

# EMERGING STRONGER CONVERSATIONS

A series of conversations for Singaporeans to come together to reflect on their experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, and garner ideas on helping Singapore emerge stronger from the crisis. As part of the Singapore Together movement, we aim to turn these insights and ideas into action and partnerships.

**SINGAPOREANS WHO PARTICIPATED TO DATE: 146** (As of 6 August)

## 5 KEY ISSUES RAISED

### SOCIAL SUPPORT



- Greater inclusiveness for all.
- More support from the government and community to those in need, for e.g., low-income families, persons with disabilities, and those suffering from mental stresses or family violence.
- Support for an equitable society with equal opportunity for all. For e.g., there are concerns that a GST hike to 9% would hit the poor the worst, and concerns about lack of digital access. Some participants wanted more recognition or tangible benefits (e.g. higher pay) for essential workers (e.g. cleaners, gardeners), foreign workers, and the "invisibles".

### JOBS & ECONOMY



- Better work-life balance and employer flexibility. Although, it is as important for workers to increase work productivity and be willing to upskill.
- Better government support for those going through mid-career changes, entrepreneurs and start-ups, and home-based businesses.
- Reduce overdependence on foreign labour, foreign companies, and international trade. Government policies should push companies to have a Singaporean core.

### PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENTS



- The government should engage with people of diverse backgrounds, including youth voices for new ideas and innovations.
- Recognise that apart from the government, people need to be proactive as well. We need people-to-people (P2P) conversations and not just government-to-people (G2P) ones, and on issues such as race, gender, nationality and politics.
- Convene "action groups" comprising government and people of different ages.
- Create an empowering feedback loop from people to government.

### EDUCATION & TRAINING



- Our society needs to redefine success. We are "losing our soul" for being too results-driven.
- Our children should learn good habits, for e.g. healthy lifestyle and empathy.
- Run campaigns to encourage Singaporeans to be gracious and inclusive.
- The next generation needs to be critical thinkers and be able to analyse information.
- All schools need to have equitable resources and adapt to digital platforms.
- SkillsFuture offerings could comprise more small courses and qualifications that can have a positive impact on career progression, rather than hobby-type courses.

### NATIONAL IDENTITY



- Build greater trust, kindness, care, empathy, inclusiveness and kampong spirit within society and to be less judgmental or negative.
- Better communication and hear diverse views within our society.
- Greater trust between government and people.
- Capitalise on our unique culture — our ethnic diversity and acceptance of other races/culture, hawker centre culture — to give ourselves a competitive edge as people are our assets.

## OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY...



Many older, less-educated workers need help in upgrading their skills to stay employed during crisis... I'm most encouraged by the government's effort in helping Singaporean retain jobs, in spite of the pandemic and economic crisis."



To describe the ESC: If the session was food, it would be a richly-stuffed sandwich. There was a lot of exchange of ideas, and I savoured every second of our shared enthusiasm. It was the diverse views that gave it the flavour... people from all walks of life came together with a common passion."



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