

Setting Standards and Engaging Youths



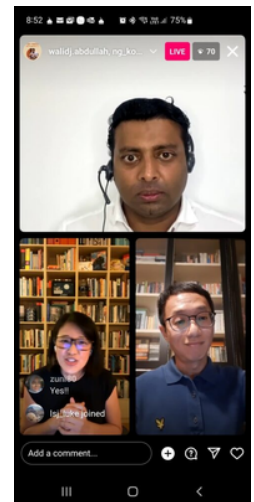
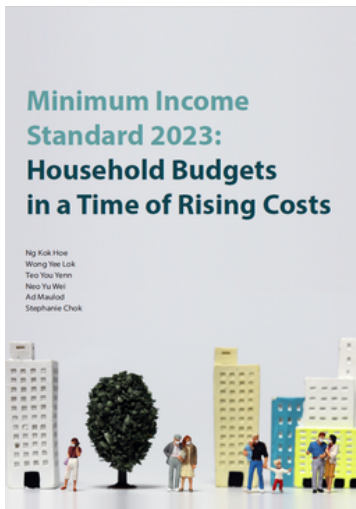
OUR MISSION

The Social Inclusion Project (SIP) is dedicated to analysing the role of public policies in creating an open, diverse and inclusive society, where people have opportunities for participation. It aims to influence policy development, promote policy literacy and enable engagement. The programme is committed to independent and transparent research on overlooked and emerging social problems, with a focus on empirical work that has practical impact. It is outward-looking and engages policymakers, practitioners, researchers and the public to share knowledge and generate ideas. This impact statement is a review of the highlights from our work in 2023.

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS IN A TIME OF RISING COSTS

In 2023, we published the latest household budgets from our research on Minimum Income Standards (MIS). Since 2019, the MIS Singapore research team has conducted focus group discussions to understand how ordinary Singaporeans think about what constitutes basic needs in Singapore today, and then determined the household budgets necessary to meet these needs. The 2023 report updated the MIS budgets to capture the impact of price inflation. This latest report garnered significant media interest, with 27 reports across various outlets. The active discussions underscore strong public interest in the establishment of clearly defined standards for basic needs.

MIS Singapore also joined the Global Living Wage network convened by the UK Living Wage Foundation to promote fair and decent wages worldwide. In addition, our living wage calculations were adopted by B Lab – an international nonprofit network which accredits businesses that meet high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency – for its operations in Singapore. Currently, six certified companies in Singapore are implementing the living wage we recommend.



NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT ENABLE A BASIC STANDARD OF LIVING

Last year marked the start of fieldwork for the Minimum Place Standards (MPS) project in Singapore. Through consensual focus groups with participants from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, the MPS study examines what amenities and characteristics residential neighbourhoods must have, to enable a basic standard of living. Over 60 participants took part in focus group discussions about topics such as: What kind of housing and transport are required as basic needs? How can neighbourhoods ensure physical security? What is the value of old places and memories to future generations? How do community spaces enable social participation? Are physical shops still necessary? Our final study report will generate a comprehensive set of place standards for Singapore neighbourhoods based on their responses.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT SUPERVISION

Working with young people has been an important part of our commitment to public engagement, and a key strategy to nurture a future community of active and concerned citizens.

In 2023, we spoke on democratic governance at the Moot Parliament Programme Symposium (organised by the Ministry of Education) and about social research at the Catholic High School Humanities Exchange. We delivered the keynote address and led a workshop on labour migration at Gotong Royong (School of the Arts Singapore). We also supervised two teams of Secondary Four students doing research on retirement planning and neighbourhood design under the Humanities and Social Science Research Programme (MOE).

Since 2020, we have worked with more than 40 student researchers across our projects. We hosted our first gathering with them in 2023, not just to express gratitude for their contribution but also to celebrate their success as a new generation of changemakers.



ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

The past year has been a fruitful one for SIP's engagement in local and international dialogues on social inclusion. The highlights include:

- Publishing 3 academic papers and 3 commentaries on topics such as transnational housing insecurity during the pandemic, advances in COVID-related research on Singapore, and the impact of public consultation in addressing equity concerns related to the medium of instruction in schools.
- Organising 2 seminars on Minimum Income Standards and Singapore's 2023 Budget.
- Speaking at 4 events hosted by organisations such as Ethos Books, AWWA and the Ministry of Education.
- More than 30 media mentions of our research across mainstream and alternative channels.
- Appearances on 3 podcast episodes, with The Beverage Report (London School of Economics and Political Science) and Teh Tarik with Walid.
- Almost 54,000 webpage views across our project websites.

In addition to active external engagement, SIP launched a short paper series *Inclusion Matters* to examine complex themes in social inclusion in an accessible way. The first paper, on the theme of Housing and Place, delves into participatory urban planning – a process that involves citizens in decision-making for their neighbourhoods. The upcoming paper in this series will discuss how Singapore regulates space.



WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN THE URBAN SETTING?

What to expect in 2024

In the coming year, we will

- Release reports on **Future of Work** to provide insights into challenges and potential solutions concerning skills development and labour migration
- Complete fieldwork for the **Minimum Place Standards** study, engaging an additional 100 participants in upcoming focus groups.
- Embark on a new project to tackle the complex issues related to **Care** – its demand, provision and quality.
- Launch our very own **social media** platforms!

For more, visit <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/research/social-inclusion-project>