

## Survey: Fewer young Singaporeans think of emigrating

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Three in five respondents feel they can attain their life goals without leaving the Republic

More young Singaporeans believe they can achieve their life goals here without having to move overseas, research has found.

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) interviewed more than 2,000 local 19-to 30-year-olds and discovered that fewer were thinking of emigrating permanently.

Findings of the 2016 survey released yesterday showed 18.3 per cent had thought about emigrating, down from 21.2 per cent in 2010.

Meanwhile, 59.3 per cent said that they could achieve the things they want in Singapore without having to leave, up from 45.6 per cent in 2010.

IPS senior research fellow Leong Chan-Hoong, who was part of the team behind the survey, said it showed that more people would rather improve their socio-economic well-being here, such as by studying and working hard, than simply emigrating for a better life.

"If you look back five or six years ago - today, we have a lot more emphasis on cultural immersion, not just at the university level, but also at the polytechnic, secondary and even primary school level," said Dr Leong. "It is a way to internationalise Singapore and to let students know that there is a world out there with a completely different system and way of life."

However, the survey also noted that a larger proportion of Singaporean youth feel that an increase in emigration is inevitable as Singapore gets more stressful and competitive.

"As much as the economy as a whole has done pretty well, and Singapore is more stable than the US, Britain or Europe, the outcome may not be same for everybody," Dr Leong added.

"You may think that the economy has done well, but there may not be enough jobs for everybody."

On the pull of Singapore's national identity, 53.1 per cent of respondents said they would not renounce Singapore citizenship even if they were to become permanent residents in another country, up from 40.6 per cent in 2010.

Most survey respondents chose Australia as their preferred emigration destination, while New Zealand came in second. There was a slight drop in interest in the United States, Britain and Canada, which came in third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

According to the annual Population In Brief report released on Thursday, there were 216,400 overseas Singaporeans as of June this year. This is an increase from the 214,700 at the same time last year, and continues a steady upward trend over the past decade, from 181,900 in 2008.

Ms Denise Phua, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Social and Family Development, said the world has shrunk in a sense due to technology, and countries are experiencing challenges similar to those of Singapore in the economy and other areas.

"If we are indeed part of a Singapore family and care about ensuring that everyone's potential can be maximised, then stay and help build a nation that is not only successful economically, but also significant and purposeful," she said.