

The Objectives and Outcomes of IPS Prism

1. The focal concern of IPS Prism was 'How will Singapore govern itself in 2022?' It was designed in November 2011 as a catalyst for developing a more informed citizenry.
2. It has three key outcomes. First, is what is called the IPS Prism Scenarios; second, the IPS Prism Survey and third, the transformative impact on participants themselves.
3. This report provides the background and objectives of the project and its outcomes.
4. In brief, the participants at eight workshops (140 people who would be recognised to represent seven key sectors of Singapore society) developed scenarios of governance in 2022. They identified the following as key driving forces of change in relation to the focal concern:
 - The sense of national identity and its impact on social cohesion – integration or fragmentation (12 mentions)
 - Income distribution and its impact on social mobility – inclusion or exclusion (ten mentions)
 - Geopolitics and globalisation – influenced or the influencer (10 mentions)
 - Value system – individualists and materialists or communitarian (8 mentions)
5. The IPS Prism Scenarios were developed as the final output of the workshops.
6. The three driving forces of the IPS Prism Scenarios were:
 - Credibility of the government – government knows best or government does not know best
 - Definition of success – society chases after the material or society is driven by a concern about values that are beyond the material and economic

- Distribution of rewards and support – government and society rewards and supports those with the highest potential to make a contribution to society and the economy or government and society supports all, equally.

7. The scenarios were:

- **SingaStore** – a pro-business, high growth world the public trusts which invests in people and endeavours that have the highest potential to create economic value. The question is how socially sustainable it will be.
- **SingaGives** – a pro-Singaporean scenario where the public trust a new government and elected president to implement an egalitarian policy framework supported through the use of the national reserves. The question is how fiscally sustainable it will be.
- **WikiCity** – a pro-active scenario where a new coalition government is elected to trim the role of the state because of citizens low trust in government, and allow for self-organising communities to emerge to meet the daily needs of people. The question is how politically sustainable it will be.

8. The third phase of the project was the Immersive Arts Experience. Participants found the process open, and transformative in how it allowed for a high degree of peer-to-peer interaction and learning.

9. Participants were invited to share their own stories of life in 2022 and then signified their stories. This IPS Prism Survey was designed using a narrative capture methodology. The survey is not intended to be representative of Singapore society but to give some indication of what people who attended the Experience thought. 600 participants shared their stories, with an over-representation among respondents of people below 40 years of age, and those living in better public housing and private housing when compared to the national population by the 2012 Census.

10. The highlights of the views about life in 2022 through the IPS Prism Survey were as follows:

11. **What is ‘good governance’?** There was a bias towards saying that government in 2022 would be judged by what it does to improve the well-being of people perhaps through economic growth, rather than creating economic growth on its own, and certainly not by whether it gives people the freedom to do what they want. Respondents indicated that they want Singapore to be governed by moral values and ‘common sense’ or pragmatism, rather than economic goals. Trust in government, and more broadly, governance, will rest on moral direction and how well citizens’ sense of well-being is addressed. In other words, economic growth and goals can really only be the means to that end. *This addresses the first and second driving forces in the IPS Prism Scenarios – how the credibility of government will be judged and whether society would be defined by its achievement of simply the material or beyond the material.*

12. **Who should provide what and to whom?** Respondents indicated in the main that in 2022, the government would be expected to provide basic goods like healthcare, education, housing and transportation with perhaps some participation by the community, but certainly not by the community or business sectors on their own. In terms of social support, the first group that should receive help is the needy with some concession to the position of helping ‘everyone equally’, but not those with ‘the highest potential to make a contribution to society’. It was interesting that when presented with three different groups of people and asked to prioritise which should be first to receive social support, even the younger respondents identified ‘the elderly’ to take first priority. When it comes to a choice of who they would give a \$100,000 scholarship to however, respondents were likely to straddle between giving it to people ‘with the most need’ and ‘those with the most potential’, rather than to give the money to ‘everyone equally’. A large and strong state could still be in fashion in 2022, and there would be support among such a profile of people for prioritising help to the elderly.

13. **How should the government provide its support to society?** When asked a question about how the government should provide its support, a largest cluster of respondents placed themselves between ‘Help people help themselves’ and ‘Subsidise part of the cost of people’s basic needs’. The second largest cluster of respondents placed themselves in the empowerment ethic and the third largest cluster in the part-subsidies option. Very few placed themselves in the ‘pay for all of people’s basic needs’ option. While a large and strong state with significant state subsidies for basic needs will be in fashion, there is a strong message that the help should be designed in a way that ‘teaches people how to fish’ than giving them half-priced fish or giving them the fish altogether. *This and the section above address the third driving force of the IPS Prism scenarios – that support should be given to the needy and if possible, to all equally and in such a way that it empowers people through subsidies of basic needs.*

14. While the IPS Prism Survey dataset is over-represented by the younger set of Singaporeans, it is quite fitting that it is so for the forward-looking nature of the project. The respondents are also more affluent but these are the upwardly- and also globally-mobile set of people. These are their views.

15. This is just the end of the beginning for IPS now that IPS Prism has come to an end. There is Our Singapore Conversation and many other ground-up efforts across the country now that ask the fundamental questions of ‘how do we want to govern ourselves’, ‘what is the good society for Singapore’, ‘what do we value and want to see happen in Singapore in 2030’ to get people to think through their ideas. With good facilitation, participants learn to share their views, clarify the views of others, find consensus, and agree to disagree agreeably where trade-offs must be made in policy-making. Together these will add to developing a more informed citizenry, surely the bedrock of good governance in Singapore in 2022 and beyond.