

Singapore Citizenship Journey

Introduction

Between 13,000 and 16,000 prospective citizens go through a 2-months Singapore Citizen Journey (SCJ) programme annually. Over 65% of participants are between the ages of 14 and 65 years old, and 60% are from Southeast Asian countries. The 4 components of the SCJ include the e-journey, an experiential visit, community service and a community sharing session.

In 2020, a Citizens' Workgroup was convened so that the Government could engage Singaporeans from diverse backgrounds to review and create fresh and relevant content for the e-journey and finetune its desired outcomes. Over 7 months, the Workgroup came together to explore what makes us Singaporean, and worked towards building a common understanding about what future Singaporeans should know about our society. This report, which sums up the Workgroup's recommendations, is written as a welcome gift from Singaporeans to all new citizens.

There are 8 chapters in this report.

Chapter 1 provides the context to the shared values found in our local society. It highlights the values and norms that unite all citizens. Appreciating and practising these values and norms will make us better Singaporeans.

Chapter 2 outlines four key roles and responsibilities for our fellow citizens. These include: upholding key principles; respecting women; appreciating the Singapore story; and co-writing the next chapter of the Singapore story through effective integration and positive contribution.

Chapter 3 details the integration model in Singapore which fully respects the cultural background of each Singaporean. It provides space for new citizens to retain their own identity while building a shared sense of belonging with local-born Singaporeans. The chapter highlights the importance of organising and participating in activities to promote

social bonding.

As new Singaporeans start to find their place in society, they will also want to give back.

Chapter 4 explores how Singaporeans contribute to society. It highlights the values of empathy and kindness, and prioritising others above self.

It is also important for new citizens to understand the historical development of Singapore and its society. **Chapters 5 to 7** highlight Singapore's history; its arts and cultures; and its integral institutions and systems. These features shape how our society functions and progresses. We believe that citizens should understand how these features work, so that they would be able to manage their affairs better and feel more at ease in society.

Lastly, being forward-looking has always been a critical attribute of Singapore. By anticipating the future through scenario-planning, we can adapt to and thrive with change. As such, **Chapter 8** concludes by highlighting our collective vision and aspirations for the future as we move ahead as a nation together.

Research Process

Background

The SCJ is a mandatory induction programme for new citizens that aims to enhance their understanding of Singapore's history, culture and values, and build stronger ties with the local community.

In 2020, MCCY invited citizens to form a Citizens' Workgroup to help create content to update the SCJ. About 100 citizens from diverse backgrounds were eventually selected, reflective of Singapore's demographics in terms of age, race, gender and socio-economic status. These included community and civic leaders from ethnic and religious organisations, grassroots, immigrant associations, schools, companies and trade unions.

The process occurred over two phases, from April to July and from August to December 2020. By end-2020, the Workgroup's final report would be made public

Methodology of the two phases

In **Phase 1** (April – July 2020), the intent was to enable participants to be familiarised with the discussion topics, and learn how to work together. Due to COVID-19, the discussions took place online and participants shared their views and responses to questions such as:

- i. What are the values that we share and care about as Singaporeans?
- ii. What are some unique traits and behaviours that make us uniquely Singaporean?
- iii. What responsibilities do we have to each other as fellow citizens?
- iv. What roles can we play in our communities and society?

In **Phase 2** (August – November 2020), a smaller group of 69 citizens from Phase 1 continued the deliberations with the aim of proposing content to update the SCJ. Discussions focused on the question, "What do you want future Singaporeans to know or to be?" After discussions, the participants agreed to form eight groups to conduct further research in the following areas:

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- i. Values and Norms
 - ii. Roles and Responsibilities
 - iii. Integration
 - iv. Contributing to Society
 - v. History and Milestones
 - vi. Art, Culture and Traditions
 - vii. National Systems and Institutions
 - viii. Moving Ahead as a Nation

The participants worked closely with MCCY to craft a series of questions to be posed to the wider public through a survey commissioned by MCCY. The survey sought to:

- i. Understand citizens' perception of what Singaporeans should know
- ii. Understand citizens' perception of Singapore's future
- iii. Understand citizens' perception of how future Singaporeans should act, e.g. in terms of integration and contributing to society

The survey was conducted from September to October 2020 via online self-administered questionnaires and telephone interviews. The 3000 citizens who participated in the survey were reflective of Singapore's demographics in terms of age, race, gender and socio-economic status.

Methodology used in Phase 2

In general, the eight groups conducted secondary research by referring to books, journals and government resources such as official speeches and handbooks. The groups also relied on reports from earlier public consultation exercises such as Our Singapore Conversation and the Committee on the Future Economy. Their research was then combined with the results of the MCCY-commissioned survey, to develop the content for this report.

In addition to the MCCY-commissioned survey, some groups also conducted their own surveys for their respective topics. For instance, the group looking into Chapter 3's topic on 'Integration' conducted an open-ended survey to seek more detailed responses to the complex issue of integration. However, due to the group's limited resources, their sample size was small (five citizens). Likewise, the group looking at Chapter 5's topic on

'Contributing to Society' conducted a small quantitative survey, and some in-depth interviews with new citizens.

Being at Home

A Welcome Letter from Singaporeans



Our Values & Norms

Dear future Singaporeans,

So you have been in Singapore for a while now, and many of you may not have planned to stay here for so long but somehow, Singapore has become your home away from home. In fact, you have become so comfortable and love it so much here that you have been toying with the idea of making Singapore your only home. We know it is not an easy decision, so we have decided to share with you what we love most about our country, our home, our Singapore.

Singapore is a young Asian country and a multi-racial nation, composed of distinct communities. In Singapore, we recognise and respect each other's cultural heritage and identity while living harmoniously with each other. We may be a rojak (an eclectic salad described in Chapter 3!) but we are not a melting pot! So in 1991, we formally and collectively decided on a set of commonly shared values that are the very essence of what makes us Singaporeans, and have shaped Singapore to be the country that the world knows today. We live out these 5 shared values, act on them, and honour them – **we place society above self, uphold family as the basic building block of society, provide community support and respect for individuals, seek consensus instead of conflict, and appreciate racial and religious harmony.**



In times of national crisis and global pandemic, we have seen how our fellow Singaporeans have selflessly done right by the country and placed the **nation before community and society above self**. Without any hesitation, our fellow Singaporeans stepped up to take care of our communities and made individual sacrifices for the greater interest of the nation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw the community pouring in to help. They ensured food security, organisations and individuals opened their spare rooms and spaces for others to live in, pulled resources to buy medical supplies for others. We salute you – all of you are our community heroes!

In Singapore, we value **family as the basic unit of society**, as family ties are very important to us. We believe in showing **love, care and concern** for one another while practising open and honest **communication** to foster strong family bonds. We believe in showing **mutual respect**, and honouring our **commitment** to stick by one another through thick and thin – even for extended family members. We love and accept our family members for whoever they are, regardless of their personal lifestyle, political stance, etc. In Singapore, it is common to see strong inter-generation bonds where two to three generations live under one roof with everyone playing their part. The grandparents look after and impart good values in the young while the parents are out at work, and the young are taught to carry out their **filial responsibilities** to express their gratitude towards our parents and grandparents for painstakingly bringing us up.

As Singaporeans, we extend **community support and respect for the individuals** in our society – be it our neighbours or even strangers who we have never met. Even during good times, Singaporeans are known to donate generously to charities and communities in need. Such public spiritedness is affectionately known as “gotong royong” or our “kampung spirit”! Kampung spirit was most demonstrated recently when Singaporeans banded together to sew masks during COVID-19 for anyone who needed one. This shared value enables Singaporeans to collectively surmount challenges ahead.

The success of Singapore could not have been achieved without Singaporeans seeking **consensus, not conflict**. You will see Singaporeans demonstrating **openness, tolerance** and most importantly **acceptance** to accommodate different views of the way that Singapore should develop, and are willing to compromise to preserve our national unity. In making any major decisions that impact Singapore as a nation, we will always seek opinions from all major religious and ethnic groups. We also share our different perspectives through channels including newspaper forums and citizen workgroups to address issues together in practical ways. As we move our views from traditional channels onto social media, we will continue to be civil towards each other, find common grounds and embrace our differences in the online space.

Consensus, not conflict is particularly important in achieving our fifth shared value – **racial and religious harmony**. You will see different races and religions co-existing peacefully

amongst ourselves and in our friendships with our neighbours in the region. At a national level, we do not use religion to pursue political causes. We also ensure minority representation in Parliament so that every voice is heard. And at the ground level, do not be surprised that your co-workers voluntarily cover for other teammates at work so that their colleagues can enjoy their festive holidays. And did you know? Singapore is one of the few countries in the world where you can find a Hindu temple co-existing beside a Chinese temple, often with both their devotees worshipping in each other's temples – a daily scene that epitomises the harmonious and multi-religious aspect of Singapore. Do visit these temples in Waterloo Street to see it for yourselves!

Did you know?

The racial and religious harmony that we enjoy today and so unique to Singapore did not happen by chance. Our forefathers have witnessed those days of racial riots where Singaporeans lost their lives, and many were seriously hurt (more on this in Chapter 5). It was not because we were against each other but because we knew and understood very little about one another. We could only imagine that this must have been a very strange land for anyone who travelled thousands of miles away from their homeland – an island with everyone only able to speak and understand their own language and dialects, and cultural and religious practices that were so different from their own!

Our forefathers staunchly believe that multiracialism is non-negotiable, so we deliberately made efforts to learn about one another's race, culture and religion at every opportunity. In schools, we learnt English to understand each other, and retained the study of our mother tongue to preserve our ethnic heritage. Every year on Racial Harmony Day, our children celebrate diversity in schools by dressing up in ethnic costumes, sharing each other's culture and tasting different foods. It is not uncommon to see them wearing ethnic costumes of an ethnic group other than their own. Our Singapore men learnt through shared experiences in the army that everyone regardless of race or religion, has to play a role in the nation's defence and security. Where we live, there is always a balanced mix of ethnic groups, so we can continue to learn to live harmoniously and cohesively with one another.

Oh yes – Singapore's hawker culture is part of our DNA! In these humble hawker centres, we learn about diverse cultures through our beloved local foods lovingly prepared by our fellow Singaporeans, sometimes using heirloom recipes! And it is this diversity that makes us different but same same as we enjoy each other's food. We hope you will explore and enjoy Singapore's wide array of hawker food and be as in love with them as much as we are.

Our 5 shared national values form the building blocks for our country. These shared values also helped us develop a national identity that is unique to Singapore and respected by the rest of the world. It is easy to spot true blue Singaporeans with the following traits:

First, we believe it is important to **respect** each other, no matter how different we may be. It can be in the form of small gestures like addressing our seniors as “Uncle” or “Aunty” regardless of their race or religion to thoughtful considerations of eating at halal restaurants when having a meal with our Muslim friends. You will also notice respectful practices in hawker centres, where we have separate utensils for halal and non-halal food, and in people’s homes where we visit, we would always take off our shoes and bring a little token of appreciation for our hosts!

Secondly, Singaporeans possess a strong sense of **responsibility** and readily fulfil our duties towards our nation, family, community and the world. Did we also mention that we are immensely proud of all our Singaporean men? They give 2 years of their lives to serve National Service so that they can protect our country during times of war or conflict. We practise **active citizenry** in other ways too – for example, during COVID-19, we embraced our individual and social responsibilities and wear masks diligently – not only to protect ourselves but also for the well-being of those around us. Our Singapore Armed Forces took on crucial tasks to contain the spread of the virus locally, while our Singapore Government collaborated with other nations to combat COVID-19 globally.

Thirdly, Singaporeans are people of great **resilience**. In the face of unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, Singaporeans have adapted quickly to the new norms and came together as one to support one another and the economic recovery of Singapore. We will persevere and emerge stronger together!

Fourthly, we always uphold our ethical principles and **integrity** in standing up for what is right for our people, our communities and our nation – even if we have naysayers. Upon the outbreak of COVID-19, Singapore assured Singaporeans living abroad that no Singaporean will be left behind. Not only that, Singaporeans generously contributed daily essentials and cared for our migrant workers. We care for our workers just like we care for Singaporeans, as we regard them as an integral part of our community.

Fifthly, we **care** for one another, as you would often see kind and compassionate Singaporeans giving up their seats for the elderly, showing good neighbourliness by keeping the noise level down after 10:30pm, or sacrificing their weekends to volunteer for a worthy cause close to their hearts. On top of that, we contribute a

portion of our monthly salary to our respective ethnic self-help groups to support lower income families.

Last but not least, we will always safeguard our societal **harmony** as social cohesion is not something that we take for granted in Singapore. You will see Singaporeans respecting each other's customs and practices in our daily lives, especially those carried out in shared physical spaces. A story that happened at a void deck – a Malay wedding and a Chinese funeral took place in the same vicinity, and the guests from the Malay wedding stood still to pay respects to the Chinese funeral procession as they passed by. Some members of the funeral procession reciprocated this kind gesture by nodding to acknowledge the guests. Isn't this heart-warming?

We welcome you to our Singapore family. Together, let's live out these 5 shared values, act on them, and honour them. Let's stick by Singapore and love Singapore no matter what happens.

Do you speak Singlish?

Actually *hor*, the strongest testament of our social cohesion is reflected in "Singlish", our Singapore-brand of English! We got include bits and pieces from Malay, Chinese dialects, and Tamil also! For example, in Asia, we greet each other with "Have you eaten?" – an equivalent of "How are you?" to show that we care. In Singapore, we say, "*Eaten already?*". And then *hor*, when we travel overseas and hear someone saying "*Don't liddat leh!*", they are confirm guarantee plus chop Singaporeans. *Donch pray pray* – Singlish got depth one *hor!*

Our Roles & Responsibilities

Now that you know about our shared values, we want you to care enough to practise them consistently and help us keep doing the same. Citizenship is a privilege for all of us. With privileges come certain responsibilities beyond the obvious ones like obeying the laws of our country.

Multiculturalism and Secularism

Multiculturalism and secularism are the bedrocks of our society. We are a multi-cultural country that respects all races and religious traditions. We know from our own experiences in the 1950s and 1960s that race can be used by the unscrupulous to sow discord, division and civil disorder. To survive and thrive, Singapore needs social harmony and good race relations. All citizens have a responsibility to sustain racial harmony to achieve a happy, peaceful, and functioning society for all. You can do this by accepting and embracing the diversity of races and cultures in your new country. You will enrich your life in the process and enrich ours, as we get to know you and your culture.

Religion can be another fissure if it is not managed well by all of us. Singapore is a secular republic in which all citizens have the right to practise their religions or to practise none. Your responsibility is to strengthen our religious harmony by giving others the same level of respect as you expect to receive from them.

Likewise, there is no room for gender chauvinism in Singapore. Your responsibility is to treat men and women with equal respect and practise meritocracy at work in terms of equal pay for the same job and equal opportunities for advancement.

Learn about the Singapore Story and the Singapore Brand

The next building block in your citizenship journey is to learn about and always remember the Singapore story. A later chapter will focus more deeply on history and milestones. Your citizenship journey will focus on the post-1945 period because that is the most relevant for us today. Enjoy your visit to the Singapore History Gallery at the National Museum of Singapore, and actively immerse yourself in the knowledge of how Singapore came to be.

Singapore is a most unlikely country. It is a small island with no natural resources except the human capital of its citizens like yourself. Our founding fathers and mothers, and

succeeding generations, worked hand in hand with the post-1965 political leadership and foreign friends to build what you see today. The Singapore Brand that stands for integrity, competence, innovation and reinvention was hard-won. Your responsibility is to live the Brand and work to burnish and extend it.

During your citizenship journey you will also learn about our national institutions and symbols. Your knowledge of them will be tested. Make the effort to learn the words and meaning of our National Anthem which is in Malay – one of the four official languages in Singapore.

Contribute to the Singapore Story and Brand

Contributing to the Singapore Story and Brand is a vital responsibility which is why it is covered in more detail in Chapter 4 of this report. It is a vital responsibility, if you wish to lead a fulfilling life in Singapore. You can only do this if you integrate with your colleagues, neighbours and with the community you have chosen to join. Rather than stand apart, get involved and help in positive ways.

We need and want you to put your talents and skills to work for the betterment of our economy, environment and society. You can do this in whatever way appeals to you and allows you to use your talents to optimal effect. As a proud citizen of Singapore, you have all the capabilities to contribute. We believe in you and count on you to play a part in building Singapore for the next generation.

One United People

Integration Among Citizens by Birth and Naturalisation

Introduction

According to the National Integration Council, integration is "a two-way process of adaptation by newcomers and host societies, (and implies) consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose".

Indeed, Singapore is a *rojak* society, as mentioned in Chapter 1. *Rojak*, a mixed fruit and vegetable salad, is an eclectic dish that aptly describes Singapore as a diverse society where different groups participate wholly in community building yet retain their heritage and culture. (This is distinct from the more assimilatory nature of a 'melting pot' where immigrants are pressured to shed their home cultures in order to fit in.) Over time, it is hoped that you and your children would start to see Singapore as your primary home. This contention is borne out by the experience of many local-born Singaporeans whose grandparents or parents migrated to Singapore.

In J.W. Berry's acculturation model, Singapore could be said to favour "integration" rather than "assimilation." This chapter explores two main questions: (1) What does integration mean to Singaporean citizens? (2) Which integration strategies are most preferred by Singaporean citizens?

Methodology

For this chapter, data was collected through an open-ended survey conducted by our group as well as a closed-ended survey commissioned with the help of MCCY.

The open-ended survey allowed for more detailed responses, to help us understand the complex issue of integration. It included 20 questions on naturalised citizenship as well as integration criteria, objectives and strategies. The five respondents were Singapore citizens: 80% by birth and 20% by naturalisation. Through thematic analysis of the open-ended responses, recurring patterns, codes and themes were identified.

The closed-ended survey provided data on the frequency of interaction between Singapore citizens by birth and by naturalisation as well as the preferred integration methods. Both survey results were systematically compared to identify similarities and differences.

Results

The results are divided into two parts.

The first involves five themes relating to the definition and understanding of integration:

1. Confusion about the naturalisation process
2. Socio-cultural interaction
3. Time commitment
4. Equity
5. Inclusivity

The second involves two themes relating to integration strategies:

1. Intrinsic rewards
2. Third-party facilitation

I. Defining integration

The following themes reflect Singaporeans' understanding of integration.

Confusion about the naturalisation process

Respondents were not clear about the naturalisation process that you have embarked on (see **Appendix B**). This suggests that in your future efforts to mingle with other Singaporeans around you, those who have acquired citizenship by birth would benefit from your sharing on your journey to become a citizen, including how long you've lived among us and how you've enriched us with your presence. This can provide clarity and address any possible misconceptions.

Local-born Singaporeans may not know much about your journey as our findings indicate that most Singaporeans "rarely" or only "sometimes" interacted with new citizens. This could be because some local-born Singaporeans are reserved and you may have to make a concerted effort to initiate contact with them.

Sociocultural interaction

On the issue of assessing integration, most respondents said that one's group of friends is indicative of how integrated one is. The more diverse the group of friends is, the more integrated one is (see **Appendix C**).

Time commitment

Another indicator of depth of ties was the duration of citizens' residency in Singapore (see **Appendix C**).

Equity

You may have noticed that in many societies around the world, there may sometimes be underlying tensions between foreigners and locals. As a result, you would understand why some responses in **Appendix D** suggest some dissatisfaction with the existing state of integration. Many participants focused on what they do not want to happen, rather than what they want to happen. Being appreciative of these sensitivities will help us all foster better relations.

Inclusivity

Respondents suggested that we mingle and socialise with diverse groups and perhaps even consider sharing universal celebrations together (see **Appendix D**).

II. Integration strategies

The following segment explores the preferred integration strategies among Singapore citizens. Participants suggested an integration strategy through intrinsic motivation, best rolled out through third-party facilitation. Our findings from the open-ended survey are consistent with the closed-ended survey. The latter ranked integration methods like “hosting events where new and local-born citizens meet regularly” and “engaging new citizens at schools and workplaces” highly. This corroborates with our findings on intrinsic rewards and third-party facilitation. It indicates that integration strategies based on intrinsic motivators are preferred by the majority of Singaporeans.

Intrinsic rewards through third party facilitation

Some respondents suggested activities like “community sharing sessions” or “food sharing” events. These activities support two-way communication and cultural exchange. Interested citizens who organise such events could encourage more people to participate by raising awareness of the benefits of these interactions. Our new friends are welcome to join these events to learn more about Singapore.

As part of the SCJ, you will go through community sharing sessions facilitated by grassroots leaders as moderators. Our findings suggest that such community sharing sessions could also be open to more citizens by birth. You could also consider inviting your neighbours or other local-born Singaporeans along for these exploration trips too. In

other words, building a buddy system might be ideal for everyone especially if it is based on common interests and needs. As a first step, these could be facilitated by community partners such as grassroots organisations or community clubs. School administrators and employers could also organise such events to better integrate new citizens into our community.

Conclusion

As a two-way process, greater effort is required by both local-born and new citizens to enable everyone to live better together. Local-born citizens must also be welcoming and play an active role in the integration of new citizens. As new citizens, you must be willing to step out of your comfort zones to embrace a new country, and its people. We believe that in doing so, you will come to learn that our diversity is a unique strength of Singapore. Together, we can build a beautiful Singapore that is made up of amazing people. The next chapter talks about contributing to society and why that is important.

Our Contribution

Why is there a need to contribute?

Motivational speaker Anthony Robbins once highlighted the six factors that drive human beings. They are certainty, variety, connection, growth, contribution and significance. While each person prioritises these factors differently, they collectively shape our thoughts and actions, and account for what drives us and what brings us fulfilment.

This chapter discusses contribution and its significance. The need to contribute to something greater than ourselves is hardwired into each person. It feeds an inner barometer that brings us deep meaning and gives us significance.

As citizens, this sense of significance is tied to notions of belonging, ownership and connection to fellow citizens and the wider community. This also encourages proactiveness which benefits everyone and builds a stronger Singapore. This is what we mean in Chapter 2 when we talked about our responsibility to care about Singapore and sustaining Singapore.

What does 'Contributing to Society' mean in Singapore?

Borrowing from the good people at The Birthday Collective¹, we contribute to society by helping to build the collective Singapore Trust: The Head Trust, The Heart Trust and The Hand Trust.

¹ Adapted from www.TheBirthdayCollective.com

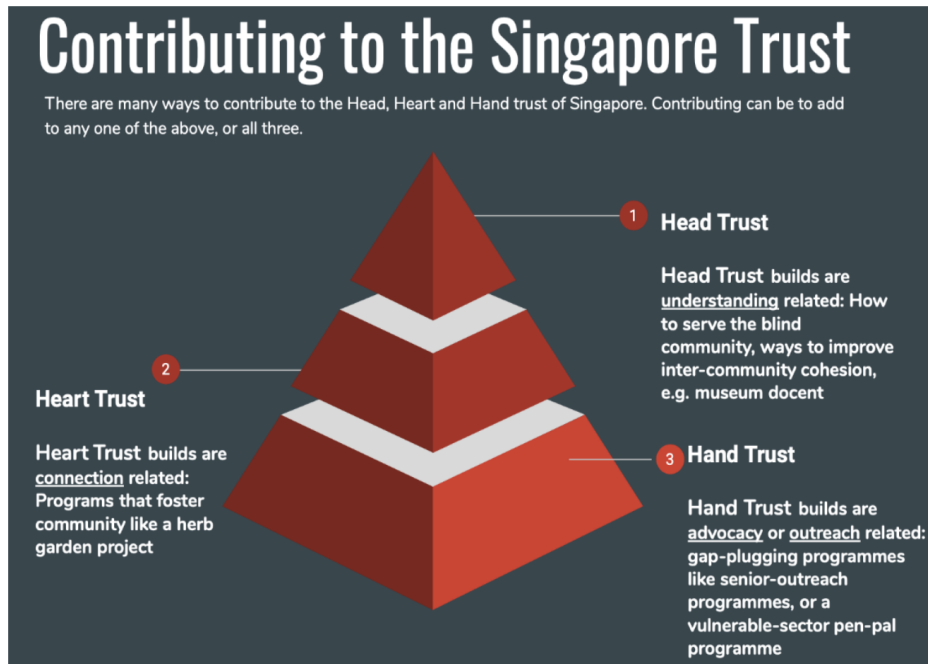


Figure 1: Contributing to the Singapore Trust

The HEAD TRUST of Singapore is concerned with not just the knowledge cache of our country, but also includes understanding of its intricacies, nuances and ways of being. It is concerned with the things and ways that help us understand Singapore better. So, Head Trust contributions are UNDERSTANDING-related. For example, what kind of new technology might better serve the blind community or is there a new pedagogy of looking at mental wellness?

The HEART TRUST of Singapore refers to the things that inspire the heart-ware of our 'Little Red Dot'. It is concerned with the things that foster CONNECTIONS between communities; for example, a community herb garden project that offers the opportunity for neighbours to work together, get to know each other and nurture the community they all live in.

The HAND TRUST of Singapore refers to the things that enable, support, or up-lift other things or other people. It is the most "doing" of the trio; it is concerned with what we ADVOCATE in our homes, communities and country. It can take the form of being a volunteer with the Singapore Police Force, or at a local charity.

In short, there are many ways to contribute to the Head, Heart and Hand Trust of Singapore. Contributing can be you adding to any of the above, or all three.

Contributing back: Part of each Singaporean's duty

So how important is it that each of us plays our part in contributing back to Singapore? Very! We did a two-part survey (quantitative and qualitative) to better understand how important the average Singaporean felt about this and here are some of our findings.

We found, quite unsurprisingly that people generally felt that all Singaporeans, new citizens like yourself included, should be actively contributing with over 85% of the respondents stating they agree or strongly agree that it is important for new citizens to contribute to society.

While most respondents indicated that so long as we actively contribute at home or at work (vis-à-vis merely having a job), it could technically be counted as contributing back to society, many thought it would be better if one's contribution to society might take a more visible form.

So how much time should we apportion to contributing back or volunteering? Well, the simple answer is as much as you can spare of course! In fact many of the people who took part in our survey felt that contributing back should be done by everyone, and hoped that new citizens would already be contributing to society in an active manner before embarking on the citizenship process. As we enjoy all the wonderful things that our Little Red Dot gives to us, we should all give back, citizen or not.

We appreciate that life is demanding. So how can each of us make contributing back as efficient as possible? Firstly, we hope that of the many programs you have to pick from on your new citizenship journey, you would prioritise giving back. Surely you would need to spend some time understanding the context of our society and its various needs in order for you to serve meaningfully on causes that are close to your heart. But we trust that you've gotten to know us since you've arrived sometime back.

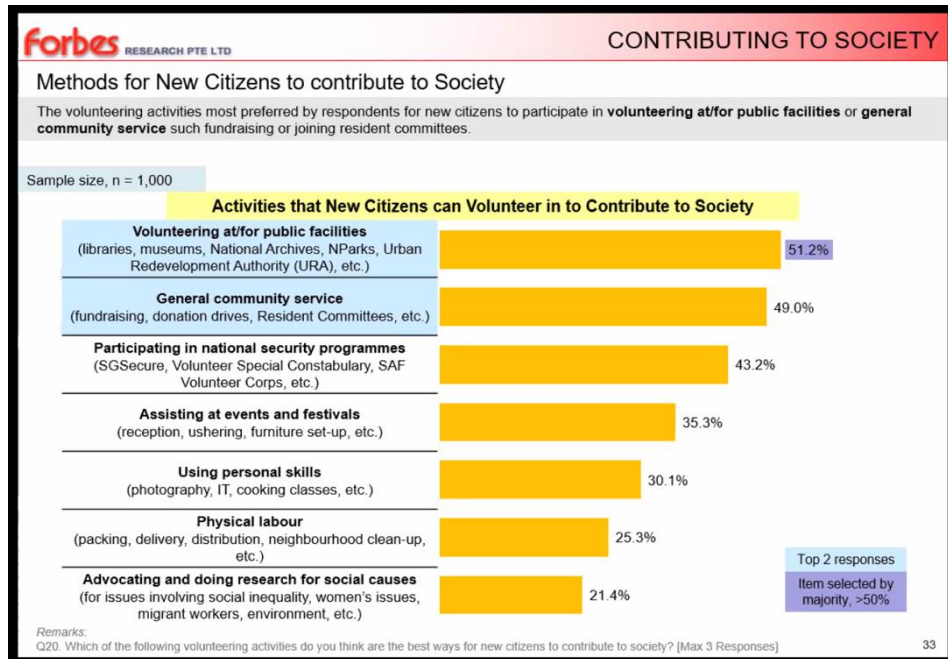


Figure 2: Contributing to Society

If you are looking for a place to start, you might want to consider one of the many volunteering opportunities available at public facilities like libraries, museums, parks, community centres and grassroots programmes. Most of the people we surveyed found these to be the most accessible avenues (see **Figure 2**).

Don't just take our word that volunteering is both fulfilling and a great way to bond with fellow Singaporeans. We had a chat with a small group of new citizens who also happen to be active volunteers in their communities, and to many of them, being an active grassroots member helps them to become better acquainted with their community, to pay-it-forward to other new citizens and hopefully set an example for others just as they have been inspired by the volunteers whom they interacted with on their Singapore Citizenship Journey.

Their responses point to a virtuous cycle of receiving and giving, and shows that spending time on contributing to society in Singapore can engender positive feedback loops. Indeed, a respondent to the earlier survey even remarked, "How do we local Singaporeans contribute back to society?" This is a question worth asking and answering.

You may refer to **Appendix G** to read their responses in full.

Conclusion & Afterthoughts

The beauty of giving back to the community is that the desire to give back is its own gift. There are numerous volunteer opportunities available and the key is to find an opportunity that you would enjoy and are capable of doing. It's also important to make sure that your commitment matches the organisation's needs.

Some general questions you might want to ask yourself before you embark could include:

- Would you like to work with adults, children, animals, or the environment?
- Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team or from home?
- Are you better behind the scenes or do you prefer to take a more visible role?
- How much time are you willing to commit?
- What skills can you bring to a volunteer job?
- What causes are important to you?

Once you have an idea on the areas that might interest you, you can consider which avenues suits you best: Like to be immersed in art? Consider being a docent at the National Gallery or the National Museum of Singapore. Have a soft spot for our silver generation? Consider volunteering with Lions Club or one of the many Welfare organisations in the eldercare sector. (You may refer to **Appendix H** for more information and ideas!)

See you on the ground!

Our History & Milestones

It is difficult to integrate into or contribute to a society unless you know its history and key milestones. Singapore is a young country. It became an independent republic on 9 August 1965 which is our National Day and which we celebrate every year.

Pre-colonial History (before 1819)

Recent archaeological research has shown that Singapore's history can be traced back at least 700 years. The island was then called Temasek, the same name adopted by one of our sovereign wealth funds today. Legend has it that during a hunting expedition, Sang Nila Utama, a prince from Palembang, in what is now Indonesia, saw a strange lion-like animal on Temasek. It had a red body, a black head and a white breast. He decided to stay in Temasek and renamed the island Singapura, which is Malay for 'Lion City'.

The Merlion statue at the mouth of the Singapore River is a modern-day interpretation of that mythical creature of long ago. Until the building of Marina Bay Sands in 2010, it was the symbol most associated with Singapore.

Figure 3 below gives you an idea of how Singapore was used as a trading hub by regional and colonial powers up to 1819.

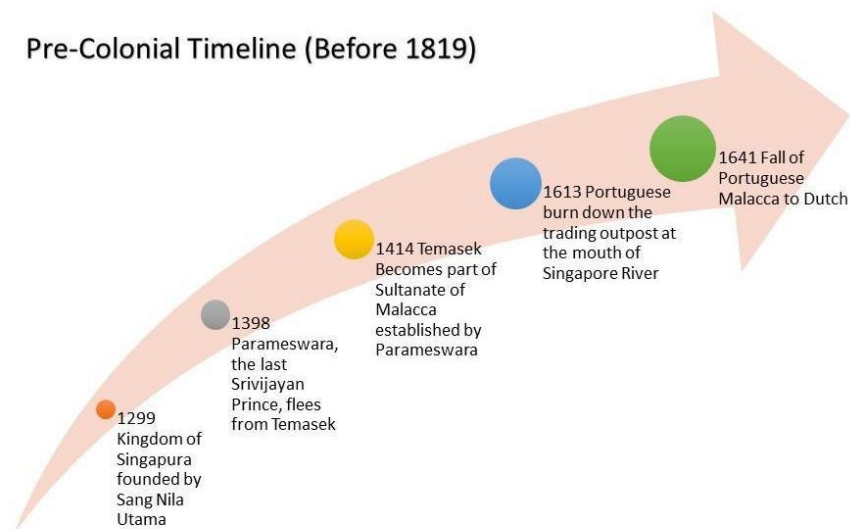


Figure 3: Pre-Colonial Timeline (Before 1819)

Colonial History (1819-1945)

28 January 1819 is a seminal date in Singapore's modern history. Sir Stamford Raffles, an officer in the British East India Company, arrived in Singapore with his colleague William Farquhar, to establish a trading post. It was part of the Company's regional plans to compete with the Dutch and facilitate the China trade. 1819's greater significance is that it marked the start of a sustained period of economic development and population growth up to the present day.

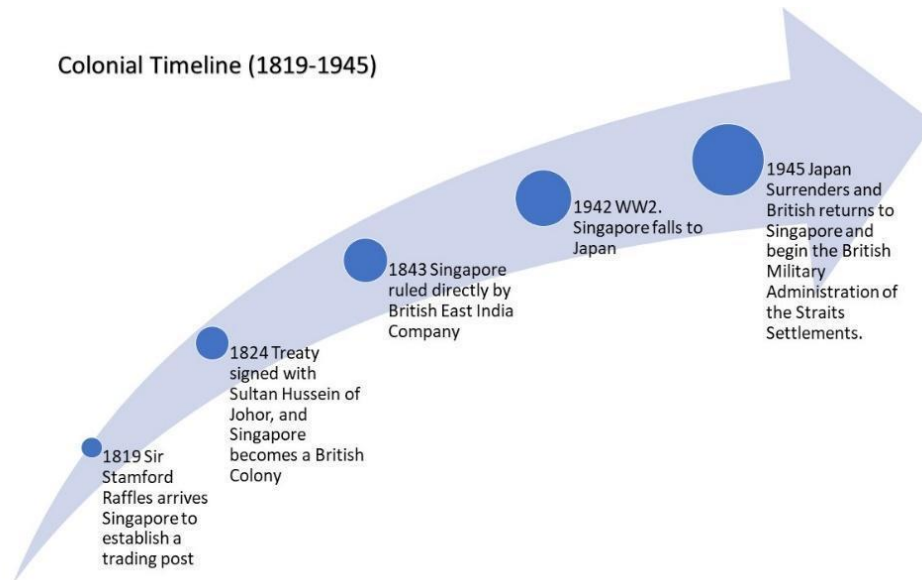


Figure 4: Colonial Timeline (1819-1945)

Singapore continued to be ruled by the British until it fell to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. Today, this date is marked annually as Total Defence Day. Total Defence means that all Singaporeans, individually and collectively, play a part to build a strong, secure and cohesive nation.

At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Japanese surrendered and the British returned to Singapore. Since 1967, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry has organised a ceremony at the Civilian War Memorial annually on 15 February to honour the civilians who lost their lives during Japanese Occupation.

Colonial- Independence Timeline (1945-1965)

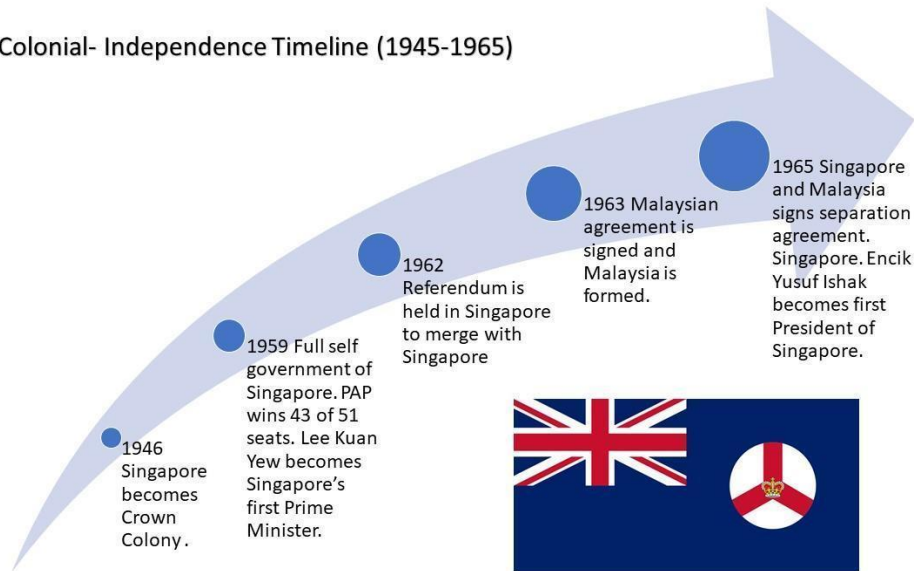


Figure 5: Colonial- Independence Timeline (1945-1965)

Path to Independence (1945-1965)

The war had changed the world. It led to more calls for an end to colonialism in favour of self-rule. In the 1959 general elections, the People's Action Party (PAP) won 43 of 51 seats and formed the government. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of Singapore. The PAP remains the ruling political party in Singapore to this day.

In the early 1960s, the almost universal view was that Singapore was too small to survive as an economic entity. That was why Singapore became part of Malaysia in 1963. The merger did not work because of diametrically opposed political ideologies. Singapore was expelled by Malaysia and on 9 August 1965, became an independent republic.

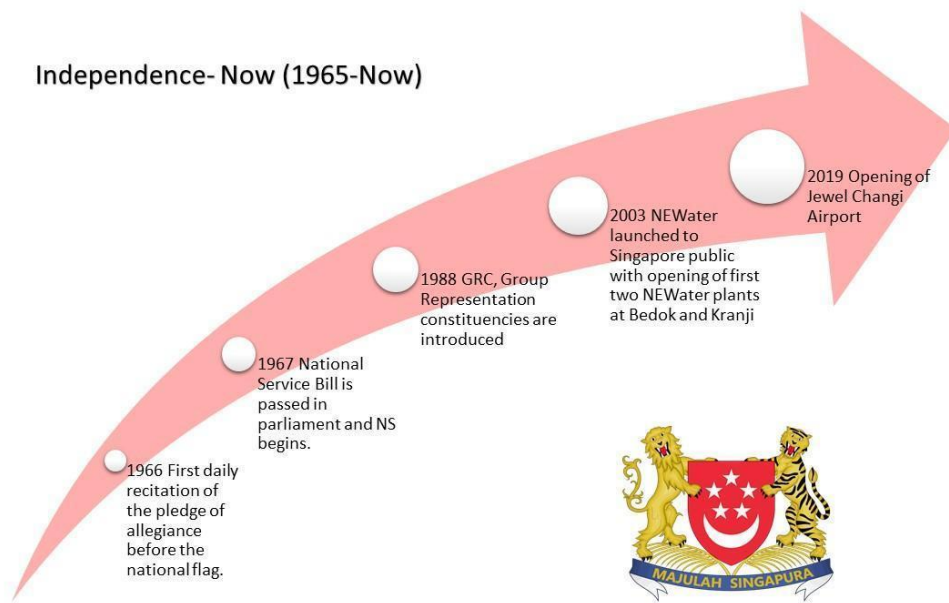


Figure 6: Independence- Now (1965- Now)

Independence to Today (1965 onwards)

Since independence, Singaporeans and their leaders have continually sought to ensure that Singapore could survive and thrive as an economic entity. To date, the four key existential threats to Singapore’s survival have been well-managed.

The first is the need to defend the republic. National Service was mandated by law in 1967. This made it compulsory for all male Singaporean citizens and all second-generation male permanent residents to serve as full-time national servicemen (NSF) for 2 years either in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Police Force (SPF) or the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF). After completing National Service, they become operationally ready reservists until the age of 40 years for junior officers; and 50 years for senior officers.

The second existential threat is the need to secure Singapore’s water supply. To reduce dependence on imported water, the Singapore Government invested in NEWater which uses membrane technology to create high-grade reclaimed water. By 2060, NEWater is expected to meet up to 55% of Singapore’s future water demand. The remaining 45% will come from water from our own catchment areas, imported water and desalinated water.

The third existential threat is the need to preserve racial harmony. This is essential in a multicultural society, so as to ensure social peace, economic development and well-being. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Singapore experienced racial riots in the 1950s and 1960s. Racial Harmony Day takes place annually on 21 July. Marking the date of a

serious race riot in the 1960s, it is a reminder to all citizens to respect each other and to always recognise the humanity in others.

The fourth key existential threat to Singapore is the economy. A city-state rises and falls on the strength of its economy. Foreign direct investment (FDI) helped kick start our country's economic development in the 1960s. That need for local and foreign talent to work together is still vital to Singapore today. When you look around Singapore today, what you see is the result of decades of work by immigrants who became citizens like you. Singapore has always attracted people from all over the world who individually and collectively contributed to Singapore society. We appreciate all contributions and especially remember those earlier generations who had a much tougher life than us. Some of these contributions are highlighted in **Table 1**. (The list is not meant to be exhaustive.)

Contribution of Early Immigrants	Brief Summary
Chinese Coolies	Unskilled workers who came in the later half of the 19 th century and employed in construction, agriculture, shipping, mining, rickshaw pulling, etc.
Samsui Women	Came from Guangdong province as general labourers in construction in the 1900s.
Sepoys	Indian Soldiers Employed by the British to maintain law and order in the British Settlements.
The Bugis	Many of the early Bugis settlers were maritime traders and made significant contributions to the development of Singapore as a regional trading hub.
The Javanese	The early arrivals in the 19 th century were craftsmen, traders and plantation labourers. They brought with them their rich artistic traditions like dance, shadow puppetry (wayang kulit) and gamelan music.
The Arabs	The Arabs who came to Singapore during the colonial period are mainly from the Hadhramaut region of Yemen. They were involved in retail, wholesale trades, real estate and Muslim pilgrimage industry. They established religious schools and were known for their philanthropy, donating land for community projects.
The Jews	Jewish community leader Manasseh Meyer was known for his philanthropy and he donated a large sum towards building the Science building for the University of Malaya (now National University of Singapore). The building was named Manasseh Meyer Building and is now a National Monument. Other prominent Jews include Singapore's first Chief Minister David Marshall, Surgeon General Dr Yahya Cohen, and founder of the Singapore stock exchange and noted philanthropist Jacob Ballas.
Chettiars of India	They started coming to Singapore from the 1820s and operated from kittingis (meaning warehouse in Tamil) near the Singapore River along Chulia and Market Streets. During the day, they would be hunched over their desks, armed with their ledgers. At night they would move the furniture aside and roll out a mattress there. It was a home cum office concept. Several moneylenders operated from a single shophouse. The financing done by the Chettiars enabled the growth of the agricultural, tin mining and shipping industries as well as the general small trades in Singapore.
Tan Tock Seng	Tan Tock Seng was an entrepreneur and philanthropist of Hokkien descent. He started out as a vegetable seller and rose to become one of Singapore's most eminent philanthropists and a leader of the Chinese community. In 1844, he helped set up a hospital for the poor later named after him. He also founded the Thian Hock Keng Temple on Telok Ayer Street.
Zubir Said	Zubir Said was the composer of the Singapore national anthem, "Majulah Singapura". ¹

Table 1: Contribution of Immigrants

Places of Interest / Historical Sites and Monuments

The sites listed in **Table 2** below are some of the important places of worship and prominent government buildings such as The Istana, formerly the official residence of British Governors and now the President of Singapore. Although the list is not exhaustive, these are some places of historical value which you can visit.

Historical Sites/Monuments and Places of Interest	Timeline	Brief Summary
The Arts House	Colonial	Served as legislative Assembly building in the 1950s.
Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall		Singapore's oldest performing arts venue.
The Cenotaph		18.3m tall war memorial built in 1922 to commemorate fallen British Soldiers in WW1
Fort Canning		One of Singapore's first British-Built Fortifications
Fort Siloso		Only complete fort left in Singapore.
St Andrew's Cathedral		This Anglican church is a national monument and was built between 1856 and 1864
Yueh Hai Ching Temple		This is one of the oldest Taoist temples in Singapore and is believed to have been set up in 1826 by newly arrived Teochew Chinese from Guangzhou.
Sri Mariamman Temple		Built in 1827, it is the oldest Hindu temple in Singapore and is situated on South Bridge Road.
Thian Hock Keng Temple		This is Singapore's oldest Hokkien temple which was built in 1842
Sultan Mosque		The original mosque was built in 1824 and is named after Sultan Hussein Shah. The current building was completed in 1932. In 1819, Sultan Hussein signed an agreement with Stamford Raffles allowing the British to establish a trading post on the island. The Sultan then requested for a mosque to be built near his palace and Raffles agreed and contributed \$3,000 to the construction of the mosque.
American Church		The Armenian Church on Hill Road was completed in 1836 and is the oldest surviving church in Singapore. The building was gazetted as a national monument in 1973.
The Istana		The official residence of the president of Singapore, situated on 40 hectares of land, was built in 1869.
Jewel Changi Airport		After Independence
National Gallery Singapore	Made up of 2 buildings – Old City Hall built between 1926-1929 and Supreme court built on 1939. Japanese surrender was held here. Swearing in of the first President and cabinet after independence	
NEWater Visitor Centre	NEWater purification facility offering reserved tours with interactive exhibits & factory viewings.	

Table 2: Places of Interest / Historical Sites and Monuments

The strength of Singapore lies in its human capital that is supplemented by attracting talented people like you from all around the world. We are proud of what previous generations of Singaporeans had built, as we work with our generation today to contribute to and sustain Singapore.

Our Arts, Cultures & Traditions

Given the diversity of Singapore's society, the local arts and cultural scene in Singapore is very varied. It is a truly rich, rojak feast of East and West, ancient and modern, across many media. Our arts scene reflects the rich cultural histories and traditions of the four main ethnic groups: Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians. There is appreciation for Western classical and contemporary music genres and dramas too. Cinema remains popular in Singapore, notwithstanding the rise of streaming services.

Singapore aspires to be a cultural hub, much like its ambitions to be a global hub for talent and business. A growing economy has enabled much investment in the arts in the last 30 years or so. This, in turn, has enabled the rich cultural scene to be widely accessible to the local population.

Artists in Singapore

Most of our pioneer artists were not born locally. They had emigrated from China and built their artistic careers in Singapore. Others came from what are now Malaysia and Indonesia. They laid the foundation for future art practitioners. Pioneer artists Liu Kang, Chen Chong Swee, Chen Wen Hsi, Cheong Soo Pieng and Georgette Chen contributed to a local art movement now called 'Nanyang Style'* in the 1930s-1950s. The Chinese term 'nanyang' “南洋”, meaning south seas, generally referred to places in Southeast Asia, which were south of China. Many of the pioneer artists loved to depict Southeast Asian locales such as the tropical paradise of Bali. You can enjoy their works at the National Gallery Singapore. Trained in both Western and Chinese art, these pioneer artists developed a hybrid style, for their paintings of people, still-lives and landscapes.

Kuo Pao Kun, a playwright and theatre director, was born in China and later wrote and directed many Mandarin and English plays in Singapore. He founded arts and drama centres in Singapore, and mentored Singaporean and foreign directors and artists. Kuo is acknowledged as a pioneer of Singapore theatre. Singaporean playwright Stella Kon wrote 'Emily of Emerald Hill', which has been staged internationally. This one-woman play debuted in 1984 has a very distinctive Peranakan flavour and has been used as a literature text in Singapore's schools.

As Singapore's arts scene grew over the years, Singapore set up a world-class performing arts centre. Opened in 2002. The Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, catered to the growing

demand for high-quality performance spaces. Other arts venues such as The Victoria Concert Hall and The Victoria Theatre, The Substation and Goodman Arts Centre have also played significant roles in enhancing the local arts scene.

Singapore also plays host to a myriad of arts and cultural festivals all year round, such as the Singapore Night Festival, the Singapore International Arts Festival, the Singapore Writers Festival and many more. These attract global talents, including new citizens who bring their expertise to make Singapore a vibrant arts city.

A number of Cultural Medallion winners (a national-level award) are new citizens and permanent residents of Singapore. They include Eric James Watson (2019 recipient, music), Law Wai Lun (2017 recipient, music). Tsung Yeh (2013 recipient, music) and Milenko Prvacki (2012 recipient, painting).

The space for artistic expression has expanded very significantly over the years as society changed and developed. Suffice to say, there is still something for everyone in the rich artistic feast. While Singapore can be said to be still a conservative society, there is a growing appetite for and appreciation of an even more varied arts scene. In some instances, artistic expressions may have helped spark public conversation on Singapore's values and norms, and encouraged the public to have dialogues on social interaction and communication in Singapore.

Sticker Lady (arts)

In 2013, Samantha Lo (dubbed the 'Sticker Lady' by the media), was arrested for vandalism, when she pasted stickers at traffic light buttons. The stickers poked fun at Singaporeans' impatience while waiting for the lights to change. For instance, one sticker had the words 'Press Once Can Already'. It was a tongue-in-cheek attempt in using familiar Singlish phrases (our local slang of English, blended with Hokkien and Malay) to draw attention to Singaporeans' behaviour. Lo eventually had to complete community service as a consequence for her actions.

Culture and Traditions

Many of Singapore's cultural practices and traditions were brought over by our forefathers from China, India, Arabia, Europe and the Malay Archipelago. While some of these traditions have since taken on new forms, most have done so without losing the meaning of the original significance.

This diverse cultural heritage is reflected in Singapore's collection of festivals.

Muslims rise early on Hari Raya Puasa to pray at the mosque. Following that, they wear new, colourful clothes (*baju kurong*) to visit friends and family.

During the Chinese Lunar New Year, it is a tradition to wear new clothes too. Red is the most auspicious colour. Hongbaos (red money packets) are given out by married couples to their elders, unmarried friends and children, while exchanging words of well-wishes.

With Deepavali, the Indian festival of light, comes sweet treats aplenty: *adhirasam*, a doughnut-like treat with jaggery; *murukku*, a crunchy snack made of deep-fried flour; and to end on a sweet note, *laddu*, a candied treat offered to guests as a symbol of happiness and prosperity.

Christmas is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians alike.

Many people show their respect for each other's festivals by sharing food, visiting one another and greeting each other. This is one of our very best things about living in Singapore, where all of us enjoy celebrating each other's festivals. This illustrates our common humanity and our bond as one, united people.

That Curry incident

In 2011, the *TODAY* newspaper reported an incident that involved two families. The two families were neighbours in the same residential block. The Chinese family, recently arrived from China, complained about the smell that wafted into their home whenever the Indian family cooked curry for meals. Both families could not reach a solution, so they approached the Community Mediation Centre (CMC) to help resolve the issue. CMC subsequently told the Indian family to only prepare curry when the Chinese family was not at home.

Public reaction to CMC's decision ranged from shock to anger, as many felt that the decision did not adhere to the multicultural principles practised in Singapore. The 'Cook and Share a Pot of Curry' was soon started as a ground-up initiative to invite foreign residents and locals to start a conversation about local practices. The initiative was well-received, and many foreign residents participated to connect with locals. This is the best of Singapore, where we appreciate and enjoy our different cuisines, festivals, customs and traditions.

Hawker Culture

Dining and mingling at hawker centres to enjoy freshly cooked food by hawkers is an integral part of life in Singapore. It is very egalitarian. Whatever your socio-economic status, hawker centres are the great leveller. Everyone has their favourite dishes and

stalls. People think nothing of travelling great distances for their favourite dish. Evolving from street food culture, hawkers and hawker centres have become markers of Singapore as a multi-cultural city-state. Today, hawker centres across Singapore continue to serve the needs of diverse communities. The food reflects the multi-cultural make-up of Singapore. Hawker centres reflect and serve a rich, rojak feast which reflects Singapore's eclecticism, diversity and inclusion at its best.

Our National Systems & Institutions

We want to highlight some of our key national institutions and systems to help you better understand your adopted country. This will help you to contribute to and integrate into the Singaporean way of life.

The rule of law is key to the collective protection of our way of life. In Singapore, no one is above the law, no matter how important, well-connected or rich they might be. The laws of the land are enforced, without fear or favour.

We pride ourselves on having very low levels of corruption. We have zero toleration for anyone who thinks they can buy favours, whether in the commercial or political spheres.

Because the rule of law is respected, we have low levels of crime. Of course, this does not mean no crime in our society. We are not perfect. Nonetheless, our country is one of the safest in the world, which is a reason why it is attractive to you.

Based on the MCCY-commissioned survey, here are the five national institutions and systems that citizens perceive to be most important. We also explain how they serve citizens and our country.

Parliamentary System

Singapore is a democratic society and general elections for the parliament are held every 5 years. The voting age is 21 years and above. Each person has one vote. Voting is mandatory by law. Candidates with the most votes in each constituency are elected as Members of Parliament (MPs) in a first-past-the-post system.

Our parliamentary system is unicameral and consists of three branches of government: laws are formulated by the legislative branch of government, executed by the executive branch and interpreted by the judicial branch.

The legislative branch is made up of Parliament and the President. Singapore follows the Westminster system of government where Parliament's legislative agenda is determined by the Cabinet.

The executive branch comprises the President and the Cabinet. The President is elected by all citizens for a 6-year term and may serve multiple terms, subject to being re-elected.

The role of the President is largely ceremonial, but the President holds the second key to our country's financial reserves. The President must consent to all drawdowns from reserves. In fulfilling this role, the President must act in accordance with the advice of the Presidential Council of Advisors.

The judicial branch is made up of judges and the courts. The Supreme Court has the final authority on legal matters. It consists of the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

National Service

As mentioned in Chapter 5 (History and Milestones), full-time National Service (NS) is an essential part of our nationhood and a rite of passage for every Singaporean and second-generation Permanent Resident male. It is critical for maintaining our sovereignty. NS is mandatory and can be served in the SAF, SCDF or SPF. It has been the cornerstone of Singapore's defence and security since 1967. Our NSFs form the backbone of these uniformed services that keep Singapore safe and secure.

Singapore's defence policy is fundamentally based on the twin pillars of deterrence and diplomacy. Deterrence is provided by developing strong and capable armed forces and a resilient Singapore, through National Service. Diplomacy is built by establishing strong and friendly ties, through extensive interactions and cooperation with other states' defence establishments. Singapore keenly understands that small states can survive and thrive only in a world where sovereignty is respected and where interactions between states are governed by the rule of law.

Promoting and Ensuring Racial and Religious Harmony

The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs) and Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) are important community-based platforms to promote racial and religious harmony. The IRCCs are local-level inter-faith platforms in every constituency (i.e. residential neighbourhood); the IRCCs aim to deepen people's understanding of the various faiths, beliefs and practices through inter-faith and inter-ethnic themed activities such as heritage trails, inter-faith talks and various ethnic and religious celebrations. The IRO was formed in 1949 by religious leaders from different faiths, to strengthen interfaith ties through lectures, seminars and talks

Under the present Constitution of Singapore, there are legal provisions that ensure every citizen has the right to practise and propagate one's own religion (Article 15) and that no one shall be discriminated against on the grounds of "religion, race, descent or place of birth" (Article 12). Aside from these, several specific laws and institutions were promulgated and formed to further entrench and provide for racial and religious harmony.

One key institution is the Presidential Council of Religious Harmony, formed under the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (“MRHA”). Its members are appointed by the President of Singapore on the advice of the Presidential Council of Minority Rights and represents all 10 major religions here. There are two main duties of the Council. The first is to advise the President on matters affecting the maintenance of religious harmony in Singapore, referred by either the Minister of Home Affairs or Parliament. The second is to consider and make recommendations to the President and hear appeals relating to any “Restraining Order” issued by the Minister of Home Affairs under the MRHA to any religious teacher who has committed or is attempting to commit acts causing disharmony between different religious groups.

In addition to that, there are several support systems that help ensure racial and religious harmony such as the Ethnic Integration Policy and the Group Representation Constituencies to ensure minority races are represented in Parliament. The Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed to ensure all races are represented from time to time in the office of President of the Republic.

Promoting self-reliance and self-adequacy

CPF is one of the key pillars of Singapore’s social security system - it is a compulsory savings scheme designed based on the principles of self-reliance and self-adequacy. Every citizen and permanent resident has CPF accounts that help to fund his or her retirement, housing and healthcare needs. Employers and employees must make mandatory monthly contributions to the CPF.

The CPF scheme has separate accounts earmarked for retirement and healthcare which earn a higher rate of interest than the ordinary account for housing and investment. From time to time, the Government has contributed top-ups to the CPF accounts for seniors or those in the lower-income groups.

More details of the CPF scheme can be found at the following website: www.cpf.gov.sg

Education

Education plays a key role in the development of Singapore. Most students will receive a compulsory education of six years of primary school followed by four years of secondary school, and one to three years of post-secondary school. Based on the results at the end of every milestone, students are admitted to several available pathways. The first ten years of a child’s education provides the foundation for further education and helps build national identity, encourages social cohesion and mixing across our diverse communities, and promotes social mobility. Over the years, the authorities have promoted a shift from lectures and rote learning to one that emphasises engagement and creativity. In recent

years, it has sought to encourage schools to consider the curriculum as a framework, and adapt and work within the framework to better meet the needs of their students. Broader subject bandings will be introduced in 2024 to make for a more flexible education system.

Continuing adult education is a key element of Singapore's plan to help keep its vital human resources agile, adaptable and relevant.

Moving Ahead as a Nation

In this last chapter, we look to the future and consider what it will take for new and local-born citizens to live, work and contribute together towards a shared Singaporean ethos and success in the decades to come.

We are all different, but Singaporeans share a common goal - to build a better future for our children and grandchildren. This requires a common understanding of our current and future challenges, and the broad global trends that our society will be facing.

We invite all Singaporeans to keep the following in mind:

1. Global trends that will shape us
2. Local challenges that will affect us
3. Common aspirations that will guide us

1. Global Trends

Big Waves of Disruptions

Studies have shown that three big waves will define the new normal in the next 20 to 30 years.

1. Exponential technological advances in fields like Artificial Intelligence (AI)
2. The effects of climate change on our lives
3. COVID-19's radical impact on our living, working and leisure arrangements

Impact on Who We Are and What We Want for Ourselves

At the individual level, our personal aspirations have changed. With increasing global affluence, literacy and access to knowledge, youths feel an increasing sense of empowerment and purpose, both as consumers as well as citizens.

With growing industrialisation, urbanisation and digitalisation, there is also a parallel desire for greater physical and mental well-being, that can only be achieved when humans live in harmony with their environment.

Individual Level	+	Collective Level	=	Synergy between the two levels
Conscious individuals	+	Interdependent systems	=	Actualisation & Unity
Participatory citizens	+	Consultative governments	=	Contribution & Democracy
Empowered consumers	+	Responsive corporations	=	Responsibility & Sustainability

Table 3: Impact on Fundamental Relationships

We came up with **Table 3** above to show the connectedness between individuals and the larger community. We shape our community and in turn, the community shapes us.

We have the responsibility and power to make a difference, in the daily choices we make, from where we get our food, which brands we purchase, what causes we support, whom we work for, and whom we elect to represent us in Government.

2. Local Challenges

Whilst global trends are important, we should also understand the immediate and local challenges facing Singapore.

1. Social tensions

- a. Singapore's age demographics is becoming an inverted pyramid. A narrow middle-aged population is sandwiched between an increasingly large ageing population and a narrowing young population base. Many resources will be needed to care for the elderly and support the middle-aged generation with care-giving duties. This has the potential to create generational tensions.
- b. The workforce in Singapore is made up of local and foreign talent, as well as migrant workers. The global competition to attract the best talent is stiff, especially for Singapore which has a shrinking local population and needs imported talent to remain competitive. During economically difficult times, there can be tensions between local and foreign especially when it comes to jobs and opportunities.

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- c. Women's rights and gender equality remain a work-in-progress in Singapore.
 - d. As Singaporeans want to be more involved in political discussions, the risks of polarisation and partisanship must be avoided at all costs.

2. Technological implication on our social fabric

- a. In an Internet-connected world, we have to deal with unintended consequences of technological advances, such as the creation of echo chambers and divisive polarisation.
- b. Data is the backbone of a knowledge-based society. However, fake content has become a serious threat to social stability.

3. Ecological tensions

- a. Climate change and rising sea levels have a direct threat on Singapore. Being a small island city-state, Singapore's actions have little impact globally, but we suffer the detrimental effects of climate changes disproportionately.
- b. As a country with no hinterland or natural resources, Singapore is vulnerable to food, energy and water shortages. It also has far fewer options in areas like waste disposal.
- c. The Government is focused on building climate, economic and resource resilience to address future environmental threats such as climate change.

4. Bilateral relations

- a. As a small country, Singapore needs to constantly manage its bilateral and multilateral relations. As national leaders change, these relationships will also evolve, leading to periodic tensions, especially with our immediate neighbours. These can have implications for a small economy like Singapore, which is very dependent on being open and connected with the world.

These are our collective fault lines. As citizens, we need to play a constructive part in addressing them.

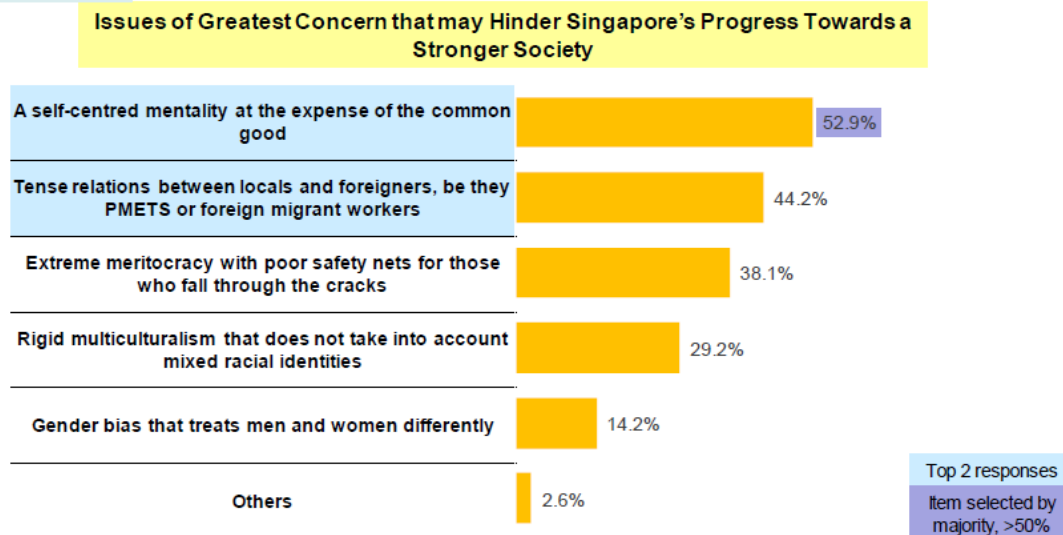
Hindrances to Moving Ahead as a Nation

We asked Singaporeans what they thought were the greatest concerns that would hinder our society from moving ahead. The top two issues identified were: (1) having a self-centred mentality at the expense of the common good, and (2) tense relations between our local and foreign residents (see details in **Figure 7** below).

Obstacles of Singapore Society

The top 2 concerns perceived to hinder Singapore's progress towards a stronger society were a **self-centred mentality** and the **tense relations between locals and foreigners**. More than half of the respondents were concerned about the self-centred mentality that operated at the expense of the common good.

Sample size, n = 1,000



Remarks:

Q18. Which of the following do you think are issues of greatest concern that may hinder Singapore's progress towards a stronger society? [Max 2 Responses]

30

Figure 7: Obstacles that may hinder Singapore's progress towards a stronger society

3. Aspirations for a Future Singapore

We also asked Singaporeans about their vision for Singapore's future.

Over 70% of respondents indicated that they would like Singapore to be a gracious society, where we are considerate towards others. This reinforces the earlier finding that self-centeredness was a key problem in our society today.

Next, more than half (57%) of the respondents said they would like Singapore to be an open society where we include and embrace different people and have an enriching exchange of ideas. This reinforces the finding that many Singaporeans today are concerned about tensions between locals and foreigners. This is also consistent with the view held by many Singaporeans that racial and religious harmony are key enablers for Singapore. Maintaining this harmony is the responsibility of all Singaporeans, as mentioned in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

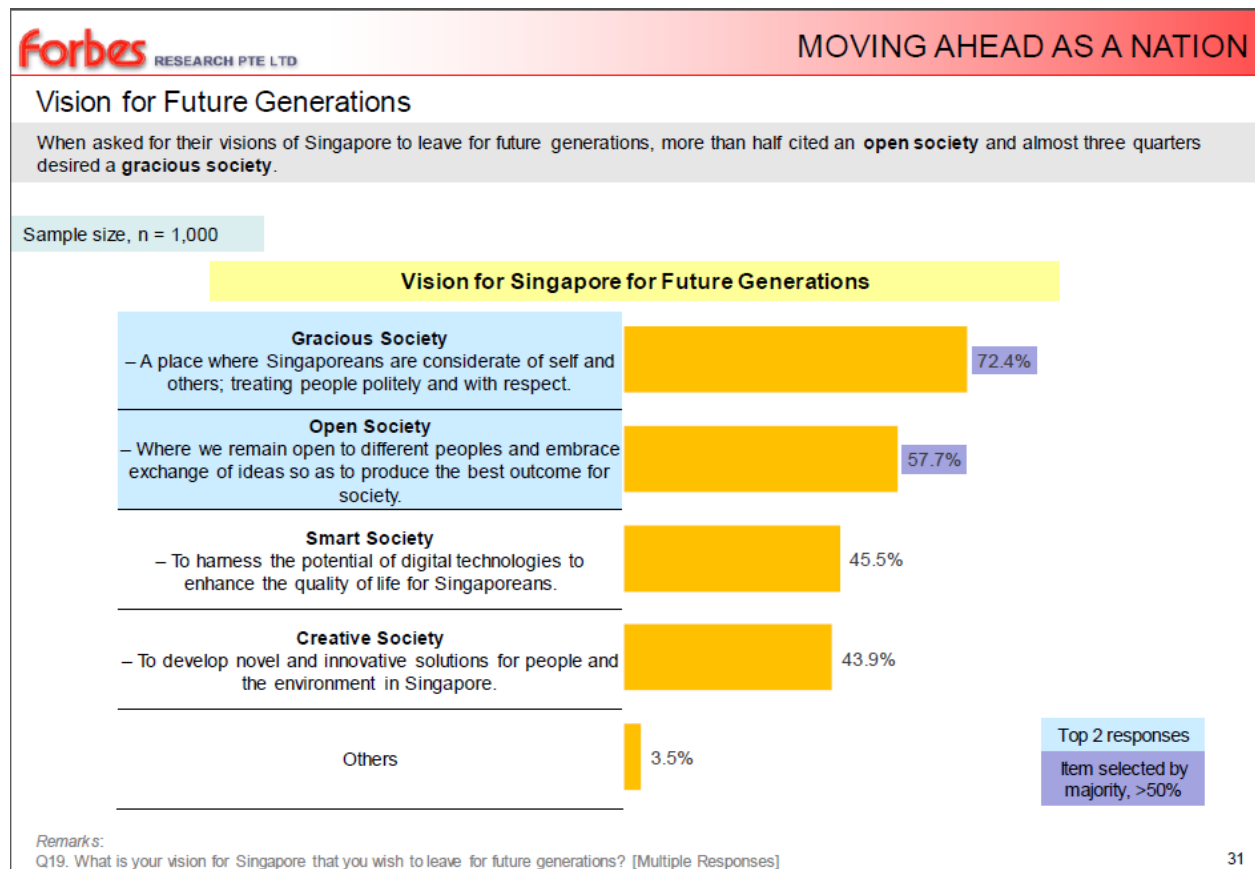


Figure 8: Vision for future generations

To move forward, let the words from our national pledge guide us:

We celebrate each individual, and acknowledge that all of us have a valuable gift to share with everyone else. This strengthens and enriches us as **one united people**.

We allow space for each person, regardless of differences and capacities, to develop their talents and flourish. This deepens our practice of **justice, equality and democracy**.

Above all else, we continue to build a gracious and inclusive society, so as to achieve **happiness, prosperity and progress** together.

Conclusion

Report

After much discussion and research, the Citizens' Workgroup (comprising eight sub-groups) have jointly authored a 10,000 word report. It contains recommendations on what new citizens should know about Singapore and its society. This is the main positive outcome of the exercise.

However, the Workgroup acknowledges that the report has its limitations. A single document will not have immediate impact on the improvement of citizen relations. The new citizenship journey is a long process and will need constant refinement and revisions along the way.

It is also recognised that the current document is mainly directed at new citizens. However, integration is a two-way process. Local-born citizens also play an important role. Hence, future efforts must be targeted at this group of citizens as well.

Lastly, the Workgroup's scope is limited to only revising the content of the SCJ. However, the 'how' is as important as the 'what'. It is beyond the scope of the exercise to consider more operational issues such as: should the SCJ start even earlier, for instance, with permanent residents? How do we ascertain whether new citizens have understood or embraced the SCJ content?

Process

Apart from the report itself, the process of putting it together has been beneficial. Over nine months, about 100 Singaporeans from diverse backgrounds volunteered their time to share and exchange views. All were motivated by a desire to improve citizenship relations in Singapore. Sharply differing opinions have led to forceful arguments but also critical reflection. Seeing commonalities across different perspectives has also highlighted that it is possible to find common ground amongst different fellow citizens.

The exercise was also a good opportunity for citizens and Government officials to know each other better. MCCY has had a close-up view of what and how citizens think. At the

same time, Singaporeans have gained a better understanding of how MCCY hopes to gather feedback and ideas from the public.

Understandably, the exercise had some inherent limitations. Firstly, all participants were volunteers and could only commit as much time and attention as their own schedules permitted. This was further exacerbated by the pandemic situation which meant that meetings had to be conducted virtually. In-depth discussions over emails or messaging was difficult, and it took more effort to arrive at consensus.

Secondly, most participants were not domain specialists or subject experts. MCCY staff also limited their roles to being facilitators and administrators, so as not to steer the Workgroup's discussions along pre-determined directions. Hence, most participants could only conduct secondary research within the limited period set aside for the exercise. As a result, the survey commissioned by MCCY was a modest one. A full-fledged public survey underpinned by academic rigour was beyond the scope of this exercise.

Acknowledgements

In closing, the Workgroup would like to thank MCCY for inviting us to take part in this meaningful exercise and the inclusive spirit in which it was conducted. The Workgroup also acknowledges the inputs of many individuals who had responded to our surveys and interviews, without which this report would not have been possible.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Values & Norms Group: A Look at Our Official Values & Ideals Embedded in Our National Symbols								
National Values	National Anthem (1958)	Happiness	Successful	Unite	Effort	Cooperation	Peace	<p>National values can include political values, and these are “important for the well-being of all Singaporeans”.</p> <p>“Some key political values are already identified with the five stars on the state flag – democracy, equality, peace, progress, justice”.</p>
	National Flag (1959)	Universal brotherhood and equality of man			Pervading and everlasting purity and virtue			
		Democracy	Justice	Equality	Prosperity	Peace		
	National Coat of Arms (1959)	Also includes National Anthem, values of National Flag & reminder of the historical ties with Malaysia.						
	National Pledge (1966)	Democratic society		Equality	Happiness	One United People		
		Justice	Prosperity	Progress	Regardless of race, language or religion			
	Lion Head Symbol* (1986)	Courage	Strength	Excellence	Resilience	Single-minded resolve		
National Flower (1981)	Harmony			Resilience				
Social Values	5 Shared Values (Goh Chok Tong, Lee Hsien Long, 1991)	Nation before community and society above self	Family as the basic unit of society	Community support and respect for the individual	Consensus, not conflict	Racial and religious harmony		<p>Shared values “focus on relationship between society and individual”, and are “required to develop Singaporean identity”.</p>
Family Values	Singapore family Values (Ministry of Community Development, 1994)	Filial Responsibility	Commitment	Love, Care and Concern	Mutual Respect	Communication		<p>“uphold the importance of family ties and thereby contribute to the collective good. These values enhance well-being of families and underpin progress of societies”</p>
Individual Values	6 Core Values (Heng Swee Keat, 2011)	Resilience	Responsibility	Care	Respect	Integrity	Harmony	<p>Include “personal values”, “moral values” & “values of citizenship”, and are “critical to the success of individuals and society”.</p>

NB: Quotes taken from Shared Values White Paper (Singapore), 1991 and Opening Address by Mr Heng Swee Keat (22nd Sept 2011), and Singapore Family Values, Ministry of Community Development, 1994

Note: The above is a value mapping exercise to identify all our official values & ideals that are embedded in our national symbols. The grouping of the values was solely the opinion of the group through interpretation of the various sources of research.

Appendix B (Understanding of the term “new/naturalised citizen”)

Responses	Codes	Theme
<i>“Exclusionary. Foreigners”</i>	Negative perception of the term “new/naturalised citizen”	Confusion on naturalisation process
<i>“many naturalised citizens live in Singapore for over 20 years before becoming citizens”</i>	Positive perception of the term “new/naturalised citizen”	Confusion on naturalisation process
<i>“just means that they are here for the low tax or for the currency”</i>	Negative perception of the term “new/naturalised citizen”	Confusion on naturalisation process
<i>“hidden passports”</i>	Negative perception of the term “new/naturalised citizen”	Confusion on naturalisation process
<i>“dare seeking for a better life here in Singapore”</i>	Positive perception of the term “new/naturalised citizen”	Confusion on naturalisation process

Appendix C (Choice of integration criteria)

Responses	Codes	Theme
<i>“we could measure the diversity of citizens’ friend groups”</i>	Expanding social circles	Sociocultural interaction
<i>“Diversity of Friend circle”</i>	Expanding social circles	Sociocultural interaction
<i>“participation rate in social and cultural events”</i>	Participation in cultural exchange	Sociocultural interaction
<i>“Learn from each other cultures”</i>	Participation in cultural exchange	Sociocultural interaction
<i>“number of years spent in Singapore”</i>	Duration of residency	Time commitment
<i>“intermarriage rates”</i>	Deep ties and bonds	Sociocultural interaction

Appendix D (Understanding of integration objectives)

Responses	Codes	Theme
<i>“Less quantity complaint cases of discrimination”</i>	Dealing with prejudicial treatment	Equity
<i>“the absence of discrimination”</i>	Dealing with prejudicial treatment	Equity
<i>“Foreigners coming out of their cliques”</i>	Diversifying social circles	Inclusivity
<i>“Singaporeans not hating them [naturalised citizens?]”</i>	Reducing emotional hostility	Inclusivity
<i>“not a 2nd class citizen in our own country”</i>	Dealing with prejudicial treatment	Equity
<i>“Everyone celebrated everyone cultures festivals”</i>	Universal celebrations and artefacts	Inclusivity
<i>“Continued cultural and racial segregation and silos”</i>	Diversifying social circles	Inclusivity

Appendix E (Favoured integration strategies)

Responses	Codes	Theme
<i>“Stick approach to make them integrate”</i>	Punitive measures	Extrinsic motivators
<i>“Compulsory for them to have diversified friend circle”</i>	Punitive measures	Extrinsic motivators
<i>“better integration training for workplace managers, school administrators and community leaders”</i>	Education and training	Third-party facilitation
<i>“[Managers] may be able to reach out to their teams in the most appropriate manner”</i>	Delegation to group leaders	Third-party facilitation
<i>“Community Sharing Session”</i>	Bidirectional communication and exchange	Intrinsic rewards
<i>“Food sharing”</i>	Bidirectional communication and exchange	Intrinsic rewards
<i>“Compulsory service to nation from new citizens”</i>	Punitive measures	Extrinsic motivators
<i>“match making of needs (e.g. business, experience, even relationship)”</i>	Customisation and needs matching	Intrinsic rewards

Appendix F (Results of survey)

Quantitative Survey and Findings

To delve deeper into the general sentiment which Singaporeans currently have about new citizens contributing to society, we posed two questions:

1. Is it important that new citizens actively contribute to Singapore and our community?
2. Does having a role (e.g. homemaker) or a job means contributing to society?

Unsurprisingly, there was overwhelming support for new citizens to actively contribute to Singapore and the community. Almost 85% of respondents agree or strongly agree that it is important for new citizens to contribute to society.

The responses were more mixed when they were asked if contributing to society might need to take on a more overt form. Most respondents indicated that so long as new citizens actively contribute at home or at work (*vis-à-vis* a having a job), it can count as contributing back to society.

Field	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Is it important that new citizens actively contribute to Singapore and our community?	9	5	28	71	158	271
Does having a role (e.g. household) or a job means contributing to society?	28	37	67	73	66	271

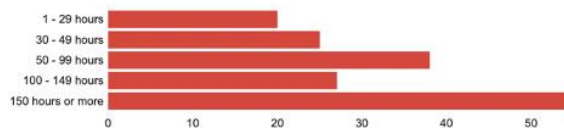
The next thing we wanted to explore was the sentiment towards the form and structure of this “contribution”. To do so, we posed two questions:

3. Is it necessary for new citizens to contribute their time in a structured programme prior to the approval of their citizenship?
4. How much of their time should the new citizens contribute?

Despite the responses to the first two questions, we were surprised to learn that 62% preferred new citizens to contribute to society in a structured programme **prior** to the approval of their citizenship. While we are not asking for the citizenship approval criteria to change, this does lend credence to the notion that Singaporeans hold a deep expectation and aspiration than new citizens like yourself join them in contributing back to Singapore.

Field	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Is it necessary for new citizens to contribute their time in a structured programme prior to the approval of their citizenship?	12	27	63	73	96	271

And when asked about the expected/preferred duration of time that new citizens should contribute to society, **most indicated 150hrs or more.**

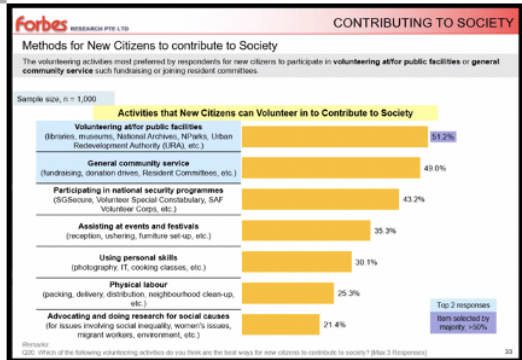


We appreciate that life is demanding. So we wanted to examine the weightage of time spent on each aspect of the current new citizenship program. As such, we got respondents to rank, in order of importance, the amount of time new citizens should spend on the various activities, namely: contributing to the community, learning more about Singapore, sharing and networking sessions and an e-learning component.

Most respondents selected ‘Learning more about Singapore’ as the most important, followed closely by ‘Contributing to the community’.

Field	1	2	3	4	Total
Contributing to the community	78	45	72	74	269
Learning more about Singapore (history, art, culture)	76	66	69	58	269
Sharing & networking sessions	38	88	101	42	269
eJourney (online modules, quizzes)	64	69	65	71	269

When asked about the best ways new citizens might contribute, the respondents ranked the options as follows:



Community service involvement (fundraising, donation drives, beach clean-ups, resident committees, etc)	187.0
Public service volunteering (libraries, museums, national archives, Nparks, URA, etc)	145.0
Security causes involvement (SGSecure, Volunteer Special Constabulary, SAF Volunteer Corps, etc)	95.0
Skills-based volunteering (photography, IT, cooking classes, etc)	94.0
Community advocacy & research involvement (AWARE, Beyond, HOME, etc)	92.0
Labour-based volunteering (packing, delivery, distribution, etc)	76.0
Event-based volunteering (front of house for theatre shows, festivals, wayfinding, registration, etc)	45.0

The survey (top left) indicated the preference for new citizens to volunteer at/for public facilities and general community service. In a smaller survey (top right) with slightly different options, we see the same responses.

Qualitative: Interviews

To get a sense of what drives new citizens to continually contribute back to Singapore, we interviewed new citizens who are active volunteers in their communities. (See Annex B).

Some of the impetus to contribute include:

- A desire to better integrate into Singapore
- To become better acquainted with their community
- To pay-it-forward to other new citizens
- To follow the examples set by the volunteers whom they interacted with on their Singapore Citizenship Journey

These reasons point to a virtuous cycle of receiving and giving, that spending time on contributing to society in Singapore can engender. Indeed, a respondent to the earlier survey remarked, "How do we local Singaporeans contribute back to society?" This is a question worth asking and answering.

Appendix G (Interview transcripts)

Interviewee #1:

NAME: Ingrid

AGE: 51 years

GENERAL PROFILE: Of Indian origin being in Singapore for last 20 years

1) Could you share in 2-3 lines your new citizens journey?

I made it a point to interact with the local community and made a number of local friends. Today I have as many local friends as I do our Indian friends. We are much richer for this experience and this has helped us discover Singapore through the eyes of the locals and we have gained tremendously from this.

2) In what area(s) do you contribute back to Singapore?

To encourage women in logistics I give talks at WILAT in the Chartered Institute of Logistics and HCLI (Human Capital Leadership Institute) as a panel speaker.

Through our Church, I volunteer on social missions that have involved regular visits to St. Joseph's Home, Pertapis Children's Home and ACMI run by Caritas Singapore. We are also actively involved with the local community in our Church by being part of various Ministries there.

In addition one of our two boys is proudly serving his NS time currently.

3) Please share what got you started in doing so?

Primarily driven by my desire to integrate into the Singapore society, allow our children to truly become a part of this community where they were born and call home and give back to a country that so warmly embraced us.

4) Do you still actively serve? If so, how often?

Once weekly, physical visits now have stopped during the pandemic in connection with social missions.

5) how might we encourage more new citizens to become active volunteers?

By getting involved in the Singapore society, integrating with the locals to fully enjoy the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of settling in a new country and society.

Interviewee #2:

NAME: Alex

AGE: 40 years

GENERAL PROFILE: Originally from Indonesia and Entrepreneur

1) Could you share in 2-3 lines your new citizens journey?

Prior to becoming a Singapore citizen I have been leaving in Singapore for more than 20 years and I would always call Singapore my home. Now that I am Singaporean, it really completes me. The journey to become a Singaporean has been smooth and very fulfilling. The learning journey that comes after the citizenship application is approved is very useful as it gives more in depth understanding of Singapore culture and history

2) In what area(s) do you contribute back to Singapore?

I have been actively involved in community bonding and residents engagement as Grassroots Leader (GRL) under People's Association (PA)

3) Please share what got you started in doing so?

Many Singaporeans are living closely to each other but many of them do not even talk to their neighbours or even know who they are. I have attended some events organized by the Neighbourhood Committee (NC) at where I live and I found it very meaningful. I applied to be the member of the NC and have since actively organizing events for the community. I have since got to know many residents living in my area and my children have also made many new friends.

4) Do you still actively serve? If so, how often?

Yes. Prior to Covid-19, we have organized events once in every 2 months.

5) how might we encourage more new citizens to become active volunteers?

We need to get new citizens to be more actively attending the community events. Actively in get feedbacks from them on how we can improve our engagement with new citizens and that their feedback is very important.

Let them feel that they play a crucial role in integration and with that we can invite them to join as a volunteer.

Interviewee #3:

NAME: Swarna

AGE:50

GENERAL PROFILE: Originally from India, Financial Adviser

1) Could you share in 2-3 lines your new citizens journey?

So far the journey has been great. I have made many friends in my neighbourhood.

2) In what area(s) do you contribute back to Singapore?

I contribute back with my a time. I joined PA as a GRL and actively participate in all the activities organised.

3) Please share what got your started in doing so?

When I was taken around on the citizenships journey, I realised the work done by volunteers and that made me keen.

4) Do you still actively serve? If so, how often?

Yes. I am part of 3 committees and spend time (serving) regularly.

5) how might we encourage more new citizens to become active volunteers?

Volunteering helps us to make friends, understand the cultural landscape of Singapore. Highlighting these benefits to new citizens will encourage people to volunteer.

Interviewee #4

NAME: Katy

AGE: 40

GENERAL PROFILE: From China and TCM

1) Could you share in 2-3 lines your new citizens journey?

Arrived in Singapore 26 years ago to attend the local University. After 12 years, this place had become my true home.

2) In what area(s) do you contribute back to Singapore?

I served in the GROs after I quit my job 6 years ago. I'm conscious that my behaviours exhibit Singapore's value of "diversity in unity" whenever I go in whatever I do.

3) Please share what got your started in doing so?

I felt Singapore had given me so much to be where I was that time. The meritocracy is working. People are sincere and kind. I ought to give it back to make Singapore a better place for all.

4) Do you still actively serve? If so, how often?

Yes. Monthly or whenever there is an event.

5) how might we encourage more new citizens to become active volunteers?

Lead by example.

Appendix H (List of organisations to volunteer at)

Not sure where to start volunteering? Here's a few websites to get you started!

<https://www.sg/>

<https://cityofgood.sg>

<https://www.sg/singaporecares>

<https://www.youthcorps.gov.sg>

<https://www.volunteer.sg/>

<https://sgvolunteer.com/>

<https://www.mindef.gov.sg/oms/safvc/>

<https://www.police.gov.sg/join-spf/community-volunteer>

<https://www.scdf.gov.sg/home/community-volunteers>

<https://www.sana.org.sg/>

<https://www.nea.gov.sg/programmes-grants/volunteering>

<https://www.ncss.gov.sg/volunteer>

<https://www.pa.gov.sg/our-volunteers/volunteering-opportunities>

<https://www.salvationarmy.org/singapore/volunteer>

<https://www.expatsgiving.org/>

<https://thefinder.life/things-to-do/20-top-inspiring-places-volunteer-singapore/?aqallery=37906&aslide=5>

<https://thehoneycombers.com/singapore/volunteer-in-singapore-charities-donations-and-social-enterprises-to-help-out/>

(List is not exhaustive)