

SESSION NOTES FOR PANEL DIALOGUE AT THE SG YOUTH FORUM 2026
“EMPOWERING YOUTHS WITH THE SG YOUTH PLAN”
25 JULY 2026, 1.50PM – 2.40PM
SUNTEC SINGAPORE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE, HALLS 401-402

On 25 July 2026, over 2,000 youths and community partners gathered at the SG Youth Forum to learn why the SG Youth Plan was created, how it was shaped by the voices of over 60,000 youths, and how its key initiatives rolled will help young Singaporeans to be confident, connected, and contributing citizens.

As part of the SG Youth Forum, attendees took part in a panel dialogue moderated by Mr Rishi Budhrani and involving the following panellists:

- SPS Goh Hanyan, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (SPS), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment
- Mr Khairul Rusydi, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, Reactor School, and INSPIRIT Community Leader
- Ms Dakshita Sardana, Student, Nanyang Technological University, and NYC Leaders Course Alumnus

The panel dialogue focused on two key areas: (i) why the SG Youth Plan was created and how it was shaped by youth's voices; and (ii) how the initiatives under the three pillars of Confident, Connected, and Contribute, will support every youth to pursue their aspirations and thrive in Singapore with hope and optimism.

Key Insights from Panel Dialogue

Theme: Purpose of the SG Youth Plan

Issue: The SG Youth Plan was created to give young Singaporeans hope and optimism to pursue their aspirations and thrive in Singapore amidst a rapidly changing and uncertain world. The plan's initiatives were developed based on sentiments gathered from youths across various life stages, backgrounds, and needs.

The moderator asked SPS Goh what a dedicated youth plan would offer beyond existing efforts, and what had driven the decision to develop it.

- SPS Goh said that while youths today were better educated and more connected than previous generations, the world was also changing more rapidly than before, and it was important to give young people hope by ensuring that the system and society actively supported them. She said that the SG Youth Plan represented Singapore's commitment to its youths – to help them find their footing in their careers and daily lives, feel a sense of belonging in their

communities, and build meaningful relationships with people who mattered to them.

- SPS Goh also said that the SG Youth Plan was developed with sentiments from over 60,000 youths across the ages of 15 to 35 years old, through large-scale surveys, online polls, roadshows, dialogues, and focus group discussions. She said that the Plan included insights from diverse youth profiles and was designed to be broad enough such that every youth could see themselves reflected in it somewhere.

The moderator asked Mr Rusydi and Ms Sardana whether the findings and initiatives under the SG Youth Plan resonated with their own experiences and observations as young Singaporeans.

- Mr Rusydi said that the Job Tasters initiative resonated with him, as giving youths firsthand experience of a potential career in a given industry, including the day-to-day realities of the role, helped them make more informed decisions rather than committing to one based on assumptions or second-hand accounts. He also shared that the SG Youth Plan offered more overseas exposure opportunities across Southeast Asia, China, and India, and encouraged youths to take them up, as experience in different working cultures would broaden their perspectives and build adaptability in an increasingly interconnected world.
- Ms Sardana said that what resonated most with her was the finding that many youths were feeling lonely and struggling to build meaningful connections. She said that youths often held themselves back, assuming they were not ready to be part of a community. The SG Youth Plan sought to address this by lowering the barrier to participation, allowing them to engage in interest-based activities and connect with others organically.

Theme: Key Initiatives of the SG Youth Plan – Confident Pillar

Issue: Youths expressed a desire for greater clarity and confidence in charting their own paths, and the Confident pillar seeks to address this by expanding access to flexible career exploration, mentoring, and practical life-skills support — particularly for those with fewer resources or networks to draw on.

Participants asked how the SG Youth Plan would ensure that its opportunities were accessible and relevant to youths across different backgrounds and demographics, such as older working youths and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- SPS Goh said that the SG Youth Plan was not just for younger students, and it had been developed with all youths in mind. She said that older youths could look forward to initiatives such as microgrants to fund social projects, opportunities to contribute to policy discussions through focus groups and dialogues, and co-living spaces designed to help young adults build community.
- SPS Goh said that the Discover platform and mentoring opportunities were designed to ensure that youths without connections or networks had equal

access to career information and guidance. She added that NYC was partnering schools to bring opportunities such as Job Tasters, mentoring, and Adulthood 101 content directly to students, recognising that many youths from less advantaged backgrounds often had limited time due to family or financial responsibilities and might not be able to seek out these opportunities on their own.

- Mr Rusydi said that youth leaders had a critical role to play in reaching underserved groups, and that they should proactively identify and engage youths who were being left behind. He added that older youths and alumni of NYC's programmes were well-placed to step up and partner the Government in convening discussions on issues that mattered to youths.

Participants asked (via Slido) how youths could pursue non-traditional career paths when parents and society tended to prioritise stability and conventional job roles.

- SPS Goh said that a key finding from the sentiments collected was that youths wanted shorter, more flexible opportunities to try out different career paths, as traditional internships were often too long and inflexible. She said that the SG Youth Plan sought to address this through initiatives such as Job Tasters and flash mentoring.
- SPS Goh said that the Government recognised youths' need for support in navigating major life transitions such as financial planning and housing. She said that an Adulthood 101 package would be made available through schools and the Discover platform to help youths navigate these key milestones.
- Mr Rusydi said that youths pursuing non-traditional career paths could "time-box" their projects and manage parental expectations by communicating clearly about their plans, milestones, and contingencies. He added that older youths who had succeeded through unconventional routes could serve as proof points and mentors, and share their experiences with younger youths.

Theme: Key Initiatives of the SG Youth Plan – Connected Pillar

Issue: Youths expressed a desire for spaces and communities where they could build meaningful friendships and a sense of belonging, and the Connected pillar seeks to address this by creating welcoming environments where young people can connect over shared interests regardless of their background.

Participants asked (via Slido) how the SG Youth Plan would help youths build meaningful friendships and connections, and what spaces and communities would be created to support this.

- SPS Goh said that the Connected pillar sought to help youths build meaningful connections through welcoming third spaces where they could get to know others and make friends through shared interests and hobbies. She added that the Curiosity Credits initiative, launched in partnership with the Self-Help Groups, aimed to help less advantaged youths develop interests and hobbies beyond academics.

- Ms Sardana said that third spaces needed to be places where youths could see familiar people regularly and connect organically over shared interests, rather than spaces that were overly structured and driven by agenda. She shared that youths have grown more uncertain about the future of third spaces in Singapore, and welcomed the SG Youth Plan's renewed focus on keeping them alive.
- Mr Rusydi said that despite living in the most digitally connected era, society was also the loneliest it had ever been, and emphasised the importance of translating digital connections into meaningful offline relationships.

Theme: Key Initiatives of the SG Youth Plan – Contribute Pillar

Issue: Youths want more than just opportunities to participate; they want the agency to act on issues they care about and drive meaningful change. The Contribute pillar seeks to enable this by lowering barriers to ground-up action, equipping youths with the skills to engage in policymaking, and creating pathways for them to contribute at every level.

Participants asked (via Slido) what opportunities existed under the Contribute pillar for youths who wanted to take meaningful action and play a part in shaping Singapore's future.

- SPS Goh said that the Contribute pillar aimed to lower the barriers for youths to move from awareness to action. She shared that youths could apply for microgrants of \$1,000 to fund their own projects, or pitch their ideas at the Youth Action Marketplace to receive further support and resources to bring ground-up ideas to fruition.
- SPS Goh said that for youths interested in policy discussions, the Youth Panels and SG Youth Policy Network would equip them with the knowledge and skills to engage the Government, community stakeholders and fellow youths constructively on issues that mattered to them.

A participant asked about the meaningful ways secondary school and polytechnic students could contribute to policymaking and public service beyond volunteering.

- SPS Goh said that volunteering was an important starting point, as it exposed youths to people from different backgrounds and built a ground-up understanding of issues before engaging in policy discussions. She added that government agencies regularly engaged youths through dialogues, focus group discussions, and surveys, which were open to youths of all ages, including secondary school and polytechnic students.
- Ms Sardana said that having gone through NYC's leadership programmes, including the NYC Leaders Course and a futures-thinking workshop in partnership with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, she had gained a deeper appreciation for how policies were made and the trade-offs involved. She said that participating in such programmes would give youths a strong

foundation to contribute more constructively to policy discussions and share ground-level experiences with the Government.

Closing Remarks

The moderator asked panellists to share one piece of advice for youths regarding the SG Youth Plan.

- SPS Goh encouraged youths to take the first step and not wait until they felt fully ready, as the SG Youth Plan had created many entry points for youths to explore, connect, and contribute at their own pace.
- Ms Sardana encouraged youths not to approach the SG Youth Plan as a checklist but to identify one issue or cause they genuinely cared about and take a concrete step towards it, however small. She added that confidence grew from the act of trying, and that simply showing up and giving something new a go was often enough to get started.
- Mr Rusydi said that youths did not need to feel fully prepared before stepping forward, and that what mattered more was genuine interest and a willingness to try. He added that a community of youth leaders, mentors and partners was ready to support them along the way.

Notes recorded by the NYC Youth Leadership and Engagement team.

Responses to Unanswered Questions

Participants raised many questions during the panel dialogue, both digitally through Slido and verbally. This Annex consolidates and responds to the unanswered questions related to the key focus areas of the dialogue.

Key Issues Raised

[Confident pillar]

Question 1: *How will the SG Youth Plan prepare youths, including older youths, for an AI-shaped job market, support real career mobility, and help them remain competitive?*

Response:

1. The pace of change today in the job market is unprecedented, shaped by factors such as the rise of artificial intelligence and the shifts in global order. While we will not be able to predict exactly what the future would look like, the SG Youth Plan is designed to help all youths – including older youths and those already in the workforce – navigate these transitions with greater confidence.
2. Initiatives under the Confident pillar, such as Job Tasters, mentoring, overseas exposure, and AI literacy efforts, will help youths explore different pathways, build networks, work effectively with AI, and be global-ready. For example, mentoring can support older youths who may be thinking through their career options, by connecting them with mentors who can provide trusted guidance, industry perspectives, and practical advice. Job Tasters are useful for older youths who may be thinking about taking up a job in a different sector. The Skills and Workforce Development Agency also provides support for older youths in the workforce through personalised career coaching and digital resources, as well as career planning guidance from industry partners.
3. The SG Youth Plan is a ‘living’ plan. We will continue to work with partners, employers and youths to refine existing initiatives and explore new ways to better support older youths, so that they can remain competitive and resilient as the economy changes.

Question 2: *How will Job Tasters and mentoring complement existing Education and Career Guidance (ECG) efforts in schools, balance exploration with commitment and employer needs, and lead to meaningful education or employment outcomes?*

Response:

1. Job Tasters and mentoring complement ECG efforts in schools by giving youths practical exposure to workplaces, industries, and role models, thus helping them gauge their interests and make sense of real-world experiences. NYC also works with MOE to keep ECG counsellors updated on these opportunities available on Discover, so that they can share them with their students.
2. Job Tasters and mentoring model also balance exploration with commitment. Job Tasters allow youths to explore different roles without the commitment of a full internship, while giving employers a manageable way to expose youths to their industries. Where there is a good fit, youths can then be encouraged to pursue deeper opportunities, such as internships, further training, or relevant courses.
3. To ensure that all youths benefit from the initiatives, NYC will increase the number of Job Tasters and mentoring opportunities, bring them into schools and community networks, and make them easier to find and access through the Discover platform.

[Connected pillar]

Question 3: *How will the SG Youth Plan support youths facing academic or career stress and social isolation, and what will make Somerset Belt, Third Spaces, and hybrid communities genuinely useful, well-used and supportive of youth well-being?*

Response:

1. Social support is closely linked to overall well-being. When youths have trusted relationships with family and friends, they are better able to cope with academic or career stress. Such pressures can feel heavier when youths feel isolated or disconnected.
2. The SG Youth Plan's Connected pillar seeks to strengthen youths' social connections through third spaces and interest-based communities. During engagements, youths said they wanted safe, inclusive, affordable, and low-pressure spaces to connect with others. NYC has started 12 third spaces across Singapore, with a revamped Somerset Belt due to be ready from 2028. It is also working with partners to help youths discover and pursue their interests with others.
3. These spaces and communities will be shaped around how youths naturally gather. This means accessible locations, welcoming community builders, regular activities, and opportunities built around interests such as arts, sports, gaming, music, volunteering, and other hobbies. MCCY and NYC are also partnering SUSS to develop programmes that build the capabilities of youth community builders, so they can better support youths to form meaningful social connections.

Question 4: *How will the SG Youth Plan ensure that underrepresented youths can access safe spaces, programmes, and interest-based opportunities that respond to their needs?*

Response:

1. The SG Youth Plan was designed to support all youths, while paying particular attention to youths whose voices and needs may be less visible. This included engaging youths with disabilities, youths from lower-income backgrounds, and youths undergoing reformatory training, so that their lived experiences could shape the initiatives from the outset. The aim is for the Plan to be inclusive by design.
2. For example, the third spaces for youths are free to access, located across Singapore, and supported by youth community builders who help keep the spaces safe, welcoming and low-pressure. NYC will continue to work with partners to bring these spaces closer to where youths are.
3. The same approach applies to the interest-based opportunities that are on Discover, many of which are free. The Curiosity Credits are also for youths aged 13 to 17 who receive support from the Self-Help Groups, to help lower access barriers for those who may have fewer opportunities to explore their interests. These efforts reflect the broader intent of the SG Youth Plan: to ensure that every youth, including those from under-represented groups, can access opportunities to connect, grow and contribute.

[Contribute pillar]

Question 5: *Beyond volunteering, how can youths lead projects, influence policy, access support, and contribute through the SG Youth Plan, even when their views may differ from the Government's?*

Response:

1. The SG Youth Plan is designed not just to hear youths' views, but to help them turn their ideas into action. Youths who want to start ground-up projects can apply for the new Microgrant and seek support through the Youth Action Marketplace, which will connect them to practical resources such as guidance, training, funding, partners, publicity and venues. Those who want to contribute through service can also access volunteering opportunities Youth Corps.
2. The SG Youth Plan also creates channels for youths to shape decisions and policies. Youth Panels allow youths to deliberate issues with government agencies and co-develop recommendations, with the next run starting from later this year. The SG Youth Policy Network will give members of youth civic groups deeper exposure to policymaking and opportunities to engage on issues they care about. More broadly, youths can continue to contribute their perspectives through surveys, focus groups, dialogues and consultations with the Government through NYC and REACH, amongst others.
3. These platforms recognise that contribution is not limited to agreement with the Government. They are meant to give youths the space, support, and responsibility to raise different views constructively, test ideas with others, and work towards practical solutions and common ground. As President Tharman said at the SG Youth Forum, "We can make the most of our youths' constructive discontent with the present. Not the cynicism that says nothing can improve, but the restlessness and

fresh pair of eyes that says: surely, we can do better; we can widen opportunities; we can live with greater purpose; and we can build a fairer, and more caring society”.

Question 6: *What opportunities under the SG Youth Plan help youths take action on environmental issues, and how will the Government respond to the eco-anxiety many youths feel?*

Response:

1. The Government recognises that climate change presents real and long-term challenges, and that youths should not be made to feel that the burden of solving them rests on individuals alone. The response should therefore focus on providing credible information, sustaining national climate action, and creating meaningful opportunities for youths to contribute alongside others. This helps turn anxieties into agency, while building communities of support around youths who care deeply about environmental issues.
2. Youths who care about environmental issues can also tap on the new Microgrant to start their own ground-up environmental projects. A more structured pathway is the Climate Youth Development Programme, jointly organised by the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, the National Climate Change Secretariat, and NYC for youths aged 18 to 35. The programme equips participants with knowledge and soft skills, connects them with policymakers and industry experts, and supports collaboration and ground-up climate action.