

## Get teens interested in world affairs

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Singaporeans can do more to protect ourselves against foreign influence, beyond instituting laws (Singapore needs laws to tackle foreign meddling in its affairs: Shanmugam, Sept 26).

Many Singaporeans seem to harbour little interest in global affairs. This is indefensible given the extensive coverage on international issues by local media.

Additionally, from the Middle East Institute to the Institute of Policy Studies to the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and several others, there is no lack of resources readily available to those seeking to learn more about global developments.

If we have little interest in things happening around the world, we may become highly susceptible to foreign indoctrination.

What has world events to do with foreign interference in domestic politics, one might ask.

For one thing, Singapore's foreign policy is deeply intertwined with its domestic politics. Singapore has earned an international reputation for its achievements.

The moment our society sustains the kind of internal fractures that plague other nations, our credibility on the world stage will erode.

This leaves our society vulnerable to any foreign entity looking to cajole or muscle us in the direction of its agenda.

As seen from a survey, one in three young Singaporeans aged between 10 and 14 has no interest in world affairs.

This being the case, schools should incorporate international relations in lessons.

Beyond having students regurgitate geography and history facts in exams, classrooms should examine links between the past and the present, and motivate students to think more critically about how and why the world is facing issues like Brexit, the US-China trade war, the Rohingya crisis, climate change and the South China Sea disputes, and how they can affect us despite happening thousands of miles away.

The Government could also look at holding forums that allow active discourse, supported by facts, on geopolitical affairs.

Don't let social media be the go-to forum where facts are fused with personal beliefs, entertainment and foreign agendas.