactive as well; need P2P conversations and not just G2P ones.
- Suggest convening “action groups” comprising govt and people of different ages; and create a constant and empowering feedback loop from people to government.

*(*note: findings from 12 Aug session is not included in this early snapshot)*