

## Open Pathways Upwards: More Avenues for Social Mobility

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THE promise that no single point in one's education - and no single examination result - will determine one's future was reassuring for Ms Irene Ng, an MP in Tampines GRC.

"It's a very liberating vision, as it frees students to explore what they are good at, to develop at their own pace, and not to be afraid of failure at any one point.

"You can re-invent yourself at any point, even after you leave school, with lifelong learning. This will also help our society to redefine success and to give people more chances to prove themselves and succeed at different points in their life," she said.

Similarly, Mr Lim Biow Chuan, chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Education, feels Singaporeans need not be too stressed over the PSLE or Primary 1 registration.

"There're many opportunities even if you don't follow the traditional paths of education," said the MP for Mountbatten.

Sociologist Tan Ern Ser of National University of Singapore said more open educational pathways will aid social mobility.

"This suggests that Singaporeans will always have opportunities for upward mobility, that a setback at any point does not determine one's destiny. It also means having multiple pathways to success, with getting a university degree being one of many possible trajectories of upward mobility."

Also needed are support from the family, community and Government, enough jobs with decent pay, opportunities for skills upgrading or retraining, and "a society in which all kinds of jobs are respected and valued", he added.

Moving away from high-stakes examinations will also enable children to acquire knowledge and be socially responsible and resilient, said Mr Liang Eng Hwa, an MP for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC.

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